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OXFORD SUMMER FEST COMPLETE STORY ONLINE P. 5



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THE DAILY

TUESDAY, JULY 2, 2013 | VOL. 101, No. 147

MISSISSIPPIAN

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI | SERVING OLE MISS AND OXFORD SINCE 1911

UM Alpha Phi Alpha wins National Collegiate Step Show

BY PETE PORTER
tjporter@go.olemiss.edu

The Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity at The University of Mississippi danced its way to victory in the National Collegiate Step Show at the 92nd annual Alpha Phi Alpha General Convention in Austin, Texas, this past weekend.

The 14 members of the Epsilon Omega Chapter beat out three other teams at the Alpha Phi Alpha National Convention to bring its first national championship home to Oxford. The team was caught a bit off guard by the win according to chapter president Odie Johnson.

“At first we were in complete shock,” said Johnson, a senior biology major. “But after it hit us that we won, we were beyond excited. The feeling was indescribable.”

Johnson said the Alphas’ championship was the result of lots of hard work and determination that began last fall when the team was formed.

“We had a lot of practice, a lot. It took a while for everyone to become comfortable with each and every step. We

knew it would take some time to get where it needed to be in order to have a chance to win.”

All of the Alphas’ hard work payed off as they hit their stride during the spring semester, the most important time for the team all year.

The road to Austin began with the Mississippi District Convention, consisting of all the fraternity’s chapters from around the state. The Ole Miss Alphas won this convention, thus moving on to the Southern Regional Convention where they competed against seven other teams from chapters across the South. The team also won this event, thus qualifying for the National Step Show Championship in Austin.

After winning the regional convention, the team entered the 2013 King of Memphis Stepshow held at the University of Memphis April 13th. Learning about it by word of mouth, step team captain Alex Isom said it was not only a good way to prepare for the national convention, but also nice to face competition from around the Southeast.

“It was one of those last minute things we entered to prepare ourselves for the convention in Austin,” said Isom, a recent graduate from Hernando with a major in exercise science. “We entered really just to practice, but we ended up winning the whole thing.”

Isom, who was in charge of creating the steps, said the team didn’t change anything from their regional competition before the Memphis show, adding that the regional show was a great momentum builder for the team going into nationals.

“We didn’t change one thing we used in regionals, but it worked to our advantage. Everyone was spot on, and the win really gave us the confidence we needed going to Austin,” Isom said.

Alpha Phi Alpha was founded in 1906 at Cornell University by a group of African-American students who formed the fraternity to stick together in order to survive the racial hostility they faced. Among its famous members are Gene Upshaw,

See ALPHA, PAGE 3



FILE PHOTO | The Daily Mississippian

Ellison Brown step dances with his Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity brothers outside of the Union.

Fourth of July Festivities

INFORMATION COMPILED BY MICHAEL QUIRK

5K and Fun Run

July 4th begins with the 8th Annual 5K Classic and Family Fun Run on the Square. Registration for the race begins at 6 a.m. with the race beginning at 7:30 a.m. Register online at www.oxfordpets.com for \$25 or they can sign up on www.racesonline.com and save \$10. The Family Fun Run is 1/2 a mile and begins at 8:30 a.m. The cost of the Fun Run is \$15. The proceeds from the race and run will benefit the Oxford-Lafayette Humane Society.

LOU Children’s Parade

At 9:30 a.m. there will be a children’s parade on the square. The lineup begins at 8:30 a.m. and those wishing to participate are encouraged to decorate their bicycles and golf carts. All children are required to wear helmets to ride their bicycles. Pets are also encouraged to participate with prizes being awarded for Most Patriotic, Most Unique and Best Dressed Pet. The winners will be announced in the Grove at 6 p.m.

Grove Celebrations

At 4 p.m. there will be activities in the Grove ranging from a children’s area, petting zoo, pony and train rides, “bouncies,” face painting and balloons. Five live bands will be performing on the Grove stage. The LOU Community Band will perform at 4 p.m., followed by Maybelle’s Lovers, then Alanna Mosley, and finally Rocket 88. At 6 p.m. there will be a ceremony commemorating the local service men and women. Refreshments will be made available.

