

County fire ban may affect celebrations

Ban prohibits fireworks, flares, bonfires

By **HUNTER SIZEMORE**
 Alligator Contributing Writer

Students hoping to party outdoors after Thursday's championship game shouldn't ward off the coming cold front with a bonfire.

A recent county ban prohibits outdoor fires, including the use of fireworks, sparklers and flares, according to a press release on the Alachua County Web site. Agricultural burning is an exception.

Outdoor grilling is not prohibited by the ban, but the press release urges the public to watch for stray sparks or embers.

The ban won't end until Gainesville gets a good bit of rain, said Carol Davis, public informa-

tion officer for the Alachua County Department of Public Safety.

There is a 50 percent chance of rain on Wednesday morning.

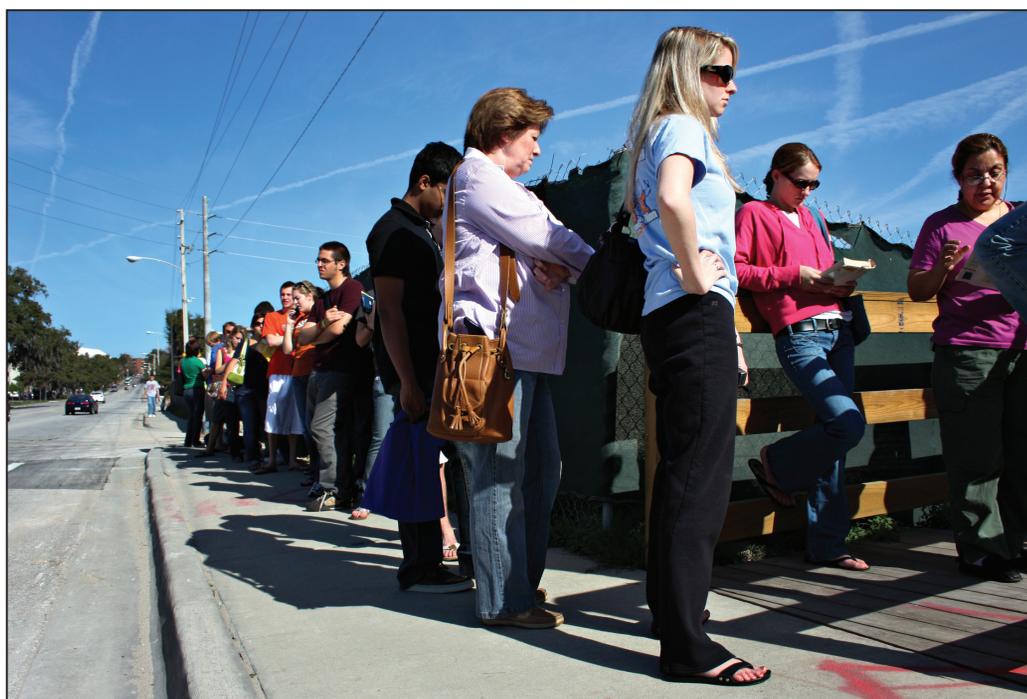
Local News

Violating the ban is a second-degree misdemeanor punishable by a fine up to \$500 and up to 60 days in jail. Police made two arrests in

Gainesville on New Year's Eve for fireworks violations and gave one citation for illegal burning.

A city ordinance states that it is illegal to start a fire within about 150 feet of a building.

"You can't swing a cat without hitting a building in Gainesville," said Summer Hallett, Gainesville Police Department spokeswoman.



Sarah Hsu / Alligator Staff

UF sophomore Katy Davis, center, waits in line with other students Monday morning to get a parking decal from the Parking Administrative Services building on Gale Lemerand Drive.

STUDENT LIFE

UF pushes studies over BCS title game

UF's administrators are setting stricter expectations for classroom attendance as the football team plays its second national championship game in two years.

When UF played Ohio State for the BCS National Championship on the first day of classes in January 2007, Bernie Machen asked professors to make it easier for students to make up missed work and even extended the drop/add deadline four days.

This year, with UF playing Oklahoma State for the national championship on Thursday, UF is doing neither.

"The thinking may have evolved a bit since Arizona," said UF Provost Joe Glover.

Glover sent a memo to administrators in December that said UF will not cancel classes or otherwise modify its academic schedule because of the game.

"Students should really be

here doing their work, it's the first week of classes," he said. "They're here for an education."

"Students should really be here doing their work, it's the first week of classes. They're here for an education."

Bernie Machen
 UF president

He said most students wouldn't be attending the game anyway, and UF doesn't want to encourage students to travel to Miami just to "partake in the ambiance of the game."

"They can enjoy the game on TV between 8 and 11:30 at night and be in class the next day," he said.

— THOMAS STEWART

Charities see rising requests for aid, fewer donations

By **KATHRYN WATSON**
 Alligator Contributing Writer

This holiday season brought a catch-22 to local charities: fewer donations and more requests for aid.

Many charities saw an increase in requests for food, shelter and clothing from families and the working poor, said Kent Vann, ex-

ecutive director of St. Francis House.

"Our mission is to serve the hungry, and we are seeing a noticeable increase in people who are just hungry, not necessarily homeless," Vann said.

Meals requested at St. Francis House rose from approximately 130 per day to 230, Vann said. The organization received more than 10,000 requests for services such as showers

and toothbrushes.

Fire of God Ministries, a church-based organization helping the homeless, saw an approximate 30-percent increase in requests for aid, said Marcia Conwell, church secretary.

"It wasn't just the homeless. It was the working class, the working poor," Conwell said.

Increased need amplified the struggle for

Fire of God Ministries and St. Francis House, both of which faced decreased donations through November.

In December, holiday meals proved to be a great rallying point for St. Francis House, but the sunken economy resulted in fewer donations than previous years, Vann said.

SEE CHARITIES, PAGE 13

■ UF student Michelle Moses died in a car crash during the break. Her sorority is planning a memorial in her honor. See page 9.

Ohio man arrested in shooting death

DAYTON, Ohio (AP) — A man was arrested in the shooting death of a woman whose 4-year son was abducted and left unharmed at a highway rest area, authorities said Monday.

Charlie W. Myers, 22, was taken into custody on an aggravated murder warrant in the slaying of Jennifer Nelson, the Montgomery County sheriff said Monday.

Nelson, 29, was found dead Friday in her Dayton home after struggling with her attacker, said Sheriff Phil Plummer. Two computers were missing from the home, one of which has since been recovered, Plummer said, adding that robbery is among the possible motives under investigation.

■ UF wide receiver David Nelson (right) and the Gators arrived in Miami this week after a monthlong wait. For more, see page 29.



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The Independent Florida Alligator is a student newspaper serving the University of Florida, published by a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) educational organization, Campus Communications Inc., P.O. Box 14257, Gainesville, Florida, 32604-2257. The Alligator is published Monday through Friday mornings, except during holidays and exam periods. During UF summer academic terms The Alligator is published Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The Alligator is a member of the Newspaper Association of America, National Newspaper Association, Florida Press Association and Southern University Newspapers.

Subscription Rates: One Semester (Fall or Spring) \$18
Summer Semester \$10
Two Semesters (Fall or Spring) \$35
Full Year (All Semesters) \$40

The Alligator offices are located at 1105 W. University Ave. Classified advertising can be placed at that location from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, except for holidays. Classifieds also can be placed at the UF Bookstore. © Copyright 2005. All rights reserved. No portion of The Alligator may be reproduced in any means without the written consent of an officer of Campus Communications Inc.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

UF Drop/Add Period Ends

Monday, Jan. 12

Students have until Monday at 11:59 p.m. to make schedule adjustments.

Like What You See?

If you have an event to post here, e-mail it to kbjornsen@alligator.org and put "What's Happening" in the subject.

LOCAL

Vandals shatter windows of parked cars

Gainesville police officers responded to a Northeast Gainesville neighborhood Sunday morning after receiving several calls from residents reporting their cars damaged.

According to a GPD release, Police were able to determine that between 2:30 a.m. and 7 a.m. unknown subjects vandalized the vehicles in a neighborhood north of Northeast 16th Avenue near Northeast 15th Street.

In each case, the vehicles were either parked on the street or in a driveway, the release stated.

People who vandalize neighborhoods usually target those with a lot of cars on the road, said GPD spokeswoman Summer Hallett. Broken windows were the only reported damage and nothing was stolen, she said.

— KATIE EMMETS

NATIONAL

Milky Way not snack-sized anymore

WASHINGTON — Take that, Andromeda! For decades, astronomers thought when it came to the major galaxies in Earth's cosmic neighborhood, our Milky Way was a weak sister to the larger Andromeda. Not anymore.

The Milky Way is considerably larger, bulkier and spinning faster than astronomers once thought.

Scientists mapped the Milky Way in a more detailed, three-dimensional way and found that it's 15 percent larger in breadth. More important, it's denser, with 50 percent more mass. The new findings were presented Monday at the American Astronomical

FORECAST

TODAY



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SUNNY
74/42

Society's convention in Long Beach, Calif.

That difference means a lot, said study author Mark Reid of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Mass. The 5-foot-5, 140-pound astrophysicist said it's the cosmic equivalent of him swelling to the size of a 6-foot-3, 210-pound linebacker.

"Previously we thought Andromeda was dominant, and that we were the little sister of Andromeda," Reid said. "But now it's more like we're fraternal twins."

That's not necessarily good news. A bigger Milky Way means it could violently crash into the neighboring Andromeda galaxy sooner than predicted — though still billions of years from now.

Reid and his colleagues used a system of 10 radio telescope antennas to measure the brightest newborn stars in the galaxy at different times in Earth's orbit around the sun. They made a map of those stars, not just in the locations where they were first seen, but in the third dimension of time — something Reid said has never been done.

— THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Believe it or not: A list of the top lies of 2008

The Burlington Liars Club in Burlington, Wis., revealed its 2008 Champion Lie on Monday as part of an annual contest.

Winner:

— "My grandson is the most persuasive liar I have ever met. By the time he was 2 years old he could dirty his diaper and make his mother believe someone else had done it." by Garth Seehawer of Oconto Falls, Wis.

Runners-up, in random order:

— "On a recent flight from

New York to L.A., we were watching the in-flight movie called 'Cocoon.' It was during a pool scene that we encountered some very violent turbulence. It was so rough that the water in the pool in the movie splashed out onto the passengers and an onboard life raft inflated!! The flight crew had to hand out towels to dry us all off!!" by Jim Kubath of Palm Springs, Calif.

— "It used to be in the winter when I walked into my house my glasses would fog up. But now, at the cost of fuel, I have my temperature down so low that when I go outside my glasses fog up." by Jerry Olson of Bonduel, Wis.

— "I knew I had to lose weight when both the automatic in and out doors opened when I entered the grocery store." by Michael E. Peters, of Fox Point, Wis.

— "When my uncle wakes up in the morning he often yawns and says, 'I could stretch a mile.' Of course, he never does since he's too lazy to walk back." by Ellen Everts of New London, Wis.

— "This summer with gas at \$4.25 per gallon, I drove up to a prepay gas station and asked the lady clerk for \$5 worth of gas. She (broke wind) and handed me a receipt!" by Gene C. Lasch of Shawano, Wis.

— "I have three German shepherds, outside dogs. This morning, it was so cold outside that one of my dogs was trying to 'jump start' the other!" by Richard Bosanko of Bristol, Wis.

— THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Sarah Hsu / Alligator Staff

Construction workers remove dirt from the northern half of the Criser Hall parking lot Monday, preparing for the construction of Hough Hall, a graduate studies building that will be an addition to the Warrington College of Business. As a result of this construction, changes impacting several parking areas are effective as of Monday. To see a map of these changes, go to <http://www.parking.ufl.edu/images/Spring2009ParkingMap.pdf>.

Five-year ROI doubles

By **ASHLEY HOOVER**
Alligator Contributing Writer

Officials say UF students with their M.B.A.s can expect a profit double the cost of their degrees five years after graduating due in largely to networking. UF's Executive Master of Business Administration program ranked No. 2 nationwide in a return-on-investment survey from The Wall Street Journal on Dec. 10, according to a UF press release. UF's data shows a 212-percent five-year return on investment for graduates of the program. Alex Sevilla, the assistant dean and director of the program at Warrington College of Business Administration, said facilitation of networking is a big factor in the program's ranking.

"Any business school's pillar of strength is how much alumni can help their fellow Gators," he said. "They don't only help with money. Strong job connections are made as well." Sevilla said students in the program have a unique opportunity to build relationships with international employers through study tours. Rosemary Mesa, a graduate student in UF's M.B.A. program, went on an entrepreneurship tour to Ireland last fall. Mesa said she spoke with head officials of companies there, such as Dell, and did marketing analysis for clients looking to start new ventures. She said the international experience gives students a real-world edge to their degrees in a time when international partnership is needed.

UF
Academics

Travolta autopsy shows no sign of head trauma

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FREEPORT, Bahamas (AP) — Jett Travolta's body shows no sign of head trauma and his death certificate says he was killed by a seizure, an undertaker said Monday, as the 16-year-old's celebrity parents prepared to return his remains to the United States.

Authorities would not release the results of an autopsy performed Monday, but Glen Campbell, assistant director of the Bahamian funeral home handling the remains of John Travolta's son, saw the body and the death certificate, which was

based on the autopsy's findings.

"The only cause of death that was listed was 'seizure,'" he said.

Campbell told the Associated Press Jett's body was in "great condition," despite police officials who had said the teen hit his head on a bathtub.

Jett Travolta had a history of seizures and was found unconscious in a bathroom Friday at a family vacation home on Grand Bahama Island.

In a public statement released Sunday, John Travolta and wife Kelly Preston said they were "heartbroken that our time with him was so brief."

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UF sets up mobile DMV office in Reitz Union

■ **MOBILE UNIT TO PROVIDE SHORTER WAIT TIMES.**

By **TATIANA GONZALEZ**
Alligator Contributing Writer

You could drive to the DMV and wait countless hours in a long line to get your license renewed. Or you could stop by the ground floor of the Welcome Center at the Reitz Union.

The Florida Department of

Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles has partnered with UF to bring the Florida Licensing On Wheels program, a mobile DMV office that runs all over the state of Florida.

"We're very proud of this program," said Ann Nucatola, spokeswoman for the program. "We bring our services to you."

The FLOW program kicked off Monday at 10 a.m. with very short lines, to the delight of customers like Shaina McGehe, a UF

senior who started off at the local DMV.

"There were like 50 people in front of me in line," said McGehe, who renewed her license at the Welcome Center location in less than 15 minutes. "I almost didn't come here. I'm so glad I did."

Guillermo Valle, a finance junior, also opted out of the three-hour wait at the local DMV.

"I live across the street from

the DMV, but this is more convenient," he said.

Along with license renewal, students and staff can get duplicates for lost or stolen licenses and update their names and addresses, while out-of-state students can get a Florida ID card and register their emergency contact information.

"That way we can instantaneously get contacts in the case of an emergency without having to look through out-of-state re-

ords," Nucatola said.

Deepikaa Subramaniam, a graduate student from India, came upon FLOW by accident on her first day at UF and took advantage of the opportunity to get a Florida ID card.

"The service was good and he guided me through everything, so it was easy," Subramaniam said.

FLOW will be at the Reitz Union from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. today through Jan. 9.

UF STUDENT GOVERNMENT

UF endowment down, budget cuts will increase

By **THOMAS STEWART**
Alligator Writer
tstewart@alligator.org

Though UF officials previously said they didn't expect mid-year budget cuts, they are now preparing to take another hit this month from the Florida Legislature.

Lawmakers began their 12-day special session Monday to find a way to plug a \$2.3 billion budget shortfall, and it looks like UF will not be spared, President Bernie Machen said during December's Faculty Senate meeting.

As a result, Machen announced

that UF will likely borrow money from itself to maintain its operations.

Since it isn't clear yet how much the Legislature will cut from UF's funding, UF doesn't know how much money it will have to borrow, spokeswoman Janine Sikes said.

The money will probably come from auxiliary units like the Department of Housing or the University Athletic Association, which don't operate with state funding, Sikes said.

The Department of Housing is a likely source because it usually has money budgeted for renovations

and future projects that could be easily tapped, Sikes said.

Machen said during the meeting that UF will have to borrow the money because it cannot enact a budget reduction in the middle of the academic year.

"We have 50,000 students registered, they're going to show up," he said. "All our faculty are on contracts."

Machen also told faculty at the

meeting that UF's endowment, which is a pool of private donations and matching state funds that is invested, is down by about 17.5 percent as of the end of November.

That means UF's endowment has taken a \$220 million hit, putting its total value at just over \$1 billion as of November.

Machen said UF usually brings in about \$220 million a year through the endowment.

He said the numbers are disappointing but added that other universities have had it worse.

Yale University's endowment is down about 25 percent and Harvard

University's is down about 22 percent, for example.

Machen also mentioned that none of UF's funds were directly involved in the \$50 billion Bernard Madoff scandal.

However, he said, "We have a number of significant donors who were impacted heavily by that Ponzi scheme, so we're not unaffected by it."

Chris Brazda, spokesman for the UF Foundation, which oversees investments to UF, said as far as he knows, no donations to UF have been retracted as a result of the scandal.

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ON CAMPUS

UF bookstores offer 20 percent off selected items

By BRIDGET HIGGINBOTHAM
Alligator Contributing Writer

Select merchandise will be 20 percent off at the University of Florida Bookstores today thanks to a continued effort by Student Government. Last fall, SG partnered with UF's Business Services Division to bring students the discount. The 6.25 percent discount on textbooks saved students approximately \$45,000.

Although students are likely to see SG-initiated discounts in the future, last fall's textbook deal will not be repeated, said Lynne Vaughan, director of the UF Bookstores.

