

KENTUCKY KERNEL

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Lexington explores replacing Rupp Arena

By Rebecca Sweeney
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The city of Lexington announced yesterday that it could replace Rupp Arena with an upgraded basketball arena using funds generated from a new proposed downtown taxing district.

"We need to consider the possibility of a new basketball arena, expanding Lexington Center, and there is a lot of interest in redeveloping the Manchester Street corridor," said Lexington Mayor Jim Newberry in a news release. "Tax increment financing gives us many opportunities to improve our community, and we must fully explore them."

Tax increment financing allows cities to redevelop deteriorated areas of town. The financing tool has been available to Louisville for several years, and a change in state law this year made the option available to Lexington, according to the news release.

"This is an incredible opportunity between the city and the university," said UK spokesman Jay Blanton. The city is looking at redeveloping the district that encompasses Lexington Center, Rupp Arena and the Manchester Street area. Lexington can use the additional tax revenues generated from redeveloping this vicinity to fund redevelopment projects within the area, which can-

not exceed three square miles. "We want to look at facilities for the institution, downtown revitalization and the Lexington economy," Blanton said.

The Lexington Center approved issuance of a "request for proposal" to hire a consultant that would examine the possibility and proposed boundaries of the new taxing district and evaluate opportunities and costs related to an arena that could seat 24,000 to 30,000 people.

Approving the request for proposal was the first step of a long process, Blanton said.

"Our intent is to continue our partnership with the civic center and

continue playing basketball in downtown for a very long time," Blanton said.

Rupp Arena has been the home court of UK basketball since 1976 and has seen UK win 90 percent of its home games, according to the UK athletics Web site.

"We have a preeminent basketball program in America, and we want the preeminent facilities," Blanton said.

No final decisions have been made, Newberry said in the press release, and the next steps for the proposal are review by the Planning Commission and approval by the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council.

Forums addressing USP proposal start today

By Jill Laster
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The process that could overhaul student requirements for UK's university studies program by 2009 continues with faculty forums today, tomorrow and Thursday.

"We want this to go quickly as possible, but we don't want it to seem like we're moving too quickly," said Phil Kraemer, chairman of the USP steering committee and associate provost for undergraduate education. "We want to take this one step at a time."

The forums this week will be open to faculty and students and provide "a very brief overview of the process and substance of the proposal followed by open comments and questions from participants," Kraemer said.

Today's forum is from 10 to 11:30 a.m. in the Student Center's Worsham Theater.

The new USP requirements would require incoming freshmen in 2009 to complete a set of general education requirements consisting of 30 credit hours of courses that, with few exceptions, students will not be able to use pre-major or major credits to complete.

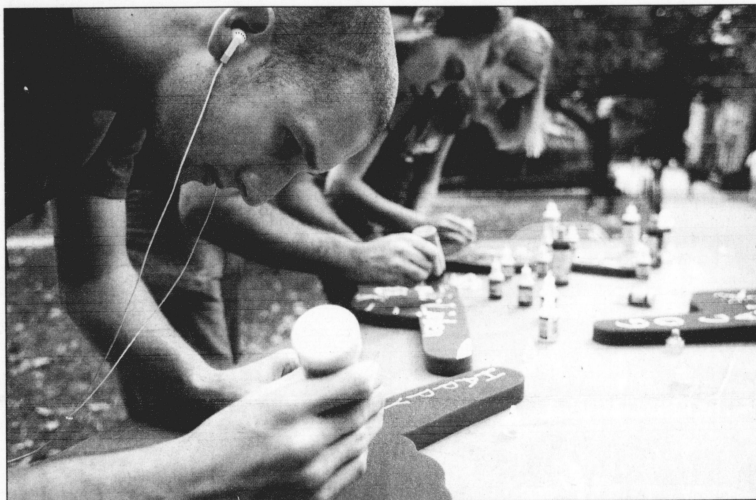
Different colleges have already submitted consensus opinions on the new requirements to Kraemer.

"Initial conversation seemed favorable, but extended conversation brought more concerns to light than advantages," said Mike Mullen, associate dean for academic programs in the College of Agriculture, in a letter to Kraemer.

"Some were favorably inclined towards this proposal, seeing the potential benefits in students learning the process of critical thinking and reasoning," Mullen said. "Others voiced concerns as to what evidence we have that the current system is not working and resource

See USP on page 4

FINGER PAINTING



PHOTOS BY ED MATTHEWS | STAFF

Pre-physical therapy freshman Matt Zirretta, left, decorates a foam finger outside the White Hall Classroom Building during Student Activities Board's Game Day event yesterday.

Oversized foam fingers became personalized symbols of school spirit yesterday afternoon as students decorated the novelty fan accessories as part of Homecoming Week's Game Day event outside White Hall Classroom Building. Homecoming Week continues today with Student Activities Board's Big Blue Impromptu, an improvisational competition, at 7 p.m. in the Student Center Grand Ballroom. For a full list of Homecoming Week events, visit the SAB Web site (www.uky.edu/SAB).



Middle school English education sophomore Amy Thompson adds paint to a foam finger during Game Day, an event organized as part of Homecoming Week.

Club seeks design training outside of class

By Megan Wimpy
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After two years of looking for ways to get involved with the interior design major beyond going to class and doing projects, junior Megan Drees decided to start a new organization for students interested in design.

The Interior Design Association, which is open to students of all majors, had its first meeting in September to determine how the club should operate and what students wanted to gain from the organization.

About 20 people have joined the club, and officers are encouraging more people to take advantage of the opportunity to learn more about design.

"The purpose of this club is to get to know more people within your major and gain more experience about interior design in the real world," said Drees, an interior design major and the club's president.

Members toured the woodshop in Pence Hall earlier this month to learn about the tools it offers for design students, and Drees said students are interested in bringing in design professionals as guest speakers and taking trips to design firms for future meetings.

See Design on page 4

Students don holsters to protest weapons policy

By Katie Jo Cox
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UK students are donning T-shirts and empty holsters throughout this week to peacefully protest state and university policies that prohibit the carrying of concealed firearms on campus.

More than 110 other university campuses around the U.S. are participating in the protest, which is organized by Students for Concealed Carry on Campus.

"Basically we're just trying to raise awareness by carrying the holsters and making sure they're empty," said business management junior Dave Burnett, a member of SCCC at UK. "We're not for civil disobedience; we're just trying to raise awareness."

UK's concealed weapons policy states that no person except a police officer can carry a firearm or any other weapon on campus property.

"It's been that way forever, and we're not the only ones. It's a state law," said Capt. Kevin Franklin of UK police. "It's for safety purposes. I just don't think it

would be a good learning environment if we had everyone running around with guns on campus."

"But we do respect their right to protest," Franklin said.

The protest started with e-mails informing members of the UK community of the protest and the meaning behind the empty holsters.

The empty holsters are a symbolic representation that students and faculty on college campuses are made defenseless by state laws and school policies that refuse to allow concealed handgun license holders the same rights that they are allowed everywhere else, according to the SCCC Web site. The holsters also serve a practical point by encouraging conversation between protesters and individuals who might not know the facts.

UK President Lee Todd also sent out an e-mail Sunday afternoon notifying campus members of the event and endorsing the protesters' right to freedom of speech while still affirming that UK is a deadly-

See Protest on page 4

UK to host statewide health summit in 2008

By Juliann Vachon
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UK announced yesterday that it will host the 2008 Governor's Get Healthy Kentucky Summit in September to continue addressing the state's growing health problems.

The announcement was made less than a month after the program's first summit at the University of Louisville brought together state universities and other regional community health leaders to address the problem of obesity in Kentucky, along with other statewide health issues.

