

THE Kentucky Kernel

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After little response, UK stops touting grad contracts

By Wes Blewins
THE KENTUCKY KERNEL

Midway through a "full-court press" of its pilot program for graduation contracts, UK has made a decisive shift in its approach, opting not to actively advertise the course plans to incoming freshmen and current students.

Instead, UK is now mainly relying on students to promote the program — but some university advisers doubt whether the program will

survive.

The graduation agreement guarantees students in 14 majors will graduate in four years, provided they follow the guidelines of their department's curriculum map. Each participating program provides an eight-semester course plan designed to ensure a diploma in four years.

If a prescribed course is unavailable, the university will pay the tuition and fees associated with the class, which will be taken in a future semester.

Due in large part to a lack of student participation, the graduation contract program isn't where UK expects it to be, said Richard Greisman, assistant provost for program support. Out of roughly 1,000 students in eligible majors in the freshman class of 2004, 15 percent — or 150 students — enlisted in the program, he said.

The deadline for current freshmen to register for this year is May 5, provided that students have taken all the proper courses thus far.

Cathy Hunt, an adviser and student services director for the College of Communications and Information Studies, said her office hasn't received any further information on the program and said she isn't sure how much longer it will continue.

"We've heard nothing at all about the graduation contract since the 2004-05 academic year ended," she said. "No university advisers were asked to advertise it to incoming freshmen for this year; no interest sessions were held at the summer ad-

vising conferences.

"Nothing has happened at all." UK began an aggressive effort in 2004 to advertise the program through the media, campus organizations and mailings to incoming students and their families, but the university "didn't get many takers," Hunt said.

"It wasn't a lack of advertising; it was a lack of participation," Hunt said.

Cindy Iten, director of advising
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No university advisers were asked to advertise it to incoming freshmen for this year ... nothing has happened at all."

— Cathy Hunt, College of Communications adviser, on UK's graduation contract program.

The film "Munich" opens with the story of the 1972 Olympics. But Gary Conelly has his own version.

Tragic Games can't sink career

By Kaycee Brown
THE KENTUCKY KERNEL

Growing up, Gary Conelly always believed the Olympics would be the ultimate achievement of his swimming career.

He started as the best in Fresno, Calif., and then graduated to grueling workouts under a legendary college coach that helped produce a conference championship and more than a dozen national honors.

"Ever since I started swimming, I assumed I would go to the Olympics," he said.

Then terrorists from the Palestinian group Black September took 11 Israeli athletes hostage in Munich, Germany, tainted the event Conelly had worked toward his entire life.

"It was a very bitter experience," UK's swimming head coach said. "Much more bitter than sweet."

"I've talked to other friends and people I know who were Olympians, and 99 percent of people who go through the experience didn't get what they wanted."

But ultimately, Conelly couldn't turn his back on the pool — a decision no one regrets.

The doctor's tutelage

In Fresno, at the base of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Conelly tasted success early.

"I was usually in the top whenever I competed because there weren't as many people to compete against," he said. "Because it was such a tiny town, I received lots of positive reinforcement,

which made me want to continue to do better."

Conelly started swimming competitively when he was 10 years old.

"I never took swim lessons," he said. "My older brother had just started swimming, so I decided to start, too."

From that point on, Conelly focused on being the best.

"I think whatever anyone does, you get the ultimate in your head and try to accomplish it," he said.

With the goal in mind, Conelly attended Indiana University to learn from legendary Hoosier swim coach, James "Doc" Counsilman.

"He had a way of making you feel like you were the most important guy on the team," Conelly said. "I think a lot of the team actually thought of him as a father figure, so we were all trying very hard to live up to his expectations and gain his praise."

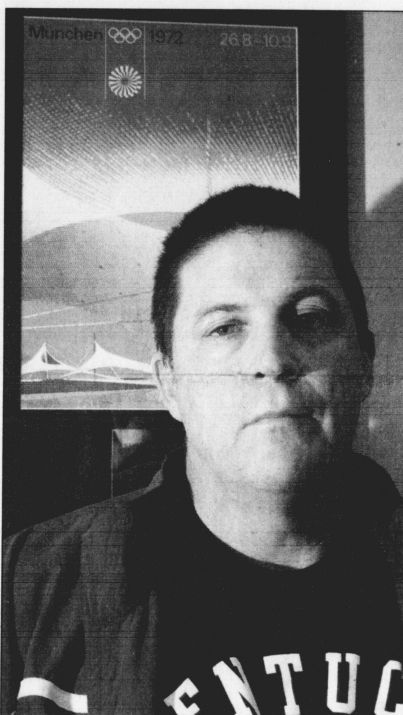
Under Counsilman's instruction, Conelly became the conference champion in the 200-meter freestyle in 1970 and earned either All-American or Honorable Mention in individual and relay events more than a dozen times.

The 1972 Olympics

Indiana served as the springboard to even greater swimming heights for Conelly in the summer before his senior year, he swam in the 1972 Olympics in Munich.

He led off the 800-meter relay and posted a time that would have given him the bronze medal, had

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UK head swimming coach Gary Conelly stands in front of a poster he received when he competed in the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Conelly swam the 800-meter relay in the Olympics that summer before his senior year of college. He ultimately earned either All-American or Honorable Mention in individual and relay events more than a dozen times.

High court nominee set for last vote

By Glenn Thrush
NEWSDAY

WASHINGTON — Samuel Alito is expected to be confirmed as the Supreme Court's 110th justice today after an improvised, last-ditch filibuster attempt by Senate liberals flopped yesterday.