Fireworks

The day will end with a fireworks production at 9 p.m. at Oxford-University Stadium/Swayze Field. The gates will open at 7:30 p.m. with local films playing on the scoreboard until the fireworks begin. This year is the first that Oxford will have a professional production company coordinate the fireworks. Those hoping to attend are encouraged to sit in the stadium seating by making a \$2 donation.

Meredith Rawl, from the local agency Family Crisis Services of Northwest Mississippi, is this year’s committee chair. For more information on the events visit www.live.oxfordms.com/lou-4th-of-july/.

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COLUMN

Progress is progress

BY CASEY HOLLIDAY
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On Sunday, Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy denied a bid from Proposition 8 supporters to halt gay marriages that had become legal in California, following the lifting of the ban by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

It was another moment of celebration for same sex couples, as well as all supporters of gay marriage. With pride parades taking place in New York City, San Francisco, Chicago, Paris and dozens of other cities around the world this past weekend, the timing could not have been better.

When I opened Yahoo! last Wednesday and saw that the Supreme Court had found the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional, I will be honest and say it made me tear up quite a bit. Though I am not currently dating anyone (hint hint everyone, I'm single!) and marriage is not

in my near future, the steps we have taken towards progress astound me.

I'm gay. One day, I would like to be married. Unless there is some outrageous transformation or law passed, that probably won't happen anytime soon here in Mississippi. The Supreme Court did not make the sweeping ruling on same sex marriage bans that supporters had hoped for, leaving the legality of them in limbo.

To me, gay marriage isn't a religious issue. When the government began to offer legal benefits to marriage, there became two parts of marriage: the legal and religious.

My Mormon church probably wouldn't recognize my marriage as sacred or "real" like it does straight marriages, and that doesn't negatively impact my life in any way. But, at least in some states, the federal government would see it as equal, regardless of what gender

my partner is, and guarantee me more than 1,000 benefits.

As a gay person, it is incredibly difficult to watch people tell me that I shouldn't be afforded the latter because their religion deems it unnatural and marriage is "sacred."

The religious right argues that the Supreme Court rulings infringe upon their religious liberties, forcing them to accept it or be labeled such awful terms as "homophobic" or "anti-gay."

I don't believe that being gay is a choice. I have close friends, however, that do. They're not "homophobic" or "anti-gay," and I would never call them that. It's simply their belief, something I would never fault them for.

They do, however, believe in same sex marriage. I, and other Americans like me, shouldn't be punished for others' religious beliefs. Hindus don't eat beef, why aren't we trying to ban the consumption of cow for ev-

eryone in America?

The Supreme Court stopped short of declaring bans on gay marriage unconstitutional, saying that it's the right of the states to define marriage however they want.

My love is not less than anyone else's, and it shouldn't be classified as such just because some people believe it's wrong. Why should the state of Mississippi be the one to decide if my love is real enough to be married?

The Supreme Court made great strides by finding DOMA unconstitutional, and the failure of Prop 8 is also a success.

At the same time, it's hard not to wish they had taken that extra step. Progress is progress though, right? Right?

Casey Holliday is a senior English and journalism major from Horn Lake. Follow him on Twitter @Casey_Holliday.

COLUMN

An opinion writer's opinion on opinions



BY ANNA RUSH
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The past week has been a whirlwind of controversial issues. Paula Deen using an extremely insensitive word and the commercial fallout that resulted, the Supreme Court's ruling regarding same sex marriage, the George Zimmerman-Trayvon Martin court proceedings, and a host of other events have sparked conversations everywhere. Everyone seems to be voicing their opinion on these polarizing issues. In light of all

if this, I must confess something to you. It may seem contradictory coming from an "opinion writer," but I don't actually like voicing my opinions.

Let me explain. I almost never interject myself into discussions on controversial issues. I prefer not to openly take a stance on an issue that could raise eyebrows among my friends or peers. I may feel strongly on an issue and even say so among my close friends, but I almost never voice such on record – be it print or on social media.

The fear of unintentionally offending a friend or having a past statement be brought up later to my own derision keeps me quiet. Opinions are shaped by the experiences and people we encounter, molding how we

view the world around us. My opinions, as a 24-year-old law student might change completely once I don the hat of a 40-something working mother. If I voice a strong opinion now, will I later have to eat my own words? How important is it to voice your own opinions? If you feel strongly should you not be able to be express it publicly? Is there a time and place for everything, including opinions? Should you carefully evaluate each statement for its appropriateness?