The summits are part of Gov. Ernie Fletcher's Get Healthy Kentucky initiative, a program aimed at improving health conditions and quality of life in the state.

Kentucky ranks seventh in the nation for the rate of obesity among adults at 27.5 percent, according to a study by Trust for America's Health. The study also shows that Kentucky ranks third for the rate of overweight children at 20.6 percent.

Jody Ensmann, program manager for UK Health and Wellness, said the summit at U of L was successful in forming relationships among university and state health specialists who can effectively address statistics such as these.

"The fact that we could bring together all of these key leaders who have a vested interest in the health and well-being of Kentuckians was a huge first step," Ensmann said.

At the summit, participants listened to speakers and an expert panel talk on health concerns in the state, including childhood obesity and the cost of health care.

After discussing existing and potential programs aimed at addressing state health problems in breakout sessions, regional teams reconvened and worked together to identify one strategic wellness initiative that the group would implement over the next year, said Tammy Akin, a UK wellness specialist.

UK's Health and Wellness program will work with community partners, such as the Lexington Health Department, the YMCA and the Lexington Herald-Leader, to improve wellness in workplaces during the next year.

The Bluegrass Partnership for a Fit Kentucky had already started creating a worksite wellness program, and the regional team decided to work with the organization to "strengthen what had already been laid as a foundation," Ensmann said.

See Summit on page 4

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Horoscopes

By Linda C. Black

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

Aries (March 21 - April 19) Today is a 5 — You're entering a four-week phase with the emphasis on planning. No need to hurry, run out several scenarios before deciding.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20) Today is a 7 — Your friends are full of great ideas, but you'd better take care. When it comes to dipping into your reserves, you'll be wise to turn them down.

Gemini (May 21 - June 21) Today is a 7 — You're entering a very busy phase. Soon you'll be able to advance your agenda in ways you've barely thought possible. Yes, there is work involved.

Cancer (June 22 - July 22) Today is a 7 — This time, the far-out idea could be more trouble than it's worth. Think about what you'd have to do to make it work, before you say you will. Might be best if you don't.

Leo (July 23 - Aug. 22) Today is a 7 — It's not a good day to gamble, buy toys or ask for favors. Also, stay away from the malls. You'd buy stuff you don't need, in the wrong color or sizes.

Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22) Today is a 7 — Proceed with caution. A partner's suggestion seems good, but causes a mess. Don't rush right into anything. Do a trial run first.

Libra (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22) Today is a 7 — Creativity is required on your next assignment. Troubleshoot and innovate to get the job done on time. You won't find the answer to this problem in the manual!

Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21) Today is a 7 — Somebody you love dearly wants you to help them solve a problem. Don't throw your money at

it. That would be counter-productive.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21) Today is a 6 — Somebody or something at home needs more of your attention. This will not be an easy chore. Great patience is required.

Capricorn (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19) Today is a 7 — It takes time to develop new skills, time you may feel you don't have. Don't get nervous and make a mistake that would just make it take longer. Relax.

Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18) Today is a 7 — You have enough to take the whole gang out for a night on the town. Doing that, however, would be monstrously naive. Pay off a debt instead.

Pisces (Feb. 19 - March 20) Today is a 7 — Conditions are changing in your favor. You'll see, it'll happen soon. This is not just because you cleaned the garage but it has been said that such activities have miraculous healing powers. You decide.

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THE DISH

THIS MINUTE

Eva's first sex scene

Mendes talks nudity, kissing and pregnancy rumors with Us

No one can call Eva Mendes a prude. In the new drama *We Own the Night*, she steams it up as Amada Juarez, the leather bustier-wearing girlfriend of nightclub owner Bobby Green (Joaquin Phoenix). Although the actress has done nude scenes, this film contains her first sex scene. The Miami native, 32 (whose boyfriend is producer George Augusto), dishes to *Us*.

Q: How was filming the sex scene with Joaquin?

The truth is, it's very technical when you shoot it. The freak-out comes when you're sitting in the theater going, "That's my boob. Oh, my God!"

Q: You've also kissed Will Smith and Denzel Washington on screen. Who was the best kisser?

All of them, though I regret not kissing Johnny Depp for longer [in 2003's *Once Upon a Time in Mexico*]. I was so intimidated by him. It was the first time I had worked with an actor who I had crushed on as a little girl.

Q: What role did you want and not get?

I really wanted Mr. & Mrs. Smith. I was 10 minutes away from auditioning when my agent left me a message telling me the part had been offered to Angelina Jolie. I got really crazy, ignored it and auditioned anyway. I really thought I had a chance!

Q: What about those re-

cent pregnancy rumors?

I had just finished a pasta meal and my tummy was hanging out. Then suddenly it was all over the Internet: baby bump. Eva's pregnant! And they said I was coming out of a prenatal yoga class — I don't even go to regular yoga!

— Muriqee Meneses

Ellen's DJ — His hot playlist

Music to our ears! Ted Stryker, 33, the new DJ on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* (check local listings), tells *Us* some of his top must-have tunes.

"Stronger," Kanye West — It's infectious and the lyrics are good. No matter what is going on when I put that on, I feel energized.

"Everlong," Foo Fighters — The best love song of the past 20 years. I wish I thought of these lyrics: "Breathe out / so I can breathe you in."

"The Way I Are," Timbaland

"I love the beat, and I am not even remotely tired of listening to that song — and it gets played everywhere!"

"Fix You," Coldplay

"Chris Martin is one of a select few who can get away with singing, 'Tears stream / down your face / I promise you I will learn from my mistakes.'"

"You're All I Need To Get By," Method Man

"This song is perfect in every way. The Meth mixed with Mary J. Blige is a lethal combo!"

House's Rx for Cast Exits

It's no fun getting axed from a hit TV show. But that's what 40 actors (down to about 12 as of press time) have faced as their characters compete for a coveted diagnostics team slot on *House* (Fox, Tuesdays, 9 p.m.). "We've lost a few people we were all close to," says Lisa Edelstein, 41 (who plays hospital chief Cuddy). "It was a brutal process. But we would acknowledge them for a moment at the read-through. Everybody would clap, and on their last shot, all the producers and writers would come down to the set and acknowledge the person."

Scrubbing in So who's staying? "I can't tell you," she says. "But I'm very happy." However, Kai Penn, Olivia Wilde and Peter Jacobson are reportedly making the grade.

— Mara Reinstein

What's Your Kid Being for Halloween?

"My favorite costume right now is the one that my son [Dezi, 5 months] wears. He's baby Yoda."

— Jaime Pressly

"Milo [6] is going to be a zombie punk rocker."

— Camryn Manheim

— Adam Sandler

"Owen [4] is going to be Luke Skywalker, and Aiden [2] is going to maybe be Princess Leia or maybe a butterfly."

— Noah Wyle

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UK in the thick of SEC race with four games left

The road through the Southeastern Conference is a tough challenge and is not just a test of what's humming under the hood, but what's in the gas tank.

To start the season, both Florida and Louisiana State had the Georgia Dome on their minds with hopes of playing there for the conference championship. Now in the ninth week, it's the other teams that are breathing down their necks, making the race for the SEC title as competitive as it's been in years.



J.D. WILLIAMS
Kernel columnist

Obviously one of those teams is UK, who originally had the goal of "being a factor" in the race, as head coach Rich Brooks said earlier in the season. After a 5-0 start, the goals inside of Commonwealth Stadium quickly changed from just being a bump in the road for other teams to winning the SEC.

However, it was a loss on the road to that coach who I will not name that opened the hydrant, and the Gators came in two weeks later to officially hose the Cats down.

