

# KENTUCKY KERNEL

CELEBRATING 37 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

## Refugee flees war-torn home, finds second chance in U.S.

By Jill Lester  
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Government and rebel forces began fighting in Mabior Ghack's village in 1987. When he heard shots, 5-year-old Ghack began running.

He couldn't find his parents, and out of fear he did not go back to try to join them.

"When you are in that kind of situation, all you think about is living or dying," he said. "There are no other options. So you have to think of living."

Ghack, who will graduate in May with a civil engineering degree, is one of the "lost boys of Sudan," the name given to more than 27,000 boys displaced or orphaned during the Second Sudanese Civil War between 1983 and 2003.

During the war, government troops systematically attacked Sudanese villages. More than 2 million people were killed during the 20-year war, according to the International Rescue Committee. Girls were raped, taken as slaves, killed or adopted by other Sudanese families. Many boys, often orphaned, traveled on foot for weeks to nearby countries as refugees.

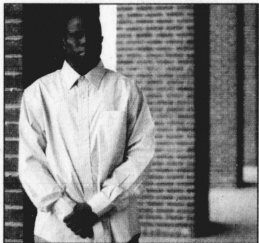
Fleeing from his Sudanese village to Ethiopia was a three-week journey. During that time, Ghack and a friend were protected by an older man, and the group managed to avoid the attacks from wild animals and from armed forces while crossing the Sudanese border. However, Ghack had only the clothes on his back and whatever food he could scavenge when he left Sudan.

It wasn't much better in Ethiopia. "You can't make it on your own," he said. "Some people tried to go back, and some died because of animals, some died because of hunger, some died because of lack of water."

For three more years Ghack lived in an Ethiopian refugee camp. While there, he didn't think much about whether he would get to see his parents again, if they were even alive — it was too unrealistic, he said.

When he was 9, Ethiopian rebels overthrew the government, resulting in chaos for the country. Ghack and others abandoned the camp and began the dangerous trip back into Sudan.

See Ghack on page 3



KRISTIN SHERROD | STAFF  
Sudanese refugee Mabior Ghack became a U.S. citizen in June 2007. He will graduate from UK in May with a civil engineering degree.

## Transy student fears deportation back to Sudan

By Jill Lester  
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Members of Lino Nakwa's village were gathering for prayer when the rebels came and took him from his family. The Sudan People's Liberation Army took Nakwa, then 12, and his brother, trained them to fight with sticks and forced them to work in the rebel group's camp.

The training Nakwa received as a boy is now affecting his steps toward obtaining U.S. citizenship: His application for a green card has been denied because of the "military-type training" the SPLA forced him to undergo.

"It was the reason I fled my country," Nakwa said. "It was the reason I came here, and now that same information is being used to take me back."

Now, because of his refugee status, he could be deported at any time. Nakwa, a senior at Transylvania University, received a letter from the Department of Homeland Security's Citizenship and Immigration Services denying him citizenship in late February. Although the letter said he and his brother were forced to receive the "military-type training," it also said denial of his green card cannot be appealed.

Returning to Sudan is a frightening thought for Nakwa: He is scared of being killed for being a Christian if he is deported.

"The fact that I stand no chance for appeal fills me with fear," Nakwa said.

A representative for Citizenship and Immigration Services said she would look into the case.

See Nakwa on page 3



## Community mourns loss of loyal friend



TOP PHOTO BY ELLIOTT HESS, ABOVE PHOTO BY BRITNEY MCINTOSH | STAFF  
Above: Attendees of the memorial for Connie Blount, the UK student killed in a hit-and-run accident Sunday, write her letters before a memorial service in her honor started yesterday.

## Hundreds gather in grief to reflect on UK student's life

By Blair Thomas  
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Her smile was infectious, her spirit was contagious, and friends and family who shared their memories of Connie Blount at her memorial service yesterday said she was the best friend any of them had ever known.

Blount, 18, was killed in a hit-and-run accident early Sunday morning while crossing the intersection of South Broadway and West Maxwell Street.

More than 250 people packed the Baptist Student Center last night to reflect on the life of a girl who they said spread joy everywhere she went.

"I knew there was a God when she smiled," said Jack Blount, Connie's father. "Light shined out so bright it almost blinded me sometimes."

Jack Blount and his wife, Cindy, plan to take their daughter's body back to their home in Park City, Utah tomorrow. Blount's father said the family wanted to have a service on campus because so many people had called to share their love and support after his daughter's death.

"I can't begin to describe how much this service means to us," Jack Blount said, holding back tears. "To see all the love here that she gained in just seven months in Kentucky — all of these people. Tonight truly has strengthened us."

Blount, a freshman, was a member of the equestrian team and came to UK to pursue her love for horses, Jack Blount said.

Cary Campbell, a member of the equestrian team, said Blount's upbeat personality was an unmatched presence on the team.

"Connie bubbled at life, either at the barn,



ELLIOTT HESS | STAFF  
Mourners linger to talk and grieve after the service ended yesterday evening.

studying at 3 a.m. for a chemistry test or out with her friends," said Campbell, a freshman. "People will remember her beautiful blue eyes and an amazing smile, but these are really just the superficial things that overshadowed someone of such depth, passion and abiding friendship. I'm glad to have had a good friend like Connie," Campbell said.