When I hear or read someone's opinion, even one that I disagree with, I often think, "Wow, I really admire you for having the courage to say that." On the contrary, I sometimes hear or read someone's opinion, even one that I agree with,

and think, "Wow, I can't believe you actually said that." Why are some opinions okay but others not? This longwinded internal debate is probably why my last Facebook status was about selling BBQ tickets for my sorority, in 2008.

I'm sure you've formed a strong opinion of me for dragging out my non-conclusive conclusion on the subject, so I'll get to the point. "Pee or get off the pot" as my eloquent father always says.

Well here it goes; as far as an opinion on opinions, this opinion writer has yet to form one. Cheers!

Anna Rush is a law student from Hattiesburg. She graduated from Mississippi State University in 2011. Follow her on Twitter @annakrush.

THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN

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The Daily Mississippian welcomes all comments. Please send a letter to the editor addressed to The Daily Mississippian, 201 Bishop Hall, University, MS, 38677 or send an e-mail to dmeditor@gmail.com.

Letters should be typed, double-spaced and no longer than 300 words. Third party letters and those bearing pseudonyms, pen names or "name withheld" will not be published. Publication is limited to one letter per individual per calendar month.

Student submissions must include grade classification and major. All submissions must be turned in at least three days in advance of date of desired publication.



MISSISSIPPI
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MEMBER NEWSPAPER

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Court orders quick reply in open-carry gun case

ALPHA,
continued from page 1

Edward William Brooke and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Along with winning the national convention, fraternity member Abdul Hamid had the highest overall GPA of all the fraternity's chapters across the nation.

Winning the national convention is among the top accomplishments for the Epsilon Omega Chapter according to Isom.

"We have had some notable accomplishments, but this is definitely among the best," he said. "And for us to win this in our chapter's 35th anniversary, it's even more special."



PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN LEWIS

Alphas after winning step competition

Make the DM part of your morning ritual



THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN
THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI
SERVING OLD MISS AND OXFORD SINCE 1911

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Plaintiffs who want to block Mississippi's open-carry gun law won a quick order overturning it. Now they have to act quickly to save that order.

Presiding Supreme Justice Michael Randolph ordered Hinds County District Attorney Robert Shuler Smith and the other plaintiffs to answer by 5 p.m. Monday a request from Attorney General Jim Hood to throw out a lower court ruling.

Neither Smith nor his attorney Lisa Ross immediately answered phone messages Monday afternoon.

Hinds County Circuit Judge Winston Kidd ruled this past week that the law was vague, granting an injunction in an emergency hearing Friday to prevent irreparable harm.

Smith and others requested that the law be blocked. The law was to take effect Monday.

The law clarifies that people in Mississippi don't need any kind of state-issued permit to carry a gun that's not concealed.

The bill's main sponsor, Rep. Andy Gipson, R-Braxton, reiterated Monday that the law only clarifies the state constitution's existing right to bear arms.

"House Bill 2 is nothing new when it comes to your right, the citizens' rights, to keep and bear arms in Mississippi," Gipson said in a news conference at the state Capitol. "That's been the law of the land in Mississip-

pi not since July 1, but since 1890 and even earlier."

Some sheriffs and police chiefs, however, have said they fear people could become trigger-happy and hurt civilians or law enforcement officers. Gipson said police chiefs and sheriffs needed to accept the changes, saying Kidd's ruling was "judicial activism" that overstepped his powers and that the lawsuit was an attempt to criminalize guns.

"A right unexercised is a right lost and what we've seen over the last few weeks is a rediscovery of the right to bear arms in Mississippi," Gipson said.

In his appeal, Hood argues the state judge's ruling violates the right to bear arms and the Legislature's right to regulate concealed weapons.

Hood said the plaintiffs in the case made no allegation or argument that the law is unconstitutional. Instead, he argues they only offered some vague policy statements, "none of which represent a legal sufficient basis for the judiciary to overturn the will and judgment of the Legislature."

Hood said the plaintiffs waited 116 days between the time the law was signed by the governor and the date it was take effect to file a complaint. Hood said his office had effectively been ambushed, receiving only 30 minutes to review the complaint before the hearing before the state judge.