It's true. The Cats are down, but they're not out. Florida's win over UK simply meant that the Gators now control their own destiny of representing the SEC Eastern Division in Atlanta. The team from The Swamp is in a three-way tie with Georgia and South Carolina for the lead in the division. Florida will play Georgia on Saturday and will travel to Columbia, S.C., on Nov. 10 to battle the Gamecocks.

What hurts the Cats' hopes of winning their division is that they've already lost to two of the three teams ahead of them. To be the best you have to beat the best, which is something UK didn't do.

However, there is something called grace, and the football gods must be shining down on the Cats. They still have to play Georgia on the Bulldogs' home turf, a game either team can win. There is no predictable win in college football this season, and the SEC is certainly not an exception. Vanderbilt beat South Carolina last weekend, and Mississippi State, who the Cats will host Saturday, got a road win against Auburn early this season.

"We're talking about a team that went in and beat Auburn at Auburn," Brooks said about Mississippi State, one of many teams to go into a game as an unranked underdog and knock off a ranked opponent.

In order for UK to crawl back into being a real contender for the division, the Cats will have to become a two-headed monster cheering with pom-poms in one hand, and a devil's advocate with a fork in the other hand, all while playing stellar on the field. They have to hope a team or two can step up and get big wins against Florida and South Carolina. If that happens, then all the Cats have to do is run the table with the remaining games on the schedule. That's a feat that would have been followed by a chuckle and a "yeah right" a few years back, but there's something about these new-age Cats.

Last season's 34-31 win over MSU sparked a 5-1 run to end the season. Can lightning strike twice in one spot?

We'll see. Things are topsy-turvy in college football, and there's a surprise every weekend, so I wouldn't be shocked if the Gators and Gamecocks let the Cats back in. But then again, if they didn't, I wouldn't be shocked either.

At any rate, we'll see if the Cats have any fight left in the tank to get to the finish line stretching across the entrance of the dome in Atlanta.

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FOOTBALL NOTEBOOK

Cats hope to avoid slip-up against MSU

By Eric Lindsey
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Before battling top-25 opponents South Carolina, Louisiana State and Florida, college football analysts and experts around the nation questioned if UK could contend for a Southeastern Conference championship.

While the No. 14 Cats went just 1-2 during the brutal three-game stretch, UK at least proved that it's a legitimate SEC contender after going toe-to-toe with some of the powerhouses of the SEC.

If the Cats want to remain in the SEC race, they'll have to avoid a slip-up against a weaker opponent in Mississippi State on Saturday.

The Bulldogs are just two games away from reaching bowl eligibility with four games left, a situation reminiscent to the Cats in 2006 when they reeled off four victories in their last five games to become bowl eligible.

"They really are in the same situation we were in last year," said sophomore defensive tackle Corey Peters. "Now that I know how that feels, I think that's going to give us a little more motivation to work harder this week."

After getting off to a quick 3-1 start, the Bulldogs have faded of late, losing three of their last four games to South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia. Despite their recent struggles, head coach Rich Brooks pointed to the Bulldogs' huge win at Auburn earlier in the year as to why the Cats can't afford to overlook the Bulldogs this week.

"They're an improved team, there isn't any question about it," Brooks said at his weekly news conference yesterday. "I'm sure much like we were (last year), they're looking for consistency week-to-week."

Much of the Bulldogs' inconsistency has been a struggling offense. MSU ranks dead last in the SEC with 290 yards per game while averaging just 21 points per game. Three quarterbacks have seen significant time under center for the Bulldogs, combining to throw more interceptions (11) than touchdowns (5).

"The inconsistency is what gets under your skin as a coach," Brooks said. "I just hope they wait another week to find that consistency."

Injury update

With one more game left until UK enters its



BRAD LUTTRELL | STAFF

Sophomore defensive tackle Corey Peters tackles Florida quarterback Tim Tebow during the Cats' 45-37 loss to the Gators at Commonwealth Stadium. The Cats will take on Mississippi State this Saturday at 12:30 p.m.

bye week, the Cats are hoping to avoid any more injuries to an already banged up-team.

The Cats could be without senior wide receiver Keenan Burton (strained knee) and junior tailback Tony Dixon (sprained ankle) for Saturday's game. Both are listed as questionable.

"We'll have to see in the next couple of days how they come along," Brooks said.

The Cats will also be without sophomore line-backer Micah Johnson and freshman quarterback Will Fidler.

Johnson had surgery yesterday to repair cartilage damage in his knee and could be available for the Nov. 10 Vanderbilt game, Brooks said. Fidler is scheduled to have surgery on Thursday on a torn labrum in his shoulder. Fidler will miss the remain-

der of the season but is expected to be available by spring practice, according to Brooks.

Saturday sellout sets record

Saturday's homecoming game against the Bulldogs has already been sold out, according to UK Athletics. The fourth sellout of the season marks the most sellouts in Commonwealth Stadium since its expansion in 1999.

UK officials added that public tickets for the last home game of the year against Tennessee have also been sold out.

"(The fans) have become a factor for the opposing teams coming in here," Brooks said. "They're giving us a home-field advantage, and that's so important in this conference."

Men's tennis duo falls in semifinals of tournament

By Laura Pepper
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After upsetting the top-seeded doubles team on Sunday in the quarterfinals, freshman Brad Cox and junior Bruno Agostinelli fell in the semifinals of the Wilson/ITA Southeast Indoor Regional yesterday.

The duo of Agostinelli and Cox were defeated 8-2 by Miami's (Fl.) Daniel Valverde and Carl Suresberg at the Hilary J. Boone Tennis Complex, falling just one match short of last night's final.

Despite reaching the semifinals, the Cats were at a disadvantage when Agostinelli came down with food poisoning early yesterday morning. He was rushed to the hospital and treated, but the junior had little time to recuperate before facing the Hurricanes' duo at 3:30 p.m. "Miami could pick up on the fact that we were not 100 percent," said head coach Dennis Emery. "They did a good job staying on top and closing the match. Normally, when a team knows that their opponents are not at full strength, they back off. Miami did not do that."

The Cats lacked their normal enthusiasm that helped carry the duo through the first four rounds of play, Emery said.

"It is hard to come out of the emergency room and try to compete at this level," Emery said.

"You have to be at full-strength. Unfortunately, we did not have the chance to win today."

UK's serve was broke four times during the match, and they had trouble on the return serves.

"In match doubles, you need to hold your serve," Cox said.

Despite suffering from fatigue, Agostinelli did show signs of life during the match.

"Bruno served much better than was anticipated," Emery said. "The best thing that he did was that he was able to hold his serve twice."

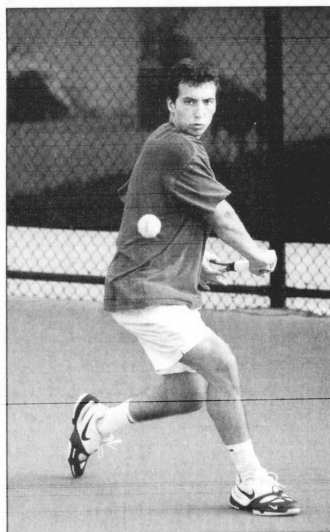
The pairing of Agostinelli and Cox was only the fifth match in which the two have played together. Before this weekend's tournament, the two had never competed with each other in a tournament, but it might not be the last time. Emery said he was extremely pleased with the duo's performance over the weekend, and they will likely be paired again in the future.

Cox said he would enjoy playing with Agostinelli again if he had the opportunity.

"Bruno is helping me a lot on the back end," he said.