A slideshow that included hundreds of pictures of Blount with her friends and family was a reminder of all the people whom she touched and what a great friend she always was, said Callie Schott, also a member of the equestrian team.

"We are left with a void and a warmth in our hearts," said Schott, a senior. "I am blessed to have known her."

It is a void that won't be filled anytime soon, her father said.

"This is the hardest thing I've ever had to face. I can't begin to describe what it feels like," Jack Blount said. "When I got the call from the hospital that Connie was dead, I had jumped at the phone because I thought it was my oldest daughter telling me I was a grandfather."

See Blount on page 3

## Police have suspect in hit-and-run

By Julian Vachon  
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Police are following multiple leads and are investigating one suspect in particular who could have been involved in a hit-and-run incident early Sunday that killed a UK student, said Officer Scott Lynch of the Lexington police.

A pickup truck struck Connie Blount, 18, of Park City, Utah, while she was crossing the intersection at South Broadway and West Maxwell Street with a friend at about 2:15 a.m. Blount died later that morning at the UK Medical Center from injuries, police said Sunday.

The truck, light-colored and possibly of the General Motors make, did not stop after hitting Blount and fled south on South Broadway, police said. Police have not released any names or made any charges, but Lynch said they have "strong leads."

Jack Blount, Connie's father, said he spoke with police yesterday afternoon and was pleased with the progress they made since the incident.

"I can tell you they were very excited when I spoke with them," Jack Blount said. "They worked all night and have made a tremendous progress. I think we're anxious to see what they learn in the next day or two."

See Investigation on page 3

## Reduced budget cuts into tutoring service

By Katie Saltz  
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With state funding cuts stretching UK's budget for the upcoming school year, one student service is in danger of losing funding.

The Study has been open for a few years, but it will have to cut many of its programs if outside funding sources do not come through.

Over the past four years The Study has received funding from various sources such as Student Government and individual colleges, said Karin Lewis, director of academic enhancement at The Study. But because of the budget cuts, funding is not coming in like previous years, she said.

"Right now we don't have commitments like we usually do because each of the colleges don't know what they're going to have to cut," Lewis said.

The Study provides free academic consul-

tations, peer tutoring and study strategy seminars for UK students. Political science and Spanish junior Jessica Johnson works as a peer tutor in Math 123 and said The Study helps students who have trouble learning in large classes.

"It's a great help to students because some of these classes are huge and it's hard for them to learn in that environment," Johnson said. "People often say there is no way they could pass the class without The Study."

The provost has contributed money to The Study in the past, Lewis said, but now that contribution is not certain either. When deciding where to absorb the budget cut, Provost Kamble Subbaswamy said in an e-mail that his goal is to maintain the quality of the educational experience at UK.

"We have to balance the curricular staffing needs against various support functions," Subbaswamy said in the e-mail. "The Study is, in-

deed, an important academic support service. My budget reduction recommendation to the President will try to balance all these considerations as best as possible."

With the reduction in funding, Johnson said she hopes the provost will provide money to keep The Study going.

"I'm highly disappointed because the provost needs to recognize that academics are why we are here," Johnson said. "The Study provides a huge resource for students to improve in academics."

The Study held a staff meeting Sunday, Johnson said, and workers were informed that The Study would be very understaffed and that many of its services would have to be cut.

Normally at this point in the year, Lewis said she would be recruiting and hiring students to work next year. But with the uncertainty of the funding, she said that has been put on hold.

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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 an 8 — The planning phase is just about over. Now it's time to get your hands dirty. Show leadership. Take on a difficult task without hesitation.

**Taurus (April 20 - May 20)** Today is a 6 — Appreciate the love and it will grow, right before your eyes. If it's hard to talk about, show your feelings through your actions. Cookies are a nice gesture.

**Gemini (May 21 - June 21)** Today is a 7 — Domestic matters demand attention and even a shopping spree. Don't overlook the basics; a happy home brings you good luck.

**Cancer (June 22 - July 22)** Today is a 5 — You're gaining what you've already earned. This bounty is not a gift. It might seem like that to somebody else, but you know the whole story.

**Leo (July 23 - Aug. 22)** Today is a 7 — It's not easy to keep your mind on business, but it could be quite profitable. Stop daydreaming for long enough to make a nice bonus.

**Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)** Today is a 6 — You're getting stronger and more inquisitive. Your charm and sense of humor make you especially attractive. Enjoy what you've accomplished.

**Libra (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22)** Today is a 7 — Congratulate your partner on a recent accomplishment. You couldn't have done it yourself, and you get to share in the benefits.

**Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21)** Today is a 7 — Finish up the tasks you've been assigned ahead of schedule. Don't waste time working when you could be out playing with friends.

You need a break.  
**Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)** Today is an 8 — You're lucky, but that's not entirely enough. Good luck is not always there. Also have the facts and figures at your fingertips.

**Capricorn (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)** Today is a 6 — Make a wise investment and then congratulate yourself on your good financial judgment. Then go out to celebrate. Try something different.

**Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)** Today is an 8 — Continue to query an expert who thinks he knows more than you do. Actually, just the opposite's true. You don't have to reveal that fact.