By a larger-than-anticipated 72-25 margin, the Senate voted to end debate on Alito, killing a quixotic campaign mounted last week by Massachusetts Sens. John Kerry and Edward Kennedy, both Democrats.

"This was a battle that needed to be fought," said Kennedy, exiting the Senate chamber after the results were apparent.

New York Sens. Charles Schumer and Hillary Rodham Clinton both voted for the filibuster, even though Schumer privately argued that such a move would hurt Democratic candidates in this year's mid-term elections.

The liberals needed 40 votes to block Alito, but failed to galvanize fellow Democrats against Alito — just as polls show their failure to turn popular sentiment against him during confirmation hearings. In the end, 19 Democrats voted with 53 from the GOP majority.

Yesterday's cloture vote clears the way for Alito's odds-on approval today — just in time for President Bush's prime-time State of the Union speech.

"I am pleased that a strong, bipartisan majority in the Senate decisively rejected attempts to obstruct and filibuster an up-or-down vote," Bush said in a statement Monday night.

Filibuster proponents had privately predicted that they would lose by a few votes, but they attracted few party centrists, turning the vote into a rout.

ABC journalists slowly recovering

By Matea Gold
THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

NEW YORK — ABC News anchor Bob Woodruff and cameraman Doug Vogt showed improvement yesterday, a day after a roadside explosion rocked their vehicle as they traveled through Iraq, spraying shrapnel that left them both with severe head injuries.

The two journalists, who were airlifted to a U.S. military medical center in Landstuhl, Germany, on Sunday night, remained in serious but stable condition. ABC News President David Westin said that doctors there reported that the two men showed signs of improvement, although Woodruff — who sustained upper body injuries, as well — had more extensive wounds. Both could be transported to the United States for treatment as soon as Tuesday.

"We have a long way to go," Westin said in a statement yesterday. "But it appears that we may

have also come some distance from yesterday."

Woodruff on Monday responded to stimuli on his hands and feet and briefly opened his eyes, ABC correspondent Jim Sciutto reported on "World News Tonight." Vogt was awake and joking, which "gave us a chance to smile today," Sciutto said.

Vogt's wife, Vivian, and Woodruff's wife, Lee, along with his brother and sister-in-law, waited at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center for updates about their condition. They were joined by Melanie Bloom, a close friend of the Woodruff family and the widow of former NBC correspondent David Bloom, who died in Iraq in 2003.

"Having seen him, we think he's going to recover eventually," Woodruff's brother David told ABC. "It's going to be a long road, but I think he's a strong guy and he's going to make it."

Revealing strip mining's consequences

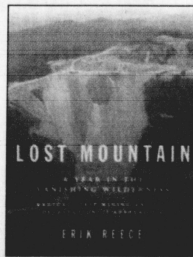
UK lecturer jets to New York to promote new book

By Darlusch Shafer
THE KENTUCKY KERNEL

A lecturer in UK's English department is spearheading the fight against a form of coal mining popular in Eastern Kentucky, in the hope that his new book will help raise people's awareness of mining and fossil fuel practices.

Erik Reece first published an article in Harper's Magazine in April 2005 entitled "Death of a Mountain," which chronicled the story of Lost Mountain near Hazard, Ky., and the effects of mountaintop removal, a mining practice that involves blasting off mountain tops with explosives and bulldozing the rubble into surrounding valleys.

Critics highlight pollution concerns associated with this mining method, as well as its aftereffects — which Reece said creates virtual wastelands where mountains and forest once were.



"I'm setting out to make this a mainstream issue and to get urban readers to pay attention," said Reece, who's taught at UK since 1986. The book, "Lost Mountain: A Year in the Vanishing Wilderness," is being published by Riverhead Hardcover and will be released Thursday. Reece also won Columbia University's John B. Oakes Award

for Distinguished Environmental Journalism this week for that same essay on mountaintop coal removal. Reece said the book is an extension of his Harper's article, which blossomed out of time spent in the UK-owned Robinson Forest, near Hazard, with the UK Summer English Writing Program over the past four years.

"I have such an affinity for Robinson Forest that I had to write about what's threatening it," he said.

Reece also worked with students and scientists at UK's facilities in the forest while working on the book.

"I owe a lot of the information in the book to all of the scientists who participated in our program, and to the students," he said, adding that he wants the program to get a boost from the book. "I hope that the attention the book gets calls attention to the program because it's one of the most innovative educational experiences around."

Randall Roorda, an associate
See **Reece** on page 2

Contracts

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in the College of Arts and Sciences, said it seemed as far as students were concerned, there wasn't a need for the agreement.

"It didn't mean anything to them," Iten said.

Initial plans called for an expansion of participating majors beyond the original 14, but Interim Provost Scott Smith decided to hold that number steady. After UK's new permanent provost, Kumble Subbaswamy, takes office July 1, he will decide whether to increase the number of majors that participate in the contract program.

A group of UK students advocated the idea in 2002, modeled after a similar program in place at the University of Iowa.

Greissman said universities that have been successful in developing graduation contract agreements automatically enroll students in the programs. But when UK started its program in the fall of 2004, he wanted to take a different approach by allowing students to make their own deci-

sion about whether to enroll or not.

"One hundred percent participation is not meaningful if students aren't informed about the program," he said.

After the "first-year full-court press" of advertising, Greissman said administrators decided not to take the same aggressive push in 2005. "I felt our best shot at reaching a student was through his or her adviser," Greissman said.