Hood had issued a non-



FILE PHOTO | The Daily Mississippian

binding legal opinion June 13 saying guns would still be banned on school and college campuses, and that law-enforcement officers could ban the open carry of guns in courthouses and other public buildings. Hood also said people would still be able to ban weapons on private property.

Gipson said he had worked with Hood, a Democrat, to draft the appeal over the weekend.

"When Jim Hood and Andy Gipson agree on something, you know something is up," Gipson said. Republicans in 2012 trimmed Hood's powers to hire outside lawyers in an effort that carried heavy partisan overtones.

Though Kidd set a July 8 hearing on the matter, Gipson said he hoped the Supreme Court would wipe away Kidd's ruling before that hearing.

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REVIEW

'Hello, Dolly!' performance filled with beauty, grace and spunk

BY ALEX GRYDER
ajgryder@go.olemiss.edu

For the 10th Anniversary of the Shakespeare Festival, Oxford put on a crowd-pleasing performance of "Hello, Dolly!" in the Main Hall of the Ford Center on Thursday, June 27.

Based on Thornton Wilder's "The Matchmaker," "Hello, Dolly!" is one of the most popular musicals on Broadway.

Mary Donnelly Haskell plays Dolly Levi. She brought not only a powerful voice to the stage, but also a great sense of timing for delivering comedic lines. Dolly Levi is known for her love of life and meddling with the lives of others, and Haskell played her part perfectly. She seemed extremely comfortable in the role she was playing, as though she was born to be Dolly. Haskell's own sense of humor came out in the role, and, as an audience member, I could tell she was amused with the idea of meddling



JARED BURLESON | The Daily Mississippian

Horace Vandergelder struggles with his feelings about Dolly throughout the production and at the end of the show he proposes.

with her fellow cast members on the stage. I had not expected to fall in love with the character of Dolly, but Haskell seemed so fun and full of life that I could not resist.

Written by five-time Tony Award winner Jerry Herman, the play follows Mrs. Dolly Gallagher Levi, a matchmaker extraordinaire, as she sets off on a quest to make sure all the people in her town of Yonkers find love.

Dolly herself has set her sights on Horace Vandergelder (Ed Hanson) the well-known half-a-millionaire. She plans on taking him as her own husband to spread his wealth throughout the lives of others.

Director of the play Rene E. Pulliam has brought to the stage a caring, witty, and confident Dolly Levi.

The play begins with a slow build up from the orchestra, conducted by Robert Aubrey, into the opening of Act One. The townspeople of Yonkers fill the stage in their stunning la belle epoque attire. The cast becomes intimate with the audience by sharing their fond thoughts of Dolly. The act brings

both music and dialogue to the stage which introduces a whole new level of involvement between the audience and characters. Dolly is then wheeled onto the stage and smiled upon as she begins to pair up the single men and women with one another,

whereafter she "shoos" them from her advisory.

Ed Hanson plays Dolly's love interest, Horace Vandergelder. Vandergelder is known for his ill-humored response to life and Hanson certainly played his part well. I was not expecting

to dislike Vandergelder as much as I did. Though the part was played well, it seemed odd that someone so loving and caring as Dolly could ever fall for a man of his like. Hanson helped win me over by the end of the last act; however, it took convincing.

I was pleasantly surprised by Vandergelder's clerks, Cornelius Hackl (Garrett Lawson) and Barnaby Tucker (Kyle Davis) who filled the audience with humor and life. The duo were so full of hopes and dreams for their futures that one could not help but fall in love with them. Their witty banter and innocent nature almost stole the show for me. They were so well cast that I couldn't imagine them in any other state.

Though all the cast members of the play filled the auditorium with beautiful voices, Mary Haskell's stood out the most. She performed every song with beauty, grace and a bit of spunk, and it was lovely to listen to her throughout the night.

I fell in love with the characters and storyline of "Hello, Dolly!" and very much enjoyed my Thursday night.



JARED BURLESON | The Daily Mississippian

Mary Haskell stars in the Oxford Shakespeare Festival's production of Hello Dolly last weekend.



JARED BURLESON | The Daily Mississippian

Cornelius and Barnaby impress Irene and Minnie with their thrifty behavior while singing about 'Elegance.'