**Pisces (Feb. 19 - March 20)** Today is a 5 — You'll do better now with routines you've got down by heart. Improve your efficiency and you'll also increase your profits. Get smooth.

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## JESSICA'S BABY SHOWER

With just two months to go until her baby girl's arrival, Alba is feted by friends at an afternoon tea party in L.A.

As friends and family gathered to celebrate Jessica Alba's impending motherhood at the Ever After Teahouse in L.A.'s Studio City neighborhood on April 6, the seven-months-pregnant actress positively glowed.

"It was just very from the heart," guest Kim Kardashian tells Us of the shower for the actress, 26, who is expecting a daughter in June (sources say Honor is among the names being considered). "It was her closest friends, and it was very magical."

A crowd of 40 — including pals Rashida Jones, Jaime King and, of course, Alba's mom, Cathy — sipped Bellinis and nibbled on Sprinkles cupcakes at the outdoor afternoon affair, which featured tarot card readings, massages, baby-themed party games and a DJ spinning jazz and funk tunes. Each guest also painted a square to be made into a quilt for the baby. Says an attendee, "There was lots of love."

### Family Affair

Early on in the festivities, dad-to-be Cash Warren, 29, made a cameo, popping by to thank the well-wishers for showering his fiancée with all the kiddie essentials, which included lots of baby clothes made of organically grown cotton.

"We're doing everything ecofriendly," Alba's interior designer, Kari Whitman, a guest at the shower, has told Us of her client's green streak.

But the coolest gift, says one guest, was a box full of fabulous

baby shoes, from glittery party shoes to pint-size Pumas. Not only is Alba prepared with a well-stocked nursery, but she's also emotionally set to embrace her new role.

"She's getting advice, but she's not nervous at all," a pal tells Us. "She was born to be a mother, and she'll be a great one."

—Aimee Agresti

### JAMIE LYNN'S LONELY BIRTHDAY

Engaged and at odds with her folks, a pregnant Spears turns 17 alone

On April 4, the night Jamie Lynn Spears turned 17, her family gathered for a festive Italian dinner in a private room at Ristorante Peppone in L.A. As Britney chatted with older brother Bryan and his girlfriend, she dined on salad and ravioli. "She was beautiful, happy and having a wonderful time," an eyewitness tells Us. Parents Jamie and Lynne, too, "were all smiles." And the birthday girl? Well, she wasn't there.

Instead, the pregnant teen (due this summer) was in McComb, Miss., quietly celebrating with her fiancé, pipe layer Casey Aldridge, 19. Their big plans: After spending time at Aldridge's home — where, says a source, the pair have been staying — they shopped at a Wal-Mart before grabbing dinner at a Ruby Tuesday. "They

looked pretty underwhelmed," a fellow diner says of the couple, who ate pickings from the salad bar and drank iced teas. "There was no birthday cake. No dessert." They then headed to a house party (picture pickup trucks and dirt roads) thrown by a pal in Jamie Lynn's honor.

The most excitement came two days later, when the duo and friends rode ATVs around Aldridge's property. "They were just messing around," a photographer who was taking shots of the pair tells Us. But the mood changed when Aldridge told the photographers they were trespassing. "He said we need to leave," says the photographer. "He had a gun on his lap."

Even though Jamie Lynn is far from California, her special day wasn't entirely ignored by her family. On April 3, Britney, 26, visited the Ed Hardy warehouse in L.A. and picked out some birthday presents for her sister, marketing director Nicole Irving tells Us. "She had us send her three swimsuits and a bunch of the Crystal Rock line."

As for the parents (who sources say strongly disapprove of Jamie Lynn's engagement), they wasn't mean to play favorites, but due to Britney's mental illness, they had no choice. "They've had a hard time balancing both girls," says a Lynne insider. "Obviously the Britney situation was an immediate crisis."

—Joey Bartolomeo

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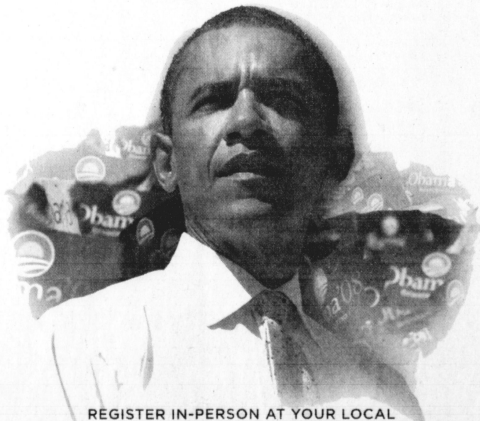
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## INVESTIGATION

Continued from page 1

A friend of Blount described as a male in his late teens or early 20s was walking her to her condo on South Upper Street after a night with friends at two or three different locations, Jack Blount said.

Lynch said accounts from the night showed that Blount and her friend had been drinking alcohol, but he did not think that contributed to the accident.

The two were walking west, crossing South Broadway, and Lynch said he could not comment on where they were coming from because it could jeopardize the investigation.

Jack Blount said he talked with the young man who was walking with his daughter, the police and doctors at UK Medical Center. Multiple people told him they did not think Connie or her friend had enough to drink that would impair their ability to walk home safely, he said.

