

KENTUCKY KERNEL

CELEBRATING 37 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

Senate passes partner benefits ban

By Jill Laster
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The state Senate approved a bill yesterday that would ban public universities and state institutions from providing domestic-partner benefits to their employees. The legislation easily passed in a 30-5 vote.

If the bill is approved by the Kentucky House of Representatives, it would change statutes so that health benefits for state workers would only apply to the employee and the employee's spouse and family members. "A statement like this kind of sig-

nals to the rest of the country we're a backward state," said state Sen. Ernesto Scorsone, D-Lexington.

Scorsone, the only openly gay member of the legislature, said a domestic-partner benefits ban would negatively affect both current employees and potential recruits to universities.

To hire first-rate researchers, UK and other state agencies can't offer a second-rate health plan, Scorsone said.

Rep. Stan Lee, R-Lexington, said the costs of domestic-partner benefits would be an unnecessary burden on Kentucky, especially at a time when

state finances are low.

"It will cost money," Lee said. "To say it won't cost money is fiction."

The bill will now go to the House of Representatives, where it will be assigned to a committee. During the last legislative session in 2007, a bill banning domestic-partner benefits passed in the Senate and then entered a House committee, where it died after an 8-8 committee vote that would have moved it to the House floor.

Part of Lee's job as the House minority whip is to gauge how representatives feel about legislation, he said. If the current bill made it past the

committee onto the House floor "it would pass overwhelmingly," Lee said.

Scorsone said he doesn't believe the bill has enough support to pass in the House.

Right now about 60 UK employees benefit from domestic-partner benefits, said UK spokesman Jay Blanton. The University of Louisville was the first public university to provide domestic-partner benefits, which started January 2007. UK added domestic-partners to its opt-in health plan during the April meeting of the

See **Benefits** on page 5



Scorsone



Lee

"... This kind of signals to the rest of the country we're a backward state."

"... This has been a continuing issue for a few years, and it's time to debate it."

Appalachia stereotypes subject of dialogue

By Rebecca Sweeney
rsweeney@kykernel.com

When Kristy Tsou came to UK, she was afraid to participate and ask questions during class because of how she felt her peers would perceive her.

Tsou, a sociology graduate student, was one of five panelists who told personal stories about being from Appalachia during last night's Diversity Dialogue, titled "Talk from Appalachia," sponsored by the Student Diversity Engagement and the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs.

Tsou was afraid that because of her accent, people would assume that all of the stereotypes about Appalachian people would apply to her.

"Generally, redneck jokes are more accepted than other racial jokes," Tsou said.

Stereotypes affect the group of people they're about, but they also change how outsiders view the group, Tsou said.

Many Appalachian economies are moving from extraction-based industries, such as coal mines, to service industries, which will require more people, Tsou said.

"People might be afraid to enter the Appalachian region because of stereotypes they've heard about," she said.

Tsou recommended keeping lines of communication open between people of different groups and encouraged Appalachians to "strive to show people how capable we are."

Karima Samadi, dietetics major and College of Agriculture ambassador, moved to Harlan, Ky., from Albuquerque, N.M., and discussed the difficult time she had adjusting.

"I found my niche in two clubs," Samadi said. She said black people embraced her because of her skin color, and the drama club was where she felt that she fit in with the nerds.

Samadi said sometimes stereotypes can be true. "To me, mountain people are polite," she said. "They make homemade biscuits and the best apple butter you'll ever taste."

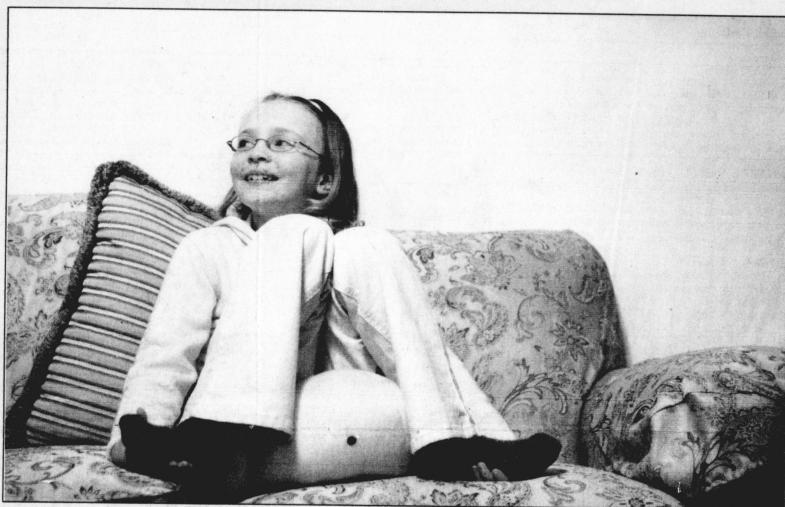
Lara May Vest, a student affairs officer at UK from West Liberty, Ky., in Morgan County, didn't realize that she was Appalachian until she received a letter from UK inviting her, as an Appalachian UK student, to attend a leadership program.

Vest minored in Appalachian studies while a student at UK and said she thought it was awesome that people were writing books about and studying Appalachians.

"I love this region, and I want people to appreciate it for what it stands for," she said.

Neemia Hagans graduated from UK in the first class of Robinson Scholars, a program that began in 1997 to support students who might encounter economic, cultural or institutional set backs while trying to complete their college degrees. She said it's difficult for Appalachian students to transition from their hometowns to college.

See **Diversity** on page 5



Mackenzie Sorensen, 8, sits on the couch in her living room Tuesday evening. Mackenzie was diagnosed with cancer in 2005 and has been adopted by Kappa Delta sorority as part of DanceBlue for the past three years.

Putting a face on the fight

DanceBlue's Adopt-a-Family program pairs students with cancer patients

By Katie Saltz
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Some 5-year-olds are scared to go to sleep for fear of monsters under the bed. But Mackenzie Sorensen's fear of sleeping was different.

"I was scared when night came to go to sleep or to take a nap," Mackenzie said. "I was scared I would not wake up, I would die and wake up in heaven."

Mackenzie was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia in 2005 when she was 5 years old. She was treated at the Pediatric Oncology Clinic at UK Hospital, finishing her chemotherapy about four months ago. Now Mackenzie is 8 and in remission.

Being in and out of the hospital for the past three years, Mackenzie has had the support of the UK chapter of the Kappa Delta sorority through

the DanceBlue Adopt-a-Family program.

DanceBlue is a yearlong fundraising project that raises money for UK's Pediatric Oncology Clinic and ends with a 24-hour dance marathon. The Family Relations Committee for DanceBlue organizes the Adopt-a-Family program, which pairs DanceBlue teams with families who have a child with cancer. Committee chair Rachel Botto said the program benefits both the families and the teams.

"It is important that families know there are students on campus that support them in what can be a difficult time," Botto said. "Also, for the adopting organizations, the program puts a face on pediatric cancer. These organizations now realize these are real children facing a very real and serious fight."

The Sorensens are one of 12 families in the Adopt-a-Family program

this year. KD was paired with Mackenzie in the first year of her treatment. Sorority member Emily Zengal, a journalism junior, said her fellow members have developed a relationship with Mackenzie and requested her for the past two years.

Adopt-a-Family is just a part of DanceBlue, but it is one aspect that can make an amazing impact on a personal level, Botto said. This year, one student donated UK basketball tickets to a child at the clinic, and another team traveled out of town to watch a child be baptized.

"Organizations are reaching out to families in ways that we never could have dreamed," Botto said. "We have organizations cooking meals, raking yards and helping clean these families' houses."

When Mackenzie was in isolation in the hospital, she couldn't go to the clinic library. When she wanted to read, she could only choose from books people brought to her room. For her birthday, Mackenzie asked members of KD to collect and donate children's books to the clinic's library.

said Renee Sorensen, Mackenzie's mother. It was one of the many gestures they've made that Renee said has encouraged her daughter.

"It's been nice to have the girls around because it gives Mackenzie somebody to look up to," she said. KD members visit Mackenzie in and out of the hospital, Zengal said, and they gave her gifts when she came to the KD Christmas party.

Because the program involves the whole family, Zengal said the KDs try to buy Mackenzie's older brother, Parker Sorensen, gifts as well so he doesn't feel left out. This Christmas, Parker, 14, received a football signed by the seniors of the UK football team.