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Weekend festivities

(Right) Guests enjoy the **North Mississippi Hill Country Picnic** Saturday, June 29. The three day festival is tribute to the traditional roots of Mississippi music and culture. *Photos by Katie Williamson*

(Below) Oxford Downtown Council hosts the **Summer Fest** on the courthouse lawn Saturday, June 29. The day consists of Sidewalk sales, double decker bus tours, a dunk tank, castle bounce, balloon artist and other family-friendly activities. Go to theDMonline.com for full coverage. *Photos by James Cozart*



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GARFIELD

By JIM DAVIS



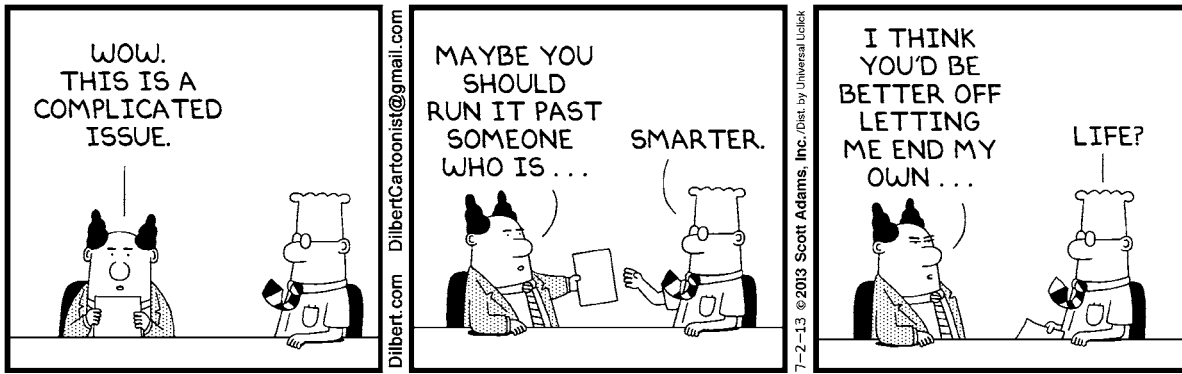
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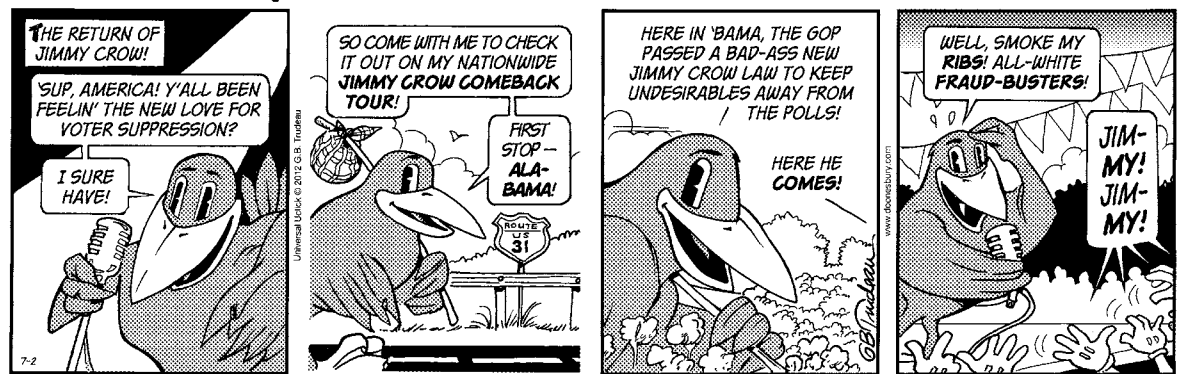
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			2		3			4

HOW TO PLAY

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 with no repeats.

DIFFICULTY LEVEL CHALLENGING

6	4	9	3	1	2	5	7	8
7	1	5	8	9	9	2	4	3
2	8	3	7	5	4	1	9	6
6	5	4	2	3	9	8	1	7
3	2	7	9	8	1	4	6	5
1	6	8	4	7	5	3	6	2
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4		2	7	6	9	8	3	1
8	3	1	5	4	7	9	2	6