"We weren't here so we don't know the exact details," Jack Blount said. "It certainly would not surprise me that Connie or her friend or any other college student would have a drink on a Saturday night."

"I've been Connie's father for more than 18 years, and I've never seen Connie drunk," he said. "She was just a responsible young woman."

Blount's body underwent an autopsy Sunday, but a toxicology report and other results will not be available for one to three months, said Sarah Davis, deputy coroner at the Fayette County Coroner's office, on Sunday.

Police suspect that Blount and her friend crossed the intersection while the traffic signal was green for vehicles, Lynch said.

But Jack Blount said the man, who gave his account of the incident to police, said he had some trouble remembering the specifics of the night, such as what color the light was when they started crossing the street.

"You're not typically in record mode as you walk home," Jack Blount said. "And after being traumatized by seeing your friend hit by a truck, all of a sudden you start second guessing yourself about what you saw."

## BLOUNT

Continued from page 1

Blount's older sister, Kelley Krohnert, gave birth to a daughter Sunday afternoon.

"Being an aunt is something she looked so forward to," Jack Blount said. "I will miss her, we all will miss her. But I am comforted knowing that this isn't the end, knowing that I will see her again someday."

Her father said he has no doubt she is in heaven looking down on him and laughing, and he is sure she's still pursuing her love of horses.

"She came home from Sunday school one day when she was young and wanted to know if there are horses in heaven," he said. "Anyone who has read the Bible knows there are horses. Any anyone who knows Connie knows she is riding one right now."

## GHACK

Continued from page 1

After facing many of the same obstacles he encountered on the way to Ethiopia, Ghack arrived in a small Sudanese town where he lived for about four months before he decided to cross with a group into Kenya, a safer country where he could go to school.

In 1993, six years after fleeing his home village, Ghack figured out how to contact his father. He called from Kenya and told his father he was alive.

In the months that followed, Ghack, 11, saved up money to call about once a month. During middle school he worked as a plumber and tended a small plot of kale, a leafy green vegetable he sold at the market to pay for school supplies.

During their last phone conversation, Ghack told his father he wanted to visit Sudan to see his family. His father told him no to because he could be killed in the conflict between rebel and government forces, and to stay in school instead.

A year after they last talked on the phone, Ghack received a letter from his uncle. As he began to open it, his cousin, who knew what it contained, told Ghack to throw it away. He opened it anyway.

His parents had been killed during fighting between the government and rebel forces.

"I was on the bed, and I fell to the

floor," Ghack said. "I didn't go to school for two weeks."

Ghack finished high school in Kenya in 2000. A year later, he heard a religious group would be interested in sponsoring him and other refugees going to the United States. The refugees thought it was all talk until they began filling out applications.

After a yearlong process of interviews and paperwork, Ghack was on his way to the United States.

Ghack arrived in Louisville in 2001. He could write proficiently in English, but he had trouble speaking it. Ghack took classes through the Kentucky Refugee Ministries to learn both American culture and English.

He began working nights at a gas station and taking classes at Jefferson Community College in Louisville during the day. Ghack graduated with an associate degree and applied to UK. The workload was daunting.

"When (my father) told me to go into engineering, I didn't think I would go to college. Even when I was admitted to UK, I didn't think I would graduate," he said.

Ghack, a U.S. citizen since June 2007, has been at UK for four years.

Fellow students sometimes ask him for his story, but he doesn't say much. Some-

one recently asked him if he was going to visit his parents after graduation. He evaded the question and replied that he would visit his family.

"I don't tell a lot of my history because if I tell them, I don't think they would believe it," he said.

was two weeks before Nakwa could find a steady source of food.

Nakwa was reunited with his four other siblings in 1998, which he calls one of the happiest moments of his life. With the support of Kenyan nuns, Nakwa applied to go to the United States as a refugee.

"I thought, finally, we're coming here, we're moving on with our lives," Nakwa said. "We can come to the U.S. The U.S. is a peaceful country."

Nakwa arrived in Louisville in 2003 with his four teenage brothers and sisters. At 24, Nakwa spoke little English, and he had never held a job before. But he worked at UPS to support his family while attending Jefferson Community College.

"It's changed my life," he said. "It's changed the way I see things. It made me forget about myself and think about them."

He graduated from Jefferson Community College with an associate's degree and left Louisville continuing his studies at Transylvania University.

Now, Nakwa is set to graduate in May, but he doesn't know if he will be forced to go back to his country.

"I don't know what's going to happen," he said. "They regard me as being related to this terrorist organization. They could take me away at any time."

Nakwa, his lawyer and members of the Transylvania community said they will continue to fight the decision. They have mailed congressional state officials and the media to build support.

Anyone wanting to write a letter on Nakwa's behalf should send it to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, P.O. Box 82521, Lincoln, Neb., 68501-2521. Nakwa's case number is LIN0626050570.

## NAKWA

Continued from page 1

tion Services said he could not comment on specific cases.

The Department of Homeland Security changed its policy in March and said the status of immigrants like Nakwa would be reconsidered. Nakwa's lawyer filed an appeal this week, but a decision may not come for months.

Several weeks ago, students and faculty at Transylvania began a campaign to keep one of their own in the United States.