Considering the overwhelming results of the program thus far, Greissman said it was unclear what else UK could do. As an alternative, he said he wants to see student organizations take the lead in advertising the program.

The future success of the program depends on finding more effective ways to encourage students to participate, since they were the ones to push its inception in the first place, Greissman said.

"The thing that makes me proud ... is it was developed with the help and initiative of students," he said.

"It's up to students to take the lead in advertising the program to freshmen."

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Participating Majors

- Agricultural Economics
- Art History
- Art Studio
- Biology
- Civil Engineering
- Communications Disorders and Information Studies
- Dietetics
- History
- Journalism
- Mechanical Engineering
- Nursing
- Psychology
- Social Work

Conelly

Continued from page 1

he been swimming in an individual Olympic event. Since he was not eligible to swim in an individual event, it only mattered how the team did in the relay.

"It would be easy to be bitter about the experience, but in life that was only a breath," Conelly said.

Although he didn't come home with a medal, Conelly said the best part was being in the Olympic Village with people from all over the world.

"There was such a camaraderie. We gave each other Olympic 1972 pins from our countries. It made you feel really good, like it was the whole point of (the Olympics), not just what you see on TV," Conelly said.

But Black September, a Palestinian terrorist organization, turned the Olympics into a tense, 23-hour spectacle the world watched unfold on television.

On Sept. 5, Conelly, along with most of his teammates, returned from an all-day swimming exhibition to find teammate Mark Spitz, who won seven gold medals for America, with bodyguards. Eleven Israeli athletes had been taken hostage, and Spitz, a Jew, didn't rule himself out as a possible target.

"When we came back, there were soldiers and armored vehicles all over the place," Conelly said. "We were really kept in the dark about what was going on."

"Initially, we were told that the Israelis escaped and the terrorists were captured," Conelly said. "We didn't learn about the disaster at the helicopters (where the hostages were killed) until much later."

After such a traumatic event, Conelly's desire waned after he had worked so hard to get to this pinnacle in his life.

"The impact was dramatic," Conelly said. "It was very depressing and seemed even more so since there had been this great feeling of connectedness and community and goodwill only a few days before. Typically, everybody would



UK swimming head coach Gary Conelly watches his swimmers practice yesterday at the Lancaster Aquatic Center.

congregate in the middle of the village, but none of that was going on.

"It made me want to go home and get away from all the bad feelings."

Conelly the coach

Even after a bitter Olympic experience, Conelly stuck with the pool.

"Once I finished school, I started helping Doc coach at IU, leading me to coach for 32 years," he said.

After he graduated with his master's in English from Indiana and swimming jobs in Spain, South Carolina and Florida, Conelly came to UK in 1991. In the 15 years since, his teams have won five conference championships.

"He was a really cool guy and seemed really knowledgeable about the sport, so he was a big reason why I came over here," said team captain and All-American swimmer Steven Manley, who emigrated from Ireland to swim for UK.

Fellow captain and All-American swimmer Daniel Farnham agreed.

"He pushes you, but he also has a sense of humor and keeps practice fun

and entertaining," he said. "He's a real down-to-earth guy. He's really easy to talk to."

Manley said Conelly's unique style makes competitive swimming more enjoyable.

"He has a way of motivating people that's not a traditional way of coaching," Manley said. "It's a more relaxed style. He brings the best out in his athletes."

Conelly's Olympic experience, a goal he worked toward his entire childhood, was marred by terrorism.

But the UK coach has moved on, immersing himself in his work. He says being an active participant in the lives of young swimmers is the reward the Games didn't deliver.

"From the times when they're rambunctious as freshmen ... to see them later become more aggressive about swimming," Conelly said, is the best part of his job.

"Watching them grow up — it's exciting to see them go through that transition."

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Reece

Continued from page 1

professor of English, directs the Summer Environmental Writing Program and was with Reece when he first went to Robinson Forest.

"When Erik got there, he had a chance to see the devastation surface (strip) mining had wrought and to say the least, he was taken aback," Roorda said. "I'd say once he started work on this, it totally preoccupied

him. He kept at it and he worked at it."

Reece said he also wants the book to have a larger and more widespread impact.

"The short-term hope is that people will start conserving energy and join the fight against mountaintop removal," Reece said. "The long-term hope is that we will wean ourselves off coal and move toward alternative energies."

Reece's book also takes an in-depth look at people in coal country and how they have been negatively affected by the mining, along with some background information.

"There's going to be a lot more profiles of people who are living around the strip mines and having a tough time," he said.

Roorda said the work Reece is doing not only makes people at the university proud, but also demonstrates what

people can be capable of. "I am, of course, tremendously proud of him," Roorda said. "Erik is showing a lot of people in the department and in the university what it means to make a difference."

Roorda said Reece has captured a special opportunity.

"Not many of us end up working on projects of such moment," Roorda said. "This is an instance of someone who has prepared himself and found a situation where he can make a difference. He's an exemplar."

Reece maintains the book is ultimately about Kentuckians and for

them to draw attention to the situation.

"I'm fighting for the land, the people, the people's children. I'm fighting for the health of the environment," he said. "People's health is directly related to the health of the environment. Too often, environmentalists get marginalized."

Reece, who is heading to New York City to promote his book today, said he's glad for the opportunity to get the word out.

"I feel like I'm on the right side of the fight."