"So much of it is on Mackenzie, so we try to include her brother too," Zengal said. "We talk to him about school and normal things like that." Parker said his sister's sickness doesn't affect his life that much, but it was good to see the KDs care about Mackenzie.

"They all just took her under their wing." See **DanceBlue** on page 5

Prof to speak on global importance of Pakistan

By Henry Montgomery
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Pakistan is a country easily overlooked when discussions of the Middle East arise, but with nuclear capabilities and links to terrorism it is a "hotspot" in the region, a UK professor said.

The rapidly growing country is the focus of a presentation by John Stempel, a professor in the Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce. His lecture is titled "Pakistan — At the Center of the Storm" and will be held tonight at 7 in room 249 in the Student Center.

Students Taking Action Globally and the Bluegrass Chapter of the United Nations Association are hosting the event, which is free to the public. A question and answer session will follow the presentation.

Stempel said Americans should learn about Pakistan because of controversial issues surrounding the country.

Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan's former prime minister and then-candidate for the office was assassinated Dec. 27, and the country is now in a state of emergency, Stempel said. The country's plans



Stempel

to hold free elections were put on hold since the assassination.

The current political situation and the possible presence of Osama bin Laden, who has been thought to be hiding in Pakistan, and other terrorist groups makes the region dangerous, Stempel said.

"Pakistan could be the next place terrorism breaks out," he said.

Richard Mitchell, a member of the Bluegrass Chapter of the United Nations Association and a professor at UK's College of Dentistry, said it is

crucial for America to ally itself with Pakistan. The region also has the second largest Muslim population in the world, Mitchell said, and it is important for people across the world to learn more about the country and its culture.

As a former director of the Patterson School and a known expert on the region, Stempel is qualified to talk on the country and conflicts, Mitchell said.

The country and its problems are very complex, Mitchell said, and students and faculty members interested in the politics and the direction of the Middle East should attend the speech.

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Horoscopes

By Linda C. Black

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

Aries (March 21 - April 19) Today is a 7 — Focus on financial matters in total privacy. Listen, but don't even offer advice. The situation is rapidly changing. Take care of your old obligations before incurring more.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20) Today is a 6 — You can be supportive, but keep control of the checkbook. Don't allow your partner to spend your money without permission. There may be an attempt, so vigilance is required.

Gemini (May 21 - June 21) Today is a 7 — Wait just a little bit longer before launching new projects. Don't launch anything, actually. Do your pre-launch checklists again.

Cancer (June 22 - July 22) Today is a 7 — Busy yourself making sure you have plenty of everything. If there's something you need, let your partner know. Together you can find it, or find a way to do without.

Leo (July 23 - Aug. 22) Today is a 6 — Something that used to be hard is almost becoming fun. Don't let problems scare you; tame them. And don't let them sense fear. It turns them into monsters.

Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22) Today is a 7 — It's still best to watch and listen, but don't say very much. Let people assume you know more than you actually do. Then, go and find the right answers, before embarrassing questions.

Libra (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22) Today is an 8 — As the day progresses, your attitude will improve greatly. Don't just sit there, helplessly; investigate. The more research you do, the better you'll feel.

Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21) Today is a 6 — Keep your ears open and you'll discover a great bargain. You

can get something for your home at an awesome price. It could be linens or food, but it's more likely electrical.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21) Today is a 7 — You can find another way to achieve your objective. The old way is blocked, but don't waste time worrying about that. Ask an old friend for a favor.

Capricorn (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19) Today is a 6 — You still have a lot of loose odds and ends that need to be tidied up. Avoid annoying criticism by cleaning up messes in private.

Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18) Today is a 7 — Keep quiet for a while longer, around authority figures. You don't have to agree, just don't instigate a confrontation. There are other ways to prove your point, later.

Pisces (Feb. 19 - March 20) Today is a 6 — Finish up the task at hand, and don't complain about it. Having this out of the way will free up a lot of your valuable time. And then you can party.

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the DISH

Latifah talks weight loss, babies and TomKat with Us

She's curvy and proud of it! but that doesn't mean Queen Latifah is opposed to dropping a few pounds to stay healthy. The 37-year-old New Jersey native (currently starring in *Mad Money* with Katie Holmes and Diane Keaton) is following in the footsteps of Kirstie Alley and Valerie Bertinelli as Jenny Craig's newest celebrity client. But the actress/singer only plans to shed 15 to 20 pounds from her famously full-figured frame. She gives Us the scoop.

Q: Why did you sign up with Jenny Craig?

I read that if you lose 5 to 10 percent of your body weight, you would cut your chance of diabetes in half. I thought, Wow, that's a big, dramatic thing that can occur. And that's only, like, 15 or 20 pounds. That's nothing.

Q: So what's your plan to shed the weight?

It's really simple: It's good food! I also have a trainer and go to the gym on my own too. I might take a spinning class or a kickboxing class or a cardio sculpt. I get bored easily.

Q: Hollywood has babies on the brain. Do you?

This question keeps coming up! It helps probably to drop some weight because you're going to gain a bunch when you're pregnant. And giving birth is challenging, so it helps to be in

THIS MINUTE

Queen's health kick

Q: How was working with Katie and Diane in *Mad Money*?

It was cool. There was so much going on with Katie and Tom [Cruise] and the baby [Suri] being around. We were sort of protective of one another. There were no egos!

Project Runway's standouts
Who will sew up a place in Fashion Week? Us handicaps four worthy candidates.

Victoria Hong, 35
Why she'll make it: After a few missteps, the married Korea native (who has her own clothing label) has proven that her perfectionist mentality yields elegant results. Exhibit A: That stunning blue prom dress.

Why she won't: She can also be abrasive, bossy and whiny — a lethal combination come runway judgment day.

Rami Kashou, 31
Why he'll make it: It's no wonder the attached Palestinian has styled celebs including Tyra Banks and Fergie — he has a gift for draping gorgeous gowns.

And guest judge Zac Posen was working a lot every year and enjoying it. You can't beat a deal like that.

Q: Your pal Jessica Simpson is in your new video. Are you helping her with her country album?

Yeah. She is writing with some other folks too, and I'm kind of watching her back. Which is not a bad idea.

coat and a skirt made of Twizzlers? Twizzlers, people!

Why she won't: Her time-management problem is a disaster waiting to happen.

Christian Siriano, 22
Why he'll make it: It's easy to loathe the attached Maryland native. He's young, obsessed with the word fierce, ultra-cocky — and talented. After all, his over-the-top organza gown led to a rare smile from judge Nina Garcia.

Why he won't: He's had a few misses, such as that ugly, lacy prom dress. See, he's not perfect!

Willie's dish on his pals

Willie Nelson has been in the music biz more than 50 years, but he's still not ready to park his tour bus. The Texas native, 74 (who is a married father of six), is back with a new disc, *Moment of Forever* (out January 29). He talks tunes and famous friends with Us.

Q: What's your secret to career longevity?

I've been blessed with good health. My band and I are no spring chickens! We are still working a lot every year and enjoying it. You can't beat a deal like that.

Q: Your pal Jessica Simpson is in your new video. Are you helping her with her country album?

Yeah. She is writing with some other folks too, and I'm kind of watching her back. Which is not a bad idea.

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Carson Kressley

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THURSDAY,
January 31,
2008

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Emily Coovert
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kernel POP

“We’re looking up blogs, going, ‘Have you seen this?’ And we’re going, ‘That’s not real! We would know if he was coming.’ And then our creators were like, ‘No, he’s really coming.’”

— Sophia Bush on finding out Kevin Federline would be guest-starring on “One Tree Hill”

Former fab five fella to bring fashion advice



By Sarah Knight
features@kykernel.com

For one famously fashionable TV star, helping men learn how to dress isn't his only passion — he also enjoys sharing his experiences with college students.

Carson Kressley, known for his role as one of the “fab five” on the TV series “Queer Eye for the Straight Guy,” will be speaking tonight at 8 in the Student Center Grand Ballroom.

“I prefer not to call it a lecture — it sounds so boring,” Kressley said. “Instead, it will be more like a light-hearted discussion.”

With his eye for fashion, Kressley broke into the fashion world by landing a long-term position at Ralph Lauren in New York City. Now, as the host of Lifetime’s new series “How to Look Good Naked,” Kressley spends his time teaching people how to feel good in their own skin and talking to students about how to get their foot in the door of the fashion world.

“It is important to be yourself at all costs,” Kressley said. “Follow your dream and listen to your heart. Don’t worry so much about what others tell you to do, but do what you want.”