"He's a total victim of terror. He's not a terrorist," said Transylvania senior Neil Barry, a friend of Nakwa's who has helped organize the campaign. "He's the kind of guy you'd want your sister to date. The way this country's treated him is horrible."

The military training Nakwa received in Sudan in 1991 was during the Second Sudanese Civil War, which lasted between 1983 and 2003. Government troops systematically attacked Sudanese villages. More than 2 million people were killed, including Nakwa's father.

After a month as a captive of the SPLA, Nakwa and his older brother decided to flee. It was dangerous — a group of boys tried to escape the day earlier and were killed — but the two decided it was worth the risk.

"It was just one of those things where you say, 'Whatever happens to me happens,'" he said.

Nakwa and his brother fled through the jungle for two days without food or water, in constant fear the SPLA would follow and kill them. They reached Kenya, but it



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The Campus Calendar is produced by the Office of Student Activities, Leadership & Involvement. Registered Student Orgs. and UK Depts. can submit information for FREE online ONE WEEK BEFORE TO THE MONDAY information is to appear. Call 257-8867 for more information.

Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Friday 18 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Robert C. May Photography Endowment Lecture Series, 12:00 PM, UK Art Museum in the Singletary Center for the Arts</li> <li>•Volunteering at the Carnegie Center, 3:00 PM, Carnegie Center</li> <li>•CCO-Volunteer at Catholic Action Center, 5:00 PM, Catholic Action Center</li> <li>•UK Shaolin-Do Club, 5:00 PM, Alumni Gym Loft</li> <li>•Miniature Worlds: Art of India, 12:00 PM, UK Art Museum in the Singletary Center for the Arts</li> <li>•The Inner Eye: Folk Art of India, 12:00 PM, Rose St &amp; Euclid Ave</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ad Club Meeting, 8:00 PM</li> <li>•Volunteer w/ Beaumont Buddies, 4:00 PM, Beaumont Middle School</li> <li>•The Inner Eye: Folk Art of India, 12:00 PM, Rose St &amp; Euclid Ave</li> <li>•Volunteering at the Carnegie Center, 3:00 PM, Carnegie Center</li> <li>•Miniature Worlds: Art of India, 12:00 PM, UK Art Museum in the Singletary Center for the Arts</li> <li>•Prof Series: Business Etiquette Dinner &amp; Crownie Plaza, 6:00 PM, Crownie Plaza, Lexington KY</li> <li>•Robert C. May Photography Endowment Lecture Series, 12:00 PM, UK Art Museum in the Singletary Center for the Arts</li> <li>•Learn to Knit, 7:00 PM, Student Center Rm 228</li> <li>•CCO-Volunteer at God's Pantry, 3:30 PM, God's Pantry</li> <li>•CCO-Young At Heart Meeting, 5:30 PM, Student Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•UK Shaolin-Do Club, 5:00 PM, Alumni Gym Loft</li> <li>•FREE MOVIE: Gattaca, 10:00 PM, Worsham Theater, Student Center</li> <li>•The Inner Eye: Folk Art of India, 12:00 PM, Rose St &amp; Euclid Ave</li> <li>•Belgian Engineering Scholarship Pizza Social, 11:00 AM, Ralph G. Anderson Building (RIGAN Commons)</li> <li>•Trivia, 8:00 PM, UK Student Center Cats Den</li> <li>•Making the Move: Tips for Relocation, 3:30 PM, James W. Stuckert Career Center</li> <li>•Post-Etiquette Dinner-Employer Career Networking Session, 11:00 AM, Atrium</li> <li>•CCO Board of Directors Meeting, 5:00 PM, 106 Student Center</li> <li>•Volunteering at the Carnegie Center, 3:00 PM, Carnegie Center</li> <li>•Miniature Worlds: Art of India, 12:00 PM, UK Art Museum in the Singletary Center for the Arts</li> <li>•Robert C. May Photography Endowment Lecture Series, 12:00 PM, UK Art Museum in the Singletary Center for the Arts</li> <li>•Miniature Worlds: Art of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India 12:00 PM UK Art Museum in the Singletary Center for the Arts</li> <li>•Robert C. May Photography Endowment Lecture Series 12:00 PM UK Art Museum in the Singletary Center for the Arts</li> <li>•Volunteering at the Carnegie Center 3:00 PM Carnegie Center</li> <li>•FREE MOVIE: Transamerica 10:00 PM Worsham Theater, Student Center</li> <li>•The Inner Eye: Folk Art of India 12:00 PM Rose St &amp; Euclid Ave</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Robert C. May Photography Endowment Lecture Series 12:00 PM UK Art Museum in the Singletary Center for the Arts</li> <li>•UK Dance Ensemble Spring Performance 8:00 PM Singletary Center for the Arts</li> <li>•Miniature Worlds: Art of India 12:00 PM UK Art Museum in the Singletary Center for the Arts</li> <li>•The Inner Eye: Folk Art of India 12:00 PM Rose St &amp; Euclid Ave</li> <li>•Volunteering at the Carnegie Center 10:00 AM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Miniature Worlds: Art of India 12:00 PM UK Art Museum in the Singletary Center for the Arts</li> <li>•Robert C. May Photography Endowment Lecture Series 12:00 PM UK Art Museum in the Singletary Center for the Arts</li> <li>•The Inner Eye: Folk Art of India 12:00 PM Rose St &amp; Euclid Ave</li> </ul>

# OPINIONS

## KERNEL EDITORIAL BOARD

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The opinions page provides a forum for the exchange of ideas. Unlike news stories, the Kernel's unsigned 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

## Program to address 'students of concern' may help retention

UK is making positive strides to monitor students who could be at risk of academic problems because of personal situations.