The Miami duo went on to win the doubles final an hour later, beating Mississippi's team of Brian ten Berge and Matthias Wellermann 6-6.

Following a day off today, the Cats will begin practice for the Alabama Invitational in Tuscaloosa, Ala., on Oct. 26 to 28.



Junior Bruno Agostinelli gets ready to backhand the ball on March 28 at the Hilary J. Boone Tennis Complex. Agostinelli and freshman Brad Cox lost 8-2 in the semifinals of the Wilson/ITA Southeast Indoor Regional yesterday.

ELLIOTT HESS STAFF

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteering at the Hope Lodge, 6:00 PM, The Hope Lodge 9 Ball Tournament, 7:00 PM, Cats Den STAG, 5:00 PM, CSI-Smart Classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary Negotiations, 101, 3:00 PM, Oliver H. Raymond Building Comedy Caravan, 8:00 PM, Cats Den 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Madden Tournament, 7:00 PM, Cats Den CCO Board Meeting, 5:00 PM, CCO The Thing, 10:00 PM, Center Theater CCO Board of Directors Meeting, 5:00 PM, Student Center CunninLynguists, 7:00 PM, Student Center Interviews, Site Visits, and Salary Negotiations, 3:30 PM, James W. Stuckert Career Center They Live, 8:00 PM, Center Theatre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Italian Conversation Practice, 5:00 PM, Coffee Island The Exorcist, 10:00 PM, Center Theater They Live, 8:00 PM, Center Theater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK vs. Miss St., 12:30 PM, Commonwealth Stadium 	

USP

Continued from page 1

limitations."

Some of the colleges expressed concern over the number of courses the new USP curriculum would require.

The current proposal splits requirements into two 15-credit-hour halves: Community of Learners, freshman courses focused on the liberal arts and the transition into college, and Community of Citizens, courses to take anytime before graduation that emphasize ethics and critical thinking.

"Probably the greatest concern across the College of Engineering is the fact that engineering students will see the largest increase in credit hours," the letter submitted

by the College of Engineering said. "Engineering students are already at the upper end of total credit requirements."

The forums are the next step in getting faculty feedback, before official debate in the University Senate next month, Kraemer said.

"We will meet ... and we will look at all the feedback and we will discuss it," he said. "We want the Senate to know we've really got broad-based support here."

The Senate could vote on the proposed requirements as early as December.

Tomorrow's forum will be from 3:30 to 5 p.m. in the Worsham Theater, and Thursday's will be from 3:30 to 5 p.m. in room 201 of the College of Nursing Building.

Student Government will host a student forum on the proposed changes on Oct. 30 from 4 to 5 p.m. in the Student Center.

PROTEST

Continued from page 1

weapons-free campus.

Other state universities, such as Western Kentucky University, Eastern Kentucky University and Northern Kentucky University, are participating in the event, Burnett said, and the protest has gained national attention.

Local gun shops are also getting involved by donating or discounting holsters for students taking part in the protest, Burnett said.

"It's become bigger than I could imagine," he said. "The awareness is snowballing around the nation."

For more information and a list of the protest guidelines, visit the national SCCC Web site (www.concealedcampus.com) or e-mail concealedcampusuk@yahoo.com.

SUMMIT

Continued from page 1

While no specific action has been taken yet on the project, each regional team will report progress updates throughout the year and again at next year's summit, Emsman said.

The 2008 summit at UK could focus on a health goal other than reducing obesity, such as increasing physical activity among Kentuckians, Akin said. But the summit will also be a place for health specialists to share the results of the ideas and programs generated at the 2007 summit.

"The ultimate success (of the 2007 summit) will be seen when we meet again next fall and look at the results," Akin said.

DESIGN

Continued from page 1

Interior design senior Brittany Gordon said the club is beneficial because it gives students the chance to explore their options in the professional interior design field.

"I decided to join the Interior Design Association because of the great outreach programs it can offer to a student in our major," Gordon said.

Mary Margaret Reynolds, an interior design junior, said she enjoys how the club allows interior design majors to get to know each other better.

"There is so much information to be learned about interior design," Reynolds said. "Through this club we can learn a little bit more than what is taught to us in class."

Terry Rothgeb, faculty adviser of the design club, said that the organization is not just a social club.

"The organization was started to augment a professional program with professional experience," Rothgeb said.

The club's next meeting will be Nov. 1 at 12:30 p.m. in the Funkhouser Building. The fee to join is \$10. For more information about the club and its meeting locations, e-mail Drees@megandrees@uky.edu.

Research shows moderate drinking may be risky

By Judy Peres
Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO — You eat your veggies, you exercise at least a few times a week, you gave up cigarettes and hormone-replacement pills, and you have a glass of red wine every day, all because you care about your health.

But one of these things is not like the others. While your attention has been elsewhere, scientists have amassed persuasive evidence that drinking alcohol — any form of alcohol, even in moderate amounts — can pose a serious threat to your health.

Researchers have known for nearly 20 years that drinking alcoholic beverages can cause cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus and liver. But those diseases don't get much publicity. This year, the International Agency for Research on Cancer added breast and colon cancer — two of the four major killer cancers — to the list of malignancies known to be fostered by alcohol.

The risk is "dose dependent," meaning the more you drink the higher the risk.

According to comprehensive reviews of the scientific evidence, people who average just over one drink a day (100 grams of alcohol in a week's time) increase their chances of developing colon cancer by about 15 percent. For those who consume about four drinks daily, the risk is 40 percent higher.

Women who have one to two drinks a day increase their breast cancer risk by 13 percent. With four drinks, the risk is 50 percent higher. That's twice the increase in relative risk attributed to Prempro, the hormone pill tested in the Women's Health Initiative, the well-known study that found the risks of hormone replacement outweigh the benefits.

Last month, yet another study reinforced the fact that even a glass or two of wine a day increases breast cancer risk. Yes, even red wine.

Drinking small amounts of alcohol — a shot of hard liquor or a glass of beer or wine

— on a consistent daily basis does have a few proven health benefits.

Specifically, it reduces the risk of heart attacks and strokes caused by blocked arteries by 10 to 15 percent. That's probably because alcohol increases good cholesterol and prevents blood platelets from clumping together.

"On the other hand, alcohol is detrimental for more than 60 diagnoses," said Juergen Rehm, head of public health and regulatory policies at the Ontario Center for Addiction and Mental Health.

"That red wine stuff — how it was supposed to be protective — was hyped completely out of whack by the media," Rehm said. "And whatever protective effect there is, is not about the red wine — it's about the alcohol."

According to data compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, alcohol consumption is the third-biggest cause of preventable death in the U.S., after smoking and obesity. The centers estimate that in 2001, the most recent year for which data is available, drinking caused nearly 93,000 deaths.

That includes more than 12,000 cancer deaths, comparable to the 13,674 killed in alcohol-related traffic accidents.

The same data show that about 30,000 fatal heart attacks were prevented by moderate alcohol consumption, which is defined as fewer than two drinks a day for men and less than one drink a day for women.

But Dr. Robert Brewer, head of the CDC alcohol team, said the evidence for alcohol preventing heart attacks is less reliable.

"We need to be cautious about interpreting the studies that suggest a benefit," said Brewer. "People who drink moderately are different from people who don't drink — they exercise more, they have better medical insurance, their body-mass index is lower." In other words, they might have had fewer heart attacks because of factors other than alcohol intake.

Scientists don't know exactly how alco-

hol changes the cancer picture. Some researchers are analyzing the influence of alcohol on estrogen levels, which can affect the risk of breast cancer. But alcohol also affects liver function, which could impair the body's ability to get rid of potential cancer-causing agents.