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- 1 Ballpark figure
- 7 Loan abbr.
- 10 Iron hook
- 14 Oval-nest builder
- 15 No, to a laird
- 16 Mishmash
- 17 Interstellar dust cloud
- 18 Hankering
- 19 Without — — to stand on
- 20 Outdoor hobby (hyph.)
- 23 Titled
- 26 Split
- 27 Tall and slender
- 28 Mayberry moppet
- 29 Tofu constituent
- 30 LAX regulators
- 31 British inc.
- 32 GI address
- 33 Hot coals
- 37 Affinity
- 38 Disparity
- 39 Suffix for "press"
- 40 Fiddlestick
- 41 Bliss
- 43 Flaming
- 44 "Not — — long shot!"
- 45 Belief
- 46 Unknown factors
- 47 Merger or buyout
- 48 Quaffs
- 51 Wolfed
- 52 Move crabwise
- 53 Roman relic (2 wds.)
- 56 Archipelago dot
- 57 Peggy or Brenda
- 58 Coronets
- 62 AAA suggestions
- 63 "Bien" opposite
- 64 Pianist's span
- 65 Miss Trueheart of the comics
- 66 "Woof!"
- 67 Shortstop — Reese

DOWN

- 1 From, in Hamburg
- 2 Sooner than
- 3 Pen part
- 4 Stuntman
- 5 Dragon puppet
- 6 Be a parent
- 7 No matter what
- 8 Joyous outburst
- 9 Housing expense
- 10 Green light (hyph.)
- 11 Kate's sitcom friend
- 12 Monster
- 13 Socked in
- 21 Wilted
- 22 Rubbernecked
- 23 "Cape Fear" star
- 24 Telescope lens
- 25 Waits
- 29 Twitch
- 30 Arouses enthusiasm
- 32 Andre of tennis
- 33 Time to be in
- 34 Receded
- 35 Palace dweller
- 36 Marshy hollow
- 42 Mate for Shere Khan
- 46 "A house divided against —"
- 47 Open wider
- 48 Flannel item
- 49 Squander
- 50 Lazes about
- 51 Keep — — to the ground
- 52 Divide the pie
- 54 — mater
- 55 Up above
- 59 Damp and chilly
- 60 Hail, to Caesar
- 61 Drop in on

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

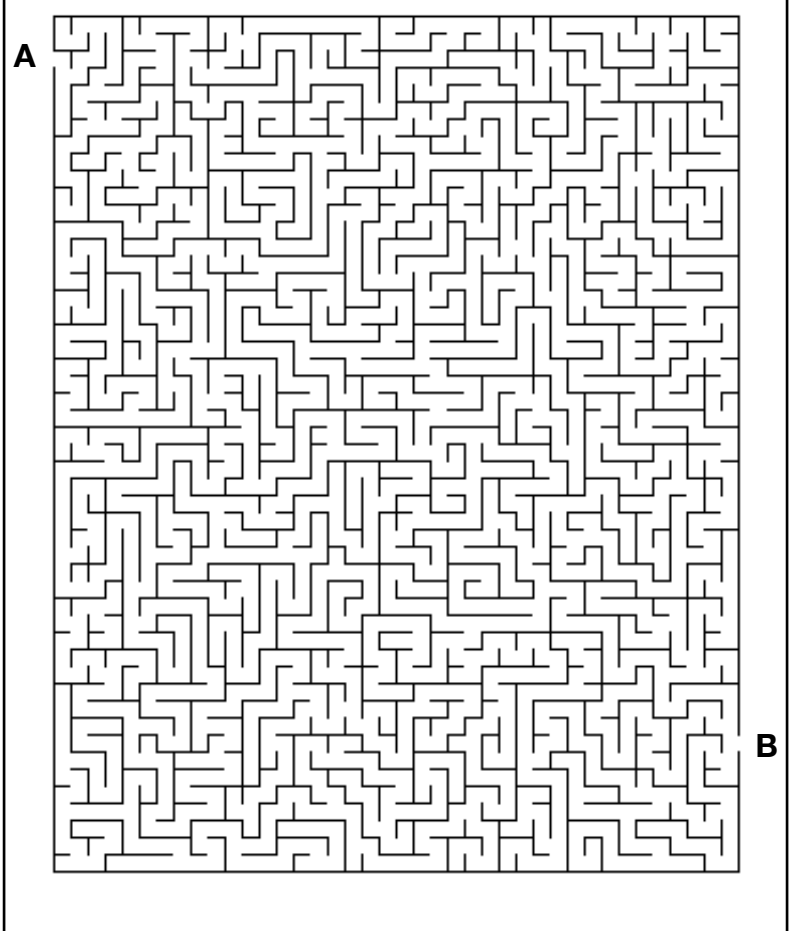
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MARVELOUS MAZE TOO

Start at entry point A and work your way through the maze to exit point B.