"It was a one-time deal," Vaughan said. "It would be nice. I know everyone enjoyed it, but the margin's not there. We'd be selling at a loss." Also excluded from the deal are electronics, computer software and batteries. Today's discount applies only to supplies such as paper, binders, writing instruments, scrubs and residence hall essentials.

"Anything that helps students save a little bit of money on supplies they need for class, I think, is a great thing," said Kevin Reilly, Student Body President. In order to qualify for the discount, the purchases must be made in-store today between 7:30 a.m. and 9 p.m.

"Anything that helps students save a little bit of money on supplies they need for class, I think, is a great thing."

Kevin Reilly
Student Body President

Students can use the discount and purchase their items with deferment. Vaughan hopes the one-day deal will increase goodwill with the students, and she hopes it will keep students from shopping elsewhere. "The University of Florida is a big pie, and all of the businesses across the street

want a slice of that pie, and I want my slice to be the biggest," Vaughan said. In addition to the Reitz Union location, the bookstores in the medical and veterinarian schools are also participating today. The law school location will offer the same discount on Friday.

UF freshman Jenelle Demers said she was pleased to hear of the discount but thought the event should have been better publicized.

"They should do textbooks every semester and supplies in the fall," Demers said, adding she already has school supplies. "Any discount is fine with me. I'm sure someone needs it."

LOCAL

Marine charged with molestation

By KATIE EMMETS
Alligator Writer
kemmets@alligator.org

A man in the United States military visiting Gainesville on leave was arrested after being accused of molesting a 12-year-old girl early Saturday morning.

When driving home, neighbors told Gainesville Police Department Sgt. Dan Stout that there were several minors in the house at 8401 N.W. 13th St.

Stout arrived at 3 a.m. at the house where U.S. Marine Felipe Garibay, 27, was found inside with five neighborhood girls under 17 years old, said GPD spokeswoman Officer Summer Hallett.

Although all five of the girls told him they didn't want to drink, Garibay mixed each of them vodka and cranberry juice and persuaded them to drink it, a GPD arrest report stated.

According to the report, one of the 12-year-old girls sat on

Garibay's lap.

The four other girls witnessed him grabbing and touching her inappropriately under her clothing, the report stated.

When police arrived, she appeared disoriented and was taken to the hospital for treatment.

The remaining four underage girls were treated by Emergency Medical Services, the report stated.

GPD usually sees underage drinking cases with minors between the ages of 18 and 19, Hallett said.

"You don't see a 27-year-old try to get girls between the ages of 11 and 16 liquored up," Hallett said. "I don't think the military will be too happy about this."

Garibay was charged with lewd or lascivious molestation of a person under 16 years of age, four counts of contributing to delinquency of a child and five counts of child abuse.



Sarah Hsu / Alligator Staff

Booking It

Students walk into the Florida Book Store Monday evening to beat the rush to buy books. The book store will be open extended hours through Jan. 18.

"We were on the phone. I guess he wasn't paying attention to the road. I heard him crash. I think about it all the time."
Jennifer R. | Cincinnati, Ohio

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Editorial

No Mercy

Post-BCS hangovers don't matter to Machen

Apparently reaching the pinnacle of the college football world doesn't mean much to UF President Bernie Machen, who seems to think championships are as commonplace as players like Oklahoma's outspoken Dominique Franks.

As Thursday's BCS National Championship Game looms, the Editorial Board advises you not to make the trip down to Miami — unless of course you don't mind suffering the consequences in the classroom.

Past years have seen a kinder and more sympathetic Bernie advising professors not to punish students for missing class the day after the game as they travel home or recover from celebrating on University Avenue.

With excellence becoming synonymous with UF athletics, Machen has refused to extend a grace of sorts to students as current plans for Friday call for business as usual on campus.

We as students can't help the fact that UF happens to start its spring semester earlier than many other schools — heck, our opponents don't go back to class until Jan. 20.

The Editorial Board isn't expecting a major shift in the academic calendar — just a mutual understanding that we might not be in class on Friday.

Is it too much to ask for the opportunity to enjoy in the success of our team without having to worry about the academic repercussions?

Sharing in the success of the UF football team should unite the administration, staff and students — not cause a divide. We are talking about the first Friday of the first week of school, hardly the week before finals.

It's never too late for a new year's resolution, Bernie.

Opinions

ALLIGATOR
www.alligator.org/opinions

The Administration is passing down a strict "No Mercy" policy on students missing class due to the National Championship.



Column

Economic woes shouldn't dictate faith

The culmination of a brutal year for every aspect of the Western economic paradigm birthed a dismal Christmas retail season. The blind faith in overheated consumerism that fuels the economic engine of the world exploded over the last year — and even 8-pound, 6-ounce baby Jesus could not steer us clear of fiscal ruin.

Faith is necessarily blind — the belief in something that is not directly available requires a certain amount of devotion and conviction, whether one anchors their faith to an unseen organizing force or an untenable return on investments. Our prophets of profit, now exposed as charlatans and shysters, were promoted by an unquestioning media as combination shaman/celebrities for the past two decades. The real American idols were not carrying any tunes but rather toting briefcases and practicing slash-and-burn farming on fiscal regulations.

Once the regulatory landscape was suitably barren, a cult of personality grew up around investors who brought back big returns. None more so than Bernie Madoff, who descended from Mt. Nasdaq with two mystical Blackberries and built what the Wall Street Journal called "the atomic bomb for Jewish charities."

In Western Europe, religious voices have begun a wide-ranging dialogue on finance and faith. The Financial Times, a British newspaper focusing on economic issues, has been chronicling the growing chorus of Christian voices opposed to our deregulated hyper-capitalism. In Germany, Bishop Wolfgang Huber accused Josef Ackermann and Deutsche Bank of "a form of idolatry" by establishing the shaky goal of pretax returns on equity of 25 percent.

Quite clear is Huber's assertion that money has become a god of our cratered and uncertain fiscal landscape.

An article in the same paper only a few days before quoted

Tommy Maple
tmaple@alligator.org

Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, as he forcefully inserted himself into the British discourse on this most urgent crisis of faith. Williams told the BBC

that the sorry state of world economies represented "sort of a reality check" and "a reminder that what I think some people have called fairy gold is just that — that sooner or later you have to ask: 'What are we making or what are we assembling or accumulating wealth for?'"

Assembling meaning from life is a far more difficult proposition than accumulating wealth, as any Joe McMansion can attest to.

More than 20 years ago, Pope Benedict XVI wrote about the potential demise of our economic system due to hollowed-out ethical tenets and our lust for the paper over the papal. The Pope foretold of wholesale and systemic economic collapse when the ethical concerns for community and family took a backseat to pure profit motives. This opinion has become increasingly valuable as deregulation squeezes out more and more of the flailing middle class.

Certainly, our modern societies cannot reasonably cleave faith and money — but newspapers all over our country are chronicling how the economic crisis is coercing the masses into church pews. With this shove from reality, the country is now dependent upon the pontificating voices of easy-credit-compatible American evangelism to sing a new tune.

The need for change is certainly far from a hidden conclusion — you know it was a bad year for our false American idols when there are more stampede deaths in one morning at Wal-Mart than over the five days of Hajj.

Tommy Maple is a journalism graduate student. His column appears on Tuesdays.

The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the Alligator.

Reader response

Today's question:

Were you planning on having a bonfire to celebrate the BCS National Championship Game?

Monday's question:

No question ran Monday.

Vote or post a message at www.alligator.org

Chomp out fires

The Editorial Board understands that college students will be, well, college students come Thursday evening.

Two days from now you will diligently trade in your notebooks for Natural Light, and laptop for lemon drops.

Unless you go to UF, how often does your football team make the championship game, anyway?

While we'd all like to be in Miami to see the game in person, staying local is easily the second best option.

From beer pong to ice luges, Gainesville (sorry Norman) will prove to be a mecca of partying, debauchery and if things unfold as we expect — celebration as the Gators take home the BCS championship.

We realize everyone celebrates in their own unique manner. Many students will descend upon University Avenue for peaceful riot-

ing, while others will gleefully buy rounds of shots for complete strangers at Gator's Dockside.

The Editorial Board asks that you pay careful attention to Gainesville's laws and refrain from relishing the victory by starting a bonfire. Don't end your night early by getting arrested for having a 12-foot-flame burning in your backyard. Even worse, we would hate to see you make a poor decision and ruin everyone's fun by spending the evening in the hospital.

Run around campus proclaiming your love for Tim Tebow or ascend upon Florida Field and pretend you are Louis Murphy catching the game-winning touchdown.

You still have a hankering for fire? Tune in Thursday to see Percy Harvin burn corners and Will Demps smoke safeties — a bonfire for Oklahoma's BCS chances.

the independent florida
alligator

Nicole Safker
EDITOR
Kristin Bjornsen
MANAGING EDITOR

Dan Seco
OPINIONS EDITOR

The Alligator encourages comments from readers. Letters to the editor should not exceed 150 words (about one letter-sized page). They must be typed, double-spaced and must include the author's name, classification and phone number. Names will be withheld if the writer shows just cause. We reserve the right to edit for length, grammar, style and libel. Send letters to letters@alligator.org, bring them to 1105 W. University Ave., or send them to P.O. Box 14257, Gainesville, FL 32604-2257. Columns of about 450 words about original topics and editorial cartoons are also welcome. Questions? Call 376-4458.

U-Wire

“Bleeping Blago” should be bagged

If convicted, Blago will join the legacy of Illinois corruption.

It was more than a trifle embarrassing to have my home state thrust into the house of national consciousness at about 6 a.m. Central Standard Time. Even more depressing is the realization that scandal is not so unusual so as to be unheard of. The only unusual end to this story is that the governor accused of corruption was publicly humiliated.

If convicted, Gov. Rod Blagojevich, D-Ill., or “Bleeping Blago,” would be the second consecutive Illinois governor to go to federal prison. George Ryan, who preceded him in this dubiously esteemed office, is currently serving time in the federal penitentiary in Terra Haute, Ind., and is seeking a pardon from President Bush. Ryan’s conviction stemmed from numerous accusations of graft.

Most odious of these was a scandal from when Ryan served as Illinois Secretary of State. In return for donations, this office granted commercial drivers’ licenses to some who had no business holding them, with unfortunate and, in one case at least, tragic results.

It would be convenient to gloss over these two individuals as somehow aberrant. It would be similarly convenient to wonder if the federal prosecutor made a mistake. However, there is a larger culture of corruption in this state that makes almost anything sound plausible and likely.

Chicago has had some astonishing allegations of corruption in city government. Nineteen-year-old building inspectors. Trucks hired to do nothing. Affirmative-action contracts given to white-owned firms. High-level indictments in the water department. The stories sound fantastic to anybody not a native of Cook, Lake, McHenry, Kane, DuPage and Will counties. However, to the more than 6 million residents who live in these counties, this is politics as usual.

It has been politics as usual for a long time, too. The city was built on pork twice-over — once from the meatpacking houses and once from the pork-barrel. Johnny Powers, a notorious Chicago alderman of the 19th Ward on the West Side, was known as a “boodler,” or an expert at securing bribes in return for government favors.

Oddly, he sounded remarkably like Blagojevich when facing an investigation: “I will show the press that unwarranted attacks cannot be made upon an innocent man ... I defy the world to prove I have ever done a serious wrong.” This fiery quote ran in *The New York Times* of Jan. 9, 1898, in an article bemoaning the “Corruption With Which Chicago Is Larded.”

So, what happens next? Blagojevich has decided to fight the charges, and his lawyer has been running around Springfield proclaiming his innocence. The General Assembly, however, is probably not going to wait for a conviction in federal court and might move to impeach the governor following its re-assembly on Jan. 6.

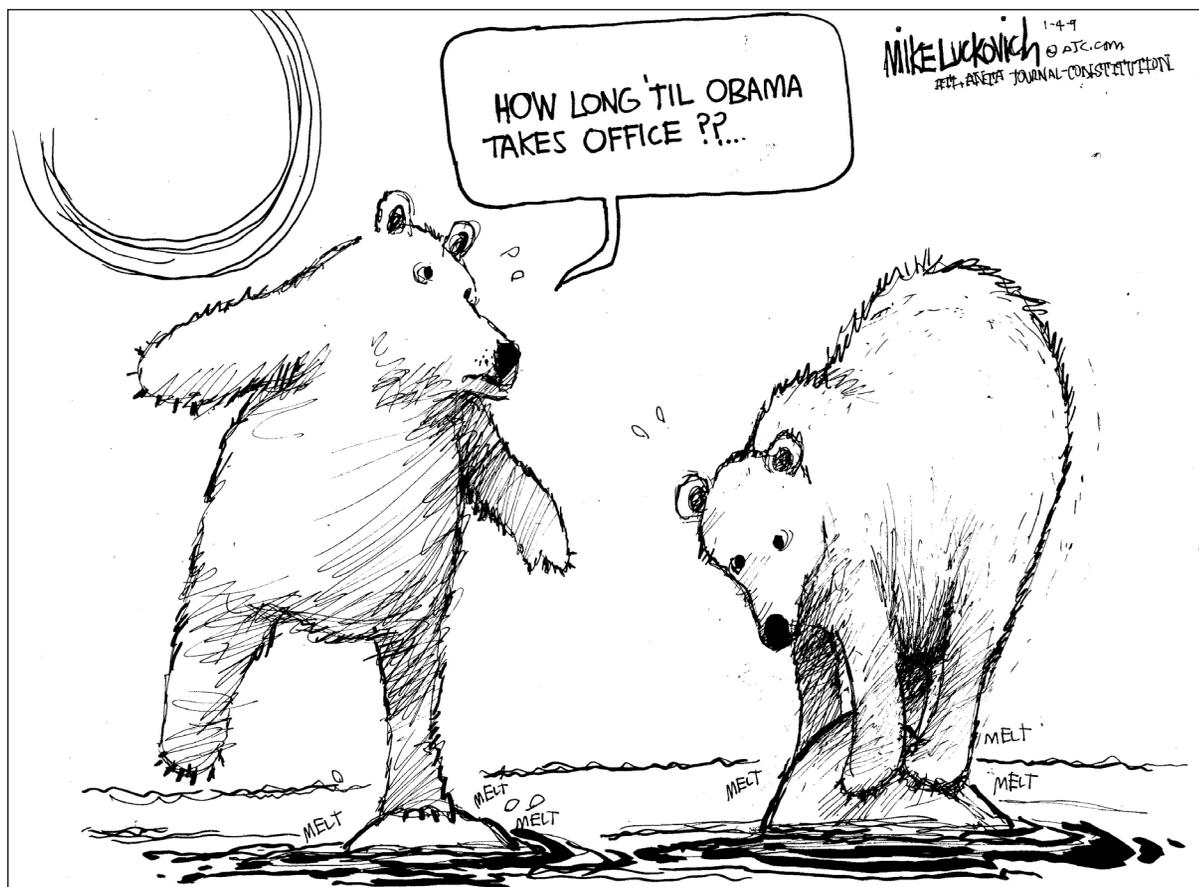
Talk of impeachment is not new in Springfield, and some citizens of the state wanted a recall amendment to be added to the constitution for the express purpose of removing the governor. However, the programs intended to remove the governor have been blocked by one of Blagojevich’s few friends in the assembly: Senate President Emil Jones Jr. Indeed, it is interesting to wonder if House Speaker Michael Madigan’s reluctance to open impeachment proceedings had anything to do with the difficulty of obtaining a conviction of the governor in the Senate. With Jones retiring, this logjam is removed.

Meanwhile, anyone vaguely associated with government has tried to distance himself from the governor. Lisa Madigan, daughter of the Speaker, has been particularly strident, and as attorney general of the state she has attempted to have Blagojevich declared incapacitated by the Illinois Supreme Court. This sort of toughness from the attorney general’s office is probably nothing more than a large display for political purposes.

How much of a difference will this chaos make to the Illinois political scene? It’s hard to say. If Patrick Fitzgerald remains the U.S. attorney in the Obama administration, we will probably see more indictments and convictions of influential politicians. However, Fitzgerald’s future might not be certain, and, if the history of Illinois is any indicator, the “Illinois Combine,” as the graft-ridden system is called, will likely survive this investigation and roll on to more golden times.

Mark Kozlowski is a student at the University of Pittsburgh.

Mark Kozlowski
U-Wire



U-Wire

No reason for New Year's resolutions

It's pointless to wait for a new year to improve your life. New Year's resolutions are doomed to fail because of the lack of motivation after the month of January (or even Jan. 2 for some), and they hurt self-esteem as a result of that failure, reversing the whole positive aspect of resolutions in the first place. The desire for self-improvement should not be marked by the obligation of making goals once a year, but rather it should be evident year-round.

Habits are hard, both hard to make and hard to break. You can't change the past with just a few promises.

The popularity of New Year's resolutions seems to be a must-follow trend among many, especially with all the media attention. Articles about “Top Ten Resolutions” and “Celebrity Resolutions” have become the Internet's top searches around this time of year.

People desperate to mimic their favorite celebrity's resolution for the first week of January realize their goal is pointless and stop caring after Jan. 8. It's almost safe to label this as the first-week-of-the-year-awakening, rather than a New Year's resolution.

Making a goal because you have to make a goal will not get you anywhere. If there is no realistic desire, there will be no end result.

Take the idea of procrastination. If you waited until a few hours before your final exam to study, the chances of you performing well are slim to none—unless you get lucky or are one of those gifted geniuses. Failing an exam because you waited until the last minute to study is not the most effective way of

**Chloe
Ghoogassian**
U-Wire

achieving your goal: getting an A in the class.

Thus, if you wait until Jan. 1 to change your ways, the chances you'll actually attain your goals are slim as well.

Let's say you suddenly pledge to run a marathon. Because you are not used to this amount of running and have never been trained, you will be unable to run effectively and complete the marathon, causing you to feel discouraged and thus failing to keep your promise. Procrastination is a result of laziness, which is a result of a lack of desire, which will get you nowhere.

