The many faces of a hero

By Bethany Harbsom
The Chanticleer Senior Reporter

"We are not here for that! We are here for peace—not to fight one another!" said Captain Donnie Ray Belser Jr. as he planted himself firmly between two Iraqi soldiers who had raised their weapons angrily toward one another.

Moments of bravery and courage were commonplace in the life of this 28-year-old soldier, who was killed Feb. 10 after his unit was attacked with small-arms fire in Baqubah, Iraq.

For the many who loved him, Belser is remembered as a man who made his life count in so many ways, both in and out of the military arena.

"That’s what impressed me the most about him. He knew when to wear the face of husband, of daddy and of the military. He knew how to intertwine those into one person," said Marcia Dobbins, Belser’s sister-in-law.

The roots of Belser’s military career can be traced back to Jacksonville State University, where he found his niche in the ROTC program from the very beginning of his freshman year. Belser graduated from JSU in 2001 with a degree in criminal justice and a minor in military science.

"He was always quick with a broad smile and a heart-warming laugh. However, when it was time to get serious, Donnie had a military bearing that was beyond reproach," said Captain Millicient Suzanne Peyer, who served alongside Belser for two years in the ROTC department.

Belser loved JSU and the ROTC program, and he also participated in Ranger Challenge.

"He was eager to learn all he could about his chosen profession," said Capt. Peyer.

Retired Lieutenant Colonel Dave Merriss, a former JSU Professor of Military Science, remembers Belser as a "dedicated, quiet leader."

"When we commissioned him, I knew he would be an outstanding officer," said Merriss.

Retired Major Johnny Thompson, who was Belser’s Military Science Instructor and Assistant Professor for three of the four years he spent at JSU, said it was an honor and privilege to swear Belser into the Army as an officer and commission him. "The two grew close and continued to stay in contact even after Belser graduated.

"I watched him grow from an 18-year-old with the goal of becoming a United States Army officer, to a senior cadet with a clear sense of purpose, to a caring and effective Army officer and leader who placed the needs of his soldiers above his own. All the while, I could see that he was completely dedicated to doing something with his life that served a greater cause," said Thompson.

See Hero, page 4

**Photo courtesy of JSU NewsWire**

Captain Donnie R. Belser Jr. and his daughter, Morgan, before his deployment (top).

Belser and fellow JSU ROTC classmate Captain Millicient S. Peyer at their commissioning ceremony (far left).

Belser during his deployment (left).
Symposium winner: Salamander Whisperer

By Jessica Summe
The Chanticleer Editor-in-Chief

Graduate student Clifford Webb found out he won an award at the Student Arts Symposium through an email from his professor, Dr. George Cline. Webb's presentation, which encompassed 14 months of a 22-month thesis, was entitled Efficacy of Leaf Litter Refugia Bags for Sampling Adult Streamside Salamanders (Caudata: Plethodontidae).

In regular English, Webb is the Salamander Whisperer.

A former science teacher and 14-year Florida resident, Webb was "just blown away" by the variety of salamanders in Alabama. So when Webb's first thesis was based on mudpuppies, Webb turned to a local stream -- and its slimy inhabitants -- for inspiration.

Webb evaluated Dr. Dolly of Marshall College technique of using "leaf litter refugium" bags to catch salamanders. "The usual way you catch salamanders is by hand, but they're really quick," said Webb. "You can have your hand wrapped around one and in half a second, they'll drive down and bury themselves in the gravel at the bottom of the stream. You can search all day, but that salamander's just gone."

Dolly's technique, which involves filling a bag with rotting leaves and onions and leaving it out for the salamanders to find, was altered slightly in Webb's project. The bags have a bigger mesh to attract adult salamanders. Instead of the babies and juveniles that Dolly had set out to catch.

"The reason he didn't want to catch adults is because adult salamanders are cannibals," said Webb. "Yeah, it's a really fascinating microcosm, amphibian politics."