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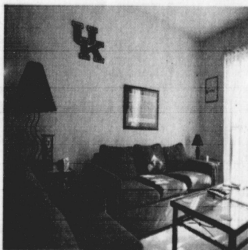
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'Free' Web space a no-brainer for students

There's a little secret among campus techies, and that's free Web space. UK offers use of a server to all students called SWEb, the student Web server. UK offers 500 MB of storage space on SWEb, and your own personal Web site. This, of course, is in addition to the U-Connect locker and e-mail services, and is completely free.



Roger Chui
TECH COLUMNIST

SWEb, located at <http://sweb.uky.edu>, is a cutting-edge Apple Xserve running all the latest software, which means it can handle anything you throw at it with thoughts to spare.

To get started on SWEb, you need to create an account using the university's Account Manager, located at <http://web.uky.edu/uams>. You can request a new account here using your student ID and personal access code, and in

anywhere from five minutes to an hour, you should be ready to go on SWEb. With the switch to Active Directory last year, the SWEb server now authenticates with the campus account server, so your username and password are the same as your U-Connect username and password.

The student Web server offers a basic Web file manager, which is sufficient for anyone used to the U-Connect Locker service. Personally, I think the SWEb interface is a lot cleaner.

When you log in, there will be a "www" folder in your account. Anything you put in this folder will be viewable by the entire world. Now, if you want to share "mytermpaper.doc" with 6 billion people, you can just drop it in the "www" folder, and access it anywhere by pointing an Internet browser to <http://sweb.uky.edu/~yourusername/mytermpaper.doc>. Try it yourself — you can download this article at <http://sweb.uky.edu/~rchai2/20060131.doc>!

Of course, if you don't want to let the

world see your files, you can simply stuff it elsewhere.

What's great about SWEb for the computer-savvy is that it offers secure shell access, meaning those not happy with the Web interface can take more direct control of their files. Secure shell, or SSH, is also more secure for both the server and users because all transfers are encrypted. More advanced users can also use secure shell to create secure "tunnels" through the Internet.

As far as I'm aware, SWEb offers more student space than any other public server on campus and is usable by people from anywhere with basic point-and-click knowledge of computers to more advanced console hot-doggers. Since part of your ever-increasing tuition money is going toward this service, you might as well get your money's worth.

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'Fourth Friday' a hit with local artists

By Charlie Denison
KENTUCKY ART CRITIC

The Lexington Art League certainly knows how to start the year off right. After the opening of the 2006 Nude International on the second Friday of the year, the Fourth Friday celebration was just as stirring. A line stood waiting from outside. In all, more than 600 gathered to see the art, the studios, hear the music and mingle amongst the artists and supporters.

"January's Fourth Friday is always big," said Dan Burns, a glass Apple. "They're almost as big as the Halloween Fourth Fridays."

Burns, a volunteer for the art league, was taking out trash and doing dirty work Friday. But he was in high spirits and enthused to be a part of the event.

Other volunteers had similar joyful attitudes about the evening.

"I love supporting this community," said Deborah Knittel, a retired English and drama teacher. "It makes it even more exciting when the turnout is so encouraging."

Knittel's job Friday was to recruit members to the art league. For students, the membership charge was down from \$25 to \$15. By the end of the night, 50 new members were recruited.

In the basement of the Loudon House, studios were open. Tiffany Finley, a good friend of art league special events coordinator and artist Marin Fiske, volunteered to stay in Fiske and Kandace Tatum's studio.

"I'm not an artist, I'm a supporter," said Finley, who pointed out some of her favorite pieces of Fiske's. "She's very creative. She even used dead bees she found in her garage in one piece."

The basement had another spectacle, especially for swimmers, in the Project Space, a newly formed exhibition space at the art league. The area was occupied by the former swimmer and lifeguard Ray Neufeld's constructed video of a swimming pool, that is, according to the art league Web site, "engaging, challenging, and experimental in both conception and execution." With your shoes off, slowly walk around on the mat and simply imagine.

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Rappers are all smiles going for grills

By Curtis Stephan
SPECIAL TO NEWSGIRL

NEW YORK — His name is Paul Slayton, better known as the Houston-based rapper Paul Wall. And these days, it's hard for him not to spontaneously grin, revealing some \$25,000 worth of jewelry on his teeth — a fact he likens to having a disco ball inside his mouth.

After all, his collaboration with rap superstar Nelly on the song "Grillz," an ode to platinum- and diamond-encrusted teeth, is the No. 1 song on the Billboard charts this week as fans nationwide race to their local jewelers for some dental glitter of their own.

"It's been incredible," says Wall, 24, whose latest album, "The People's Champ," was released last fall. "It's exciting to see how grillz has taken off. I definitely see more people saying how much they love it."

The grillz phenomenon has a long history. Once crafted solely for corrective dental procedures such as crowns and fillings, gold-capped teeth — also called "fronts" — slowly became chic in the late 1970s. By the early '80s, hip-hop became mainstream, stars such as the late Jam Master Jay of Run-DMC and rappers LL Cool J and Roxanne Shante took gold to new stylistic heights.

Yet it was the British-born and Bronx-reared rapper Slick Rick, revered for witty rhymes and eye-dazzling jewelry who is credited with creating early demand for grillz.

"They weren't all pimps, but I'd see guys on the street who dressed really flashy. I remember seeing one guy who had a ruby in his mouth," Slick Rick says. "Growing up, I just tried to blend their style with mine."

Once southern rap emerged in the late '90s and gave rise to everyone from Juvenile to Lil' Jon & The East Side Boyz, jewelry-coated teeth have become an enduring symbol in hip-hop as rope chains and Kangols.