New Year's resolutions can even cause negative consequence to one's emotional state because human beings are not inclined to respond well to failure. Mental health specialist Paul Farmer says, “We chastise ourselves for our perceived shortcomings and set unrealistic goals to change our behavior, so it's not surprising that when we fail to keep resolutions, we end up feeling worse than when we started.”

Sure, it's better to try and fail than not to try at all, but the most realistic way of attaining one's goals is without the unrealistic labels.

Self-improvements can be made year-round, so don't wait until the new year to start acting upon it. Attaining goals are very possible. Steps can be taken to improve aspects of your life — little steps that won't be forgotten after the first week of January.

Chloe Ghoogassian is a student at UCLA.

Letter to the Editor

Ticket office failed to please fans

I have been a football season ticket holder since 1997. In 2003, I not only kept up my Gator Booster status but I also upgraded to Champions Club at a time when the program was struggling to sell these seats due to a decline in the team's performance. In 2006, I had no trouble getting either SEC Championship or BCS Championship game tickets.

It was therefore inconceivable to me how I could not qualify this year, after contributing more money and having more years of Gator Booster membership. When I was finally able to get through to a live person from the ticket office, the nice young man explained to me that contribution levels had increased significantly over the past two years. He

admitted, however, that most of the entities contributing significant funds in recent years were corporations such as Publix Super Markets, not individuals.

This tells me that the University of Florida and Gator Boosters do not value loyalty. This is not what I was taught at UF as a student, and I certainly hope that these are not the values our coaches are imparting upon our student athletes.

Further, I feel the ticket office did an especially poor job anticipating the call volume in this situation. The week after the Vanderbilt game, I was unable to get through on the toll-free number, and every time I called the toll number, there was at least a 20-minute wait. In these difficult economic times, it looks to me like UF missed a golden opportunity

to give back to the local economy here. It should come as no surprise that I did not even bother calling the week after the SEC Championship game.

In conclusion, I urge you to keep in mind that it is already a stretch for most of us loyal Gator fans to afford the continually increasing minimum contribution amounts to keep our season ticket seats. To now effectively tell us, especially given current economic conditions in our country, that “it's just not enough” to get us SEC Championship game and bowl tickets so we can celebrate the team's prosperity after seeing our beloved Gators through the lean times is simply not good business.

Dean Millard
UF alumnus

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Student dies in car crash; friends plan memorial

By **THOMAS STEWART**
Alligator Writer

UF student Michelle Moses, 21, a fourth-year elementary education major, died while driving home to Mason, OH, a suburb of Cincinnati, over winter break.

On Dec. 20, while traveling north on I-75 near Richmond, KY, Moses lost control of her car just before 9 p.m. and struck the concrete divider between the northbound and southbound lanes, according to Trooper 1st Class Chris Lanham, a spokesman for the Kentucky State Police.

After getting out of her red 2007 Mazda 3, Moses was struck by a black 1996 Ford Mustang driven by Melvin A. Baker, 53. Baker was apparently switching lanes, Lanham said.

The impact sent Moses over the divider and into oncoming traffic, where she was struck by up to three vehicles, including a tractor trailer, Lanham said.

She was pronounced dead at the scene.

According to an article in the Richmond Register, reports at the scene indicated Moses was talking on her cell phone when she was struck by Baker's car.

Baker was injured in the crash, the Register reported.

A service was held for Moses in Cincinnati on Dec. 23 and she was buried in New Jersey on the following day.

A memorial is tentatively scheduled for Jan. 23 at UF Hillel.

Alpha Epsilon Phi, the sorority which Moses belonged to, is planning the event.

A Facebook group created after she died had 748 members as of Monday night.

Andrea Simon, her roommate at Campus Lodge and sister in Alpha Epsilon Phi, said she was always laughing.

"Her reaction to everything was pretty much just laughing," she

said. "Even when she was upset or like nervous."

She was very adventurous and always the life of the party, Simon said.

"She was always the first person on the dance floor," Simon said.

Every Wednesday they would try to go out to Gator City because it was ladies' night, Simon said.

Gator City was her favorite bar.

One time they went with a friend who was pretty shy and turning 21 that night.

By the end of the night, Moses had coaxed the girl onto the top of the bar where the both of them began dancing, Simon said.

"I think they got kicked off after a while," Simon said with a laugh.

Another night at Gator City, earlier in the semester, she met a guy named Michael Jellis.

Jellis, who was an exchange student from Australia, wrote in a Facebook message that he was standing at his favorite spot, next to the cigarette machine, when he saw Michelle and asked his American friend to talk to her while pretending to be Australian.

He asked his friend to tell her that he wanted to talk to her.

Jellis and Moses eventually began dating and fell in love.

Jellis, who was on his second exchange trip to UF, wrote that his favorite bar was also Gator City.

When asked why he came back to UF a second time, Jellis said he was thinking about it before the accident and decided it must have been fate that brought him back.

"I came back thinking I was coming for cheap beers and to watch football, but it just seemed like all those things brought me back to Gainesville to be in that spot at that time so that Michelle and I would meet," he wrote.

He said Moses was thinking about going to Australia with him and even talked about teaching aboriginals there.

She was fond of Australia, he



Photo provided.

Michelle Moses, right, poses with her friend Stephanie Kaplan in an undated photograph. Moses died in a car accident on Dec. 20.

said, partly because her father was also Australian.

He said some of his favorite memories of her were when she would help him study for his law school exams.

"I was stressed and cramming hard and Michelle knew this," he wrote, "but we also wanted to spend every minute together that we could (because I) had to go home soon."

"So to make me actually study Michelle would come to the law library with me and sit there and do all this extra work that she probably (didn't) need to do (because) she would ace her exams regardless."

He wrote they were often the last two people to leave the library, but she never complained or tried to distract him.

The last time they talked was while he was waiting for his plane back to Australia on the day that Moses died. They talked for two hours, he said.

They talked about visiting South Africa, Dubai and the Greek islands.

They also made a deal, he wrote, that they would get two dogs, and if he washed them, she would do everything else.

The last thing they said was that they loved each other, Jellis wrote.

Tim and Beth King, who lived next door to Moses' family in Mason for five years, said she would often baby sit their boys, Charles, 9, and Sam, 5. They liked her so much that when they found out she would be babysitting they would spend all day asking when she was coming.

Last spring, Tim said, when the family was deciding what to do for spring break, their son Sam immediately said "Hey, we could go to Florida to see Michelle."

"And he was totally serious," chimed Beth.

Leigh Flanders, who met her when they both pledged Alpha Epsilon Phi during their sophomore year, said Michelle loved shopping and Moe's Southwest Grill.

Flanders said she loved her job at the Sunglass Hut because it put her so close to the shopping. Her

favorite stores were White House Black Market and Bebe.

She said they would go to Moe's after every football game.

She said Michelle also liked to volunteer and was excited about doing an alternative spring break this year with Habitat for Humanity.

Last spring she went to New Orleans with Habitat and helped rebuild houses destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, Flanders said.

Flanders said she talked to her on the phone a few hours before she died, while she was driving home.

A few friends said they were comforted by the fact that she seemed so happy around the time she died.

Flanders said a big part of it was her love for her boyfriend Michael.

"I have been with her through numerous boys," she said, "but the way she was when she spoke about Michael, it even took me by surprise," she said.

"I've never seen her that happy."

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NATIONAL

Obama predicts economic revitalization package

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Barack Obama plunged into rare pre-inaugural crisis talks with Congressional leaders Monday, declaring the national economy was “bad and getting worse” and embracing tax cuts now expected to reach \$300 billion.

He predicted lawmakers would approve a mammoth revitalization package within two weeks of his taking office.

If the two-year plan is enacted, workers would see larger pay-

checks almost immediately because taxes withheld by the government would drop. The break would be retroactive to Jan. 1, and couples receiving a \$1,000 tax cut would begin receiving an extra \$40 in twice-monthly paychecks as the government tries to spark more consumer spending.

“The economy is very sick,” said Obama, who met privately with leaders of both parties at the Capitol. “The situation is getting worse. ... We have to act and act now to break the momentum of this recession.”

Obama, who takes office two

“The situation is getting worse. ... We have to act and act now to break the momentum of this recession.”

Barack Obama
President-elect

weeks from Tuesday, said when it comes to the floundering economy, he clearly feels he cannot sit by until the swearing-in.

Obama said he expected to have a bill signed by the end of January

or the first of February.

Obama’s proposal to stimulate the economy includes tax cuts of up to \$300 billion — including \$500 for most individuals and \$1,000 for couples if one spouse is employed — as well as more than \$100 billion for businesses, an Obama transition official said. The total value of the tax cuts would be significantly higher than had been signaled earlier.

New federal spending, also aimed at boosting the moribund economy, could push the overall package to the range of \$800 billion or so. Some \$77 billion would

be used to extend unemployment benefits and to subsidize health care for people who have lost their jobs.

The rest would go toward job-creation projects such as roads and bridges and toward long-term goals such as alternative energy programs.

Aides have said the package Obama has dubbed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan could cost as much as \$775 billion, but the president-elect has refused to put a price tag on the plan, and some members of Congress expect it to go higher.



AP Photo/Gulfstream Park

Gemswick Park, with John Velazquez, in yellow cap, captures the Old Hat Stakes horse race at Gulfstream Park on Sunday, Jan. 4, 2009, in Hallandale Beach, Fla. Elusive Heat, background, was second with Edgar Prado up, and Frolic’s Dream (2) was third with Jermaine Bridgmohan. (AP Photo)

Man arrested in downtown club

By **KATIE EMMETS**

Alligator Writer
kemmets@alligator.org

A Gainesville man was arrested at a downtown club after police found crack cocaine and two loaded handguns.

While on foot patrol, Gainesville police spotted two men loitering by a black Jeep Cherokee in the parking lot of Club Decadence at 12 S.W. Second St.

After seeing police walking toward them, the two men quickly shut the doors and walked into the club, the GPD arrest report stated.

In the center console, there was a clear plastic cup in plain view containing what appeared to be bags of crack cocaine, the report stated.

One of the men was arrested and identified as Michael Watts, 22, while the other disappeared into the crowd and

was not found, according to the report.

Officials located a .38-caliber revolver and a black 9mm Taurus semiautomatic handgun from the garbage can next to where the men were standing. Both were fully loaded, the report stated.

When asked if they could search the SUV, Watts told the officers that the vehicle was his girlfriend’s and told them the drugs were put there by the other man.

According to the report, Police found about 8.7 grams of crack and 11 bags containing about 6.5 grams of powdered cocaine.

GPD has an idea of who this man is but he has not been charged yet, said GPD spokeswoman Summer Hallett.

Watts was arrested and charged with three felonies including possession of drugs with intent to sell.

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Alligator offices get an upgrade

By **THOMAS STEWART**

Alligator Writer
tstewart@alligator.org

After a period of uncertainty and low morale last semester that witnessed The Independent Florida Alligator without an applicant for the editor-in-chief position for perhaps the first time in 40 years, the paper is back on its feet.

At a meeting in December, the paper's board of directors chose a new editor, Nicole Safker, a UF journalism senior.

Safker, who was the only applicant for the top spot, is the first person to become editor from the paper's

photo department since 1987, according to Alligator records provided by General Manager Tricia Carey.

"I couldn't be more excited. It's not as dark and dreary as it was a few months ago."

Nicole Safker
Alligator Editor-in-Chief

In addition to finding an editor, the paper will also be implementing changes to address some of the problems voiced by staffers in meetings late last year.

The paper recently got new equip-

ment, including flat-screen computer monitors and a new computer for the photo department, according to Safker.

The Alligator will increase communication with its board of directors and has seen an outpouring of support from faculty in UF's College of Journalism and Alligator alumni, Safker said.

The paper will also try to increase its focus on multimedia journalism this semester to better prepare its staff for future jobs, Safker said.

"I couldn't be more excited," she said. "It's not as dark and dreary as it was a few months ago."

UF associate provost to leave

UF announced a search Monday to replace Daniel Wubah, who has been UF's associate provost for undergraduate academic affairs since 2007.

It was announced in December that Wubah was leaving to become vice president and dean for undergraduate education at Virginia Tech.

His last day at UF will be Feb. 28.

UF will look first for a replacement within its own ranks, said Provost Joe Glover.

Glover said he hopes to find a replacement by March 1 to take over right after Wubah leaves.

Wubah is one of a growing list of administrators who have decided to leave UF this academic year.

Others who have left include UF Senior Vice President for Administration Kyle Cavanaugh, Dean of Students Gene Zdziarski and Dean of the College of Medicine Doug Barrett.

Glover said administrators often leave in waves and this just happens to be one of those waves.

He said it's nothing unusual and said he doesn't think it has anything to do with the current economic situation at UF.

Wubah, who is also a professor of zoology, said he decided to leave for VT because he was looking for a school with more of a science background.

His wife, Judith, who is an assistant professor of anatomy and cell biology at UF, will join him at VT, he said.

— THOMAS STEWART

UF ACADEMICS

UF names new IFAS vice president Larry Arrington will replace Jimmy Cheek

UF announced Monday that Larry Arrington will be the interim senior vice president for agriculture and natural resources while UF searches for a permanent replacement for Jimmy Cheek, who was named chancellor of the University of Tennessee in October.

Arrington, who has been dean of UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences since 2003, will start Monday.

The national search for Cheek's permanent successor has not started yet, according to a memo sent from President Bernie Machen to faculty Monday.

In his new position, Arrington will oversee IFAS,

which has a budget of more than \$300 million.

With the largest budget of all of UF's colleges and administrative units, IFAS also received the largest budget cut, \$9.5 million, in the 2008-2009 budget, according to Alligator archives.

Arrington said budget issues will be the most challenging aspect of his new job.

He also said he looks forward to making changes to IFAS to make its programs more relevant to the current job market for students.

— THOMAS STEWART

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NATIONAL

III. State Legislature racing to impeach Blagojevich

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO (AP) — State legislators weighing evidence against Gov. Rod Blagojevich may finish their work before getting any tapes of the governor's conversations that were made secretly by the FBI, attorneys indicated Monday.

The House impeachment panel is racing to complete its job, possibly by the end of this week. But the efforts of federal

prosecutors to give the panel some of the FBI tapes face a potential obstacle course in court that could take up several weeks.

"These tapes are relevant evidence; we'd like to have them," said David Ellis, a lawyer for the impeachment panel. But he said the panel could wrap up its work as early as this week.

Blagojevich, 52, a two-term Democrat, is charged along with former Chief of Staff John Harris with a scheme to sell or trade

the U.S. Senate seat left vacant by Barack Obama's election as president.

Blagojevich is also charged with illegally plotting to use his power as governor to squeeze roadbuilders, a harness racing executive and the head of a children's hospital, among others, for hefty campaign contributions.

Prosecutors propose to provide the impeachment panel with a few minutes of the extensive recordings the FBI made of the

governor talking with aides and others.

As skirmishing got underway Monday, Blagojevich's chief defense counsel, Edward M. Genson, said he wanted all of the tapes released to the panel, not just the four brief ones that prosecutors offered.

"We are not going to ask that one tape, or two tapes, or three tapes or four tapes, be offered," Genson told Chief U.S. District Judge James F. Holderman. "We are going to ask that all of them be offered."

UF ACADEMICS

Study shows UF athletes have widest SAT score gap

By **CHELSEA KEENAN**
Alligator contributing Writer

A study released during winter break pointed to a gap in SAT scoring between college football and basketball players compared with their classmates' average, a trend that extended to UF's own football team.

Of the 54 public universities in the study published in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, the biggest gap between football players and their classmates occurred at UF.

UF football players scored an average of 346 points lower on the SAT than the rest of the student

body.

The national average showed football players scoring 220 points lower and basketball players about seven points below their score.

UF spokesman Steve Orlando said that athletes are not given special consideration when applications are reviewed.

The UF admission's board is made up of faculty and admissions officials, who review applications using a holistic approach.

This means that SAT scores are not the only factor.

Instead, they choose applicants they believe will be able to

graduate at the end of four years, Orlando said.

"There are no athletic officials on the board," he said.

Orlando also pointed out that UF athletes have the second highest graduation rate in the SEC with 87 percent. Vanderbilt University came in first with 94 percent.

Although he was unable to give an answer as to why UF had the largest gap among athletes and their classmates he said that the study has discrepancies.

"It's an isolated factor of one subsection of the entire student body," he said.

With UF's recent budget cut

of \$47 million, it is eliminating 430 faculty positions as well as reducing enrollment by 1,000 students each year over the next four years.

"I understand that extracurricular activities are important," said UF sophomore Christine Mudie.

"But I don't think it's fair that I had to work so hard to get my SAT score up to par just because I'm not on the football team."

Mudie said she would be interested in seeing the SAT scores of other athletic teams such as softball and tennis.

Vanessa Rangel, a member of the UF women's soccer team, said

that colleges shouldn't be concerned only with academics.

"Of course you want athletes to be well-rounded," Rangel said.

"But when you're recruiting athletes, SAT scores aren't the thing you look for. You want to be the No. 1 team in the nation."

Student athletes aren't the only students who feel this way.

"UF wouldn't be nearly as prestigious if we didn't have the athletics we have,"

UF sophomore Laura Milton said. "We wouldn't have the money and funding to do the research we do."

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Israel ignores call for cease-fire, assault continues

Arab delegates met with U.N. Security Council, urged resolution

■ THREE ISRAELI SOLDIERS DIE IN FRIENDLY FIRE.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GAZA CITY, Gaza — Israel ignored mounting international calls for a cease-fire Monday and said it won't stop its crippling 10-day assault until "peace and tranquility" are achieved in southern Israeli towns in the line of Palestinian rocket fire. Three Israeli soldiers died in a friendly fire incident.

Israeli forces seized control of high-rise buildings and attacked smuggling tunnels and several mosques in a campaign against Hamas militants that took an increasing toll on civilians. Three young brothers were reported

killed during shelling. Palestinian wounded filled hospital corridors.