The good news for worried drinkers, Rehm said, is that quitting seems to eventually reverse the risk.

In a study published last month in the International Journal of Cancer, Rehm and his colleagues showed that the risk of head-and-neck and esophageal cancer decreased significantly within 10 years of giving up booze. It was the same as that for non-drinkers after 20 years.

Some experts say society should take the public health risks of alcohol much more seriously and limit consumption.

Traci Toomey, an epidemiologist at the University of Minnesota, said several strategies have been shown to work, including restricting happy-hour and two-for-one promotions, training wait staff to make sure servers aren't overserved, and increasing taxes.

"Taxes on alcohol haven't kept up with inflation, so the real price is much lower than it used to be," she said. "Excise taxes should be indexed to inflation."

All but a handful of states have seen deep erosion of excise taxes.

Frank Coleman of the Distilled Spirits Council dismissed the notion that the industry was responsible for keeping alcohol taxes low.

"Our society has a general aversion to higher taxes, except for policies, works who think they know what's best for everybody else," he said.

Coleman also noted that the so-called alcohol industry involves "lots of little people all over the country: waitresses, bartenders, husbands, people who run little shops, family farms — it's a big chunk of the economy."

In any case, he said, alcohol "if used responsibly, in moderation, can be part of a normal healthy lifestyle."

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Congressman: Blackwater evaded federal taxes

By Joseph Neff
McClatchy Newspapers

The congressman leading an investigation into Blackwater said Monday that the embattled security company may have evaded tens of millions of dollars in federal taxes and was seeking to hide its tax practices.

Rep. Henry Waxman, a California Democrat, said that Blackwater has avoided paying Social Security, Medicare and unemployment taxes by treating its armed guards as independent contractors and not employees.

The other two large private security companies in Iraq, DynCorp and Triple Canopy, classify their guards as employees and pay the federal taxes that Blackwater has not, Waxman said.

The issue came to the attention of the IRS when a Blackwater guard working in Afghanistan complained that the company had classified him as an independent contractor. The IRS said Blackwater's classification was "without merit" and ruled in March that the man was an employee.

Blackwater agreed to pay back wages and other compen-

sation to the man, but on condition that he not talk to any politician or public official about the company.

"THE UTMOST PROTECTION AND NONDISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE AND IS THE ESSENCE OF THIS AGREEMENT," the settlement agreement stated in capital letters. Waxman released it after obtaining it by subpoena from Blackwater.

"This nondisclosure agreement is abhorrent on its face," Waxman wrote Monday to Blackwater founder Erik Prince. "It is deplorable that a company that depends on federal tax dollars for over 90 percent of its business would even contemplate forbidding an employee to report corporate wrongdoing to Congress and federal law enforcement officials."

Blackwater issued a statement Monday saying that Waxman was incorrect about the tax issue and that the company was appealing the IRS ruling.

The company said the U.S. Small Business Administration has determined that Blackwater

security contractors are not employees.

"It is unfortunate that the Chairman has relied upon a one-sided description of the issue to color public perception without all the facts being presented," the statement concluded.

Blackwater, based in Moyock, N.C., deploys about 1,000 contractors to protect the U.S. ambassador and other diplomats in Iraq. It has had federal contracts worth more than \$1 billion since 2001.

Waxman, chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, has been investigating Blackwater since 2004. The scrutiny intensified after a Sept. 16 shooting in Baghdad in which Blackwater contractors killed up to 17 civilians in a crowded square.

The Iraqi government has demanded that Blackwater leave Iraq and that the shooters be tried in a Baghdad court. The State Department has signaled that it will not renew Blackwater's contract when it expires.

Blackwater has been working in Iraq since 2003. Waxman's staff looked at the most recent State Department contract

and estimated that between May 2006 and March 2007, Blackwater avoided paying \$15.5 million in Social Security and Medicare taxes and \$500,000 in unemployment taxes.

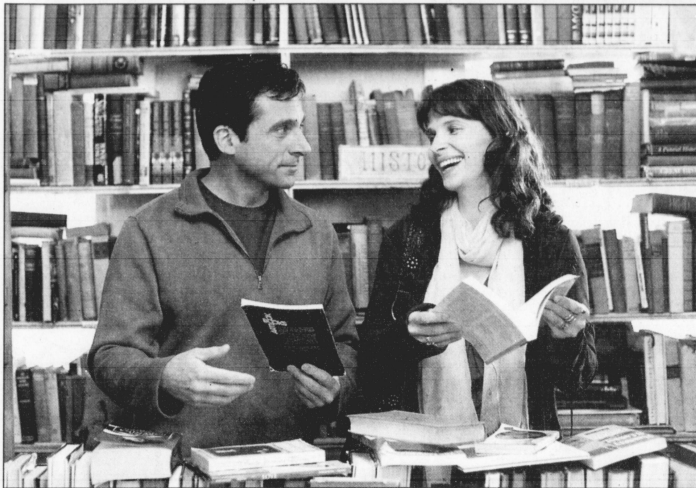
William Turnier, a professor of tax law at the University of North Carolina law school in Chapel Hill, said employees, by definition, are subject to the control of their employers, who decide when and how work must be done.

Independent contractors, on the other hand, provide their own tools, decide when to start and finish work, and determine how to proceed with their work. The classic example of an independent contractor is a house painter, who negotiates a price, brings his own tools and truck, and decides how to do his job each day.

Turnier was skeptical that Blackwater security guards would meet this definition. "These guys must go out when Blackwater tells them to," Turnier said.

"They're following strict orders, and I don't think they are supplying their own guns or vehicles."

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Steve Carell and Juliette Binoche star in Touchstone Pictures' "Dan in Real Life," which opens Friday.

COURTESY OF TOUCHSTONE PICTURES

Steve Carell tries gentler role with 'Dan in Real Life'

By Terry Lawson
Detroit Free Press

Steve Carell and Peter Hedges have at least one thing in common.

When director Hedges started working on "Dan in Real Life," which opens Friday, he figured he'd be working on the approximate scale of his previous film "Pieces of April," an indie-comedy that won a lot of hearts and support at the Sundance Film Festival. (The film went on to have some success on the art-house circuit.)

He didn't expect it to star the hottest actor in comedy.

As for Carell, when he took the leading role in "Dan in Real Life," a widowed newspaper advice columnist who, by falling hard for his brother's girlfriend, finds himself discarding his own best advice, he didn't expect to be the hottest actor in comedy.

For most filmmakers, this would be cause for popping champagne corks and new car shopping.

But this isn't the case, it turns out, for both Hedges and Carell.

"I find myself trying to explain what this movie isn't, more than what it actually is," says Carell, who was a character actor and "The Daily Show" correspondent.

"It's not a high-concept thing or a side-splitter like 'The 40 Year-Old Virgin.' It's a lot — oh, I don't know, quieter, softer."

"It's funny, yeah, but it's sad, and sort of uncomfortable and truthful. It was interesting

in it the same way I was interested in 'Little Miss Sunshine.' It doesn't come with some kind of implied laugh track; you know, here's where you laugh, here's when you laugh harder.

"I'm not really that enamored of movies or TV where the characters try to be funny, or even know that they're funny. And that's really where Peter comes from, too," Carell says. "He was like, 'Just play Dan. Let the audience decide if they think he's funny. You just try to make him real.' He's not that into jokes. He's into people."