Kressley said he hopes that by sharing his experiences with students, he can give them hope for their future

and show them there is no one way to make it in any career.

“I can’t give all the answers,” he said. “But I can share my experiences, and hopefully it will help to inspire others.”

Kressley said he also plans on talking about the phenomenon of reality television and America’s obsession with celebrities. At the end of the lecture, he will open up the floor for a question and answer session.

“Hopefully, with the question and answers, I can give some sort of ‘insider’s look’ at celebrities,” Kressley said.

Lauren Baxter, director of pop culture for Student Activities Board,

which is sponsoring the talk, said SAB chose Kressley to come to UK because he brings something a little different.

“We were looking for a speaker that deals with topics that have not been discussed before — in this case, fashion,” Baxter said.

Baxter said she hopes the discussion helps make students a little more confident in their body image. “I hope people realize that he has an amazing message,” she said. “‘How to Look Good Naked’ comes out in January and is all about being comfortable in your own skin.”

Tickets are free for students with a UK ID, \$10 for UK faculty and staff and \$15 for the general public, and they can be purchased at the Student Center ticket office. For more information about tonight’s event, call 257-8867 or visit the SAB Web site (<http://www.uksub.org>).

BOUTIQUE OF THE WEEK

Name: General Eccentric
Style: Unique and eccentric casual and clubbing fashion.
Hours: Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday.
Location: Center Court at 535 S. Upper St.
Price: Mid-range.
Why it’s cool: Students get 10 percent off by showing their student ID, and General Eccentric receives two to three new clothing shipments every week. Shipments include a limited number of each size of a particular garment, which makes it uncommon for students to see other people wearing the same clothing on campus. The store also contains a wide variety of clothing, so customers can find an outfit for any occasion.



General Eccentric offers students the chance to look fashionably unique on campus for a reasonable price.

CHRISTINA LAYTON
STAFF

Film documents activism, gender issues in India

By Margaret Barr
features@kykernel.com

An Indian activist’s fight against a dam project in her home country is coming to UK through a film presentation.

Arundhati Roy’s film “Dam/Age,” which claims that the Narmada dam project in India will displace up to a million people, will be shown tonight from 7 to 9 in the Bingham-Davis House at the Gaines Center. The showing is free and open to the public.

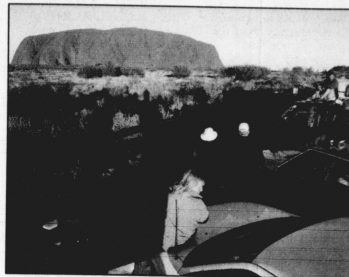
The showing is part of a film series sponsored by UK’s Gender and Women’s Studies program. Kate Black, an archivist and library faculty member, chooses the films to be presented each semester. This year, she said her theme was women resisting.

“I always aim to have the film be international and have a variety of perspectives,” Black said.

“Dam/Age” follows Roy as she struggles against the dam being built across the Narmada River in Gujarat, India. Roy said the project will not provide the needed irrigation or drinking water for the area.

Srimati Basu, an associate professor in Gender and Women’s Studies, will introduce the film and lead commentary and discussion afterward. Black said she chose Basu to com-

See Dam/Age on page 4



Like moths to a flame visitors gather every evening at sunset at Uluru or Ayers Rock in Australia.

Going global: Hot picks for 2008 overseas travel

By Gary A. Warner
The Orange County Register

Picks for overseas adventures in 2008:

Argentina

Turn winter on its head with a summer visit in February (the seasons are reversed in the Southern Hemisphere). Or ski in August.

Argentina is the most “Euro-pean” of the South American countries. Check out Bariloche, a winter resort town that’s a little slice of Switzerland.

Buenos Aires is a hot spot if you like big cities.

Southeast Asia

Development continues across the region, with the type of travelers changing as Western lodgings (and prices) spread across the region. Vietnam is now an upscale vacation destination, with luxury hotels in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), and plush beach resorts in Da Nang. Golf has become a growing part of the tourism industry. Cambodia is good for backpackers, but four- and five-star hotels are starting to bloom in the Siem Reap Province.

Cambodia is seeing an upgrade in hotels and restaurants, though renovations at the famed Angkor Wat temple complex are controversial. Laos is still best for experienced backpackers.

Bulgaria

Believe it or not, it’s the hot spot of the moment in Europe as the crowds that once played in Prague and Budapest are priced out and seek new haunts. Romania is attractive to some, while the Baltic republics are farther along in tourism development and areas like the Ukraine and Serbia have lingering economic or political issues. The further east you go, the more bumpy (but perhaps interesting) the trip. Check out BeachBulgaria.com which offers info on many Black Sea resorts.

Australia

The dollar is getting weak even in the traditionally bargain-friendly land down under. Best bet is to get away from the big cities of Sydney and Melbourne, where prices are the highest. Our summer (their winter) is an espe-

cially great time for visiting the north and center of the country. The Great Barrier Reef is in prime season. Box jellyfish, which sting many vacationers in the summer, are gone during the winter. Meanwhile, the usually baking temperatures of the interior have cooled. Try offbeat towns like Silverton, Kalgoorlie, Coober Pedy and Lightning Ridge for a taste of outback life. Rent a four-wheeler and drive part of the Mercenie Loop Road from Alice Springs to Uluru (also known as Ayers Rock). The road is a great adventure littered with wrecked vehicles and hubcaps hung in trees. Relatively frequent traffic along the road ensures visitors won’t get stranded. If you are looking for luxury, try the Ghan or Indian-Pacific train routes. The main downside to Australia is the expensive plane tickets. A one-way ticket runs more than \$1,000.

General tips

Check out booking engines like kayak.com to compare plane and hotel prices.

The site skims from many traveling Web sites, including major sites like Expedia.com and CheapTickets.com. Check for travel warnings on the U.S. State Department Web site as well as the Australian government (www.smarttraveller.gov.au) and British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (www.fco.uk.gov/travel/).

A couple of my favorite Web sites for trading information about travel are vagablogging.net and worldhum.com. They have good message boards about even the most obscure destinations.

But be careful when using travel message boards; some posters tend to exaggerate to “show their bravado” and may try to tell you that a place is all right for travel though you might be uncomfortable. The further off the beaten track, the better to consider traveling with a friend or even a group.

Go anyway: Prognosticators are often wrong, but the general consensus is that a weak dollar and high gas prices will be sticking around for awhile.

“A ‘wait ‘til next year’ attitude probably isn’t going to save you any money. Go now and just shorten your trip by a day or two to make up for the difference. Or just figure you’ll deal with the credit card bills when you get home.

THIS COULD BE YOUR GRAB BAG OF TEN

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'America's Next Top Model' winner a strong competitor

By **Tania Padgett**
Newsday

Don't let the girl-next-door looks and demurem fool you. Saleisha Stowers, the latest winner of "America's Next Top Model," is one tough cookie.

"It takes a strong black woman to get out there and work the fashion industry," Stowers said in an interview with Newsday. "And I am a strong black woman."

Stowers will need to be strong. The modeling world, which the CW's "Top Model" demonstrates repeatedly, is not for the faint of heart. It also doesn't seem to be the place where there are many African-Americans.

"I would love to see more African-American faces," Stowers says. "We are beautiful. There should be more of us on the runway."

There aren't, though. And despite her win, Stowers' well-publicized strut into the world of high fashion has been controversial and somewhat wobbly. Critics grouched that the 5-foot-9 former receptionist from California had an unfair advantage over the other contestants because of her previous modeling experience and ties with Tyra Banks, who produces and presides over the show.

Stowers attended Banks' T-Zone camp for girls when she was 14 and reportedly has appeared twice as an extra on Banks' talk show.

Stowers says she got on the show "fair and square." Early on

in the competition, she defended herself against two housemates who implied through their questioning that she did not deserve to be there. "Honestly it's a competition," said Stowers, who was so riled that she leapt onto a bed. "I don't care who attacks me. I'm here to win and I probably will."

She did. With razor-sharp focus, a cheery personality and a knock-'em-dead strut, Stowers took down her competitors one by one, including Bianca Golden, who once called her "almost plus-sized" and Chantal Jones, a stunning blue-eyed blonde who many fans thought was a shoo-in to win.

Stowers is the third African-American model to win on the reality show. She received a management deal with Elite Model Management, a \$100,000 contract with CoverGirl cosmetics, and the cover and a six-page fashion spread in the January issue of Seventeen magazine.