"Pamela Anderson, Ashton Kutcher and Elton John can wear all the bling they want, but there's one place they'll never go. They won't get fronts because it's one of the last things that hip-hop is keeping for itself," says Minya Oh, a radio personality also known as Miss Info and author of "Bling Bling Hip Hop's Crown Jewels." "People don't want rappers to look like everyone else walking down the street — they want them to look like royalty."

Urban jewelers and such Web sites as gangstago.com are overwhelmed trying to keep pace.

"It's been crazy. People are asking for grillz with multicolored gold and diamonds that stretch out to eight teeth," says Rudy "Freeze" Athouriste, owner of Daed Jewelers in Miami. "A lot of people are trying to incorporate this into their budget. And with tax time and refunds coming up, just imagine what's about to happen," says Freeze, who has been designing grillz for seven years.

To produce the fronts, jewelers use a

waxy substance to create a dental impression, which is then coated with additional chemical solutions and left for 30 minutes to harden. The metal is then designed to the customer's taste. The New York State Dental Association recommends that any work involving a dental procedure be done by a licensed professional.

"If we're just talking about something that fits and isn't worn all the time, then that's OK," says Dr. Matthew Messina, a spokesman for the American Dental Association. "But if it's worn for long intervals, there's a serious risk for tooth decay."

Despite its surging popularity, critics say grillz are yet another example of hip-hop's maddening obsession with bling. Rappers such as Chuck D and Talib Kweli, however, rail against the use of "conflict diamonds" culled from mines in African war zones. When asked about the controversy over grillz, Wall says, "You can spend \$200 or \$50 for tennis shoes — it's about what you can afford."

Selwyn Seyfu Hinds, author and veteran hip-hop journalist, says the industry's fascination with avarice should be viewed in a broader context.

"Most rappers are young men from fairly tough circumstances who dreamed of matching the materialism they saw in captains of industry like Donald Trump," Hinds says. "We need to do a better job at promoting what financial empowerment really means."

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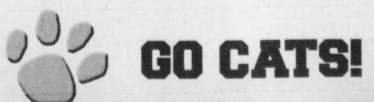
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Tuesday 31 st	Wednesday 1 st	Thursday 2 nd	Friday 3 rd	Saturday 4 th	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •James W. Stuckert Career Center Drop-In Hours, 3:00 PM, James W. Stuckert Career Center 408 Rose Street •Horticulture Club, 5:30 PM, Greenhouse Classroom •Alpha Phi Omega Active Meeting, 7:30 PM, Student Center, Room 359 •Pre-Dental Society Winter Meeting, 7:00 PM, Lecture Hall MN 363 •Fencing Club Practice, 8:00 PM, Buell Armory •Reformed University Fellowship (RUF), 7:30 PM, student center rm. 357 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Spring 2006 VOLUNTEER FAIR - FREE FOOD!! (Student Volunteer CTR), 11:00 AM, Grand Ballroom Student Center (Office Located - Inside SOC (Near the UK ID Office)) •Vanessa Shepherd: Faces of Zimbabwe, Randall Gallery •New North Open Mic Night, 9:00 PM, New North Hall Plasma Room •Marudzi Akasiyana: Faces of Zimbabwe, Randall Gallery, Student Center •James W. Stuckert Career Center Drop-In Hours, 3:00 PM, James W. Stuckert Career Center 408 Rose Street •Comedy Caravan, 8:00 PM, Student Center Cats Den •French Film Series, 7:00 PM, WT Young Library Auditorium •New North Open Mic Night, 9:00 PM, New North Hall Plasma Room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •James W. Stuckert Career Center Drop-In Hours, 3:00 PM, James W. Stuckert Career Center 408 Rose Street •Football Tournament, 7:00 PM, Student Center Cats Den •Fencing Club Practice, 8:00 PM, Buell Armory •Reformed University Fellowship (RUF), 7:30 PM, student center rm. 357 •RSA General Assembly Meetings, 5:30 PM, 359 Student Center •Dance/Blue All Committee Meeting, 5:00 PM, 230 Student Center •National Student Exchange Info Session, 3:30 PM, 102 Miller Hall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •James W. Stuckert Career Center Drop-In Hours, 3:00 PM, James W. Stuckert Career Center 408 Rose Street •CF Free Dinner and Fellowship, 7:00 PM, CSF Building (across from Cooperstown Apt.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •UKUFO, 10:00 PM, Seaton Field 	



IN OUR OPINION

Meal plan measure a good step for SG

Thanks to Student Government, it looks like students will be able to effectively voice their opinion on the new meal plan in this spring's elections.

Last week, SG's Operations and Evaluations Committee passed a resolution that would place a question on the March ballot about whether students would prefer a declining-balance system — in essence, the old meal plan. The full Senate must approve the resolution for the question to appear on the ballot.

Passing the resolution should be a no-brainer for the SG Senate. Students seem generally dissatisfied with the new plan, but there are no concrete numbers to confirm the sentiment. A ballot measure like this one would send a clear message to UK administrators, backed up by a solid count of students who want to revert to the old plan.

Most of all, we're glad to see SG fulfilling its intended purpose — representing a student voice about decisions and issues on campus. An SG that spends its time working to change the meal plan is much more valuable to the student body than one that plans dances and events.

For the ballot measure to accomplish anything, however, election turnout must increase dramatically. Last year, 2,818 students voted, meaning that turnout was a dismally low 10.6 percent.