Arab delegates met with the U.N. Security Council in New York Monday, urging members to adopt a resolution calling for an immediate end to the Israeli attacks and a permanent cease-fire. At the same time, diplomats and European leaders traveled the region in an effort to stop Israel's expanding ground and air offensive.

In the first serious clash in an urban area, Israeli troops and Hamas militants fought a gunbattle on the outskirts of the crowded Gaza City neighborhood of Shajaiyeh, Israeli defense officials said. Details also emerged of an unsuccessful attempt by Hamas

fighters to capture Israeli soldiers hours after the ground operation began Saturday with a withering round of artillery fire.

Military spokesman Brig. Gen. Avi Benayahu told Israeli TV the assault was going according to plan with forces sweeping through Palestinian rocket launching locations near the border.

Later, the Israeli military said three soldiers were killed and 24 others wounded Monday evening by friendly fire. It said an errant Israeli tank shell hit their position outside Gaza City, adding that initial suspicions that a Hamas booby-trap caused the casualties were ruled out. Israel Radio re-

ported a colonel who commanded an infantry brigade was among the injured.

Despite Israeli claims that casualties have been heavy among militants, no Hamas fighters were seen Monday by an Associated Press reporter at Shifa Hospital, the Gaza Strip's largest. Instead, the hospital was overwhelmed with civilians. Bodies were two to a morgue drawer, and the wounded were being treated in hallways because beds were full.

Gaza health officials reported that since the campaign began on Dec. 27 more than 550 Palestinians have been killed and 2,500 wounded, including 200 civilians. U.N. humanitarian chief John Holmes told reporters in New York on Monday that

U.N. officials believe at least 500 people have been killed in the fighting and that as many as 25 percent are civilians.

At least 20 Palestinian children were killed during the day, said Dr. Moaiya Hassanain, a health official. Most confirmed deaths have been civilians.

The three brothers died in an attack on a town outside Gaza City, a Gaza health official said. They were carried to a cemetery in an emotional funeral. One of them, Issa Samouni, 3, was wrapped in a white cloth, showing only his pale, yellow face. A man delicately placed him in a dark grave cut into the earth.

In Shajaiyeh, troops seized control of three six-story buildings on the outskirts, climbing to rooftop gun and observation positions, Israeli defense officials said. Residents were locked in their rooms and soldiers took away their cell phones, a neighbor said, quoting a relative who called before his phone was seized.

"The army is there, firing in all directions," said Mohammed Salmai, a 29-year-old truck driver. "All we can do is take clothes to each other to keep ourselves warm and pray to God that if we die, someone will find our bodies under the rubble."

Fighter jets attacked houses, weapons storage sites, a pair of mosques and smuggling tunnels, as they have since the start of the offensive. Israel has attacked several mosques during the campaign, saying they were used to store weapons.

Eight Israelis have been killed since the offensive began. One other soldier and three civilians were killed during the initial air phase of the offensive. Israeli officials are concerned that heavy casualties among its troops could undermine what has so far been overwhelming public support for the operation.



AP Photo

An Israeli girl examines debris from a damaged roof of a temporary closed food market on Monday minutes after a rocket fired by Palestinian militants from Gaza hit in Sderot, southern Israel.

Number of homeless children in Alachua County rose by 150 in the fall

CHARITIES, from page 1

One organization saw a slight increase in donations this December because of a holiday fundraiser.

"It was an interesting surprise," said Martha McInnes, director of Interfaith Hospitality Network.

Families with children can receive aid from Interfaith Hospitality Network, a network of nine local churches that offers places to stay overnight.

McInnes said that a lack of holiday jobs hurt people who were counting on the extra money in December, prompting some who don't normally request aid to look to local organizations for help.

"Yes, we have kind of a tent city and the issues of people who are chronically homeless," McInnes said. "But now we have a lot of people who simply don't have enough money to pay their bills."

Homelessness also affects Alachua County children. About 650 students in county schools are classified as homeless, said Courtney Allen, homeless education coordinator for Alachua County.

The number of homeless students increased by about 150 last semester, she said.

Calls for assistance start to come in before Thanksgiving and continue through the holiday season, Allen said.

"They are looking for any kind of toy drive, any kind of assistance," she said of families in the program. "They don't get a

traditional Christmas."

The students are protected by the McKinney-Veto Act, which works to provide

"They are looking for any kind of toy drive, any kind of assistance," she said of families in the program. "They don't get a traditional Christmas."

Courtney Allen
homeless education coordinator for Alachua County

a seamless education to homeless students. Under the act, students are offered immediate enrollment, transportation to and from

their schools and a nutrition program during school.

Over holiday break, homeless children are without benefits such as the nutrition program, Allen said.

Despite the current trend, many charitable organizations are hopeful that volunteer hours and donations will soon increase.

One student group plans to answer the call.

Kyle Robisch, president of Gator CHOMP, said members deliver food to St. Francis House Monday through Thursday each week, and they receive food donations from area restaurants such as Jimmy John's.

Plans to increase the organization's reach include a competitive campus-wide clothing drive.

Dems project head of CIA, director of intelligence

■ **OBAMA HAS NOT MADE THE FINAL DECISION.**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President-elect Barack Obama's decision to fill the nation's top intelligence jobs with two men short on direct experience in intelligence gathering surprised the spy community and signaled the Democrat's intention for a clean break from Bush administration policies.

Former Clinton White House

Chief of Staff Leon Panetta, an eight-term congressional veteran and administrative expert, is being tapped to head the CIA. Retired Adm. Dennis Blair is Obama's choice to be director of national intelligence, a selection expected for weeks, according to two Democrats who spoke on condition of anonymity because Obama has not officially announced the choices.

Obama is sending an unequivocal message that controversial administration policies approv-

ing harsh interrogations, waterboarding and extraordinary renditions — the secret transfer of prisoners to other governments with a history of torture — and warrantless wiretapping are over, said several officials.



Obama

The search for Obama's new CIA chief had been stalled since November, when John Brennan, Obama's transi-

tion intelligence adviser, abruptly withdrew his name from consideration. Brennan said his potential nomination sparked outrage among civil rights and human rights groups, who argued that he had not been outspoken enough in his condemnation of President George W. Bush's policies.

And despite an internal list of former and current CIA officials who had impressive administrative credentials, all either worked in intelligence during the Bush administration's development of

controversial policies on interrogation and torture or earlier, during the months leading up to the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

Neither Panetta nor Blair are tainted by associations with Bush administration policies, in large part because they both come from outside the intelligence world.

Blair and Panetta would replace retired Adm. Mike McConnell and former Air Force Gen. Michael Hayden, respectively. Both men had said they would stay in their positions if asked.

Major auto manufacturers report poor December sales

Bargains will likely disappear as showrooms empty

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT (AP) — Huge rebates and zero-percent loans couldn't overcome economic uncertainty as U.S. auto sales plunged 36 percent in December, capping a dismal year that saw sales free-fall by 2.9 million vehicles from 2007.

The bleak numbers, according to both industry officials and analysts, mean that record high rebates and low-interest financing deals will stick around until at least February.

But those deals will likely disappear as

the remaining 2008 models are sold and inventories are lowered to match demand.

One automaker, Hyundai Motor America, is trying to woo skittish buyers by promising to let them return cars for up to a year if they lose their jobs and can't make the payments.

Similar bold moves might be necessary throughout the year.

Every major manufacturer reported drops of more than 30 percent in December.

Leading the largest year-over-year drop since the Arab oil embargo days of 1973-

74 was struggling Chrysler LLC, which sold 53 percent fewer vehicles than last December and 30 percent fewer in 2008 than in 2007.

General Motors Corp. sold 2.9 million vehicles last year, the lowest number in 49 years.

National News

U.S. auto sales tumbled to 13.2 million in 2008, down 18 percent from 16.1 million in 2007. Consulting firm IHS Global Insight predicts that U.S. sales will drop to 10.3 million this year as the economy continues to sputter.

Even Toyota Motor Corp. and Honda Motor Co., which earlier in the year had seen increases, saw declines in December that were larger than their U.S.-based competitors'. Toyota was down 37 percent and Honda 35 percent, compared with Ford Motor Co.'s 32 percent drop and GM's 31 percent slide. Nissan Motor Co. sales also dropped 31 percent.

Automakers were reluctant to predict when a recovery might occur, but most were pessimistic about the first quarter. After that, some were hopeful that President-elect Barack Obama's stimulus package would kick in, coupled with a loosening of credit that could bring people back to the showrooms.

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Jobs will stay at Apple reins despite health setbacks

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK (AP) — Apple Inc. founder Steve Jobs, a survivor of pancreatic cancer whose gaunt appearance in the past year has alarmed the Mac and iPod lovers who look to him as an oracle, said Monday he has an easily treated hormone imbalance and will remain in charge of the company.

The news sent Apple stock up more than 4 percent on a down day for much of the market. But Jobs did not say whether the problem was related to the cancer, and some analysts said the health watch may not be over.

The CEO's health is an important issue for any company, but especially for Apple, where Jobs has presided over a decade of huge success. His mix of secrecy and high-design principles, seen in the rollouts of new Mac computers, the iPod music player and the iPhone, has become a trademark.

In a public letter, Jobs, 53, said his thinness had been a mystery even to him and his doctors until a few weeks ago, when "sophisticated blood tests" confirmed that he has "a hormone imbalance that has been 'robbing' me of the proteins my body needs to be healthy."

"The remedy for this nutritional problem is relatively simple and straightforward, and I've already begun treatment," he wrote. "Just like I didn't lose this much weight and body mass in a week or a month, my doctors expect it will take me until late this spring to regain it."

Jobs, who co-founded Apple

with Steve Wozniak in 1976 at the dawn of the personal computer revolution, left in 1985 and returned as CEO in 1997, slashing unprofitable product lines and helping rescue the company from financial ruin.

Jobs announced in 2004 that he had undergone successful surgery to treat a very rare form of pancreatic cancer — an islet cell neuroendocrine tumor. The cancer is easily cured if diagnosed early. Even so, fears that Apple would lose his leadership percolated in 2008 as

"I will be the first one to step up and tell our board of directors if I can no longer continue to fulfill my duties as Apple's CEO."

Steve Jobs
Apple CEO

Jobs appeared pale, worn and notably thinner in the face. Apple said he was suffering from a common bug, but The New York Times cited anonymous sources who said Jobs had undergone "a surgical procedure" to address the problem that had caused him to lose weight.

Worries about Jobs intensified after Apple said in December that he would not make his annual keynote address Tuesday at the Macworld conference in San Francisco. It was at Macworld in 2007 that Jobs introduced the iPhone.

Apple said Jobs would not take the stage because this year will mark the company's last appearance at the show, which is run by a separate company. Phil Schiller, an Apple marketing executive, will

give the company's presentation instead.

But after Apple's official statements didn't quell the discussion of Jobs' health, the CEO said he released his letter Monday "so that we can all relax and enjoy the show tomorrow."

He closed it by saying: "So now I've said more than I wanted to say, and all that I am going to say, about this."

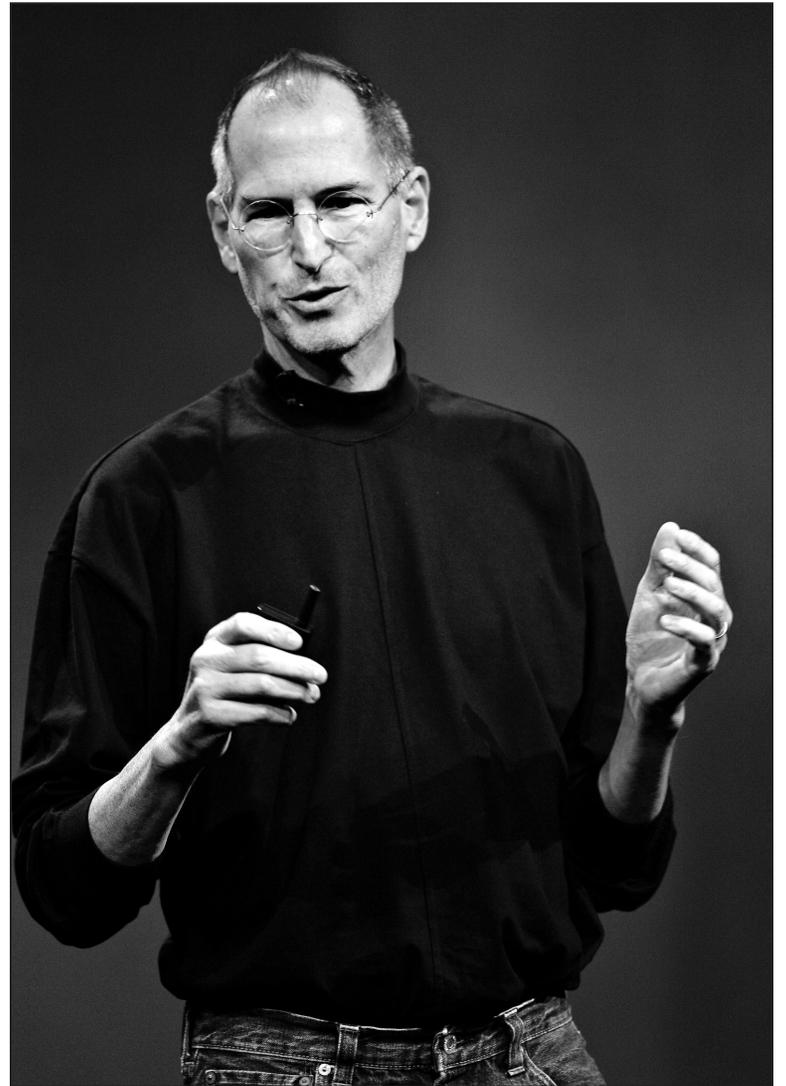
For Apple investors, it seemed that was good enough. Apple stock rose \$3.83, 4.2 percent, to close at \$94.58.

Still, the announcement is unlikely to end speculation about Jobs, said Brian Marshall, an AmTech Research analyst. He expects Jobs to step down as CEO this year, most likely remaining an adviser to the company. Marshall said he believes Jobs' departure would cut \$10 to \$15 from Apple's stock price.

An Apple spokesman declined to comment, and Jobs said in his letter that "I will be the first one to step up and tell our board of directors if I can no longer continue to fulfill my duties as Apple's CEO."

Stephen M. Davis, a senior fellow at the Millstein Center for Corporate Governance and Performance at Yale University, said the announcement fits Apple's pattern of "releasing information to shareholders in dribs and drabs."

"It's not a technique designed to win loyalty from investors over the long term," he added. "This is a public company in which millions of investors have entrusted their savings and in which millions of customers also have a stake."



AP Photo

Apple CEO Steve Jobs gestures during a product announcement in San Francisco.



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North Koreans rally to honor, support Kim Jong Il

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Tens of thousands of North Koreans rallied Monday in a display of might and loyalty that underscored the regime's guiding "military first" principal amid tensions with rival South Korea.

The government mobilized 100,000 North Koreans for the annual New Year's rally, which honors leader Kim Jong Il and reaffirms full public support for his rule in the year ahead.

Pumping their right fists in unison, they marched through Pyongyang's main Kim Il Sung plaza pledging their loyalty, some waving huge red flags as top officials watched from a viewing stand.

Kim Jong Il did not appear among them in footage broadcast by APTN. The 66-year-old leader has not shown up at a mass event since reportedly suffering a stroke in mid-August, even missing the country's milestone 60th anniversary in September.

But North Korean officials deny the reports of Kim's collapse. They say Kim has been busy touring farms, factories and military units across the country, with state-run media recording some two dozen trips since early October alone.

Most of the reports, photos and footage do not specify an exact location or date, and South Korean officials say they cannot confirm the visits with so little reliable information.

Still, foreign officials and analysts pore over each photo, frame and statements for clues to what's going on in the reclusive communist nation.

For his first trip of the new year, Kim spent the day with soldiers, the

Korean Central News Agency said, marking a change from his usual routine of paying tribute to workers at industrial sites or at the grave of his father, North Korea founder Kim Il Sung. The tank unit is North Korea's first; it once fell under his father's command and is considered the birthplace of North Korea's "songun" military policy, the report said.

In Seoul, Unification Ministry spokesman Kim Ho-nyeon said it was the first time since 1995 that Kim spent New Year's Day with the military — one of several moves he said demonstrate North Korea's renewed efforts to show the military's primacy.

International News

Kim Jong Il rules the totalitarian nation in his capacity as chairman of the country's all-powerful National Defense Commission.

The concept of "military first" was a focal point of the regime's New Year statement, a joint editorial from the country's three main publications that is the closest thing to an annual state of the union address in Pyongyang.

Analysts say Kim Jong Il is reaffirming the military's might as a way to tighten his grip on the nation of 23 million at a time of economic hardship and political uncertainty. The regime also is setting the stage for a post-Kim Jong Il era, experts said.

Kim inherited leadership upon his father's 1994 death but the "Dear Leader," believed to suffer from diabetes and heart disease, has not named any of his sons to succeed him.

"He will continue to put importance on the military until he completes naming his successor," said



AP Photo

In this Korean Central News Agency photo released by Korea News Service Tuesday in Tokyo, tens of thousands of North Koreans pump their fists in unison during a rally Monday at Pyongyang's main Kim Il Sung plaza in a display of might and loyalty that underscored the regime's guiding "military first" principal amid tensions with rival South Korea.

Yoo Ho-yeol, a North Korean studies professor at Korea University.

The editorial, which laid out ways to build up the economy and repeated the regime's commitment to a nuclear-free Korean peninsula, lacked its customary criticisms of the U.S. but excoriated Seoul.

North and South Korea, which fought a three-year war in the 1950s, remain divided by the world's most heavily guarded border. Relations warmed under 10 years of liberal leadership in Seoul, but quickly turned frosty when conservative

President Lee Myung-bak took office last February refusing to hand over aid without condition.