Still, Stowers knows that winning the TV show does not guarantee career success. You won't see her on the runway during the upcoming Fashion Week because her agency is not sending her to any castings.

"Saleisha already has commitments including CoverGirl and doing publicity for 'America's Next Top Model,'" says Jose Covarrubias, her booking agent at Elite. She also needs to become more seasoned, he adds. However, he says, "We will definitely send her to the next one."

DAM/AGE

Continued from page 3

ment on the film because of her expertise on gender in India. Roy's first novel, "The God of Small Things," won the Booker Prize in 1997 and the Lannan Cultural Freedom Prize in 2002. Roy also wrote an extended essay, "The Greater Common Good," protesting the dam construction. She donated her Booker Prize money and other book royalties to the Namada Bachao Andolan, a non-governmental organization that opposes the Namada dam project.

ontap | For the week of JAN. 31 - FEB. 6

TONIGHT

Sharon Jones & The Dap Kings w/ The Ivan Milev Band
7:30 p.m., Bogarts, Cincinnati. Tickets cost \$15.

Legendary Rhythm and Blues Revue
8 p.m., The Southgate House Ballroom, Newport. Tickets cost \$25.

Grampall Jookabox w/ Doog
9 p.m., The Dame. Tickets cost \$3.

John Berry & the Outliers
9 p.m., The Southgate House Lounge, Newport. Tickets are free.

FRIDAY, Feb. 1
Six Organs of Admittance w/ Mick Turner and Caves
7 p.m., The Dame. Tickets cost \$8.

Sharon Dap & the Dap Kings
8 p.m., Headliners, Louisville. Tickets cost \$13.

Lee Rocker w/ Stardevils
10 p.m., The Southgate House, Newport. Tickets are free.

SATURDAY, Feb. 2

Lee Rocker w/ Crown Electric
7 p.m., The Dame. Tickets cost \$5.

Straw Boss
9 p.m., The Southgate House, Newport. Tickets are free.

Brassknuckle Boys w/ The Bridgeburners and Kill Toby Wyatt
10 p.m., The Dame. Tickets cost \$5.

MONDAY, Feb. 4

Dax Riggs
9 p.m., The Dame. Tickets cost \$7.

TUESDAY, Feb. 5

Skillet
7:30 p.m., Headliners, Louisville. Tickets cost \$19.

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 6

Hurt
8 p.m., Headliners, Louisville. Tickets cost \$13.

Ryan Malott w/ David Rhodes Brown and Stephen Kuffner
9 p.m., The Southgate House Lounge, Newport. Tickets are free.

COMPILED BY FEATURES EDITOR EMILY COOVERT

MAKE YOUR WEEKEND PLANS

1. Flatpickin' show

He's not in the Beatles, but this Richard Starkey knows how to play. Starkey, an acclaimed guitarist, has won his share of flatpicking contests with an outstanding playing style that is dignified and straightforward. His latest CD, with Mark Cosgrove, is titled "Delaware Crossing." Starkey will perform as part of Red Barn Radio Live at 7:30 tonight in the Arts Place Performance Hall on 161 N. Mill St. Admission is \$5 for adults and free for children under 12. For more information, call 277-8224.

2. "Boston Marriage"

Playwright Dave Mamet brings his trademark dialogue and perfect timing to this black-comedy play. Tonight at 7:30 marks the preview of their new play "Boston Marriage" with a Radiohead-like "pay what you can" price. From Feb. 1 to 24, the show starts at 8 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays with ticket prices of \$15 to \$25. On Sundays, the play starts at 2 p.m. with the same prices. There are no performances Monday through Thursday. For more information, call 225-3070 or visit the Actors Guild of Lexington's Web site (www.actorsguildoflexington.org).

3. Dance party

The formula is simple. The Big Maracas will provide the music. Natasha's Café will provide the dance floor, and you provide the dancing. The party starts Friday at 9 p.m., and there is a \$7 cover. Natasha's is located downtown at 112 Esplanade. For more information, call 259-2754 or visit Natasha's Web site (www.beetnik.com).



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DANCEBLUE

Continued from page 1

wing and supported her," Parker said. "It's cool to know that people care."

Even after Mackenzie had been in the hospital for a while, Renee said it was helpful to have the KDs continue their visits to her daughter.

"You are in the hospital for so long, it gets monotonous," Renee said. "After going so many times it's almost like it's

not a big deal anymore, and the girls would still come visit."

Having Mackenzie around has been positive for the KD girls too. Zengal said, and being involved with the Screenmen helps the girls appreciate how lucky they are.

"We complain about school and homework, but there are kids just trying to keep up with their homework, wishing they could go to school," Zengal said. "It really puts things in perspective."

Mackenzie goes to the clinic for check ups every 30 days so

doctors can monitor for relapses. Renee said she and the family will probably stay involved with DanceBlue to keep raising awareness for the clinic.

"Treatment takes so long, it's a part of (Mackenzie's) life now," Renee said. "It's important to let people know that things are looking up."

The actual dance marathon is something Mackenzie said she looks forward to. Like last year, Mackenzie plans on singing in the talent show during the family hour. The first year she attended was fun, Mackenzie said, even

though she was tired by the time she left.

"It was way past my bed time. Like, 10 o'clock," she said.

After being involved with DanceBlue, Mackenzie said she thought about other ways to help kids like her. One of her favorite things to do is draw, and she wants to use her drawing to cheer up kids with cancer.

"I thought about drawing pictures for other people to make them feel better," Mackenzie said. "I don't want them to be as scared as I was."

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BENEFITS

Continued from page 1

Board of Trustees.

"The president has said time and again, and it's the position of the university, that at the end of the day we're hoping that the legislature will give universities the flexibility to make decisions about the health care of its employees and families," Blanton said.

Lee said it's time for domestic-partner benefits to pass through a committee and reach the House floor.

"The way I view it, and this is what the citizens want and what the citizens expect, is that this has been a continuing issue for a few years, and it's time to debate it," Lee said.

The House of Representatives already has a bill in committee that would ban domestic-partner benefits as well.

Rep. Richard Henderson, D-Jeffersonville, who sponsors the House bill, said his legislation is still receiving "overwhelming support" with phone calls from constituents and 20 co-sponsors. But because of the controversial nature of the bill, the process has slowed down and discussion within the committee has been put on hold.

"I'm not really pushing the bill right now because there's been a slow down around here because the new governor is just getting his feet wet," Henderson said. "But I'm not one to let an issue sit dormant, so after the budget is settled, I'll make a real push."

Staff writer Blair Thomas contributed to this story.

NEWS BRIEF

SG approves funds for clubs, grants

The Student Government Appropriations and Revenue Committee met last night to review funding requests. Nine organizations received funding from SG, totaling \$8,000. The committee gave \$1,000 for general funding grants and another \$1,000 to the College of Law Student Bar Association. Three club sports received \$1,000 each, and \$3,000 was allocated for service and diversity grants. One Senate special project was recommended by the committee and will go on to the full Senate next week for final approval.

DIVERSITY

Continued from page 1

"We go from a small environment to a diverse school like UK, and we don't know where we fit in," said Hagan, who's from Knott County. "At home, we're the star student, but here, we're only a glimmer of the twilight."

Mahjabeen Rafiuddin, the director of Student Diversity Engagement, said she hopes the Diversity Dialogue honored Appalachian students and challenged other students to see their struggles.

"The conversation of personal stories is something we don't get very often at UK and I think that's important," Rafiuddin said.

Rafiuddin said her goal is for all students to go to dialogues that are about people different from themselves and respect each other.

Israel's Labor Party leader waiting in wings

By Joel Greenberg
Chicago Tribune

JERUSALEM — Ehud Barak, the former Israeli prime minister whose push for Mideast peace failed eight years ago, is waiting in the wings, the fate of the Israeli government in his hands.

The burly defense minister and Labor Party leader is in a pivotal position following Wednesday's release of an official report harshly critical of the performance of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's government during Israel's war against Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon in the summer of 2006.

Barak, 65, a decorated former army general who succeeded the discredited wartime defense minister last June, has been positioning himself for a bid to return to the prime minister's office, which he occupied in 2000 when peace talks with

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat broke down and were followed by a violent Palestinian uprising.

His next move following Wednesday's report — possibly pulling out of the government, thereby toppling it, or calling for Olmert's resignation — could be decisive for the future of Israel's governing coalition and President Bush's last-ditch attempt to secure an Israeli-Palestinian peace pact by the end of this year.