And in a vote such as this one, numbers matter. It's not an actual referendum on the meal plan — the decision to keep or change it ultimately comes down to the UK administration. So for this vote to have any significant impact, high participation is vital. The percentages may be the same, but 7,500 votes against the current plan out of a total of 10,000 is much more likely to prompt change than 1,500 votes out of 2,000.

Last week's meeting, the Operations and Evaluations Committee also started the process of determining where voting booths should go. Chairman Ben Carter

said he favored sticking with what "we know works" rather than rethinking the placement of voting booths.

Carter's statement is almost comical. The only thing we know about the past arrangement is that it *doesn't* work. Judging from previous years' experience, lines are discouragingly long at central locations — especially the White Hall Classroom Building — while locations elsewhere see almost no voters.

It seems that the best way to increase turnout would be to put more voting machines in central locations near where most students spend their time on campus, such as White Hall and the Student Center. On the first day of voting last year, 725 students voted at those two locations combined, compared to a combined 194 at the College of Agriculture, College of Business and Economics, College of Law and Medical Center.

Asking students about the meal plan on the March SG ballot would be a step in the right direction for SG — and sensible placement of voting booths would be even better

Moreover, adding polling machines to central locations would reduce the number of poll workers necessary. Last year, a shortage of poll workers led to a serious reduction in polling hours, which presumably depressed turnout. Rather than risk a repeat of that situation, which led to some machines being used for only two hours per day SG should put them in high-traffic spots where they can be used for more hours.

Though we realize that further centralization of voting may not be optimum for some students, inconveniencing a few dozen students so that it is easier for hundreds more to vote is surely worth the cost. No setup will make everyone happy so the goal should be to maximize efficiency.

We hope the full SG Senate approves the meal plan ballot measure and a more sensible allocation of voting booths. The choice to show up to vote ultimately comes down to students, but SG needs to do what it can to fight apathy and make voting more convenient — and these steps are one way to do that.

There's no easy solution to graduates' number problems

Some college graduates have little to no common sense, according to a recent national survey. In fact, about 20 percent of graduates from four-year institutions like UK don't have the quantitative literacy skills necessary to balance a checkbook or calculate how much gas is in the tank. A similar amount struggle with analyzing

To be frank, this is appalling. The gap between "book smarts" and common sense can most likely be traced back to a lack of preparation in high schools across the nation. High schools have an incentive to keep graduation rates high to keep receiving government funding, so students who aren't qualified end up being passed on.

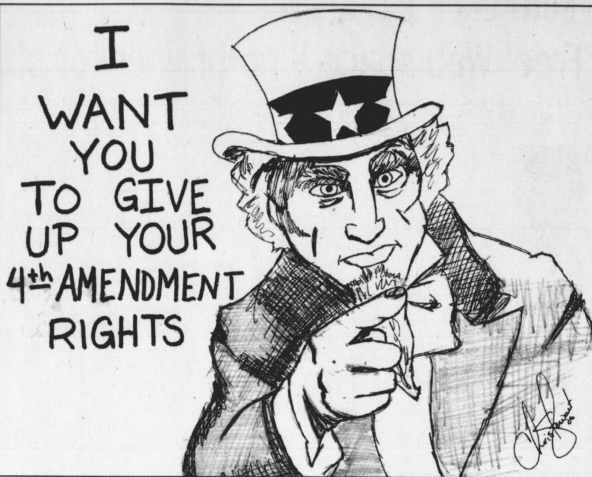
A lack of focus on real-world application of skills in math and science also contributes to the problem. Students all too often receive no satisfactory answer to the question "What's the point of learning this stuff?" Though schools should certainly teach ba-

sic theory and principles, they should make sure that students realize their practical applications.

Parental responsibility is also a factor in the problem of low quantitative literacy — parents should take time to teach teens how to balance a checkbook and use the quarter-tank mark as an indication that they should fill up soon. This should be taught way before high school graduation. Finally, students who reach college so poorly prepared are unlikely to pick up quantitative reasoning in enormous classes with little personal assistance. We saw that earlier this year when high failure and withdrawal rates — most likely the effect of inadequate high-school preparation and large class sizes — plagued MA 109.

No matter the cause, poor real-world preparation is an issue that must be resolved. High schools, parents and students across the U.S. have to take on responsibility for practical skills if they hope to succeed in and beyond college.

Poor high-school preparation and lack of concern at home are the major causes of quantitative illiteracy



CHRIS STEWART, THE KENTUCKY KERNEL

Damnation of the childless makes no sense

The Rev. R. Albert Mohler Jr. hates DINKS.

That's right — the president of Louisville's Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has called dual-income-no-kids couples "an absolute revolt against God's design."

Well, by that logic, I suppose Mohler hates me, too. Apparently I'm an absolute revolt against God's design, because I don't want children of my own.

In commentaries from his Web site and his congregation's Baptist Press, as well as in media interviews, Mohler has based his case on the Bible, saying it teaches that "marriage, sex and children are part of one package."

And all this time, I thought couples were free to choose their own lifestyle, including how many children they wanted, if any.

Couples are not given the option of chosen childlessness in the biblical revelation," Mohler said.

Clearly, I was wrong. But I have to admit, it's a little unsettling to see the human race as nothing more than a horde of breeders. Such an unflattering light debases the institution of marriage. And having children, the whole aspect of adulthood, actually.

I've tried to follow Mohler's line of reasoning here. Really, I have. (My indignation just keeps getting the best of me halfway through, because I'm one of those blights upon humanity who doesn't want to reproduce.)

Maybe, I've thought, desperate to deduce some iota of rationality into his argument, he's equating DINKS with gratuitous sodomy. Sodomy is, after all, any sexual act that doesn't produce offspring.