Though reliant on handouts from Seoul, the North cut off all ties with the South, and it emerged Monday that the senior Pyongyang policymaker for inter-Korean relations was fired in the fallout. New names have appeared in KCNA reports in recent weeks, signaling a government shuffle in the capital.

In Pyongyang, there was no sign of uncertainty about the future in footage broadcast by APTN. Scores

turned out for the staged rally despite the bitter cold, shouting slogans in support of Kim and waving banners promising to carry out his policies.

"The New Year is a year of a great change, which will be embellished with noteworthy events in the history of the construction of a great, prosperous and powerful socialist country," said Choe Tae Bok, secretary of the powerful Central Committee of the Workers' Party. He called it "a year of a revolutionary surge."

INTERNATIONAL

Iraqis await Blackwater prosecution after shooting

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraqis wounded by gunfire in a Baghdad square 15 months ago are awaiting with guarded hopes the beginning of court proceedings against five former private Blackwater Worldwide security guards.

The five men are to appear in a federal court in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday for an initial hearing on charges of manslaughter in the chaotic few minutes of shooting on Sept. 16, 2007 that killed 17 Iraqi civilians and wounded dozens more.

The defendants, who are expected to plead not guilty, contend they opened fire af-

ter coming under attack when a car in a State Department convoy they were escorting broke down. But people wounded in the outburst say the shooting was unprovoked.

"It all started when they began shooting without any cause," Samir Hobi, a taxi driver who was sitting in his car at the scene.

"Then the Blackwater vehicles came up on the wrong side and pushed my car away," said Hobi, who suffered a broken leg.

The North Carolina-based Blackwater is the largest contractor providing security in Iraq. Most of its work for the State Department is in protecting U.S. diplomats in Iraq — a job the agency is unable to handle on its own.

Many Iraqis saw the bloodshed in Nisoor Square as a demonstration of American brutality and arrogance and suspected the guards would never be called to account.

"Now I believe that justice does exist."

Baraa Sadoun Ismael
taxi driver

However, Ismael, like some of the other victims who spoke to The Associated Press, expressed disappointment that the guards

would not face execution if convicted. The maximum sentence would be 30 years.

A sixth Blackwater guard struck a deal with prosecutors, turned on his former colleagues, and pleaded guilty to killing one Iraqi and wounding another.

But the case is far from open and shut. Blackwater radio logs made available to the AP in Washington last month cast doubt on prosecutors' claims that the guards' shooting was unprovoked. The log transcripts describe a hectic eight minutes in which the guards repeatedly reported incoming gunfire from insurgents and Iraqi police.

Prosecutor calls for jailing of Madoff after Ponzi scheme

Madoff may have stolen \$50 billion in scam

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK (AP) — A prosecutor on Monday asked that Bernard Madoff be jailed pending trial, saying the disgraced financier violated an agreement with the court by mailing watches, jewelry, cufflinks and mittens worth more than \$1 million to relatives and friends.

"The defendant's recent actions amount to obstruction of justice,"

Assistant U.S. Attorney Marc Litt told U.S. Magistrate Judge Ronald Ellis at an hour-long bail hearing. The prosecutor said one package of items that was accompanied by a handwritten note from Madoff may alone be worth more than \$1 million.

The judge ordered both sides to submit written arguments this week and said he would rule later.

Madoff's lawyer, Ira Sorkin, said

his client did not violate a court-imposed asset freeze by mailing heirlooms through the post office to his brother, a son and daughter-in-law and a New York couple vacationing in Florida. Besides watches and jewelry, other items included \$25 cufflinks, pens and a \$200 pair of mittens.

Sorkin called it an innocent mistake and said Madoff and his wife sought the return of the items they

had sent on Dec. 24 as soon as they were told they could not send them out. He also suggested that some of the items belonged to Madoff's wife, and therefore were not subject to a court order at that time.

"We maintain it happened innocently," Sorkin said. "He's not a threat to the community, and there's no danger he's going to flee."

The last-minute court hearing was the latest chapter in an ongoing struggle between prosecutors and Madoff over his bail.

Madoff was released without restrictions after his arrest. Conditions of his bail were later tightened to the point that Madoff is now under constant surveillance and confined to his Manhattan penthouse around the clock, the only exception being court hearings.

The 70-year-old Madoff, a former Nasdaq stock market chairman, was arrested Dec. 11 on securities fraud charges alleging he duped investors out of as much as \$50 billion in a giant Ponzi scheme.

Democrats divided over seating of Senator

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Democrats struggled to avert a showdown steeped in race and corruption Monday as a defiant Roland Burris declared, "I'm a United States senator" and flew to the capital to claim President-elect Barack Obama's old seat in Congress.

Even as he sought to pressure fellow Democrats, Burris signaled there were limits to his rebelliousness. "I'm not going to make a scene. I don't want to give you all a circus," he told reporters asking whether he intended to breach protocol by attempting to walk uninvited onto the Senate floor on Tuesday.

The 71-year-old veteran of Illinois politics was still en route from his home state when Majority Leader Harry Reid announced he would not be permitted to take his seat when other new lawmakers are sworn into office. Burris "has not been certified by the state of Illinois" Reid said, a reference to incomplete paperwork that barely begins to describe the dispute.

While Burris has not been accused of any wrongdoing, he was named to the Senate last week by

Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich, who faces charges of having attempted to sell the seat.

Senate officials said it was possible Reid would try and have Burris' case referred to the Rules Committee for review, a move that would effectively sidetrack the issue while the complicated political and legal situation in Illinois could be sorted out. They spoke on condition of anonymity, saying they were not authorized to discuss possible developments.

Reid, D-Nev., had appeared to leave open the possibility of a compromise over the weekend after failing to persuade Blagojevich to leave the seat vacant. Burris is to meet privately on Wednesday with the majority leader in his office a few paces off the Senate floor.

Burris, who is black, downplayed the issue of race at a news conference before boarding a flight from Chicago to Washington — even though supporters have given it prominence.

"I cannot control my supporters. I have never in my life, in all my years of being elected to office, thought anything about race," he said.



AP Photo

Illinois U.S. Senate appointee Roland Burris talks with the media after arriving at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport in Linthicum, Md., Monday.

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NATIONAL

Military officials improve security

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP) — Tighter background checks and improved security would help prevent a repeat of the deadly 2001 anthrax attacks, military officials said Thursday, while acknowledging there are no guarantees.

It was five months ago that an Army biodefense lab scientist, Bruce E. Ivins, committed suicide after being named the prime suspect in those attacks.

"I can't say for certain it could not happen today," Army Maj. Gen. Robert Lennox, assistant deputy chief of staff for operations and training, told reporters. "But it would be much more difficult." He said there are more hurdles now before someone could remove a biological agent or toxin from a lab and seek to use it.

"I can't say for certain it could not happen today"

Robert Lennox
Army Major General

Lennox said military safety reviews in recent months endorsed many of the security changes already made, from improved cameras and lights to satellite surveillance. But other changes were deemed not workable or too expensive, including limits on scientists' hours or a system that would prohibit workers from being alone with a toxin.

The Air Force and Navy also said they are preparing to resume shipments of dangerous biological agents to and from their medical and research labs. The Army briefly halted its shipments in August, then resumed them after tightening some rules.

The greatest vulnerability, Lennox said, is being able to determine whether someone might be a threat. Ivins' activities largely went undetected by military authorities at the Fort Detrick lab in Maryland despite revelations that emerged that he was a likely threat.

As for transporting toxins, there are now requirements that two workers be present at all times during transit and that there be satellite coverage of the

shipment. Also, the military is giving supervisors more training to be able to detect employees who may have problems, and expanding the security clearance checks of potential employees.

Workers at 12 military labs — five Army, five Navy and two Air Force — conduct biomedical research to sup-

port counterterrorism efforts, research protection for the armed forces and keep track of infectious diseases across the globe. Employees work with a range of dangerous materials such as anthrax and germs that cause Avian flu and encephalitis.



AP Photo

Bruce E. Ivins, a biodefense researcher, tormented his wife with rudeness and behaved erratically in the weeks before the Army scientist took his own life.

Police re-open child search

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EL DORADO, Kan. (AP) — The Kansas parents who failed to report their 11-year-old adopted son missing nearly a decade ago are "people of interest" as authorities search for him nationwide, a sheriff said Monday.

Investigators only recently learned Adam Herrman was missing and are focused on finding him, Butler County Sheriff Craig Murphy said. Adam was 11 when he disappeared in 1999 from a mobile home park in Towanda where he lived.

Authorities would not say whether they believed Adam, who would now be 21, is alive. "We are working it as if it is a death — but we are not leaning one way or the other," Murphy said.

Doug and Valerie Herrman adopted Adam at 2½ years old, and he had been in foster care before that. The parents have not been arrested or charged with any crime, and Murphy said no charges would be filed while investigators focused on the search.

The family's attorney, Warner Eisenbise, said, "He was a problem child. He ran away frequently to the point of exasperation,"

"My clients feel very guilty that the last time he left they didn't make an attempt to locate him. Every other time, the police were called or he wandered back. They assumed he found one of his siblings or went back to his biological parents."

Murphy said investigators have not confirmed whether Adam had a history of running away. The family has cooperated with investigators, he said.

The Herrmans now live in the Wichita suburb of Derby, in neighboring Sedgwick County.

Adam was homeschooled when he disappeared, Eisenbise said.

Murphy said a search of the empty lot where the family's mobile home once stood gave investigators one answer they sought, but he did not elaborate other than to say no human remains were found.

Murphy's office did not receive a missing persons report until contacted recently by Sedgwick County's exploited and missing children's unit. He declined to say who tipped them off. It was not clear exactly when they learned of the boy's disappearance.

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UF defense gears up for Oklahoma's no-huddle attack

■ PRACTICE SQUAD HAS BEEN IMITATING THE SOONERS' OFFENSE.

By **BRIAN STEELE**
Alligator Staff Writer
bsteele@alligator.org

MIAMI — The Gators' scout offense sure must be tired.

For the past week, UF's third string has been running Oklahoma's no-huddle offense in preparation for Thursday's BCS National Championship Game, and that doesn't leave you much time to catch your breath.

While the Gators have faced some of the nation's elite speed in the Southeastern Conference — on offense and defense — they are at least reprieved by having opponents rely mostly on slower, dink-and-dunk, run-heavy offenses.

Now, however, Brandon Spikes and the gang better keep their helmets on, because even when they get a quick break on the sideline, there's no time for rest against the Sooners.

"We haven't played a team that's as fast-paced as them," free safety Major Wright said. "They get on the ball, they're ready to go. Get on the ball, they're ready to go."

That shows in their numbers. Heisman-winning quarterback Sam Bradford has attempted 442 passes this year (174 more than Tebow) and the Sooners have run the ball 560 times for a total of 1036 offensive plays this

year. By comparison, the Gators have only run 800 plays.

"You just got to hold your count and watch the ball," cornerback Joe Haden said. "Ever since the Alabama game, we've just been preparing for no-huddle ball."

The no-huddle offense also makes it difficult for UF's defensive line, which has been depleted by injuries and, as defensive line coach Dan McCartney put it, has only Jaye Howard and Torrey Davis as backups on the interior line.

For the big guys who get fatigued the fastest, that's a difficult situation.

"Ball goes out of bounds, clock stops," said McCartney, who likes to substitute players in and out of the game frequently. "Take a timeout, you can substitute. Other than that, you got to be real careful (substituting)."

It's hard to deny the Sooners' talent with two 1,000-yard rushers (DeMarco Murray, who will miss the game, and Chris Brown) and six receivers with at least 27 catches.

The Gators are going to do their best to make them look as talented as The Citadel, though.

"We've got speed on the defensive line that I don't think they've seen before," linebacker Ryan Stamper said. "I just think that we'll match up well with them."

If UF does slow down Oklahoma's offense, which averages 54 points per game, it could be a very good day for the Gators. As Spikes said, it's all about UF's defense stepping up,

because the offense should do its job just fine.

"They're kind of a step slower," Spikes said of Big 12 Conference defenses. "It seems like

the more athletic players are mostly on offense in the Big 12. It'll be different for them when they see the speed on our defense."



Courtesy to the Alligator

UF linebacker Brandon Spikes fights off a block against Vanderbilt during the Gators' win in Nashville, Tenn., on Nov. 8, 2008.

OKLAHOMA FOOTBALL

Franks' comments provide UF bulletin-board material

By **BRIAN STEELE**
Alligator Staff Writer
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FORT LAUDERDALE — Brandon Spikes has stressed all week long that being in South Florida is a "business trip." Luckily for Spikes, he did get a slight reprieve with a great joke on Sunday.

The joke was courtesy of Oklahoma sophomore cornerback Dominique Franks, calling Tim Tebow the nation's fourth best quarterback. Except Franks was serious.

"The three best quarterbacks in the country came from the

Big 12," said Franks, referring to Sam Bradford, Colt McCoy and Graham Harrell. "The three best receivers came from the Big 12. The three best tight ends came from the Big 12. ... Other conferences don't have what we face."

Franks is one of the few who isn't laughing now. Not to mention UF junior Percy Harvin might have something to say about the Big 12 having the three best receivers.

"That's just crazy to say something like that," Spikes said. "I laughed. I thought it was a joke. You serious? We kind of laughed it off. When you say smart stuff or try to be funny about Tim, he's

just going to make you pay."

It wouldn't be the first time Tebow has made an opponent pay for their remarks. When former Florida State linebacker Geno Hayes talked about stopping Tebow, the then-sophomore had one of his best games of the season in a 45-12 thrashing of the Seminoles.



Spikes

Still, Franks stood by his words when asked to explain his opinion.

"Yup (Tebow is the fourth best)," Franks said. "I think our

quarterbacks are better. Just the way they conduct themselves and how they play on the field. Playing against those guys, it's a lot harder to prepare for those guys than it is for Tebow. ... It makes it easier to know that he's more of a running style quarterback. He can beat you running, but with him running you've got your linebackers and your safeties coming up. It makes it easier for you to know what type of player a guy really is versus just coming out and playing a passing quarterback every week."

While all other Oklahoma players are staying politically correct and showing Tebow respect, they

are confident they can slow down UF's pit bull quarterback.

"He is a big guy, but we've got big guys too," sophomore defensive tackle Gerald McCoy said. "He's a great player, but I think we'll be able to handle him."

When asked about the comments, Tebow said he would use them as motivation, but wouldn't comment much more than that.

Neither did UF coach Urban Meyer.

"If (Franks) really feels that way, every man has his own opinion," Meyer said.

But this man is going to be facing a highly motivated Tebow on Thursday night.



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UF streaks toward SEC schedule

By **CHRISTOPHER YAZBEC**

Alligator Writer
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Not many saw this kind of start to the season coming, maybe not even the UF women's basketball team.

Over the break, the Gators went 6-0, pushing their record to a school-best 14-1 and climbing to a No. 18 national ranking.

UF has won 14 straight games, also a school record, highlighted by a 90-83 home victory over then-No. 16 Pittsburgh on Dec. 21.

The Gators gathered wins against Coppin State 75-34 and Florida A&M 77-55 before setting up the showdown with the Panthers.

UF rallied in the win against Pittsburgh after being down 70-62 with 9:24 remaining.

Guard Sha Brooks led the way with 24 points, but it was guards Steffi Sorensen and Lonnika Thompson who proved to be the difference with their 3-point shooting. The juniors shot 9 of 14 from beyond the arc.

Pittsburgh guard Shavonte Zellous shocked the Gators by scoring 42 points. She single-handedly

kept the Panthers in the game, but in the end it was not enough to prevent the upset.

"We've got a lot of fight," UF coach Amanda Butler said in her postgame radio interview after the win against Pittsburgh.

"Being able to maintain our composure, I think that's going to be something that we can really draw a lot of confidence from."

UF got a well-deserved eight-day rest for the holidays after that game and returned to action at home in the first round of the State Farm Classic against Vermont.

The layoff might have had an impact on the team, but the end result was no different, as the Gators won 85-76.

UF returned the next night in the final to face Miami University of Ohio and didn't have much trouble, winning 75-56 to claim the title.

Senior forward Marshae Dotson collected the Most Valuable Player award after her first double-double

of the season with 12 points and 10 rebounds.

The Gators wrapped up non-conference play on Saturday night at Ohio. Up just 6 points at halftime, UF finished strong to post a 74-56 win and escape the cold weather.

UF has padded its NCAA Tournament resume in the non-conference part of the season with quality wins against three ranked opponents, including at then-No. 22 Florida State, then-No. 21 Arizona State — a game played in the Bahamas — and Pittsburgh.

Now, the Gators will turn their attention to Southeastern Conference play, and for Butler, it hasn't come soon enough. She summed up the wait with one word.

"Finally," she said in her postgame radio interview Saturday.

For a team that has set school records for consecutive wins (14) and is off to the best start in school history through 15 games, the season essentially starts over when SEC play begins Thursday night against Mississippi State.

If the non-conference play is any indicator, however, don't expect this team to let up in the second half of the season.



Women's Basketball

uf women's basketball

AT A GLANCE



Coppin State

Final Score: **UF 75**, Coppin State 34
Key Player: Lonnika Thompson – 13 points

Florida A&M

Final Score: **UF 77**, FAMU 55
Key Player: Sha Brooks – 12 points, three assists

Pittsburgh

Final Score: **UF 90**, Pittsburgh 83
Key Player: Sha Brooks – 24 points, eight rebounds

Vermont

Final Score: **UF 85**, Vermont 76
Key Player: Marshae Dotson – 20 points, seven rebounds

Miami (Ohio)

Final Score: **UF 75**, Miami (Ohio) 56
Key Player: Marshae Dotson – 12 points, 10 rebounds

Ohio

Final Score: **UF 74**, Ohio 56
Key Player: Jennifer Mossor – 19 points, four rebounds

UF MEN'S BASKETBALL



SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE

UCF:

At times this season, freshman Kenny Kadji has looked all but lost on the court. Against the Knights he found the talent that brought him to Gainesville in the first place.