While Olmert's allies argued that the report was not as damning as expected, Barak now has to decide whether to make good on a promise to seek Olmert's replacement or new elections once the Lebanon report is issued.

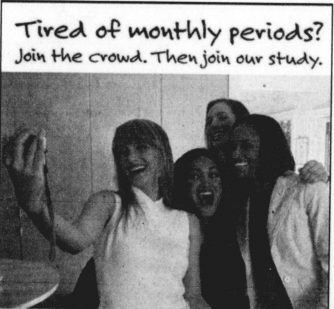
Barak had no immediate comment on the report Wednesday; his aides said he was studying it. Eitan Cabel, a Barak ally and the Labor Party whip in parliament, said Barak had to de-

cide whether to make Olmert personally accountable for his conduct of the war.

"Barak's dilemma is first of all a moral one: He has a chance to set things right in the eyes of the public," Cabel said. "There cannot be a situation where there is no responsibility and no one sets a personal example. My sense is that at the end of 2008 there will be elections."

A former commando and army chief of staff, Barak's star dimmed after his failed talks with Arafat and the outbreak of the uprising. Some Israelis accused him of trying to give away too much, while others said he was too unyielding.

After losing the 2001 elections to former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Barak went into business for several years, making handsome profits, before returning to politics and regaining the leadership of the Labor Party last year.



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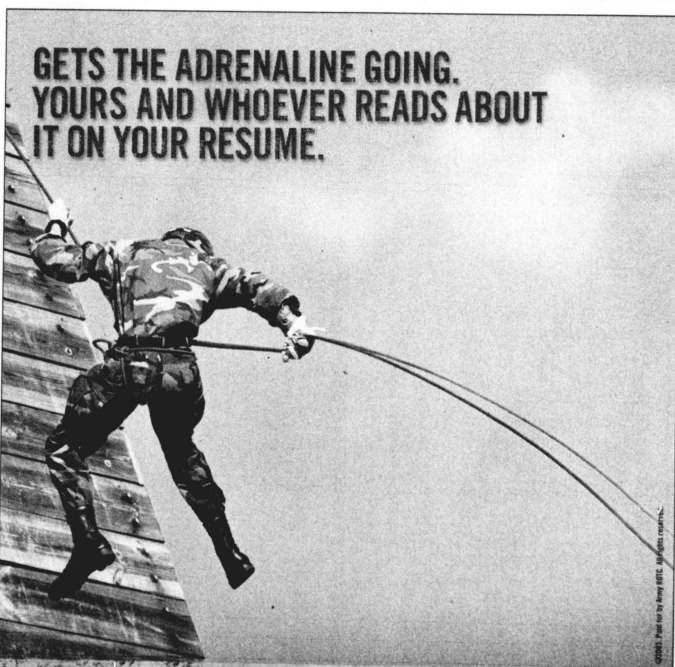
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SPORTS

Matthew George
Asst. Sports Editor
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UK tops U of L to remain undefeated

By Laura Pepper
lpepper@kykarnel.com

With a perfect season on the line and 14 straight wins against Louisville, UK took to the courts at the Hilary J. Boone Tennis Complex yesterday and kept both streaks intact.

Though the Cardinals won the doubles point, the women's tennis team took four out of six singles matches to earn a 4-3 win.

The Cats' fourth win of the season marked their 15th straight against U of L and the second consecutive year that UK has gone 4-0 to start the season — a feat that has never occurred only six times in school history.

"I am happy with the win, because we played a very intense and well-coached Louisville team," head coach Carlos Drada said.

In the center-court doubles match, UK junior Carolina Escamilla and sophomore Christine Johnston faced off against sophomore Lauren Imre and junior Lindsey Jones for a very tough and vocal matchup.

Both teams had trouble executing their first serves throughout the beginning of the set, forcing them into crucial second serve situations. But UK held strong, hitting many short, quick returns that U of L

could not handle. A controversial ball ruling that went against UK led to a lengthy dispute between both teams and the umpire. The argument left Escamilla and Johnston emotionally charged and it seemed like the pair rode that emotion for the duration of the set. Escamilla and Johnston soared to an 8-1 victory to give UK its first doubles win.

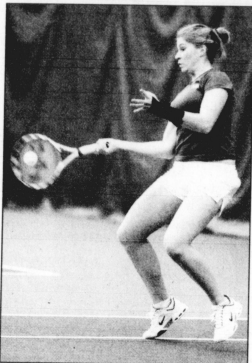
U of L won the other two doubles matches, 8-2 and 8-4 respectively, giving the Cardinals the team doubles point.

"It was the first time that we lost in doubles, and the fact that the girls were able to overcome difficulties and were able to turn it around prepares them for more adverse situations," Drada said.

UK won four out of six singles matches to clinch the team victory, but they had to work for each individual win. Two of the matches went into a third set and another took a tiebreaker before the outcome was decided in the Cats' favor.

"The girls dug deep and did what they could to win," Drada said.

UK sophomore Sarah Woestmann took her turn at Imre in the center-court singles match. The match featured predominantly backcourt play, as the players rarely came close to the net.



Sophomore Sarah Woestmann returns a shot during UK's 4-3 win yesterday. Woestmann won her singles match against Louisville's Lauren Imre 6-4, 6-2.

BRITNEY MCINTOSH
STAFF

Woestmann won the first set 6-4, causing a frustrated Imre to go back to her bench and slam her racket against her equipment bag. Woestmann continued winning, taking the second set 6-2 to claim the match.

"She had good shots, but when I mixed it up, she started missing a lot," Woestmann said. "I didn't want to give her any free points. I didn't want to miss. I wanted her to

miss."

One of the team's goals is to remain undefeated until SEC play starts, Woestmann said.

The fourth win on the season brought the Cats a little closer to meeting that goal. The team's first SEC game is scheduled for Feb. 29 against South Carolina.

The Cats look to continue their winning streak Saturday at Indiana. First serve is set for 10 a.m.

Super Bowl commercial designed to help and inspire the deaf

By Vikki Ortiz
Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO — Two deaf men are driving down a dark residential street trying to find a Super Bowl party at another deaf friend's house. But neither of them brought the address, so how do they figure out which door to knock on?

On Sunday, Darren Therriault, 45, of Schaumburg, Ill., will help deliver the punch line to millions of Super Bowl viewers when he stars in a 60-second PepsiCo commercial during the pregame show.

Therriault, who works at the corporation's Chicago office and has been deaf since birth, hopes viewers with disabilities will catch the light-hearted commercial and be inspired. Since the ad debuted last week on YouTube, he says he has heard from hundreds of deaf people across the country offering congratulations.

"I just can't believe that it's happened," Therriault said. "I'm overwhelmed. I wanted to do something that would make a difference to people with disabilities ... I'm so proud."

The information technology specialist had only been on the job for a few weeks when a PepsiCo employee from the company's Plano, Texas, headquarters

approached him. That employee, Clay Broussard, was active in the company's "Enable" organization, a network that tries to create a welcoming culture for people dealing with various disabilities.

Broussard, who is not deaf but learned sign language after working for years in the hearing-impaired community, thought it would be both fun and eye-opening to turn a joke well-known to deaf people into a commercial for mainstream audiences.

Corporate executives quickly got behind the idea. Broussard contacted Therriault and another deaf man, a forklift operator at a different company location, to play the two men on their way to the party.

Therriault, who had never so much as been in a school play, was surprised by the request.

"I looked at him like, 'Are you serious?' I don't think I can act that well," he said.

But after more thought, Therriault decided the experience would be a good idea.

He grew up in Vermont in a family where his parents, two sisters and three brothers could hear. They moved around the East Coast so that he could be enrolled in good schools for the deaf, he said.

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Members of the UK Hoops squad celebrate the Cats' 60-58 victory over visiting Florida in the team's Southeastern Conference opener Jan. 10. **ELLIOTT HESS | STAFF**

Cats face tough task on road against Georgia, Tennessee

By Bobby Reagan
bregan@kentucky.com

The UK women's basketball news conference yesterday didn't have the allure of Tuesday's Super Bowl Media Day extravaganza. There was not a charter airplane waiting for the Cats or reporters lined up outside Memorial Coliseum. However, the Cats do share a common goal with the Super Bowl-contending Patriots and Giants: winning a big game away from home.