COLUMN

Ole Miss fans find something else to complain about

BY DAVID COLLIER
dcollier@go.olemiss.edu

A year ago, Ole Miss fans had a lot to complain about.

The football program was in the cellar of the Southeastern Conference after two losing seasons that led to the firing of previous head coach Houston Nutt. Yes, Hugh Freeze had been put in place, but many throughout the fan base were unsure if he was the right man for the job.

Fast-forward to today, and Ole Miss fans are hearing national sports broadcasters like Colin Cowherd predict that the Rebels win 9 or 10 games in 2013. That prediction comes after Freeze led Ole Miss to a 7-6 record in his first season at the helm and a top-5 five recruiting class that was the national story on National Signing Day back in February.

So Ole Miss fans should have no complaints, right? Wrong.

The only thing Rebel fans are talking about in the dry summer months is parking. Not to say it shouldn't be talked about, because it should, but what I

have heard is way too much.

The Ole Miss athletics department has installed new guidelines that allowed only members of the Ole Miss Athletics Foundation that had enough priority points to obtain a parking pass to park on campus on football gamedays. Everyone else must find a place off campus, and the university is asking fans to take advantage of five off-campus lots that will have shuttles to take people to campus.

Change requires an adjustment period for everyone, but it's not the end of the world. In fact, I consider the change one that is 20 years over due.

Instead of complaining, Ole Miss fans should be thanking athletics director Ross Bjork and his staff for pushing the football program forward. Rebel fans always ask why it takes so long to raise the money to build a new basketball arena and expand the north endzone of Vaught-Hemingway Stadium.

Money is what moves athletic programs in the right direction, and this new parking system

gives Ole Miss another source of revenue.

Yes, it will make people change their gameday routines and will be something that will take some getting used to, but is it really that bad? If you want to support the football program, it's a small price to pay that winning will easily cure.

I've heard all of the excuses.

Some say traffic will be a nightmare because people won't know what to do. However, Dan O'Dowd, assistant athletics director for development/annual giving, said fans will be given gameday guides with extensive information on where to park with their season tickets. For those who don't have season tickets, all of the information can be found online at www.olemissfb.com.

I've also heard people say it is just easier to stay at home and watch the games on TV. Well, if you're one of those people, I'm going to say you're either not that big of a fan or you're lying.

If Ole Miss continues to win and progress under Freeze, there's no doubt the stadium will be filled, no matter what

fans have to do to get there. If Ole Miss loses, fans will spend their Saturdays at home. Does that have anything to do with parking? Absolutely not.

The sooner the Rebel fan base gets over the constant complaining, the sooner the entire athletics department can take steps towards winning championships.

Do you think Alabama fans care about riding shuttles? No way. In fact, most SEC schools have parking lots that have shuttles to take fans to games. I've personally ridden shuttles at Alabama and Arkansas. It's just the way it is today; the days of parking on curbs and sidewalks are over.

Want to have your own spot on campus? Give money. It's really simple.

Actually, it only took 12 priority points to obtain a parking pass this season, according to Keith Carter, associate athletics director for development/Ole Miss Athletics Foundation executive director. What does that mean?

Priority points are awarded for season ticket purchases and

money donated to the foundation. For every \$100 donated, fans will be awarded one point as well as one point for every season ticket purchased for football, men's and women's basketball and baseball.

So you want your own spot? Start buying season tickets and donating money. You can even work your way up the list by the time parking selection rolls around next season.

Carter said more on-campus parking will be available next year, and the possibility of a parking garage is being discussed. But at this time, nothing has been set.

With football season quickly approaching, leave the parking conversation behind and talk about Bo Wallace's shoulder, the progression of the incoming freshmen and how many wins the Rebels could get this year.

Freeze has the Rebels in the national spotlight, so focus on the positives and enjoy the real reason you're even planning trips to Oxford this fall.

For continuing coverage of Ole Miss football, follow @DavidLCollier and @thedm_sports on Twitter.