In "Dan in Real Life," which Hedges co-wrote with Pierce Gardner, Carell's columnist has three daughters, level-headed teen Jane (Alison Pill), hormonal horror-show Cara (Brittany Robertson) and sweet, vulnerable pre-teen Lilly (Marlene Lawston), whom he dutifully drags to their annual Thanksgiving vacation with his family at their Rhode Island cottage. Immediately offered a parenting break by his mom (Dianne Wiest), he goes off to the local bookstore, where he ends up trading reading tips and having breakfast with Marie (Juliette Binoche), the first woman he's been truly attracted to since his wife's death.

But when he returns to shyly share this good news with the family, he discovers Marie is already there — as the guest of his younger brother Mitch (Dane Cook), who adores her.

Hedges, who wrote the script for "About A Boy" and the novel "What's Eating

Gilbert Grape," which he turned into a screenplay for the 1993 film starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Johnny Depp, says that when he got the news that Carell was seriously interested in doing "Dan in Real Life," he asked him if he had any thoughts on who should play Marie.

"Somebody with a big heart and the sense of the absurdity of it all," Hedges says, recalling Carell's reply. "As far as I was concerned, that gave me the best excuse possible to get in touch with Juliette, who I think has all that and terrific comic skills. She tends to get cast here as this mature, exotic beauty, but in France, she's not so rarefied. She can be funny, she can be one of the guys, and she's always sexy. She was perfect for this."

Carell, however, did have some concerns.

"My first thought is, who would believe that Juliette Binoche would ever be attracted to me unless she had been infected with some mind-altering drug? But you know, that wasn't enough for me to raise the question."

"I also figured it might give me some leverage at home," says Carell, who is married to comedienne Nancy Walls, whom he met when both were recruited for the original Second City Improv comedy troupe in Chicago. "I could always say, 'Well, Juliette Binoche is attracted to me.' And my wife would say, 'Uh, Steve, the 'Real Life' part is just the title of the movie.'"

Spain's Concha Buika uses music to focus her mind

By Jordan Levin
McClatchy Newspapers

Concha Buika used to make things up all the time. She didn't think of it as lying so much as, well, creating a more interesting reality.

Of course her life didn't really need to be more interesting. She grew up as one of six children in the only black family on the Spanish island of Mallorca, worked in Las Vegas as a Tina Turner impersonator and has been married simultaneously to a man and a woman (Buika's idea).

"The mind is very capricious," Buika says by phone from the office of her record company in Madrid, her voice and frequent laugh as deep and rich as her smoky, chocolate singing.

"Sometimes we want to remember things that in reality we don't remember, but they become part of our life and we believe in them. We can get confused."

The things that come out of Concha Buika's music have made her a star in Spain, where her second album, "Mi Nina Lola," has been a hit. She is rapidly becoming a world music sensation. She makes her U.S. concert debut Wednesday at Miami's Manuel Artime Theater before going on to the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York.

Buika's music is a blend of flamenco, jazz, blues, copla — an old-fashioned romantic Spanish song form — and more, which Buika sings with a combination of jazz cool and flamenco's ripped-from-the-gut intensity. Her music and her lyrics are as individual as she is. "I believe in myself, and in my way of saying things," she sings in "A Mi Manera (My Way)."

"I don't know what is flamenco or what is blues or jazz or rock. I only know what is singing and playing," says the 35-year-old singer. "For me the flamenco of (Mexican singer) Chavela Vargas is the same as Dinah Washington. It's music that comes from the depths, from the place where everything pure comes from. For me (musical) styles seem like little dictators."

Buika grew up on the Spanish island of Mallorca in the Mediterranean, where the only other black person besides her family was a man hired to stand outside a store as a novelty to attract customers.

Her parents were political exiles from Equatorial Guinea, and her father walked out on the family when she was 9. She has happy memories of growing up in a poor neighborhood full of gypsies, playing in the street in her underwear.

"The neighborhood was really fun and really strange," Buika remembers. "Because it was a neighborhood where there were no rules, and children don't like rules."

But she was also an outsider. Women used to touch her kinky hair for luck, and some children were not allowed to play with her. "I always felt very strange, but it didn't affect me, because I didn't know anything else," Buika says. "For me it was normal to be the only black girl in the neighborhood, in the school, in the disco."

One job was in Las Vegas, where Buika worked in 2001 as a Tina Turner impersonator. "I had some friends from work who'd been there, and so I thought I could just go there, too. I always go around in a very savage, innocent way, because I'm from a small town."

Her attitude about life is willfully innocent, as well. While she was married to the father of her 8-year-old son, Buika fell in love with a woman and arranged for the three of them to marry. She shrugs off the idea that there is anything strange in this, or in talking about it openly.

"I do what I do, and I'm not doing anything that other human beings haven't done. All human beings are more or less the same. A lot of people don't dare do things, but they think about them. People hide something bad. I haven't done anything bad, so I don't have any reason to hide it. What rule is there that two people can't love a third person?"

Splitting from her two partners inspired one of the most powerful songs on her album, "Jodida pero contenta" (Screwed but happy). "I was singing a reality that was exactly what I felt in that moment. Because from that moment on my world was mine. For the first time since I was 17 I felt like I was really in charge of my own life."

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■ KERNEL EDITORIAL

Flu shots are well worth students' money and time

To protect themselves and others from illness this winter, students should take the opportunity to get flu shots at a low price on campus this week.

University Health Services is offering flu shots for \$10 to UK and Bluegrass Community and Technical College students at locations on campus throughout this week. Students must present a new UK or BCTC ID to receive the discount rate.

The flu is a more serious disease than some students might assume. Every year, between 5 and 20 percent of Americans get the flu, which causes about 200,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov/flu).

Obviously, those who leave themselves unprotected against the flu risk missing class or work while they are ill. But students who decide not to get flu shots aren't just endangering themselves.

Close, highly trafficked environments like classrooms and residence

halls are especially conducive to flu transmission, since the disease spreads from person to person through coughing and sneezing, or when someone touches an object that has flu viruses on it, according to the CDC.

And those who catch the flu can't keep themselves from spreading it simply by staying home once they notice the symptoms — people who are infected can spread the flu for up to a day before they show symptoms, according to the CDC.

To keep from catching the flu and potentially infecting dozens of others, students should spend the small amount of time and money needed for a flu shot. It won't even be a long walk: The shots are being offered at the White Hall Classroom Building and the WT Young Library, in addition to the Kentucky Clinic. Locations and hours are available on the Health Services Web site (www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/UHS/FluShots2007.htm).

Flu shots are well worth \$10 and a few minutes. Students shouldn't hesitate to get them.

■ LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Student activists' efforts do make a difference

In response to Brett Nolan's column "Devote yourself to one cause" in Wednesday's Kernel, we would like to clear up a few misconceptions he brought up.

The Displace Me-UK event was not designed in any way to have people understand what it is like to be displaced in a refugee camp in Uganda. It is impossible for one to understand the atrocities of Darfur and Uganda without experiencing them for oneself. The point of Displace Me-UK was to let the participants become more empathetic to the whole situation.

The event was organized to not only expose, even if only for a night, a glimpse of what some unfortunate others do in this world face daily, but the funds raised are also going directly to the organization, Invisible Children, where the money will be passed along to help with schooling in Uganda, helping 15 children get a good education for an entire year.

So when you state, "No one at

UK has enough time or money to try and offer solutions," we say, you are wrong. Students at UK are making a difference, and not just through Invisible Children. UK has over 250 organizations, and many of them are focused on raising awareness and aid for problems that are both in Kentucky and worldwide (not to mention the amount of work Greeks on our campus do for philanthropy).

To those of you who read this, we hope that you do feel passionate about an issue that affects you or someone else. That is why we are here: for an education, yes, but also to gain awareness of the world around us that is bigger than we are. As a wise friend has told us many times, compassion without action is meaningless.