That has to be it — he's likened chosen childlessness to homosexuality and cried, "Sin!"

I was so thrilled by my somewhat feasible rationalization, I almost drew a Venn diagram to celebrate.

But my brain wouldn't shut up. Following Mohler's line of reasoning, then, we should all assume the best thing to do is have as many children as possible, right?

Not so much — he doesn't oppose contraception. I should've known better than to try and rationalize the man's argument, especially when he contradicts himself so.

Mohler's blatant refusal to accept anyone who is able to have, but doesn't want, children is hurtful and demeaning. It's a personal attack that makes me feel like less of a human and more of a waste of ovaries. Not wanting children shouldn't be equated with a selfish, unfeeling nature.

To the contrary, one of the main reasons I'm not going to have kids is because I'm so petrified I'd be a terrible mom. Parent-

ing is probably the most singularly rewarding and terrifying roles anyone will ever undertake, and I know that I'll never be up to that particular challenge. So really, I'm doing my future nonchildren a favor by not bringing them into the world just so I can wreak havoc on their psyches because I wanted them to play tennis instead of soccer.

I — along with all the DINKS out there — am also not contributing to overpopulation. Besides, I have a safety net: If the maternal instinct I decidedly lack belatedly kicks in, I can always adopt.

So, yes, I think Mohler's use of selective passages in the Bible to further his own pro-nuclear-family agenda is wrong. He's alienated professionals who've chosen not to have children. He's ignored the more unconventional family structures, and the more unconventional mother and father figures — all the grandparents, the aunts, uncles and guardians who care for children as they would their own.

Indeed, he's reinforced a barely achievable Rockwellian status quo while renouncing others.

Funny, because I thought ministers were supposed to spread the Word and go easy on the condemnation.

I'm probably wrong on that front, too — my rationale must be an unfortunate side effect of wasted ovaries.

Crystal Little is a journalism senior. E-mail: clittle@kykernel.com.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Coal's benefits are vital

Several months ago, I created a Facebook group, "Coal Keeps the Lights On," of which I am very proud. The group has over 200 members and welcomes all supporters of coal at UK — "those who've seen the light," as I say. There's no question that the coal industry has had a tremendous economic impact on both Kentucky and the whole United States.

An alarming misrepresentation often perpetuated by groups like Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, however, is that people in Eastern Kentucky suffer more at the hands of our signature industry than we benefit. As a proud Pike County native, I can say without reservation that while safe, pragmatic mining practices are certainly necessary, coal mining is not the "evil" enterprise that many environmentalists portray in their editorials.

Let us examine a few key statistics, compiled by the Kentucky Coal Council and Kentucky Coal Association: The Kentucky coal industry employed 14,812 miners earning over \$676.4 million in wages during 2000; created a total of 58,219 jobs statewide, paid over \$141.23 million in severance taxes during the fiscal year 2000-01; generated total state tax revenues of about \$403.2 million; was a \$3.15 billion in-

dustry which brought into Kentucky receipts totaling about \$2.5 billion from 27 states and 11 countries in 2000; and created economic activity throughout Kentucky totaling \$6.84 billion. It is estimated that more than 80 percent of coal mined in Kentucky will go to electric power plants all over the country, which provide the electricity we all use on a daily basis.

Due to excessive media coverage of recent mining tragedies in West Virginia and Kentucky, there is now heightened public awareness concerning the need for mine safety. To those unfamiliar with the industry and the rural areas it calls home, mining probably seems like an increasingly dangerous job, because I have many loved ones who work in the business, I fully support strict safety regulations. Having said that, we must not lose sight of the fact that coal mining is a perfectly decent occupation, the benefits of which serve each and every Kentuckian.

Coal is vital to our commonwealth, and those who mine it deserve our utmost respect and support. It literally keeps the lights on, even in the homes of those who berate and malign its utility.

COODY D. BELCHER
communications junior

Submissions

Send a guest column or letter to the editor to Opinions Editor Brenton Kenkel or Assistant Opinions Editor Wes Bleivins. Please limit letters to 350 words or fewer. Be sure to include your full name, class and major with all submissions.

E-MAIL

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Note to Readers

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.

Online Poll Question

For the March elections, should Student Government concentrate voting machines in central locations, or should it spread polling places across campus?

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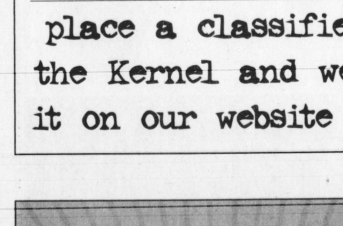
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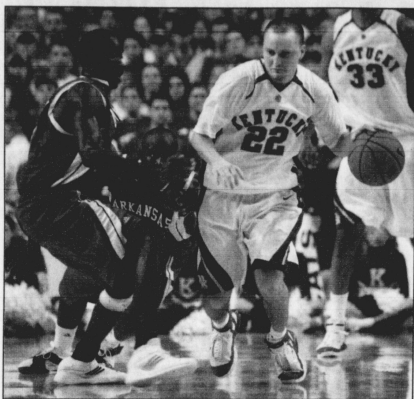
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BASKETBALL NOTEBOOK



Senior guard Patrick Sparks drives down the court during UK's 78-76 win over Arkansas Sunday. Sparks scored nine points — all in the second half — to aid UK's comeback. The Central City, Ky., native also coaxed two offensive fouls out of Arkansas guard Dontell Jefferson, after one of which the two had to be separated.