Kadji scored 15 points and grabbed seven rebounds as UF (9-3) rolled to an 89-61 win against UCF (5-5).

"In high school you don't really have to do anything when you're 6-foot-10. You just stand there and they're going to pass you the ball and you score. But in college everybody is 6-10. Everybody is as big as you. I think that was my problem the first nine games," Kadji said. "I talked to Coach Billy Donovan about it and I realize that if we want to win and be as good as we can be, I need to be a part of the team. It's time for me to step up."

GEORGIA SOUTHERN:

Walter Hodge may have had "DEFENSE" shaved into the side of his head, but it was all about offense for the Gators against the Eagles.

Three players scored in double figures as Florida beat Georgia Southern 88-81 at the O'Connell Center.

UF allowed Georgia Southern to get to the foul line late and failed to put the game out of reach in the second half.

With 38 seconds to go in the game, the Eagles had cut the Gators' lead to three points.

Nick Calathes' 3-point basket with 5 seconds left rescued the Gators.

"They played tougher than us tonight," said Calathes, who scored 21 points. "We definitely died down in the second half."

WINTHROP:

This one was over sometime between the player introductions and the opening tip.

UF looked as good as it had all season with a 74-45 stomping of Winthrop.

The Gators took a 53-11 lead into half time of a game that was almost non-competitive.

The 11 points Winthrop scored tied the record for fewest points allowed in a half by UF under coach Billy Donovan.

Freshman center Eloy Vargas, who had been sidelined by recovery from an ankle injury all season, saw the first action of his career against the Eagles.

"I'm sure he was uptight and he was 0 for 4 from the field," Donovan said. "But he battled and banged, and it was just good for his first (game). I didn't really have high level of expectation on how he was gonna perform. I'm just happy that the game was such that we were able to throw him in there and give him at least a little bit of a look."

STETSON:

A mistake-riddled first half left UF only 9 points ahead of Stetson as they walked into the locker room at half time.

When the Gators took the floor in the second, Nick Calathes put the ball in his hand and the team on his back.

The sophomore scored 23 points as UF (11-2) pulled away to beat Stetson (5-5) 78-57 in the O'Connell Center.

"I don't think we pushed the ball enough in the first half," Calathes said. "Once they started to get tired, we started to score a lot of points. That was the difference."

The Gators went on a 15-0 run to start the second half and had four players finish in double figures.

NC STATE:

The Gators were hungry to prove they could beat a big-time opponent. Against the Wolfpack, Nick Calathes fed his team's ambition.

The sophomore scored a career-high 32 points as UF overcame a 10-point halftime deficit for a 68-66 victory against North Carolina State (9-3) at the O'Connell Center.

Calathes scored 24 points in the second half and dominated down the stretch. With the Gators (12-2) down 66-65 and the clock slipping under 11 seconds, Calathes drove down the lane and made a floater over 6-foot-9 Wolfpack forward Ben McCauley.

The basket would prove to be the winner, and Calathes would ice the game with a foul shot on the following possession.

"We didn't let him get to the basket," N.C. State coach Sidney Lowe said. "But he made some tough shots over 6-8, 6-9 guys. There wasn't more you could do. He controlled the game."

Calathes scored the final 12 points of the game for UF.

UF puts routines on display

By **EUGENIO TORRENS**
Alligator Writer

If the Meet the Team event is a prelude for the rest of the season for the gymnastics team, then UF fans can look forward to the opportunity for more than one national championship.

The gymnastics team took to the Ted Crom Gymnastics Studio inside the O'Connell Center Sunday to treat fans to a glimpse of the upcoming season.

The event consisted of floor, uneven bar and balance beam routines.

Fans were also allowed to ask UF coach Rhonda Faehn questions they had about the sport.

"It went really well," said gymnast Amanda Castillo. "It was great to start off the season with having a bunch of fans come and support us. It looks like they're excited, so of course it gets us excited."

Fans weren't the only ones who may have learned something Sunday.

"It was a little sneak preview for what the freshmen can expect at the real competition," Castillo added.

She said the Meet the Team event was lower-key than the real thing.

"In competitions, it's a lot more rowdy, a

lot more fans, a lot more exciting," she said.

Freshman gymnast Elizabeth Mahlich said the event helped, because it gave her a sense of what the atmosphere would be like Friday when UF hosts Oklahoma to open the season.

Lone senior Corey Hartung said the cordial event was useful as that last stepping stone before the season.

"Starting out the year, it's good to get used to things by having our little competitions in the gym, to get used to pressure situations before we go out in the arena," Hartung said. "I guess it does (help) in the beginning of the year just to get

back into things."

Faehn echoed the same sentiment.

"We try and do situations that put the athletes in pressure situations or different situations so that they can be prepared for anything," she said. "We got to see some routines that may not make the lineup, but it's giving those athletes an opportunity to get out there under pressure and to see how they do perform."

"It may not be full routines at times, but it certainly makes them nervous, which is great," Faehn said.



Gymnastics



Corey Hartung and fellow Gators gymnasts prepared for the season in front of a crowd at the Meet the Team event in the O'Connell Center Sunday.

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Improved secondary ready to take on Oklahoma

By **MIKE McCALL**
Alligator Staff Writer
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As UF defensive backs Major Wright, Joe Haden and Ahmad Black left the Gators' team hotel on Saturday morning, safeties coach Chuck Heater stopped them.

The trio was about to head out for a press conference to be peppered with questions about slowing down Oklahoma's vaunted offense in Thursday's BCS National Championship Game, but Heater wanted to give his players something else to think about first.

"[Heater] said, 'What are y'all about to do? Last year everybody was making fun of y'all,'" Haden said. "That's what happens in a year."

Indeed, the Gators' 2007 secondary was a joke, but what the unit has accomplished this season is no laughing matter. Just a year removed from being the weakest link of a disappointing 9-4 squad, UF's cornerbacks and safeties have provided key stops and even touchdowns this season, a per-

formance that warrants a large chunk of credit for a team rebounding to play on college football's biggest stage.

The Gators have tied a school record with 24 interceptions and set another by returning five of those picks for touchdowns. They've also allowed 84 less passing yards per game and surrendered nine fewer passing scores. Those numbers would have been unimaginable a year ago after UF's last bowl game, but before the Gators' secondary could blossom into a playmaking unit, it had to hit rock bottom.

Carved Up

UF entered last season's Capital One Bowl as a big favorite against Michigan, as the Wolverines' defense was supposed to be easy prey for Heisman Trophy winner Tim Tebow and the Gators' offense.

But it was Michigan quarterback Chad Henne and Michigan's offense that had their way. Henne passed for 373 yards and three touchdowns and the Wolverines piled up 524 total yards in their 41-35 win.

Henne's output, along with Kentucky quarterback Andre

Woodson's 415 yards earlier that season, rank as the worst secondary performances in four years under coach Urban Meyer, who said he found it hard to imagine his pass defense would improve much at the time.

"I was very disturbed, like most people, when I watched that game," Meyer said of the Michigan loss.

The game was the last straw for UF's defensive backs, who were tired of being labeled as the team's Achilles' heel.

"That was one of the turning points," said Wright, a St. Thomas Aquinas High graduate. "The (defensive backs), we sucked that game. We took that as we can't have another season like that."

Wright said the players had one-on-one meetings with coaches to evaluate their play, their potential and how they could best serve the team, but before the secondary could get into X's and O's, it needed an attitude change.

Bouncing Back

Black, who leads the team with six interceptions and two touchdowns, said secondary members have had contests throughout the season to see who can make the most interceptions in practice.

It sounds like an ordinary idea, but competitions like that were nowhere to be found in 2007.

"This year, it's more fun," Black said. "We're winning ballgames. Last year, it was like, 'Just get through practice, whatever.'"

That mindset was a big problem for the young secondary, which featured three first-year starters, but this season's group – along with freshman starter Janoris Jenkins – has jelled by putting in extra time.

"To tell you the truth, last year I felt like our secondary was out there playing just to play," Wright said. "We never communicated much. This year we're out there communicating, we know the play before it even starts, we watch a lot of film, and we do a lot of stuff we didn't do last year."

The Final Test

Haden, Jenkins, Wright and Black could remain as a starting group for two more seasons, leaving a possibility for the group to become one of the best ever in Gainesville, but they'll have a chance to cement a legacy this week, when they face one of the most dynamic offenses in college football history.

Oklahoma has put up an NCAA-record 702 points this season and is riding a five-game streak of scoring 60 points or more.

Quarterback Sam Bradford, who topped UF's Tebow for the Heisman Trophy, has engineered those totals, tossing 48 touchdowns with just six interceptions, and he poses by far the toughest challenge the Gators' secondary has faced this season.

But there's a new-found swagger in Florida's defensive backfield. The Gators' defensive backs aren't fazed by the Sooners' gaudy statistics.

In fact, there is no one else they would rather face.

"This is what we wanted," Haden said. "We wanted it this way all season."



Harrison Diamond / Alligator Staff

UF cornerback Joe Haden is taken down by Alabama players as he brings an interception down the field in the fourth quarter of the Gators' 31-20 SEC Championship Game win against Alabama in the Georgia Dome in Atlanta.

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

Gators to face Sooners in battle between conferences

By **MIKE McCALL**
Alligator Staff Writer
mmccall@alligator.org

MIAMI — It's time to pull back the curtain.

Thursday's BCS National Championship Game between No. 1 UF and No. 2 Oklahoma will finally settle the argument over which conference is the best in college football.

For the first time in several years, the Southeastern Conference's reputation as the best league has come into question, while the Sooners and Big 12 mates Texas and Texas Tech put up astronomical statistics and spent the better part of the sea-

son ranked in the nation's top 10.

But just as the Gators cemented their conference's supremacy by thrashing Ohio State for the 2006 national title, they can keep the SEC's legacy intact by stopping Oklahoma quarterback Sam Bradford and claiming a third-straight championship for the SEC.

"We feel like the SEC is the conference under the NFL," linebacker Brandon Spikes said. "It's the NFL and the SEC, and we don't really pay attention to too many other conferences because we feel like the athletes there are kind of different from the SEC. I don't want

to say anything out of the way, so I can't really tell you how I personally feel about the other conferences, but I'll just say it's the NFL and then the SEC.



Spikes

to say anything out of the way, so I can't really tell you how I personally feel about the other conferences, but I'll just say it's the NFL and then the SEC.

"There's a gap, by far, and then it's everybody else."

That gap has narrowed this season, as the Big 12 had five of the nation's top 10 scoring offenses and four teams ranked in the top 15 of the final Associated Press poll, the most of any conference.

Critics say those numbers are skewed because of weak defenses, while critics of the SEC attribute the success of UF and No. 4 Alabama to feeding off of slumping teams while the conference goes through a down year.

"They say we don't play any defense in the Big 12, so this is going to be our chance to prove it," said Sooners defensive back Dominique Franks, who added that it's unfair to attack Big 12 defenses without facing a Big 12 offense first.

"If you look at it, the three best quarterbacks in the country came from the Big 12, the three best receivers came from the Big 12, and

the best three tight ends came from the Big 12," he said. "So, we've played some great offenses, and a lot of people don't understand that other conferences don't have what we faced."

While the players acknowledge the national title game will prove which conference is the best, most say the subject will be totally out of mind when they step on the field.

"Big 12 versus SEC really doesn't mean a lot," UF receiver Louis Murphy said. "It's just going to be Florida-Oklahoma. As you can see, Ole Miss beat Texas Tech, and that was just those two teams."

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Immaculate and newly renovated historic home. New hardwood flrs, appliance, paint. Walk to campus. 3/1 \$800/mo. For two occupants. Through July 31st. 911 NW 10th Ave. 215-7199 1-6-08-4-2

NICE ONE BEDROOM APT
Refinished hardwood floors, tile bath, includes W/D, swimming pool, all utils. Great location just 5 min to UF & downtown. Rent \$615. Call Mr. Kristoff 332-5030 1-6-08-4-2

2 For Rent unfurnished

2 Blocks from UF Stadium
1 Person Studio Apartment
Available Jan. 1 352-377-2930 1-6-08-4-2

BRAND NEW FOR AUG 09
CAMPUS VIEW PLACE
2BR/2BA OR 3BR/3BA
Luxury Suites near Shands,
Norman Hall, UF Sorority Row
1240 SW 9th Road
Please visit us at the model
1185 SW 9th Road 1-5pm
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www.campusviewplace.com 4-22-75-2

LEASING FOR AUG 09
Quality Student Housing
Near UF, Norman & Shands
1,2,3,4 & 5 BR Properties
List Avail Jan 20th!!
Please call or email us to
Receive a list before they
Are all gone!!!
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info@rentgainesville.com
www.rentgainesville.com 4-22-75-2

CAMPUS VIEW SOUTH
Now Leasing 2BR/2BA
Luxury Dual Suites
1185 SW 9th RD \$1000/mo
Close to UF, Norman Hall
& Sorority Row.
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Many have been drastically reduced
For immediate occupancy!
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2BR/1.5BA MidTown Apts
Parking/laundry hkups
Walk to UF \$850/mo
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MOVE IN TODAY
Casa East end unit
2BR/2.5BA \$800/mo
Pets OK w Fee
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PET FRIENDLY!
3BR/3BA w room to run
behind Hilton on SW 34th ST
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www.rentgainesville.com 4-22-75-2

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1BR/1BA w/laundry hkups
Pets OK w/fee close to UF
Water, sewer & trash incl.
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\$995/MO 3BR/2BA
NEAR UF!! w/d incl.
2041 NW 7th Place
Large family room w/fireplace
Hardwood floors & nice yard
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www.rentgainesville.com 4-22-75-2

Looking Glass Apartments. Roommate Wanted 2/2. Walk to UF, by stadium-GO GATORS! New carpet, baywindow. W/D incl, call 941-223-3150 \$575 1-6-08-4-2

2Bd/1Ba House in Duckpond Nhdv Avail Dec 27th for 1 Year Lease, 2 miles to UF, CH/A, 1 car garage, W/D, DW, Microwave, Patio, Large Fenced Yard, off street parking, pest control, \$1100/mo + Utilities 352-278-1176 1-6-08-3-2

For rent 4 bd 2 bath with family room. Close to university, schools, shopping and dining. Great for roommate sharing. Call Bobbie at 352-514-6712 1-8-08-5-2

Live Alone! 1BD/1BA. Bike to UF! Pets OK! W/D Included. Very quiet Creekside Villas - 1515 NW 29th RD 32605. Flexible lease terms. Walk to food and shops. \$625 rent. \$350 deposit. 352-275-2843 or blw@ufl.edu 1-6-08-3-2

Paradise in Gainesville. Beautiful 3/2 House with private fenced yard, screened porch, and deck with spa. Close to N FL Reg Med Center, Oaks Mall, and UF. \$1500/mo. Pat Wilson, Sun Lu Properties (352)373-0874. 1-6-08-2-2

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Sign is different. 2. Trees have been added. 3. Boy's hat is different. 4. Boy is frowning. 5. Scarf is different. 6. Boy's coat has buttons.

2 For Rent unfurnished

★**CAMPUS EDGE CONDO**★
2/2 Walk to UF, Shands & VA. Tile floor, W/D in unit, avail fall. Reasonable rate. 239-250-6149, 239-992-2449 1-30-08-19-2

5BR/3BA HOUSE
Block from law school, biking distance from UF. W/D incl. Pets ok. Huge yard. \$1600/mo. Call Solomon 262-3472 2-3-08-20-2

● 2BR/2.5BA - \$725/mo.
● 2BR/1.5BA - \$625/mo.
Off SW 34th St. Close to UF, Shands, shopping & dining. Fenced yard, util room. private parking, pets ok. Call Solomon 262-3472 2-3-08-20-2

University Terrace West
1 Female needed \$325/mo
Lease through July 2009
Union Properties 352-373-7578
www.rentgainesville.com 4-22-72-2

WALK TO SANTA FE
2bd/2ba \$750/mo
1 car garage. dw, mw, wd incl
Fenced yard. Avail Now!
Union Properties 352-373-7578
www.rentgainesville.com 4-22-72-2

Mallorca Unit near Royal Park
2BD/2.5BA Avail Now!!
Beautiful, luxury townhouse
w/ garage. \$950/mo
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Houses, Duplexes, Condo, Townhouses.
Walk/Bike/Bus to UF. Neat, clean, quality
1-30-08-18-2

HERE IT IS! RENT REDUCED...UPSCALE
Charleston Place Condo, 2/2, W/D in unit, just repainted, all tile floors, DW, screened porch, 2nd floor, call 352-335-3787 1-12-09-5-2

2 story 2 bdrm 2 bath w/firplace in Shell Rock Villas. Nice area close to UF, Oaks Mall and bus stop. \$625 mo plus security dep \$600. Call Ms. Mitchell (678) 642-1223 1-12-09-5-2

2BR/2BA Townhouse, small pets ok! private courtyard, icemaker, dishwasher, washer/dryer hookup. walk to restaurants/ grocery. \$799. mo. quiet neighbors. 318-0089 2-4-09-21-2

Room for rent with private bathroom in 2/2.5 townhouse. 2.5 miles from UF. W/D upstairs; alarm; common areas furnished. \$450/month & half of utilities. Negotiable. Call Jenn (352) 672-0238 1-20-09-10-2

DUCK POND! Historic 3/1 house for rent in walking distance to downtown, bike to UF. Hardwood floors, large backyard. 723 NE 8th Avenue. Cats OK. \$1100/month. Call Kris 352-514-4544 1-9-09-4-2

2bd/2.5batownhouse. Petfriendly. ClosetoI-75 and bus route to main campus. New paint and 2parking spaces. Rentis\$750amonthplus\$10perpet. Januaryfree!! CallRhondaat(727)-243-4688. 2-3-09-20-2