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Position breakdown: Defensive Line

The Daily Mississippian's David Collier breaks down the Ole Miss defensive line in part five of an eight-part series that will break down each position of the Rebels' 2013 football team.

BY DAVID COLLIER
dcollier@go.olemiss.edu

As football season approaches, everyone is predicting how many wins their team will get. For Ole Miss, there is little doubt they will put points on the board with head coach Hugh Freeze running the show, but how will they be defensively?

The Rebels have a lot of talent on that side of the ball, especially with the incoming freshmen that will likely be asked to make big contributions in year one.

But what could push the rest of the defense to the next level? The defensive line. There are question marks at both defensive end and tackle, but there is also a lot of potential.

At end, Ole Miss is led by junior C.J. Johnson, who had a big year in 2012, totaling 55 total tackles, 12 tackles for loss and 7.5 sacks. The Philadelphia, Miss., native

is poised for an even bigger junior campaign, but an ankle injury that he suffered in spring practice could slow him down early on. He should be ready to go for the start of fall camp, but with ankles, you just never know.

Senior Cameron Whigham is the next returning player at defensive end. Last year, Whigham started in 11 games and had 27 total tackles and 1.5 sacks. He's not the flashiest player, but he gets the job done.

This fall, a lot of eyes will be on sophomore defensive end Channing Ward to see what kind of progression he has made. Ward, who had 21 tackles as a freshman, was at a disadvantage last season after getting cleared from the NCAA clearinghouse just a week before the season opener. However, he showed a lot of athletic ability and seemed to make more of an impact at the back end of the season. Year two in the system should



FILE PHOTO | The Daily Mississippian

Auburn quarterback Clint Moseley (15) reaches for a fumbled pass as Mississippi defensive end C.J. Johnson (10) tackles him.

mean he will play faster and make the impact everyone has been waiting for.

The Rebels will also be anxious to see how big of a contribution freshman Robert Nkemdiche will make at end. The consensus No. 1 overall recruit was the headliner of Ole Miss' big recruiting class in February, but now he will have to prove his rating on the field.

Junior defensive end Carlos Thompson will also look to get into the rotation after redshirting in 2012. Thompson has yet to live up to the hype that surrounded him coming out of high school, but a year to focus on getting bigger could prove to be the difference.

Senior D.T. Shackelford and redshirt freshman Temario Strong are two lineback-

ers that could slide down to defensive end for a few snaps. Shackelford is coming off two ACL surgeries that held him out of action the past two seasons.

At defensive tackle, the Rebels will be forced to replace some big bodies, but the top returner is sophomore Issac Gross. The South Panola product was a force in his first year in Oxford, racking up 40 tackles, 10 tackles for loss and 2.5 sacks.

Ole Miss will also look for junior college transfer Lavon Hooks to play himself into the starting lineup early on at defensive tackle. Hooks was the among one of the top junior college players last season, tallying 51 total tackles, 20.5 tackles for loss and 9.5 sacks last year at Northeast Mississippi Community College.

Juniors Bryon Bennett and Carlton Martin as well as sophomore Woodrow Hamilton will also be in the defensive tackle rotation.

Analysis
The defensive line is filled with talent, but their success will rely on their ability to stay healthy. It's not as deep of a unit as the Rebel coaching staff would like, but it has the ability to be very good.

Last season, Ole Miss finished the year fourth in the nation in tackles for loss (7.92 per game) and 11th in sacks (2.92 per game). Those numbers should rise with the returning talent.

They lost a lot inside with Gilbert Pena and Uriah Grant graduating, but Hooks should be able to contribute in a big way this year. Also, Gross could be ready to have a breakout year after spending an entire offseason in the weight and conditioning program. Add some more weight to that quick first step he has, and that is a scary combination for any offensive lineman to deal with.

Johnson's ankle shouldn't give him problems, and teams won't be able to double-team him if Ward and Nkemdiche can be the playmakers they are expected to be. If those two guys have the light bulb go on early, this defensive line will give opponents all they can handle.

It may take a few games into the season to see exactly how good this unit can be, but with a young secondary, I see them carrying the Rebel defense to their second-straight winning season.

For continuing coverage of Ole Miss football, follow @DavidL-Collier and @thedm_sports on Twitter.



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