The Students of Concern team was formed in cooperation with seven UK departments in March. The group meets every other week to discuss reports from faculty, stu-

dents, parents or others in the UK community who have concerns about a student. The team could then look into the student's background to see if they have been attending class or are showing other signs of a personal problem. The group then asks students to come in for a meeting if the follow-up information raises concern, the Kernel reported Friday.

Retention has always been a problem and priority to improve for UK. The graduation rate for the 2001 class was 61.1 percent and the freshman-to-sophomore retention rate for the 2006 class was 76.4 percent, according to the UK Office of Institutional Research.

The university taking a proactive interest in students who might be having a rough time in college can only help these rates, benefiting the students and UK as a result.

But the university is also dealing with personal information when evaluating these students-at-risk, and ensur-

ing privacy should be as high a priority as helping these students.

The Students of Concern team will be keeping the names and information of particular students on file, the Kernel article said. Although this information will be kept confidential, it still contains sensitive information that could be linked to a very personal

problem or a very sensitive time. Collection and management of such information should be taken with the utmost seriousness.

The only way this program can work is if students feel comfortable opening up about personal problems to the administrators and feel secure in sharing private in-

formation. Proper management of confidential records is essential in these situations.

This team was not created in response to campus tragedies like the Virginia Tech shooting, but monitoring students with the potential of acting violently is the goal of the group, said Maj. Joe Monroe, interim chief of UK police and team member.

Still, like the management of confidential information, the team should take care not to throw premature accusations of danger on students. And, obviously, as members of the team mentioned in the article, students who are more eccentric should not be labeled a threat before any real risk is established.

The university taking a proactive interest in students who might be having a rough time in college can only help retention rates, and benefit students and UK as a result.

### ■ LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Program for 'at-risk' students causes concern

I have serious doubts about the university's new "Students of Concern" program. To begin with, the program sounds a lot like university-sponsored spying, in which professors will turn students in for skipping class, and roommates will tattle on each other for drinking too often or for being too busy studying to shower.

While it is true that there are "at-risk" students on campus and while these students often do need assistance, this program is not the proper method for finding those students and assisting them.

Last year, I would have been considered an "at-risk" student. I was dealing with personal problems, relationship problems and even some financial issues. I went to the Counseling and Testing Center, and they didn't help me. I went to the Financial Aid office, and they handed me some loan paperwork and sent me on my way. I went to my professors and even to a local minister, and said "I'm having a really tough time." No one stepped up to help me.

Before the university starts using students, faculty and staff as spies to compile a list of "at-risk" students, there needs to be a thorough evaluation of the services that can be provided to these students. There are at risk students on this campus. And I assure you, if this new team steps in and offers to help and then fails to do so, those students will be far worse off than they were to begin with.

Erin Hane Glover  
Secondary English education senior

## Recognize the father's role in abortion debate

I am writing in response to the ongoing abortion debate. I think one issue that is overlooked in this whole debate is the role of the father in the scenario. It is unfair to make it just a woman's choice to whether keep or abort a child. What about the father's rights?

Look at this in another way. For instance, the law requires child support from the father. If the father wants nothing to do with his child, he must still pay child support (which is the right thing to do). Even though the father does not want the child, the law says he must still pay his part for the child; he must take responsibility for having the child with that woman.

But imagine if the roles were reversed: The mother wants nothing to do with the child, but father wants the child and has every intention of raising that child, the mother can still choose to abort her baby. And the father is stuck with not having a voice.

It is sad that the mother doesn't have to take responsibility of her choices. It was her choice to have sex, so she must take the responsibilities of her actions. The father should have every right to that child as the mother.

Caleb Payne  
Secondary education senior

## Columnists Needed

The Kernel is looking for columnists, especially those with an interest in campus and local issues, to write for the Opinions page on a regular basis.

E-mail [opinions@kykernel.com](mailto:opinions@kykernel.com)

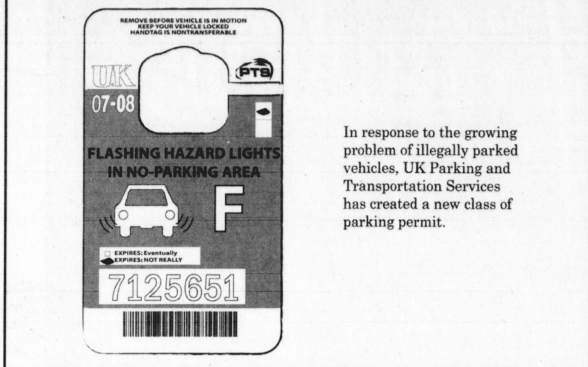
## Submissions

Send a guest column or letter to the editor to Opinions Editor Linsen Li. Be sure to include your full name, class, major and phone number (for confirmation).