Kellie Crook
Invisible Children UK President

Anthony Carelli
Invisible Children UK Treasurer

Convenient medical care needed for the disabled

I was pleased to read in the Kernel about the continued effort to integrate the relatively new acquisition of Samaritan Hospital by UK. The integration of Samaritan Hospital will be a valued asset for the UK medical staff, and allowing Samaritan's doctors to treat patients at UK is a great step. However, it is not a solution.

I once accompanied a handicapped friend to receive treatment for his muscle relaxants. We made our way from North Campus to Chandler Medical Center, a painful experience for my friend. And once we had finally made our trek, my friend then had to wait for three more hours.

All this would not have been so difficult if he were not bound to a wheelchair. An able-bodied person can walk nearly a mile to an emergency room. An able-bodied person, though presumably very irritated, can wait three hours for treatment. But for my friend, the visit to the ER was a tremendously difficult experience.

I firmly believe that those hurdles

are unnecessary for the disabled who attend UK. Further, when we realize that the majority of the disabled, and thus more of those who are likely to need emergency treatment, are focused predominantly on north campus, we need to make sure closer facilities are provided to take care of these people adequately.

So what is my solution? Perhaps allowing all people covered under UK's insurance to be taken at all UK hospitals. I firmly believe a student living on North Campus should not have to walk across campus to visit the doctor. If Samaritan simply took student insurance, then my friend could have gone to Samaritan Hospital instead of being referred to Chandler Medical Center.

Further, in doing so, we could help eliminate the long lines at Chandler Medical. Let Samaritan Hospital be the good Samaritan who will take all patients in Lexington; don't choke off the patients who are right there and need treatment now.

Joe Gallenstein
Political science junior



Tom Wilkins, Kernel cartoonist

Beijing should not forget its reliance on U.S. market for its cheap goods

For those of you who don't know, U.S. Congress awarded the Dalai Lama the Congressional

Gold Medal this past week. That is the highest civilian honor awarded by the U.S. government. Unfortunately, the Chinese government is upset over this recognition.

For a very quick background, China claims Tibet as part of China, while a group of Tibetans led by the Dalai Lama claims it is a separate nation. Furthermore, the Dalai Lama is the supreme leader of Tibet according to Tibetan tradition. After China's takeover of Tibet in the late 1950s, the Dalai Lama fled to India where he currently lives in exile.

President Bush met with the Dalai Lama in the Oval Office this past week. Soon thereafter, the Dalai Lama received the Congressional Gold Medal. It is worth noting that this issue is a bipartisan issue as both the Democrats and the Republicans agree that the Dalai Lama is a man worthy of their attention and accolades.

China is mad that the U.S. gov-

ernment has recognized the Dalai Lama for his peaceful resistance against the Chinese. Just like its reaction after German Chancellor Angela Merkel met with the Dalai Lama, as was reported by BBC News, Beijing issued its expected comment that relations were strained because of the meeting.

My reaction to the situation is simple: Beijing needs to get over itself. China needs the U.S. as much as we need them. We currently run a substantial trade deficit with China. Frankly, if they want to play hardball, they can keep their cheap McDonald's toys in their own country instead of shipping them over here for a higher profit.

In any case, there are some Kentucky stories worth talking about, too. In last Tuesday's KET debate between Gov. Ernie Fletcher and Democratic challenger Steve Beshear, we saw just how out of touch Beshear is. As the TV ads and Ryan Alessi's articles in the Lexington Herald-Leader remind us, Beshear and his law firm made as millions off of the Kentucky Central case, yet, as he proved during the debate, Beshear has no clue how much a dozen eggs cost.

When Beshear was asked the question, he had no clue. His response was "My wife buys the eggs, but I pay for them." How many more examples do you need to know that Beshear is out of touch? After all, if

George H. W. Bush was out of touch because he didn't know the price of basic goods in 1992, shouldn't we assume that Steve Beshear is out of touch in 2007? I'm sure someone will come up with a reason to say Beshear is in touch with the common person, but I beg to differ.

In comparison, when Fletcher was asked how much milk costs, he easily told the panel that it was roughly "three and a quarter." Furthermore, Governor Fletcher gave the price of a loaf of bread and a gallon of gas.

Also, some of you might have seen Governor Fletcher's new ad running on TV. This ad gives people a clear idea of what Governor Fletcher has accomplished in the past three and half years. From new roads to growth in high-tech jobs, as Fletcher says, he has worked each and every day to make Kentucky a better place.

If you want to learn more about Governor Fletcher, or if you want to know why Beshear is the wrong person to be governor, come to the College Republican meeting tonight at 8 in room 307 of the Commons Market. With only two weeks left until Election Day, we will be talking about how you can get involved. I hope to see you at our meeting tonight.

Thomas Roberts is the president of UK College Republicans. E-mail opinions@kykernel.com.

McConnell's smear campaign against injured boy is despicable

Many of you may not yet have heard of the newest gross misrepresentation of the facts by our home-grown Republican minority leader,

Mitch McConnell. I'm not talking about the "'60s anti-war movement on steroids" that he complains in his fundraising letters has been following him around. As a member of that movement, let me tell you that it actually has very little to do with the 1960s and more to do with hounding him until he stops blocking bipartisan anti-war efforts in the Senate.

What I am talking about is McConnell's smear campaign against a brain-damaged 12-year-old boy named Graeme Frost, who apparently represents a serious threat to McConnell and the rest of his GOP buddies.

Frost delivered the Democratic response to Bush's radio address after Bush vetoed SCHIP, a program intended to help families who are above the poverty line, but cannot afford health insurance. Soon after, conservative bloggers began smearing the little boy, accusing his family of owning a house in an expensive neighborhood, owning blogs, own business, and sending their children to private schools costing \$20,000 per child each year. In

essence, it was an attempt to undermine little Graeme Frost's credibility for being too wealthy to really need help.

The Frosts replied that, in actuality, this young boy and his sister, both of whom were brain-damaged in a car accident, attend the private schools on full scholarships, according to an article in the Baltimore Sun. The Frosts bought their home in 1990 for only \$55,000, and the parents said that they earn between \$45,000 and \$50,000 a year together. They said they still have no health insurance coverage that they can afford, the article reported.

The Frosts are really a lower-middle-class family with huge medical bills, just the sort of people SCHIP is supposed to help. Their experience disproves one of the right's favorite battle calls: "That we don't need to subsidize, we can't afford."

When employers are not providing insurance, which, like pensions, have become much scarcer in recent years, to their employees, who will provide it? Clearly, families such as the Frosts exist. The possibility that you and I might actually see this reality is one of the true fears of the righties.

So how exactly does this heinous attack on one disabled child link back to our senator? For the past couple of weeks, reports on the WHAS reporters throughout the country have been buzzing about a leaked e-mail from one of McConnell's staffers that went

out to these conservative bloggers with all of the misrepresented facts. Recently, The Associated Press and our own Kentucky media have picked up the story.

As James Carroll of The Courier-Journal in Louisville reported, the senator knowingly spread lies about a brain-damaged, disabled child for his own political agenda: to restrict adequate healthcare from our own children. Worse, he has denied any involvement in the WHAS reporters in Louisville. The only problem for him is that we have the proof.

McConnell not only smeared a helpless young boy in an effort to keep healthcare from those who most need it, but he blatantly lied to us, his own constituents, about his involvement in what bluegrassroots.org has begun to call Frostgate.