The Cats (10-10, 4-2 Southeastern Conference) travel to take on 17th-ranked Georgia (16-4, 3-2 SEC) today and then to No. 2 Tennessee (18-1, 5-0 SEC) on Sunday. Though UK is coming off its worst loss of the season — a 72-46 thumping against No. 9 Louisiana State on Sunday — head coach Matthew Mitchell said the team has made strides in practice.

"I thought we had good energy in practice this week," Mitchell said. "I didn't see people hanging their head, and their effort and spirits were very good. It's hard to see positives from the loss until we looked at the game film and saw individual effort and an effort rebounding."

UK is 4-4 when playing

away from home this season with road wins over conference foes South Carolina and Mississippi State. Mitchell said the close nature of the team has proved vital to its road success this year. But the Cats face a daunting task when they travel to Athens today, as Georgia has not lost a home game all season. "I don't think our players will view Georgia as a place we can't have success," Mitchell said. "They know we'll have to play well in order to have success, but they believe it's possible. One thing that seems to give our team an advantage on the road is they enjoy spending time with each other and are a very close team."

The Lady Bulldogs have lost three of their last five games but have won 12 of their last 13 meetings against UK. They are led by senior forward Tasha Humphrey, who is averaging 16.7 points and 8.8 rebounds per game. Humphrey is complimented by sophomore guard Ashley Houts and sophomore forward Angel Robinson, who both average more than 10 points per game.

"Georgia is one of the top teams in the country and certainly one of the top teams in our conference, and Tasha Humphrey is one of the best

players in the league during the last 10 or 15 years," Mitchell said. "It's been a long time since the Cats have had success down in Athens, and we're looking to change that trend."

Sunday's game at Tennessee will be a bit of a homecoming for Mitchell. UK's head coach spent a year as a graduate assistant in Knoxville, Tenn., under Lady Vols head coach Pat Summitt in 2000. Despite the homecoming, and the fact that the Cats will be looking to avenge the 65-40 loss suffered at the hands of the Tennessee in Lexington on Jan. 17, Mitchell said the Cats are focused only on Georgia for now.

"We're very aware of how good Georgia is as a team and know not to look ahead of them," Mitchell said. "We will have our hands full and will start worrying about Sunday starting Friday morning."

The Cats will again be without the services of Carly Ormerod for the road trip. The junior guard has not played since Dec. 20 after being diagnosed with sesamoiditis in her foot, a condition that causes forefoot pain.

Mitchell said there is a chance Ormerod could be ready when UK hosts Ole Miss on Feb. 7 in Rupp Arena.

PGA Tour educates players about new drug rules

By Randall Meil
South Florida Sun-Sentinel

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — PGA Tour pros are notoriously uninformed about their organization's policies, especially the newest rules.

We saw that with the implementation of the new cut rule this year at the Sony Open, where John Daly said he had no idea there was a new rule until he was standing on the 18th tee on cut day at the Sony Open two weeks ago. He wasn't the only uninformed player.

So it should come as no surprise that PGA Tour Commissioner Tim Finchem's biggest concern about the implementation of the tour's new anti-doping policy is that players won't know the rules. Finchem said this week that he doesn't believe there's a problem with performance-enhancing drugs in golf.

"My bigger concern is players making mistakes and allowing things to get into their bodies that will trigger a positive response and then that gets us into the whole realm of was it intentional and how did the substance get into the body," Finchem said. "The testing process doesn't know how it gets into your body. All it knows is it's in your body. So that part of it we need to work on pretty hard."

That's why the PGA Tour set up two educational meetings at the Buick Invitational this past week with more in the coming weeks. The anti-doping policy goes into effect in July. The anti-doping manual was distributed last summer.

Tiger Woods has supported a drug-testing policy, but more than one player has protested the notion that one's needed.

"It's the stupidest thing I ever heard," Paul Goydos said at the season-opening Mercedes Championship.

Goydos believes a drug-testing program will unnecessarily bring suspicion in a sport that prides itself on a tradition of respect for the rules. He says if nobody tests positive, the public will suspect cover-ups, and if players do test positive, they'll be labeled dopers.

Last summer, players received a 40-page manual explaining the policy. A list of banned substances covered seven pages. Steroids and human growth hormones are among the banned substances. The rules include exceptions, where players could use banned substances for legitimate medical reasons. That requires gaining a therapeutic use exemption (TUE).

"I think it's good for the sport because I think it'll show that golfers hold not just the rules and etiquette on the golf course in high esteem and in self-policing, but I think off the course, as well," Phil Mickelson said. "We're a major sport, a big-time sport and play for a lot of money. It's impor-

tant we have rules in place to cover it. But I don't think there's going to be anything there. But better to have it in place."

The anti-doping policy treats positive tests for performance-enhancing and recreational drugs differently.

The penalties are specifically outlined for using performance-enhancing drugs. There's up to a one-year suspension for the first violation, a five-year suspension for the second violation and a lifetime ban for the third.

But Finchem has discretionary power in handing down penalties for "drugs of abuse," which include marijuana and cocaine.

"If we concluded that it's being taken because it is being abused, either because of a lack of judgment, dependency or addiction, we would treat it in that context, which would include a wide range of potential actions, including some disciplinary action, some therapeutic action, and some continuing testing action," Finchem said. "So it could conceivably be that a player is disciplined at some level, and then if he's allowed to continue to play, he's tested on a regular basis to help him deal with those issues."

"We view that as somewhat different than a player who has intentionally taken a substance to gain competitive advantage. That would be dealt with in a different arena."

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Winners of six Masters, nine U.S. Opens, four British Opens and 12 PGA Championships are expected to play. Count Gary Player (three Masters titles, three British Open titles, two PGA Championships and one U.S. Open title), Boca Raton's Bernhard Langer (two Masters titles) and Nick Price (two PGA Championships, one British Open) among the major winners in the field.

For ticket information, call 561-241-4653 or go to www.allianzchampionship.com. To purchase spots in pro-ams, or to work as a volunteer, call tournament director Ryan Dillon at the same number.

Plantation's John Cashman, 63, who served as president of the Junior Golf Association of Broward for six years, died of cancer last week. He was a former pitcher for the Washington Senators who would grow to love golf and will be remembered for helping countless local juniors win college golf scholarships.

His daughter, Colleen Cashman-McSween, is a former Parade standout who has played in two U.S. Women's Opens. Persons wanting to honor his memory are asked to make donations to the American Cancer Society or the JGA of Broward (www.jga.org).

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The opinions page provides a forum for the exchange of ideas. Unlike news stories, the Kernel's original editorials represent the views of a majority of the editorial board. Letters to the editor, columns, cartoons and other features on the opinions page reflect the views of their authors and not necessarily those of the Kernel.

■ KERNEL EDITORIAL

Higher ed will suffer if students don't fight proposed budget cuts

Kentucky's higher-education leaders asked, and Gov. Steve Beshear did not listen.

In his budget address Tuesday night, Beshear recommended 12 percent cuts for higher education — a reduction that President Lee Todd and other state university heads warned would be devastating in a letter to the governor earlier this month.

This short-sighted proposal would do grave harm to Kentucky's 2020 goals, including UK's top-20 plan and the statewide drive to double the number of college graduates.

We understand that Beshear had tough choices to make, and that some reductions for state universities were inevitable. But the prospect of reversing a decade of progress on higher education should have deterred him from making such steep cuts.

Granted, the governor's proposal makes some concessions to higher education. It restores bond funding for the capital projects vetoed by former Gov. Ernie Fletcher, and it keeps money for need-based financial aid at the same level.

However, the new bond-funded research buildings will do little good if UK can't hire new faculty members to use them. Hiring freezes — if not layoffs — are almost certain to result from 12 percent cuts.

Indeed, UK will "have to consider everything" — including layoffs, salary

and benefit freezes, and program closures — to handle a cut of this magnitude," President Lee Todd said in a campus-wide e-mail Tuesday night.

And while it is a relief that financial aid funds won't fall, the money that is there won't go as far, because universities are likely to respond to large funding cuts with precipitous tuition hikes. "Substantial tuition increases, fewer scholarships, and greater personal debt" could be on the way for UK students, Todd said in the e-mail.

Now it's up to the General Assembly to do what Beshear did not: heed the university presidents' advice, and keep cuts for higher education as low as possible.

That means it's up to students to let their legislators know how important this issue is, through letters, phone calls and e-mails.