E-mail [opinions@kykernel.com](mailto:opinions@kykernel.com)

## Neurotica.

by Matt Layson



MATT LAYSON, Kernel cartoonist

## Mother nature is one parent we should all honor, protect

I was talking with an out-of-state friend on the phone the other day, and I asked him where he was.

"Outside," he replied, and he began to describe to me a really cool bird he saw that had a white body and red-tipped wings.

It made me think about how rare it is for some of us to really step back and appreciate nature.

Among those who suck at "stopping to smell the roses," literally, is me.

I mean, I think flowers are pretty, especially the ones on that dogwood near the Student Center, but I admire it from behind the counter at Starbucks. And this is just horrible. I don't spend nearly enough time outside to enjoy the air, the grass and the sunsets.

I think there's something special about the people who adore nature. My best friend is one of them. She loves to hike, and she'll go to different outdoor places just to explore it all. Or she'll remark how pretty the sky looks.

These are all things that I am conscious of to a degree, but not so much that I include them in my conversation. When we do embrace nature, I think we feel more whole. More human, maybe even more divine.

There's an author I like, Rob Bell,

who says that we're disconnected from the earth, and we can feel it, even if we have no words for it.

The premise of so many car commercials, he observes, is leaving the city for the terrain or the mountains because of this very fact.

"It's possible to go days without spending any significant time outside," he says. "And it's still considered living."

A 2004 psychological study published in the journal *Spirituality and Health* International points out three ways of experiencing nature.

One is viewing it, such as through a window or in a painting.

The second is being surrounded by it, which happens when you hike to school or work or hang out in a local park with some friends.

The third is direct involvement with it, which happens when you do things like gardening, farming and running.

There is evidence that all three forms offer mental health benefits, and physical ones too, when paired with some form of physical activity.

You know it's beneficial to keep a potted plant on your desk and have heard that "the sunlight will do you good." And if you've had the experience of climbing a tree and perching in its branches (something I've done once or twice but not nearly enough), you understand how cool it is.

I'm always surprised how much more pleasant a time I have at restaurants when a friend suggests we sit outside, and it hit me last night that one reason I like Coffea Island more than other coffee shops is because

they have live plants.

One thing we can't forget is that it's our responsibility to take care of nature, as well; it's done such a good job of caring for us, and we take it for granted.

I remember walking into Patterson Office Tower several weeks ago to find a small throng of students and faculty peacefully but passionately holding signs, banging drums, and speaking out to save Robinson Forest.

The fact that they cared so much really warmed my heart, and hit me over the head at the same time.

"You know it's a meaningful cause, so why aren't you doing more things like that?" my conscience asked.

I often say I'm too busy for things, but that's really no excuse.

All students can do their part to help out, whether it's saving Robinson Forest, helping out with Earthdays in the Bluegrass or recycling the cans and bottles they use at home. We can all pick up trash when we see it, use less water and electricity, and fight our incessant desire to consume.

This is the only planet we have, and all forms of creation deserve our respect.

So if you are a tree-hugger, know that I admire you and that I'm going to try to emulate you as best I can as the summer months approach. If you're like me and you've gotten a little too obsessed with the indoors, let the sky be your roof more often.

Natalie Glover is a psychology and philosophy senior. E-mail [opinions@kykernel.com](mailto:opinions@kykernel.com).

## More transparency in SG processes will improve staff accountability

Friends, it is April 15, and I don't have to tell you that the Spring semester is almost in the books. With Keeneland opening and the temperature rising, you can almost forget that finals week is just around the corner.

With the conclusion of the term, we are forced to say goodbye to old friends who are graduating and moving on with their lives. While the idea of transitioning into the "real world" can be frightening, it is a fact of life.

The silver lining, however, is that the summer brings us new friends. Anyone that has been around freshman orientations during the summer knows that the introduction of new students to this university brings new life to campus.

So don't fret, with the Jonathan Webb Music Festival being re-scheduled for April 26, we have a whole lot to look forward to!

Grant Mills and I have really hit the ground running with our new administration. We are working on several events and programs I think you will be very happy with when you see them in the fall.

We are joining with the UK administration to build a comprehensive plan called "Campus 365." Our mission is to provide you, the student body, with tangible and realistic goals in hopes that you can get a small glimpse of what you can expect from Student Government and the university next year.

If you would like to be on board with us and be on our staff, we would love to have you come along. Please see the SG Web site ([www.uksga.org](http://www.uksga.org)) for an executive application and get it back to us by Friday.

We understand that being accountable means being transparent in every step of the way, from the development of ideas to the implementation of plans. Grant and I believe that although we can explain why we believe someone is capable to work in SG, it is important that students know the qualifications of their SG leaders.

The goal of the new application and interview system is to get new life in SG as well as provide the opportunity for any student to come to the SG office and look at the resume of any SG staff member. Hey, you work for you, so naturally we want our processes to be as open as possible for your approval.

If any of you have been paying attention to the news recently, then you know tuition is going up. Again,

However, it is important to note that although in-state tuition is in-

creasing by 9 percent, it could be worse. In previous years, tuition has seen double-digit increases, although we saw a 9 percent increase last year.