With a new senatorial election only a year away, we Kentuckians need to ask ourselves: Is this the sort of man we want representing us? This bully and deceiver, who finds it conscience to pick on the most helpless in our nation and then is too afraid to own up to what he did, is our duly elected official. It is because of us that he has been able to become so powerful. We in Kentucky have let him loose upon this nation. Now what are we going to do about it?

Lauren Biggs is a history and classics senior. E-mail opinions@kykernel.com.

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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).

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A helicopter drops a fire suppressant on wildfires near homes in Saugus, Calif., on Saturday.

Thousands flee as fires burn in Southern California

By Barbara Kollmeier and Russ Brite
MarketWatch

LOS ANGELES — One person was killed and tens of thousands of Southern California residents were being evacuated from their homes Monday, as wildfires burned out of control across seven counties, stretching from the Mexican border north to Santa Barbara County.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency for the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara and Ventura in the wake of more than 11 major blazes. Firefighters were being hampered by "red-flag" conditions of high winds and low humidity, with more of the same expected for at least the next two days.

Resources also are stretched thin because so many fires were burning at once across the region. The total area burned, stretching from Santa Barbara to San Diego, is estimated to be in the tens of thousands of acres.

"We've been talking about the drought and the Santa Ana (winds), and with very low humidity it is a design for disaster," Los Angeles County Fire Chief P. Michael Freeman said. He indicated that he's hoping to get resources from Northern California, Arizona and Nevada to aid strained efforts.

In San Diego County, more than 18,000 acres of land are burning in the area of the Witch Creek Fire, with 62 square miles destroyed and fires as yet uncontained, according to an online report from the San Diego Union-Tribune. Officials said one person had died and 17 others were injured in San Diego County.

The Associated Press reported that as many as 250,000 people were being evacuated in San Diego County, including hun-

dreds being moved by school bus and ambulance from a hospital and nursing homes. North-east of San Diego, the community of Ramona, with a population of 36,000, was ordered to completely evacuate.

In Orange County, a fire threatening the city of Irvine was 30 percent contained. Firefighters are investigating arson as the cause of the fire.

Mandatory evacuations were under way for northern San Diego, encompassing 10,000 homes. Herb Greenberg, a columnist for MarketWatch, was among them.

"This is not the kind of place you expect to be evacuated by fire. It'd be like being in L.A. somewhere in some noncanon-ish tract homes or cul de sacs."

Many people in the affected area in San Diego were trying to go south, according to Greenberg, to get to Qualcomm Stadium, one of the designated shelters listed for the area. Emergency officials are asking residents to avoid major highways and to keep cell-phone use to a minimum to prevent hampering emergency communications.

"I'm now in Carlsbad (north of San Diego) and you wouldn't even know there was a fire. I am three miles from the smoke line — no wind, skies are blue, but you look behind me and it's as thick as can be," he reported.

The raging fires across Southern California are being fueled by dry brush created from

a record drought this year.

Some of the worst fire damage has taken place in the coastal Malibu area of Los Angeles County, where more than 2,200 acres have burned and more than 500 people have been evacuated. Classes at Pepperdine University there have been canceled Monday, and all roads to the campus are closed.

Highway 1 remained closed to traffic from the north and south.

There were some encouraging signs from reports that said winds had begun to die down in Malibu, and that the situation had improved from Sunday and earlier Monday, but officials maintained that the situation was tenuous. Ten buildings were lost on Sunday, including a landmark church.

Further north and east of Malibu, several blazes stretched across the mountains north of Santa Clarita. Twenty-five structures were damaged there, officials said.

Authorities ordered an evacuation for the city of Santa Clarita and Castaic, the northernmost portion of Los Angeles County.

In San Francisco Canyon, firefighters were monitoring a blaze that was threatening some ranch homes, with about 30 trucks gathered from various jurisdictions. Some firefighters had been on duty since Sunday morning.

Fires also were reported in mountainous parts of San Bernardino County about 60 miles east of downtown Los Angeles. Homes were burning unchallenged in the resort town of Lake Arrowhead, which reportedly started near a power station.

Aerial crews were unable to reach the area because of high winds. A few miles away, in the Green Valley Lake area, a separate "monster fire" described by officials, is also burning.

Kabbalah's popularity, controversy are no secret

By Deborah Horan
Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO — The uninitiated can find Rav Michael Laitman on YouTube, the video-sharing Web site. The white-bearded Jewish mystic is on camera, answering questions about the meaning of life posed by famous Israeli actors and musicians.

Curious newcomers to his teachings also can read any of Laitman's 30 or so books on Jewish mysticism, including "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Kabbalah."

To Laitman, that is just as it should be. He has spent much of his career bringing the ancient wisdom of this metaphysical side of Judaism to the masses, guided by the controversial belief that the once-secret teachings of Jewish sages should be accessible to anyone willing to listen. Jews and Gentiles alike.

"It is not a religion at all," Laitman said through an interpreter during a telephone interview from Los Angeles, where he spoke in a packed auditorium last week. "It is a scientific method to transcend the ego. It makes no difference what religion you belong to. Everyone should be able to do it."

Kabbalah has become more relevant, or at least more conspicuous, since Hollywood stars such as Madonna and Britney Spears took up the practice. But not everyone agrees that the popular trend toward the Jewish occult — what some deride as "Kabbalah lite" — is a positive development. The esoteric teachings should be tackled only by serious students who have first acquired a solid base in other Jewish religious texts, they say.

"If you met someone who said 'I'm studying quantum mechanics' and (he) never took physics, what would you think?" asked Rabbi Byron Sherwin, a professor of Jewish philosophy and mysticism at the Sperus Institute of Jewish Studies in Chicago. "To trivialize something that is very deep, is very profound, and is very difficult to understand is true."

Laitman dismisses the criticism as background noise to a movement that is gaining momentum. His Bnei Baruch Kabbalah Education and Research

Institute, based near Tel Aviv, claims 1.3 million disciples worldwide. His television show airs six hours a day in Israel, he said. His newspaper, Kabbalah Today, is published in Spanish, German, English and Hebrew. He commands a huge following in Israel.

A Russian Jew who immigrated to Israel in 1973, Laitman said he studied under renowned Kabbalist Rabbi Baruch Shalom Ashlag, serving as an assistant for many years. He earned degrees in bio-cybernetics, the study of human and artificial systems, and Kabbalah and philosophy from universities in Russia and taught ontology there, he said.

Sherwin, for one, is skeptical of those claims. But other Kabbalists attributed the unease of some scholars about Laitman not to his claimed pedigree but to what they consider a New Age approach to an ancient and revered system of belief. They are uncomfortable with institutions such as the Kabbalah Center, with its mass marketing and Oprah-esque appeal, and bristle at mention of its co-director, Michael Berg.

Sherwin derided the Kabbalah Center as "entrepreneurial" and lumped Laitman in with it, though the center claims no affiliation with Laitman. Other Kabbalists said they viewed Laitman as a more substantial authority on Kabbalah than those at the center, but still painted some of his interpretations of Kabbalah as unconventional.

Traditionalists are uncomfortable with some of Laitman's pronouncements. He preaches, for instance, that keeping the wisdom of Kabbalah out of reach of the masses is a source of anti-Semitism and that unless mankind solves the world's crises through Kabbalah, fascist regimes will rise again, particularly in America.

Doomsday predictions aside, Laitman attributes the explosion of Kabbalah onto the American pop culture scene to the universal human yearning to find a deeper meaning to life. Particularly in today's fast-paced and commercial pop culture, people feel spiritually lost, he said.

"Many people are searching, asking what can we do here in this world," Laitman said. "They instinctively feel that the answer is found in the wisdom of Kabbalah."

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