We have said it so many times over the past few years: If students speak up and take action, legislators will listen. They need to know a major voting bloc is paying attention.

Apathy has reigned while the funding has been ample. This time, the stakes are much higher. Forceful political action by students and their families could help forestall double-digit tuition increases.

More importantly, public outcry could stop Kentucky from reversing 10 years of progress on higher education.

That's a goal worth fighting for.

Colleges' financial aid should put the poor first

The following editorial appeared in the Chicago Tribune on Saturday.

Harvard University recently acknowledged what many parents who get sticker shock every time the tuition bill arrives — already know. Private colleges and even some public universities are so expensive that even the affluent upper middle class are struggling to pay the bills. They're so expensive that Harvard and others have been calculating throwing back on what it expects many parents to pay. Harvard is already picking up the tab for families earning less than \$60,000.

Recently Harvard announced that it will significantly expand financial aid to students from families earning as much as \$180,000 a year. The deal: Costs will be limited to about 10 percent of income, meaning that students from those families would pay a maximum of \$18,000. That's a sweet deal and a hefty discount from the full annual cost of more than \$45,000.

Now Yale has followed suit, declaring that it would increase the amount of money it spent from its endowment, expanding financial aid to low- and middle-income students and to students from families earning as much as \$200,000 a year. Other schools are scrambling to eliminate loans from their aid packages and replace them with grants, which will help middle and upper-middle income families.

Why the sudden generosity? Harvard's dean of admissions told a reporter: "People were voting with their feet. It was pretty clear that we were missing out on some pretty exciting students."

But Yale's president acknowledged what's likely to be the more compelling reason: Congressional pressure. Lawmakers have been threatening to force schools to spend at least 5 percent of their endowment funds every year, as private foundations are required to do. Last week, the Senate Finance Committee ratcheted up the pressure, demanding detailed information from the nation's wealthiest colleges on tuition hikes, financial aid and how they managed their endowments.

Harvard's got a \$35 billion endow-

ment. In fiscal 2006 alone, according to consultant Steven Roy Goodman, the school would have been forced to spend \$245 million more to meet that standard.

Whatever the motives, it's hard to argue with moves to ease the financial pressure on parents of students at Harvard, Yale and elsewhere. We're sure that many other universities are now hearing a variation on an old Chicago theme from parents: Where's ours?

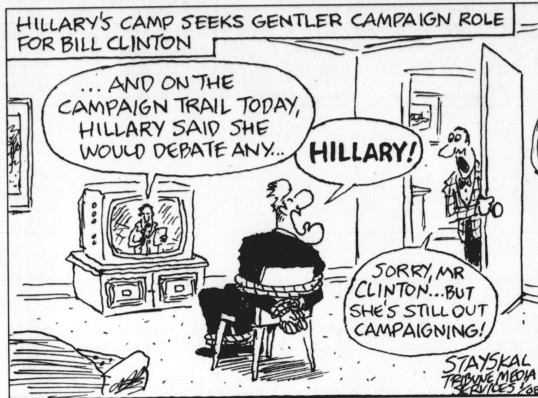
Calculating what's fair and what is gouging in the world of college aid is not a task for the faint-hearted. It all comes down to the calculation of "need." Schools look at a family's income and assets and decide whether they need financial aid. Typically, families earning six-figure incomes don't qualify. Now Harvard comes along and says we're redefining need upward.

But let's be realistic. Most colleges can't afford to match Harvard. They don't have the megabillion-dollar endowment to tap. Let's also recognize that parents earning \$180,000 a year shouldn't be at the front of the line, or probably even in line, for aid. If Harvard wants to open its pockets a little wider, fine. But affluent parents shouldn't expect schools to skip on aid to low-income students so they can afford another BMW or kitchen remodeling.

In a recent visit to the Chicago Tribune editorial board, Education Secretary Margaret Spellings commended Harvard for its move. But she followed with a far more important point: "We have to get many, many more particularly poor and minority kids, not only in and out of high school but in and out of college." The big issue, she said, is "how are we going to make college affordable, accessible and attainable and high quality for the vast majority of Americans?"

She was talking not about those who feel the pinch of private college tuition, real as that may be. But all those parents and students who struggle with much lower tuition bills from local colleges.

Paying tuition bills can pinch any family's finances. But a college education is a great investment that yields immense dividends across a lifetime.



WAYNE STAYSKAL, Tribune Media Services

America might not be ready for historic presidential race

To start off, I'm not too big on politics. I really don't know any of the ideas that either Democratic candi-

date is supporting. I do know the main candidates, but from there you lose me. But this upcoming election will set a precedent never before seen by any American. Either an African-American male or a white female will receive the Democratic nomination to run for the president of the United States.

Either way it goes, it will be a great moment in the history of America. Both women and African-Americans fought so hard for their rights in the '60s and so on, so a moment of this caliber will mean that we have come a long way and that the fights of those civil-rights activists and feminists weren't for nothing.

The question that I ask is this: Is America more ready for a woman president or an African-American president? In the months to come, there is no doubt in my mind that there will be Americans who vote for a different candidate based on race or gender. I know for a fact that someone will not vote for Barack Obama because of the color of his skin. Also I know for a fact that someone will

not vote for Hilary Clinton solely because she is a female.

The bright side of this entire debacle is that one or the other will get picked for the Democratic nomination. The fact that one or the other will get the nomination is huge. Whether or not the nominee will get elected as president is a whole different story.

There is no doubt in my mind that racism is still going on in today's world. And along with that, I know women are being discriminated against because of their gender every day. To say that neither one of these still happen would simply be ignorant and show that you are apparently oblivious to the world around you. So this brings me back to the question at hand: Which is America more ready to have?

Personally, I don't believe that America is ready for either one. With both being still discriminated against, it makes me feel that America is not mature enough to have a woman or African-American president. The fact that some Americans still base judgments of people on the color of their skin or their gender screams ignorance and assures me that at least some of America is not ready to make a monumental decision like this one.

But the good thing about this is that the population that makes decisions based on prejudice doesn't outnumber the ones who don't, which is why I hope in the end America makes the right decision. Obama's race does-

n't mean every black person should vote for him, and Clinton's gender

doesn't mean every woman should vote for her. The positions that both candidates have on the pivotal topics that face our government today should be what makes the final decision.

To come out and say who I think should win would be ignorant of me because I don't know what either candidate stands for. I hope a black man is elected president, but that doesn't mean Obama has my vote. At the same time, with my background in gender studies, I believe it would be great if a woman were elected president.

In the end, I hope that America makes the right decision. Whichever candidate receives the nomination will hopefully run a campaign free of prejudice based on their race or gender. Only time will tell, but I hope you as a student, faculty or staff member will make the right decision.

Bryan Kennedy is a journalism sophomore. E-mail opinions@kykernel.com.



BRYAN KENNEDY
Contributing columnist

In his last State of the Union, Bush finally speaks up for relevancy

There George W. Bush stood Monday night, the vice president and speaker of the House behind him one more time, eyes smiling, lips

hinting of a smirk, looking comfortable in his skin before a chamber where many don't like him, giving presumably the last really big speech of his career.

And trying to remain relevant. When you're a lame duck overshadowed by the Obamas, Clintons and McCain's ready to move in, you talk about things like "a robust growth package."

Along with that and other lines intended to make him sound relevant for the final year of his final term, what struck me was how similar Bush's State of the Union themes were to the markers he put down in his two inaugural addresses.

I went back and looked at those speeches last week. The big themes that jumped out from them still define how the president sees himself.

The first one is that of Bush the reformer. Now, you may say, all presidents hope to reform things. But more than most presidents, Bush has tried to hit home runs. Small-ball was never for the former baseball executive.

open markets.

During his first inaugural, he spoke of education and trade, too. At the same time, he pledged to overhaul Social Security and Medicare and to rewrite how Washington works. "Civility is not a tactic or a sentiment," he declared on his first day as president. "It is the determined choice of trust over cynicism, of community over chaos."

In the aftermath of 9/11 and Iraq, his second inaugural shifted the spotlight onto Bush the defender. He defined his mission this way on Jan. 20, 2005: "My most solemn duty is to protect this nation and its people from further attacks and emerging threats."

Monday night, we saw more of that mission — or obsession, as it can seem.

"We will stay on the offense, we will keep up the pressure and we will deliver justice to the enemies of America," he said. No retreat there.

The question is, has he reformed and defended?