Roomy 1BdRm/1Bath NowAvail; Brandywine, Old Archer Rd. \$650 per mo incl. water. Ready to move in. First floor, carpeted, private. Full kitchen. Very nice. Call813-924-7192whilelasts. 1-20-09-10-2

3BR/2B House near Westside Park. Beautiful hardwoodflrs.LgLR,DR,FamilyRm.Dishwasher, CentAC&Htr. Free laundry fac. Fenced, landscaped yd. Monthlyprepay discount. 1019NW 36th Dr. \$1395/mo+Util. 773-206-1774 1-20-09-10-2

House 4br 3 bath, 3000+sf, 1 mile to UF, w/d, pets ok, \$1900. 352-213-3943 1-12-5-2

LOTS OF GREENSPACE
2BRhome.\$700/mo.352-378-9220or213-3901 1-20-09-10-2

FREE SCOOTER
when you sign a one year lease. Near UF, 3BR/2BA + Office, fenced, pets OK, lawn care many extras. \$1650/mo. 1003NW22ndSt.352-256-3945 1-16-9-2

Rocky Point Apartments
3/2 W/D hkps Pets welcome!
\$899.00 call now 352-376-1619

2 For Rent unfurnished

2BR/1BA upstairs, hardwood floors, no pets. 1 block from O'Connell Center, just off University Ave. \$590/mo 727-697-3110 or 727-237-2121 1-6-09-1-2

3 Subleases

\$550/mo. incl utils. 1BR in 2BR/2.5BA townhouse with W/D, D/W, full kitchen, private balconies, large closets. 5 min walk to campus. Pets with deposit. Available now. Call 904.484.4156 or email cavguns@ufl.edu 1-6-08-21-3

ONE MONTH FREE! 1BR/1BA in 3/3 Luxury Townhouse. \$550/ month. (Starts Jan 09). All utilities (Premium Cable, HS internet, Electric, etc) INCLUDED. Further, the room is fully furnished! Call 954-483-4597. 1-6-08-14-3

ONE BLOCK FROM CAMPUS/LIBRARY WEST! Spring/Summer. 111 NW 16th St. Looking Glass Apts. 1 Br/1 Ba. Big BR. Free internet, Washer/dryer, dish washer. \$545/month. Call (850) 525-4532. 1-6-14-3

1 room in beautiful 2BR/1BA Downtown condo. Vaulted ceilings, sky lights, Italian style floors. Close to library, UF, Shands, and shopping. \$450/mo mo to mo. Pets ok. walk to popular spots dwntn festivals. 262 1351 1-6-08-9-3

\$425-1 or 2 females needed for Univ. Terrace condo on 34th; utilities included; unfurnished, bus routes 12 and 35; call 352.514.3398 or email anu87@ufl.edu 1-12-08-8-3

Arlington Square (2b/2ba) -\$1025/mo-UF Campus/Downtown Gainesville. Avail 12/18/08. Utis not incl. Must be willing to take over existing lease. Security deposit free. Contact sean6cly@ufl.edu or 239-410-1603 2-9-08-30-3

1Br/1BA FURNISHED in a 4B/4B @ Gainesville Place apts. All INCLUSIVE (utilities, cable, internet) \$425/month FLEXIBLE LEASE TERMS mxracer@cfl.rr.com OR 321-302-1175 1-20-08-14-3

Furnished 1/1 in 4/4 at Gainesville Place for spring semester. Original sublease \$540/mo but available at \$400/mo!! Includes utils. Currently has 3 responsible male residents. 305-431-2193, gully12@ufl.edu 1-6-08-5-3

Bedroom available in 5BR/3BA house. Located next to holiday inn at university and 13th. only 1 block walk to campus. \$525/mo, plus utilities. Cable and internet included. available spring/summer. 954-303-2245 1-6-08-5-3

1/1 in 3/3 Gateway at Glades apartment complex. Bedroom has own bathroom & walk-in closet. EVERYTHING included in rent except electricity coverage (split 3 ways). Must be female! Contact stefaniaepost@gmail.com 1-6-08-3-3

Sublease available Spring and/or Summer 2009. Price is negotiable, incl utilities, cable TV, internet. Females only. 1/1 in 4/4 apartment at The Estates, close to UF. Contact Carolina if interested 305-495-7270. 1-6-08-3-3

1Br/1Ba sublease in a 2/2 @ Cabana Beach. Washer/dryer, fully furnished. Free internet and cable. Include utilities. Pool, gym, bus line. Normally \$609/mo, but sublease at \$450/mo. Available now until end of July. (352) 870-4026. 1-7-3-3

Sublease brand new apartment at the Woodlands of Gainesville. 1 bedroom in a 2Br/2Ba, vaulted ceilings, fully furnished \$660 a month. If interested please call(954)801-7557 1-9-08-5-3

The Laurels 1/1 townhome. Private gated community avail now thru Aug. W/D incl. w/free tanning, HBO & showtime. Semi-furn w/various amenities. \$869/mo (negotiable) Call Ashley 941-915-6439 1-9-08-3-3

1BR/1BA Apartment Downtown \$425 per month! Start soon, Sublease OR Full year! Call Wes 941-468-2745 1-6-08-2-3

3 Subleases

Nice 2/2 apt close to campus and downtown! W/D, dishwasher, ceiling fans, pets allowed! avail now thru July 31. \$800/month. 110NW9th Terr. Call Lindsey@561-398-6720 1-13-08-6-3

Sublease 1 BD/1BA unfurn. apt. @ Pine Rush Villas from January to July. \$529/mo + utilities. Contact Paul at 352-222-0279 for details. 1-9-4-3

4/4 Fully furnished apartment with first month free. Utilities included. \$500 per month. Located in Lexington Crossing. For more info call (813) 390-7761. 1-13-09-6-3

\$425 Sprigs sublease in 2/2 fully furnished apartment at The District on 62nd Blvd. All utilities included (cable, internet, water, electricity). Located on bus routes 20 and Lator Gator C. Females preferred. Call 704-989-3168 ASAP! 1-9-4-3

1 bed 1 bath, part of a 3 bed 3 bath apartment with two other roommates. Very spacious, great location, vaulted ceilings. \$385 a month. In the polos, 2330 SW Williston Rd. apt. 2825. Call 386-490-5947 1-20-10-3

1BR/1BA apt for sublease at Summer Place Villas. \$560/month, includes water. Available NOW! Call 941-457-3444 or swatts@ufl.edu 1-27-09-15-3

4 Roommates

Roommate Matching HERE
Oxford Manor 377-2777
The Landings 336-3838
The Laurels 335-4455
Cobblestone 377-2801
Hidden Lake 374-3866
4-22-72-4

- :: 2 Blocks To UF :: -
Room in 4br condo incl utils, internet, cable TV, pool. Very Nice \$425 283-8777 www.Gainesville-Rooms-4-Rent.com 1-6-08-6-14

Female roommate needed in condo 1 mile from UF, \$455/MO includes cable, internet, utilities, pool+ more. Pvt bath, beautifully renovated, furnished, on bus route, 262-2871 1-12-08-14-4

Roommate needed SPRING ONLY \$535 SPRING+SUMMER \$425.4BR/4BA Fully furn. Util incl +internet, cable, private bath, W/D, pool. 2 Bus rts short ride to UF 954-593-3063 1-6-08-9-4

1 room in beautiful 2BR/1BA Downtown condo. Vaulted ceilings, sky lights, Italian style floors. Close to library, UF, Shands, and shopping. \$450/mo mo to mo. Pets ok. walk to popular spots dwntn festivals. 262 1351 1-6-08-9-4

HANDYMAN NEEDED Disc 4wk Share 2/2MH Furn rm avail now \$200 N/R dep. \$400/mo; \$100/wk incl util. 2 wk adv. laun/cook svc avail N/A, N/S, N/D. Cara +30 day notice 2 vacate. Nr bus/shops Sm caged pet ok 331-0762 1-12-11-4

Roommate needed 2BR/2.5Ba furn townhome in Brighton Park on bus route to UF every 15 mins. \$400/mo + utils. Call Bobby 352-665-0751 1-6-08-7-4

Walk to Shands, VA & UF campus. 2/2 first floor corner, W/D, part furn. Avail Jan 09. \$800 + util. Flex terms. SW 13th St & SW 16th Ave. 561-373-0979 1-6-08-6-4

Female needed for a great 4/2 house. DW, W/D, and pool. Also includes utils. Very nice neighborhood location. \$390 to \$495. 6 or 12 mo lease. Please call Mr. Kristoff 332-5030 1-7-08-7-4

ENJOY A ROMANTIC OLD HOUSE
Near library downtown. \$285-\$375/rm + utils. Short term. No pets. No smoking. 378-1304 1-6-08-5-4

Non-smoking, quiet roommate, m/f, needed to share a 2 br/ 2bath townhouse asap. in the Rockwood Villas on 62nd Blvd. \$395/month. MikeReed@cfl.rr.com 1-9-08-7-4

Need 1 female to share big 4/2 on horse farm. Pets ok. \$300/mo + util. Jan - July Call Meg 352-495-7714 1-7-08-4-4

4 Roommates

● 2 br 1ba condo with 1 br for rent. Central air and heat. 2 pools in complex. Walking distance to Shands and UF. Rent 395/mo
● 1BR avail w/private bath in large NW house \$425/mo. Call Mike 352-316-3930. 1-6-08-3-4

8 blocks n. of stadium. PhD student seeks responsible NS M/F for own RM/BA in large quiet home, no pets. \$535 includes all utils. 727-433-0229 1-6-08-3-4

2 Rooms for Rent.
3BR/2BA 9637 SW 96th Terr 2005 Home. 1600 sq.ft. On 1 Acre In Meadows On The Prairie. 15 Min. To UF/20 Min. To SFCC. Facebook Mike Rollins For Pic. \$550/mo. Util. Incl. 727-224-5852 1-6-08-3-4

Master BD w/ Private Bath
in 4BD/3BA house off NW 16th Ave. DW, W/D, Cox cable w/ networked i-net, new carpet, ceiling fans. No cats/dogs \$450 incl utils 328-4995 1-8-08-5-4

Room for rent in a 2 bed 2 bath house. Very close to campus, large bathroom, New appliances/furniture, w/d, dishwasher, flexible lease. Call Terry at: 352-473-6930. 1-9-08-5-4

Looking for male college student (preferred) to share 4BR/4BA condo with same. Own bathroom. W/D, high speed internet. Includes utilities \$475/mo (available immediately) 863-634-1893 1-12-08-5-4

Very close to campus 4/2 remodeled condo opens to lovely courtyard and pool. \$425 w/ UT cable and internet included. (for sale or rent) call 352-870-0291 2-17-09-30-4

Share 3 BR furn. TH Casablanca West with 2 UF students. \$300/mo., + 1/3 utilities. Smoking patio only. Male or Female. Avail. now. Near bus stop. 786.514.5319 (Max) or 786.299.8626 1-13-09-6-4

4 Roommates

Male roommate needed. Share furn 3BR/2BA house w/ yng prof \$400/mo +1/2 util Directv, ph, wireless, Vonage, elec. W/D, ofc space pvt BA (morn) lg yd fenced, pets ok, trees, wooddeck, hottub, pond. UF-15 min drive, near bus, Lakeview Ests 352-682-6297 1-27-15-4

5 Real Estate

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by David L. Hoyt 1-6-09

1	○	○	2		3		○		
				○				4	
5	○								○
				6	○	○	○		
									○
7									

ACROSS

CLUE	ANSWER
1. Power	NGYERE
5. Sharp	TCEAU
6. Objectionable	UFALW
7. Arrange strategically	PDOEYL

DOWN

CLUE	ANSWER
1. Empower	NBAEEL
2. Train	AETCEUD
3. Merry	FELLUGE
4. Flawed	YFTALU

CLUE: This actress was one of the hottest actresses in the 1970s, often playing neurotic, highly-driven women.

BONUS ○○○○ ○○○○○○

How to play Complete the crossword puzzle by looking at the clues and unscrambling the answers. When the puzzle is complete, unscramble the circled letters to solve the BONUS.

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5 Real Estate

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 - NO IMPACT FEE 30K ALSO 4.48 ACRES IN FLORAHOME
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1 Bdrm 1 Ba. Condo
\$85,000 OBO.
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6 Furnishings

BED - QUEEN - \$110 ORTHOPEDIC
 Extra thick, pillow-top, mattress & box. Name brand, new, still in plastic. Call 352-372-7490 will deliver. 4-22-08-72-6

BED - FULL SIZE - \$90 ORTHOPEDIC
 Pillow-top mattress & box. New, unused, still in plastic w/warranty. Can deliver. Call 352-377-9846 4-22-08-72-6

MICROFIBER SOFA & LOVESEAT - \$400
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BED - KING - \$170 PILLOWTOP
 mattress & box springs. Orthopedic rated. Name brand, new, never been used, in plastic with warranty. Call 352-372-8588. Can deliver. 4-22-08-72-6

CHERRY SLEIGH BED solid with Pillowtop
 Mattress & Box. All new still boxed. Cost \$1500, sacrifice \$450 352-333-7516

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BEDROOM SET. 7pc Cherry, Queen/ king
 bed, dresser w/mirror, 2 nightstands, chests avail. Dovetail const. New, in boxes. Can deliver. Retail \$6500, must sell, sacrifice \$1100 (352) 372-7490 4-22-08-72-6

SOFA & LOVESEAT 100% Italian leather.
 Brand new in plastic w/warranty. Retail \$2650. Sacrifice \$750. Call 352-377-9846 4-22-08-72-6

6 Furnishings

DINING ROOM Beautiful cherry set w/table,
 6 Chippendale chairs, hutch & buffet. New, still in boxes. Retail \$5200, sacrifice \$1100. Must sell. Can deliver. 352-372-8588 4-22-72-6

FUTON Solid oak mission-style frame w/
 mattress. New, in box. \$140 332-9899

DINETTE SET 5pc \$120 Brand new in box.
 Never used. 352-377-9846 4-22-08-72-6

****BEDS - ALL BRAND NEW****
****Full \$100 Queen \$125 King \$200****
 Orthopedic pillow-top sets. Brand name matching sets not used or refurbished. Still in plastic, direct from factory! 352-333-7516. 4-22-72-6

BED- QUEEN New orthopedic pillowtop
 mattress and boxspring set. Brand name, brand new, still in plastic with warranty. Can deliver. \$120 352-377-9846. 4-22-72-6

Bed- All New King! 3pc Orthopedic pillowtop
 mattress set. Brand NEW, still in plastic with warranty. Can deliver. \$200 352-333-7516. 4-22-72-6

BEDROOM SET- \$300 BRAND NEW
 Still in boxes! 6 pieces include: Headboard, 2 Nightstands, Dresser, Mirror, Chest. Must sell, can deliver. 352-377-9846. 4-22-08-72-6

FUTON - \$60 Solid Oak Mission Style. With
 plush mattress \$140. All brand NEW still in box. Can deliver. 352-333-7516 4-22-72-6

Bed-FULL size pillowtop mattress & box.
 New in plastic, warr. Can del. \$100 317-4031

SOFA \$185 Brand new! Love seat \$150 still in
 pkg. Can del 352-333-7516 4-22-72-6

11 Motorcycles, Mopeds

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12 Autos

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 up. Clean or ugly. Segovia 352-284-8619
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Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Nichols Lewis

- ACROSS**
- 1 Loyal
 - 5 Nickname of Margaux and Marie's grandfather
 - 9 Dumb mistake
 - 14 Lasso
 - 15 Caspian Sea feeder
 - 16 Overhead
 - 17 Still-life subject
 - 18 "Leading With My Chin" author
 - 19 Book form that replaced the scroll
 - 20 Malt shop order
 - 23 Beholden (to)
 - 24 Crunch targets
 - 25 East Berlin's land, initially
 - 28 Ahead of the tag
 - 31 "Chill, dude!"
 - 33 Vintner's vessels
 - 37 Crib toy
 - 39 Statesman Root
 - 41 Marker
 - 42 Tastes
 - 43 Crispy Asian appetizer
 - 46 1960s-'80s Fords
 - 47 Baby bird, e.g.
 - 48 Acute
 - 50 Balaam's carrier
 - 51 Bambi's aunt, for one
 - 53 Human-machine hybrid
 - 58 Bluesman who introduced the hit suggested by the ends of 20-, 37- and 43-Across
 - 61 Gemologist's unit
 - 64 Wasp's nest site
 - 65 "___ boy!"
 - 66 Hub near The Loop
 - 67 "Gypsies, Tramps & Thieves" singer
 - 68 Sample-check word
 - 69 Cleaned with a cloth
 - 70 Curdle
 - 71 Copycats
- DOWN**
- 1 Roman fountain

- 2 "Laugh-In" cohort
- 3 Invert
- 4 Spooky
- 5 Soda can feature
- 6 Vicinity
- 7 Lousy reviews
- 8 Hawaiian "Shalom!"
- 9 Kibitzing type of driver
- 10 The duck, in "Peter and the Wolf"
- 11 Bedtime "Land"
- 12 Morn's opposite
- 13 "Oedipus ___"
- 21 Oz. and oz.
- 22 Oz., e.g.
- 25 "Roger"
- 26 Gave (out) sparingly
- 27 Like the year's middle third, letterwise
- 29 Between the foul lines
- 30 Digital read
- 32 PC key below Shift
- 33 Italian scooter
- 34 Mont Blanc's range, to its west
- 35 Runs out of gas
- 36 Send via UPS
- 38 Christmas time
- 40 Like many YouTube videos
- 44 Jack-tar's quaff
- 45 Preacher's stand
- 49 Greenwich island
- 52 Throw out
- 54 Cheer for
- 55 At the summit
- 56 Fix, as one's laces
- 57 Mortarboard tossers
- 58 Naked
- 59 Honolulu's island
- 60 For all time
- 61 Who's got milk
- 62 Yellowfin tuna
- 63 50 Cent's genre

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

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 E N E R O E T T A T I S H
 D E C C A T O I L U P T O
 Y A N K E E C L I P P E R
 I C C D E O O B O I S T
 M A L E S T R I P P E R
 S P I G O T L I S T P A Z
 E R N O F I X H E R O
 T A G C A R A P A U P E R
 B O D I C E R I P P E R
 O F F E N D X E R E L O
 B U R G E R F L I P P E R
 A T E E E L A L A L O N G
 M O E T S A K E R A N U P
 A N D S S P E D K N I T S

xwordeditor@aol.com 01/06/09

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18 Personals

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OKLAHOMA FOOTBALL

Sooners' coach Stoops downplays Franks' comments

By PHIL KEGLER
Alligator Staff Writer
pkegler@alligator.org

A lot has been made of Oklahoma cornerback Dominique Franks' comments on Sunday that the top three quarterbacks in the country play in the Big 12, referring to his teammate Sam Bradford, Texas' Colt McCoy and Texas Tech's Graham Harrell.