BRAD LUTTRELL | STAFF

Rondo takes aggression out on Razorbacks, reporters

By Josh Sullivan
THE KENTUCKY KERNEL

Rajon Rondo literally lets his game speak for itself — even when he is being interviewed.

UK's sophomore point guard, apparently upset over a Lexington Herald-Leader story and paparazzi-style photo that examined the circumstances surrounding his use of a vehicle registered to friend and former UK star Derek Anderson, was intentionally aloof during interviews after Sunday's 78-76 win over Arkansas.

His answers to long-winded questions from the press mostly consisted of one-word responses and head gestures, prompting a frustrated staff member of UK Media Relations to abruptly end his interview session.

Though he held his tongue after the game, Rondo's play spoke volumes during the Cats' season-high 35-point eruption in the second half. After hitting one shot during UK's abysmal first half, Rondo reeled off 12 points after the intermission, eight of which came during the decisive 19-4 UK run that earned the Cats their first lead since they lead 2-0 with 16:57 left in the first half.

UK routinely spread the floor and allowed Rondo one-on-one opportunities against various Razorback defenders, none of whom could manage to keep him out of the paint and off the scoreboard. Rondo hit UK's last four shots from the floor, including three buckets on three straight possessions with less than four minutes left in the game.

"The thing that got them over the top was Rondo's penetration," said Arkansas head coach Stan Heath. "Time after time, where the shot clock was winding down with five or six seconds to go, he came up with the play. That's what great players do."

"Rajon, at his size, pound-for-pound is as athletic as they get," said UK head coach Tubby Smith. "That's why he's one of the best guards in the country."

Cats get contributions from two post players

All season, the Cats have struggled to get consistent production from their frontcourt. Since returning from a 14-game suspension six games ago, sophomore center Randolph Morris has shown the ability to dominate in the paint when he's able to stay out of foul trouble, but he's had little aid from the rest of UK's big men.

"Nobody's going to get hit and back down — at least, I'm not."

Patrick Sparks,
UK guard,
on Arkansas' Dontell Jefferson

But in junior forward Sheraf Thomas, UK found the other post player necessary to complete a one-two punch in the post Sunday against the Razorbacks.

Thomas scored nine points, including seven during the early stages of the second half to help the Cats close a 12-point Arkansas halftime edge to a four-point deficit. Thomas drained his first 3-pointer since the Louisville game, then nailed a jump hook in the lane. On the possession after that, he flew in from the baseline and put back a missed 3-pointer from senior guard Patrick Sparks.

"That's kind of typical (for UK), that unexpected guy who steps up and plays well," said Heath of Thomas.

After getting in foul

trouble in the last two games and having to sit on the bench, Morris managed to completely avoid the whistle in the first half and led the Cats in scoring for the fourth time in six games since returning to the court, tying a season-high with 19 points and setting a new season mark with eight rebounds.

"When you see Randolph Morris with a 19-point and eight-rebound game, that's a great performance," said Heath.

Sparks mixes it up

Patrick Sparks didn't have any kind words for his Arkansas counterpart, senior guard Dontell Jefferson. Sparks drew two offensive fouls on Jefferson, the first coming after Jefferson picked up his dribble and Sparks quickly closed down on defense, prompting the Hog guard to knock him to the floor with a forearm. Sparks spent much of the remainder of the afternoon jawing with Jefferson and eventually drew another pushing foul away from the ball.

"He was kind of getting on my nerves a little bit. He's bigger than me and I think he was trying to use that to his advantage," Sparks said. "I was getting tired of it."

"Nobody's going to get hit and back down — at least, I'm not," he said.

Aggression notwithstanding, Sparks felt quite charitable toward his teammates during the game, tying a UK career high by dishing out eight assists.

His generosity was rewarded afterward, when he earned a one-on-one visit from UK basketball matriarch Ashley Judd in a tunnel near the locker room.

When asked how his chat with the famous UK alumna went, he smiled and responded, "How do you think it was?"

E-mail
jsullivan@kykernel.com

Women ranked for first time since 1993

By Chris Johnson
THE KENTUCKY KERNEL

For the first time since Feb. 2, 1993 — almost 13 years to the day — the UK women's basketball team is in the Associated Press Top 25. The No. 21 Cats (15-4, 4-2 Southeastern Conference) beat Ole Miss on the road before coming home and knocking off No. 1 Tennessee 66-63 last week.

"This means a lot for our team," head coach Mickie DeMoss said in a press release. "Our motto this year has been to earn respect ... It's just another way of validating the fact that we have made some

progress at Kentucky. We still aren't where we want to be, but we definitely aren't where we were."

DeMoss' Cats are 15th in the nation in the Rating Percentage Index, a ranking which measures a team's performance against its strength of schedule. The RPI is a key factor in determining seeding in the NCAA Tournament.

Tennessee dropped to fifth in the poll. North Carolina, fresh off a 74-70 win over former No. 1 Duke, took over the top spot in the poll. The Blue Devils dropped to second.

UK faces another road test this week, traveling to

No. 14 Georgia (15-5, 5-2). The Cats play five of their remaining eight regular season games on the road.

This marks the first time since the first week of January 1990 that UK Hoops has been ranked and the men's team has not. The Lady Kats, as they were called, climbed to No. 25 in the nation that week.

The men's team received nine votes in the AP poll, which was released yesterday. Louisville also received nine votes for the first time this season that the Cardinals have been unranked.

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THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Matt Anzot and Mike Argente

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