Due to the state's cut to UK's general funding, the university has to make some significant changes. If the university relies solely on an increase in tuition to cover the budget losses, we would be seeing an increase in almost 18 percent.

Thankfully, however, the administration has taken part of the hit, and cuts have been made nearly everywhere on campus. University employees are not getting raises this year, and in this economy, that isn't good news for anyone.

Let's be honest: everyone hates tuition increases. It's no good for students and their parents who pay those bills, but there is still light at the end of the tunnel: friends. With the increase in tuition, President Lee Todd and the Board of Trustees are demonstrating their commitment to the Top 20 Business Plan.

As much as we want to keep tuition manageable and affordable, we want to continue our investment in our future. It's your job to go make the best grades possible, but it is the job of President Todd and the provost to make the degrees we get here as valuable as possible.

Tyler Montell is the Senate president and president-elect of UK Student Government. E-mail [opinions@kykernel.com](mailto:opinions@kykernel.com).



## Johnson finally ready to shine as UK's starting middle linebacker

By Kenny Calston  
kcalston@kykernel.com

"Micah Johnson is the man."

That was how Scout.com national recruiting analyst Jamie Newberg described the 6-foot 2-inch, 255-pound linebacker in May of 2006, before he committed to play football at UK.

Every major recruiting site ranked Johnson as a five-star prospect — easily a sure-fire top-five player in the state of Kentucky — and when the Cats landed the Ft. Campbell, Ky., native, fans across the commonwealth rejoiced.

But high expectations parlayed into disappointment when Johnson failed to earn a starting job in his first year. The excitement diminished even more when Johnson settled for splitting time with junior Braxton Kelley at middle linebacker as a sophomore this past season.

Some fans were critical in their treatment of Johnson, but his brother, junior offensive guard Christian Johnson, said he believed the expectations, and everything that came with them, including the negatives, were warranted.

"Honestly I think (the expectations) were fair," Christian Johnson said. "Our parents raised us with high expectations. They always told us, 'To whom much is given, much is required.'"

But with Kelley moving to weakside linebacker, younger brother Micah is finally ready to shine as UK's starting middle linebacker.

"I don't feel like I've met them yet," Johnson said of the expectations surrounding him when he entered the program as a five-star recruit. "Now I've learned the defense and it feels good. Hard work has paid off."

Through his hard work in the offseason, Johnson said he shed 15 pounds for the second straight year. He said the weight loss was more proof of how ready he was to finally start.

"I was just continuing to get in shape," Johnson said. "It was just positive."

Those off-the-field positives are translating on the field this spring. Head coach Rich Brooks and defensive coordinator Steve Brown both said they have been pleased with all of their linebackers. In an experienced group, that reflects highly on the maturation of Johnson. But Brown said progress can still be made.

"(Micah's) good," Brown said. "He's played a lot of football for us. He has to learn the little things still. Has to use his power and strength to his advantage. Just a lot of little things."

All the praise the junior is receiving this year has not come without a price. Older brother Christian anticipated, as many fans and experts did, that Micah Johnson would come in right away and start. When Micah Johnson didn't grab the position, some of the jubilation surrounding his arrival turned into jeers.

"Sometimes it did upset him," Christian Johnson said. "When he did something wrong, people would say he wasn't ready."

Now Micah Johnson will get the chance to do what he came to UK to do — make plays.

"He could have started more last year," Christian Johnson said. "But now it's his time to start and time to shine."

Micah Johnson said he is not looking to be a leader in a defense already full of them. He's just glad to finally hit the field.

"Everyone out there can take a leadership role," Micah Johnson said. "I'm just happy I'm in there with the other guys."

### ON THE WEB

www.kykernel.com

- Photo slideshow from the Connie Blount memorial
- More sports and news coverage

## Council hopefuls to address student issues

By Robin Pichler  
rpichler@kykernel.com

Student Government will host a forum for students to learn about the five candidates running for the 3rd District seat on the city council. After the November election, one of them will make decisions that affect UK students, said Nate Simon, SG deputy chief of staff.

"The 3rd District encompasses many of the students, faculty and staff at UK," Simon said. "Everything from housing relations to economic development, the council person elected has a great say in these matters."

Dick DeCamp, the current

3rd District councilman, is serving his sixth two-year term and cannot run again because of term limits.

The five candidates who are running — Jonathan Rodgers, Diane Lawless, Eric Thomason, Don Pratt and Garry Weston — will be present at the forum tonight from 5 to 6 p.m. at the Worsham Theater in the Student Center. The forum is open to the public.

The candidates will answer questions previously submitted by students and discuss campus topics such as the Lexington Area Party Plan, town-and-gown relations, and Lexington's housing and development plans.

"Last semester, many might remember the proposed housing plan that became such a big issue," said Chris Crumrine, SG chief of staff. "Attending will help make us aware of such issues and how UK and Lexington interact with one another."

Students can submit questions for the candidates to answer at the forum by e-mailing them to [uksgaevents@gmail.com](mailto:uksgaevents@gmail.com).

"With five very qualified candidates running, we hope that everyone in attendance will gain a better understanding of not only who they are, but what platform they are running on," Simon said.

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