Sooners coach Bob Stoops said Monday that Franks may have

been baited into making the statements.

"I know how you guys — the media in general — can lead guys down a path that, as young guys, they're not used to handling," Stoops said at media day. "In the end, we all — Dom and the whole team — we have a great respect for Tim Tebow and a bunch of their players. So in the end, it gets down to experience as a young guy handling questions that led him into something that he really didn't in-

"At the end of the day, I still wanted to play all my other sports."

Sam Bradford
Quarterback

tend to say."

STOOPS' HOMECOMING: The matchup between UF and Oklahoma has led to some trips down memory lane for Stoops.

Stoops was the Gators' defensive coordinator from 1996-98

and was considered for UF's open head coaching position that Urban Meyer eventually accepted.

Now, he's back in Miami, facing his old team for the first time. Stoops said he has heard from numerous old friends and colleagues — including UF athletics director Jeremy Foley and former Gator Allen Trammell (Class of '65).

Stoops knows it must be hard for them to pick their allegiances, forced to decide between their school or their friend.

"The one good thing is that one of us has to win," Stoops said.

BRADFORD ON ICE: Bradford, Oklahoma's star quarterback, almost never even became a football player.

The sophomore recalled a discussion he had with his parents after his eighth grade year. Bradford loved hockey, and his parents offered their support. But to play juniors, the family would have had to move from Oklahoma City, with Dallas a likely destination.

UF needs no motivation for game

FOOTBALL, from page 30

Conference Championship Game on Dec. 6, but is by all accounts ready to play Thursday night.

The Sooners' most explosive running back, DeMarco Murray, hurt his hamstring and will be out for the championship bout. Oklahoma still has leading rusher Chris Brown to carry the load, however.

All that in the last month. And yet that month has taken longer for UF linebacker Brandon Hicks than an entire off-season.

"It feels like every day, 'Come on, man. Come on, man,'" Hicks said. "I wish it was here tomorrow, I wish it was here tomorrow."

Meyer, known for his motivational tactics all season, will not have to do much for this game to get his players fired up.

"If you don't want to play in the national championship, who are you?" said center Maurkice Pouncey on Sunday. "I know all of ya'll (media members) would probably dress up for the game if you all had the chance."

Meyer hinted last week that he would be bringing some motivational speakers to prep his team for the game. He might not need

them.

"All of us are motivating each other now," linebacker A.J. Jones said. "We're going out there, going, 'Come on, come on. We gotta get it right.'"

The feeling of eagerness is the same inside the Oklahoma locker room. Sophomore defensive end Adrian Taylor explained his team's wish to play against someone other than its own offense.

"I kinda feel like two-a-days, hitting on our own teammates, it's kinda getting old," Taylor said.

Taylor is so ready for this game, in fact, that he had a dream about it Sunday night.

"It stopped in the fourth quarter, it was a tie game," Taylor said of his dream. "We had to wake up."

When both teams wake up in two days, they won't be dreaming. It will be time for action down in Miami.

In two days, their dreams might be coming true.



Football

KARL, from page 30

poraries; it's already clear — at least in my mind — that Tebow is the best player in his generation. No, at this point, it's about establishing himself among the premier players in college football history for Tebow. With another national title, he would hold a Heisman, two conference championships and two undisputed national championships. I can't think of another player with as impressive a resume off the top of my head. And that is assuming he doesn't add to his resume by returning for his senior season.

Tebow will face challenges, as he is likely to lose his two top receivers in Louis Murphy to graduation and Percy Harvin to the NFL Draft, as well as a senior offensive lineman Phil Trautwein and Jason Watkins.

Sam Bradford: Bradford and the Sooners have faced intense scrutiny in the past month. As a team, Oklahoma's BCS berth was questioned because of an early-season loss to Texas on a neutral field. Individually, Bradford faced additional scrutiny because of the Heisman voting.

Tebow backers were miffed that Tebow finished third despite earning the most first place votes, and Colt McCoy backers felt snubbed for the second consecutive week as they finished second to Oklahoma once again, despite McCoy setting a new record for completion percentage.

If the Sooners win behind another big performance from Bradford, then they can prove the right team and right player were chosen.

Harvin spends break in Gainesville rehabbing for championship match



Harrison Diamond / Alligator Staff

UF wide receiver Percy Harvin answers questions during the BCS National Championship Media Day at Dolphin Stadium in Miami Gardens on Monday.

HARVIN, from page 30

As the Gators prepared to take the field against the Crimson Tide for the SEC title, Harvin was in the locker room, pleading with team doctors to let him play.

"At the last minute, I was still trying to put on my cleats, but I could barely walk," he said. "Me and the doctor sat in (the locker room) and cried, and he said, 'I'm sorry, but there's no possible way (to play).'"

So Harvin was forced to watch UF's 31-20 win, an experience he described as "almost like I was at a funeral."

Meyer and UF quarterback Tim Tebow have often said Harvin's impact on the Gators' offense can't be properly expressed in words, but UF's performance with him watching gave a pretty good indication.

The Gators totaled 358 yards — their lowest output since September — and while that was partly due to the Tide's stingy defense, Harvin's absence alone puts a kink in the machine.

Running back Jeff Demps picked up a season-high 14 carries, but the speedster wasn't able to wiggle free for his usual big runs without Harvin drawing attention

from the defense.

"He's a guy who, whenever they break the huddle, you always have to know where he is," Oklahoma defensive back Dominique Franks said.

The Sooners, however, aren't intimidated by Harvin, who averages 8.8 yards per rush and 17 per reception, and Franks said he wants Harvin to be 100 percent on Thursday, "because when we win, we don't want any excuses."

Gators Receivers

"He's like any other receiver as far as we're concerned," Oklahoma safety Nic Harris said.

The Gators see things differently.

"Nobody on our team can replace Percy. We have to do it as a unit," receiver Louis Murphy said. "When he comes back, it's just going to open up the game so much more."

But before Harvin can open up the Gators' offense again, he still has one last hurdle to overcome.

"The problem I have now is slowing down," Harvin said. "I can't slow down, I just keep going, and it kind of locks up sometimes when I'm slowing down."

Title game can't come soon enough

■ Anticipation builds as Gators prepare for showdown with Sooners.

By **EVAN DREXLER**
Alligator Staff Writer
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MIAMI — In two days, it all ends. In two days, a national champion will be crowned.

Two days normally come and go. They're a fraction of a lifetime.

But for many members of the UF football team, two days is a period of time they are struggling to deal with.



Take wide receiver David Nelson, for example.

"I wish the game was two weeks ago," Nelson said. "It's tough to keep us caged in."

When No. 1 UF takes on No. 2 Oklahoma in the BCS National Championship Game on Thursday at 8 p.m., all that waiting — 33 excruciating days, to be exact — will finally come to an end.

The light at the end of the tunnel couldn't come soon enough.

"Probably for 20-something of those days, we've been waiting for the game," cornerback Joe Haden said, the letters "BCS" carved into the left side of his head.

Plenty has changed for the Gators and Sooners in that time. Consider:

On Dec. 10, Dan Mullen was the Gators offensive coordinator. On Dec. 11, he was not. Mullen, who will call the plays Thursday, took the head coaching job at Mississippi State and is being replaced by current UF offensive line coach Steve Addazio.

UF quarterback Tim Tebow failed in his attempt to win a second consecutive Heisman Trophy. The junior finished third, just behind Texas' Colt McCoy and two spots back of his counterpart in the National Championship Game — Oklahoma's Sam Bradford. Tebow has also since filed paperwork to receive advice from the NFL Draft advisory board.

Gators wideout Percy Harvin went through a will-he-or-won't-he week before the Southeastern

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Harrison Diamond / Alligator Staff

UF wide receiver David Nelson runs after a catch in the Gators' 31-20 win against the Crimson Tide in the SEC Championship Game

One win can change history

MIAMI — As sportswriters and fans, one of the fun things about following sports is debating the implications of wins and losses and the legacies of winners and losers.

This BCS national title game between UF and Oklahoma is no different in that there are implications beyond simply adding another ring to the finger of coaches Urban Meyer or Bob Stoops.



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Let's take a look at just a few of them.

Urban Meyer: The success that has followed him in each of his stops has been so immense he makes Midas feel sheepish.

He's turned around every program he's coached, and with a win Thursday, he'll claim his second national championship in the last three seasons and in just eight seasons as a head coach. Assuming the Gators win, this places him on the same level as USC coach Pete Carroll for the title of greatest coach of his generation.

And, yes, Gators fan, that also means that he would surpass Steve Spurrier as the greatest coach in Gators history. Spurrier is a legend and the greatest figure in UF's sports history — when you also factor his Heisman Trophy as a quarterback — but Meyer doubling the Ol' Ball Coach's national championships in one-third the time gives him the edge.

The next step for Meyer will be proving that he's not just a short flare-up and that he can sustain his success over an extended period of time like Carroll, Stoops and Spurrier have over the years.

Bob Stoops: Oklahoma has consistently been among the top teams in the nation since Stoops' arrival and it appeared as if the Sooners may have had a dynasty on their hands in the early part of this decade. But embarrassing losses at the hands of USC and Boise State have Stoops looking like anything but "Big Game Bob."

Another national title — at the expense of the new big game coach, Meyer, no less — would restore Stoops' aura of invincibility.

Tim Tebow: At this point, it's no longer about making his name among his contem-

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UF RECEIVERS

Harvin looks to put on show for OU

By **MIKE McCALL**
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UF's win against then-No. 1 Alabama in the Southeastern Conference Championship was an unforgettable experience for most members of the UF football team.

For receiver Percy Harvin, sidelined with a sprained ankle, it was depressing.

A few weeks later, Christmas break offered the Gators a rare chance to relax with

their families before resuming preparations for their BCS championship matchup with No. 2 Oklahoma.

But Harvin didn't have time to kick back, so he stayed in Gainesville and spent 15 hours per day stretching, working out and trying to get healthy before UF's championship showdown Jan. 8.

Harvin's glum mood in Atlanta and

maniacal work ethic over the holidays are both due to his competitive nature and desire to play, and now that he's healthy, he's ready to dazzle his teammates and fans when he faces the Sooners' defense Thursday night.

"What I told the team, and what coach (Urban) Meyer told me was, if I get to play in this game, it's going to be one of the best shows that has ever been put on," Harvin said.

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Harvin

Harvin's glum mood in Atlanta and

SCOREBOARD

NBA	
Spurs	91
Heat	84
NCAA Football	
Texas	24
Ohio State	21

I DID NOT KNOW THAT

■ UF sophomore diver Monica Dodson finished the Tennessee Diving Invite with a victory in the platform competition Monday at the Allan Jones Aquatic Center.

TODAY IN UF SPORTS HISTORY

■ Jan. 6, 1968: Center Neal Walk out-guns "Pistol" Pete Maravich 39-32 as the Gators upset LSU at Florida Gym. Walk also grabbed 21 rebounds in UF's win.

ON TELEVISION

■ Football : Ball State vs. Tulsa
ESPN, 8 p.m.
■ Basketball : Ohio St. vs. Michigan St.
ESPN2, 7 p.m.

Mullen calls plays for UF, shots for Mississippi State

Former coordinator divides time between old, new teams

By **PHIL KEGLER**
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MIAMI – Dan Mullen has two phones these days.

Two BlackBerrys to be exact. One in each front pants pocket.

The models vary only slightly, but he answers them very differently.

With one, he is Dan Mullen, UF's outgoing offensive coordinator, in his last days on the job, with one national championship game left to coach.

On the other he is Dan Mullen, newly-minted Mississippi State head coach, coordinating staff hires and fighting for recruits.

"I know which one's which," Mullen laughed. "They have different rings."

But if both were to ring at the same time, he knows which he will answer:

The Mississippi State Bulldogs are his No. 1 priority now.

Bound for Starkville

Life became a whirlwind for Mullen as he immediately departed for Starkville after accepting his first head-coaching job on Dec. 11.

It was perfect timing for the fourth-year UF assistant. After

the 2007 season, he sat down with Urban Meyer and talked about wanting to become a head coach, but he felt he needed one more season.

His 2008 UF offense became a perfect advertisement.

The Gators led the Southeastern Conference in scoring, total offense, rushing yards and pass efficiency.

After securing an SEC title in Atlanta, Mullen felt ready to go. Mississippi State approached him, and a match was made.

"I felt like I had the foundation now to become a head coach," Mullen said. "I was fortunate enough to get the opportunity right as soon as I started looking."

Why Mississippi State?

Mullen felt he saw potential there. He liked the vision of athletic director Greg Byrne and saw most of Mississippi's top recruits were going to be Bulldogs.

And according to Mullen, there are more NFL players per capita than any other state.

As excited as he was for his next job, one thing was always certain -- Mullen wanted to coach UF in Miami.

So on Christmas Eve, he returned to Gainesville.

One Last Encore

When quarterback Tim Tebow puts on a headset Thursday, he will hear the same sound he has the last two seasons -- Mullen's voice.

That's the way Mullen and Meyer wanted it to avoid any problems with a national cham-

"For me, the feeling right now — we're playing in the national championship game. That's an unbelievable experience. And as soon as it ends, I get to go on a plane and be a head coach for the first time."

Dan Mullen

UF offensive coordinator

pionship at stake.

So while offensive line coach Steve Addazio has taken over the "official" offensive coordinator title, Mullen will continue to do the play calling against Oklahoma.

Saying Goodbye

It will be a tough farewell for Mullen, who has worked alongside his UF colleagues for a long time. He's known Addazio for 10 years, Meyer for nine and Billy Gonzales and John Hevesy for seven.

Several players, including the gabby Pouncey twins, have given him playful grief, and Tebow said it will be bittersweet to see him go.

"I'm happy that he's leaving because he's got a great opportunity," Tebow said. "But also we're going to miss him here."

The Gators will not have to wait long to see Mullen's progress — UF plays at Starkville on Oct. 24.

But there's plenty of time to worry about that. For now, Mullen is just taking it all in, pushing through each long day, knowing it's all worth it.

"That's what keeps you going — that adrenaline rush," Mullen said.

"For me, the feeling right now — we're playing in the national championship game. That's an unbelievable experience. And as soon as it ends, I get to go on a plane and be a head coach for the first time."

Calathes raises teammates' play

By **MIKE DIFERDINANDO**
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If the Gators have learned one thing this season, it's that when the chips are down, Nick Calathes antes up.

The sophomore scored 32 points in Saturday's come-from-behind win against North Carolina State, 24 in the second half, and delivered the last 12 of the game for UF.

In many ways, the Gators have looked somewhat lost this season — a young team trying to find consistency across the floor.

What they have found, however, is their go-to guy.

And when UF (12-2) takes the court against Longwood tonight at 7 p.m. in the O'Connell Center, Calathes will look to lead his team to one more confidence-boosting win before the start of Southeastern Conference play.

"In order to be a leader, you have to first figure out how to handle adversity and then you have to be able to fight through it and bring your team with you," Donovan said. "I think that when we were down against NC State, Nick provided some great emotion and some great energy for our team. He's shown some great strides and growth these last three weeks."

Whether he's the one pulling the trigger on the final shot like he did against the Wolfpack or creating one for a teammate, Calathes is the man running the show.

When Walter Hodge drained a last-second three to beat Washington earlier this season, it was Calathes who drove down the lane, drawing a double-team before kicking it out to the open senior.

"The sign of any good player is when a guy can take other people with him," Donovan said.

Calathes has routinely drawn praise from op-

posing coaches this season, but none was more impressed than NC State's Sidney Lowe.

Lowe, a former point guard himself, led the Wolfpack to a national title as a player in 1983.

"When you have a smart player like that — that can pass and also get to the basket with his size, because he can look over the defense — it's tough (to match up)," Lowe said.

At least on the court, Calathes has become the general of a team that in many ways is still yet to be battle-tested.



Men's Basketball

If the Gators hope to avoid another trip to the NIT and make it back to the NCAA Tournament this season, they will need their star to shine on the big stage.

Something Donovan said Calathes wasn't entirely prepared to do as a freshman.

"I think there are some things that he has found out about himself that he didn't really know were inside of him," Donovan said.

Calathes leads the Gators in scoring this season (17 points per game) and assists (seven per game).

Injury Update:

Sophomore Adam Allen had surgery to repair an injury to the patella tendon in his left knee Dec. 30.

The injury was originally diagnosed as a strained MCL, but as the pain persisted, it became clear it was more severe than the UF medical staff originally thought. "I would say that he is probably done for the year," Donovan said. "He has another four weeks (of recovery) after (the surgery)." Allen has not played all season because of the injury and will likely take a medical redshirt. The sophomore averaged 4 points per game as freshman.



Andrew Stanfill / Alligator Staff

UF guard Nick Calathes drives to the inside on Florida A&M forward Lamar Twitty during the Gators' 73-58 win against the Rattlers.

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