The answer, unfortunately, is a maddening one. Some critics see him as busting up the historic Republican coalition, going to war in Iraq for oil or being an incompetent boob. And those are just three things I read about him last week.

You can't say that he doesn't deserve some of his critics' shots. Even in Texas, there's a sense that this presidency didn't turn out anywhere close to what Bush supporters had hoped.

Still, he begins his final year and likely will end it with no clear summary line, if you really dig into the details of his presidency. This administration will take decades to figure out. Like Harry Truman, Bush will go home a disliked political figure. And,

like Truman, it will take a long time for anyone to do more than write him off as a loser of a president.

Make no mistake, though: People will look back at this administration. This one hasn't been a transitional tenure, like the ones led by Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter and Bush's father.

Even when he has failed, George W. Bush has changed the debate. He has made it impossible for politicians to ignore the state of Social Security's finances. He has elevated immigration to an issue that none of us can escape. And he has pushed domestic security into our national conversation.

Without question, his decisions about Iraq and the war on terror will shape America's next decade, at the very least.

Some of his calls in those areas have been horrendous, like not adequately preparing for Iraq after Saddam Hussein was deposed. But not all have been. We haven't been attacked in seven years, and the troop surge in Iraq ultimately may prove to be his salvation.

We just don't know yet. What I'll never understand is why he and his people allowed him to go from uniter to divider. Democrats played a role in this, certainly, but Bush also went bare-knuckled against them in the 2002 congressional elections, after he had momentum in the war on terror and had succeeded with the bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act.

Those are questions for another day, for history to evaluate. What we know today is George W. Bush won't go out irrelevantly.

William McKenzie is an editorial columnist for The Dallas Morning News. E-mail opinions@kykernel.com.



WILLIAM MCKENZIE
Syndicated columnist

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Democratic presidential hopeful John Edwards shakes hands with supporters as he arrives at Jillian's in Columbia, S.C., Saturday. Edwards conceded his third place finish in the South Carolina primary.

Edwards quits race for Democratic nomination

By Russ Britt and Robert Schroeder
MarketWatch

WASHINGTON — The field of presidential candidates was narrowing to two major hopefuls for each party Wednesday, as Democrat John Edwards dropped out of the race with Republican Rudy Giuliani expected to follow suit later in the day.

Edwards, the former North Carolina senator, announced his withdrawal in New Orleans after placing a distant third behind Sens. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama in Tuesday's Florida primary, as well as in the South Carolina primary held over the weekend.

"It is time for me to step aside," Edwards said. He didn't endorse another candidate, however.

The populist candidate said he'd spoken to both Clinton and Obama and gotten their pledges to make ending poverty central to their campaigns for the White House.

Clinton followed her loss to Obama in South Carolina with an expected win in Florida on Tuesday. Clinton had garnered 51 percent of the vote compared with Obama's 31 percent. Edwards got 15 percent.

While the Florida contest was meaningless since no delegates were awarded, it still was another indication that Edwards would have trouble collecting votes from the South — a region considered his best chance to establish a stronghold.

Edwards' finish Saturday in South Carolina was particularly disappointing for the candidate, since he was born there and won the same contest four years ago.

"When you come in third in your home state, it's bye-bye time," said Larry Sabato, director of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics.

Giuliani, the former New York mayor, was folding up his run after his strategy to forgo heavy campaigning in early states such as New Hampshire and Iowa proved ruinous. Giuliani had concentrated on Florida — in which Republican delegates were awarded on a winner-take-all basis — in a planned run-up to next week's 24-state Super Tuesday contest.

But like Edwards, Giuliani finished a distant third to front-runners Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney in

the Sunshine State. McCain won a closely fought battle with Romney to win Florida, giving his candidacy momentum heading into Super Tuesday.

Giuliani reportedly was set to endorse McCain at the Ronald Reagan presidential library in Simi Valley, Calif., the site of Wednesday's Republican debate.

Speaking to supporters in Miami, McCain said that he's getting close to winning the nomination. "Our victory might not have reached landslide proportions, but it is sweet nonetheless," he commented.

Looking to Super Tuesday, McCain declared: "I intend to win it and be the nominee for our party."

With his victory Tuesday, McCain gets a big boost for the 24-state contest, according to University of South Florida Prof. Susan MacManus.

"It's like winning an overtime game and heading into the next season," MacManus said. "He just really came from behind."

The University of Virginia's Sabato said that it seems to be a forgone conclusion at this point. McCain is expected to get Giuliani's endorsement, and should pick up most of the major states next week.

"All the planets and stars have aligned for McCain," Sabato added.

Greg Valliere, chief strategist for the consultant Stanford Group in Washington, said that while McCain clearly is in front, he still has members of his own party to sway. "All the talk-show conservatives are deeply suspicious of McCain. So he has some work to do."

In Florida, McCain edged out Romney 36 percent to 31 percent while Giuliani was a distant third with just 15 percent of the vote. Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee lagged with 13 percent.

McCain will take home 57 delegates, giving him the lead in the delegate tally. A candidate will need 1,191 to secure the Republican nomination.

Analysts say that Huckabee, the victor in Iowa, could win a few more states in Super Tuesday but is more likely to act as a spoiler to Romney and ultimately position himself as a potential running mate to McCain.

Despite the Democratic contest being more of a "beauty contest," since no delegates

were awarded, Clinton said that she'll work to ensure that Florida's delegates are seated at the Democratic convention this August.

"I'm going to take your hopes, your concerns, your voices, your dreams" to the White House, the New York senator told supporters in Davie, Fla.

Clinton is ahead of Obama in the delegate tally on the Democratic side. It's unclear, though, who Edwards might endorse and whether that will make a difference.

"It's highly competitive," said Sabato. "The Democratic side could still go on for a while."

Campaigning in Florida, candidates from both sides have stressed economic issues. The state has been hit hard by the mortgage crisis.

On Tuesday, Florida home builder Touse Inc. filed for bankruptcy, with its chief executive saying the step "is necessary to reflect the realities of today's home-building market."

In interviews before the primary, residents cited housing as a drag on the state's economy.

Fort Lauderdale, in the southern part of the state, ranked fourth on a list of foreclosure activity in the United States in the third quarter, according to RealtyTrac. The Tampa area came in at 19th and Orlando in central Florida ranked 27th.

Clinton is calling for \$30 billion in assistance to states to help them fight foreclosures, as well as a 90-day moratorium on subprime-loan foreclosures and a five-year freeze in rates on subprime adjustable mortgages.

Obama and Edwards also have vowed to help struggling families with mortgage payments and unemployment benefits.

McCain and Romney stepped up their attacks on each other over issues including immigration, energy and campaign finance.

Immigration also ranked as a hot topic in Florida, the state with the third-highest number of illegal immigrants in the country.

With a voter population split evenly among Democrats and Republicans, Florida will be a key state in the general election. Moreover, its 2.1 million independents also will determine how the Sunshine State goes in the November general election.

The crew is assigned to carry a European laboratory to the space station and install it during several spacewalks.

If NASA can achieve its goal of six shuttle flights this year, it will be the first time it launched that many missions since 2001.

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NASA tentatively clears shuttle takeoff for upcoming week

By Martin Merzer
McClatchy Newspapers

MIAMI — Mission managers Wednesday tentatively cleared Atlantis for its long-delayed flight to the International Space Station, the first of six shuttle liftoffs on NASA's ambitious 2008 schedule.

Blastoff is scheduled for Feb. 7 at 2:47 p.m. from the Kennedy Space Center in Central Florida.

"The crew is trained and they're ready to go," said Wayne Hale, shuttle program manager for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. "All the elements are ready to go."

The only concern at the moment is a bent air conditioning hose discovered aboard Atlantis on Tuesday. Ground crews are examining it, Hale said, but "I'm feeling very positive that we'll come to a good conclusion on this."

The craft and its seven astronauts have been grounded for two months as experts diagnosed and repaired an intermittently malfunctioning electrical connection between the shuttle and its external fuel tank.

The problem plagued several missions in recent years, but engineers said they finally found the source — a component buried within the wall of the fuel tank — and designed a permanent solution.

"The team's done a great job of being able to isolate where that failure is," said Bill Gerstenmaier, NASA's associate administrator. "They have a good fix in place and that failure will not occur again."

The crew is assigned to carry a European laboratory to the space station and install it during several spacewalks.

If NASA can achieve its goal of six shuttle flights this year, it will be the first time it launched that many missions since 2001.