In 22 months, Webb has caught 868 salamanders of seven different species: Eurycea cirrigera, Eurycea guttolineata, Desmognathus conanti, Plethodon glutinosus, Plethodon serratus, Gymnophis dorni-
You call this winter?

By Nick Lehwald
The Chanticleer Senior Reporter

As I'm sure everyone has noticed, the weather has been acting a little odd this year. First, it gets blisteringly cold for a week. Then it warms up. Then it freezes up again. Monday morning it's snowing, Tuesday afternoon it's 75 degrees.

We will enter March at 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Now, granted, I'm from Maryland (where there is currently three inches of snow and two inches of ice) and am finding this warm weather perfectly acceptable, as I constantly remind my friends back home.

So acceptable, in fact, that I have to be constantly reminded that it's still winter and that summer break is not three weeks away but rather three months away.

The length of time before The Great Escape is a sobering realization, one that has made me look outside and take stock. Not of my worldly possessions, not of my academic standings (which I should do, by the way), but of how much I'm going to miss winter. Yes, that's right, I'm going to miss winter. Why will I miss winter, you ask? Well, that's because it might not be what it used to be for much longer.

As most everyone knows, the earth is going through something called global warming. Global warming is when carbon dioxide, along with other air pollution, collects in the atmosphere trapping in the sun's heat. This causes the planet's temperature to rise. Think of a greenhouse and you'll understand. (Greenhouse effect? Ring a bell?)

According to the National Resource Defense Council (NRDC) the average earth temperature, over the last 50 years, has increased faster and steadier than at any other time in recorded history (official weather record keeping began in 1870).

According to the NRDC and prominent scientists, the warming trend is accelerating: the ten hottest years on record have all occurred since 1990. If this trend continues, the scientists speculate that by the end of the 21st century the average U.S. temperatures will have risen by three to nine degrees. While that does not sound like very much, it most certainly is.

Now, whether or not global warming is directly responsible for the uncharacteristically warm winter we're having, one can only speculate. But so far the evidence appears to be mounting in global warming's favor.

This, however, may not be the only cause of this year's warm weather. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, La Nina, the feminin counterpart to El Nino, may be arriving earlier that usual. In its weekly update, NOAA scientists noted that cooler-than-normal water temperatures have begun developing on the ocean's surface in the east central equatorial Pacific. This, the scientists say, could be a sign of a early La Nina. While La Nina conditions typically do not impact inland temperatures, they do have a significant impact on the Atlantic and Pacific hurricane activity. According to the NOAA website, La Nina conditions occur when "ocean surface temperatures in the central and east-central equatorial Pacific become cooler than normal."

So, maybe I'm wrong. Maybe next year there will be a winter, and I will finally see snow in Alabama. If not, then the world may have to come to the troubling conclusion that maybe, just maybe... Al Gore is right.

Winner, from page 1

"Basically, that meant I was catching insects...a lot of invertebrates...bringing them to the lab, putting them under the microscope and counting the little hairs on their butt, trying to figure out what they were," said Webb.

For Webb, salamanders actually function as a "bio-monitoring" tool for the stream. The species of salamander that Webb found only live in really clean streams, both that's what supports what insects the amphibians eat and also because those particular types of salamanders have no lungs and breathe through their skin. So the streams they inhabit are usually clear, healthy environments for the local wildlife.

"I'll admit, there were times I wanted to throw my computer out the window and run screaming into the hills because I was so sick of this project," said Webb.

"But for me, my absolute favorite part was getting into the stream."
Tyler Freeman reported assault at Pete Mathews Coliseum.

Feb. 20
Mark Meier reported theft of property at Pete Mathews Coliseum.

Debony Williams reported harassment at Pete Mathews Coliseum.

Shelton Carlisle was arrested for disorderly conduct at Pete Mathews Coliseum.

Feb. 21
UPD was given a false name for an arrest report.

Feb. 22
Caroline Carmack was arrested for disorderly conduct at cleaning services.

Feb. 23
Sylvester Green reported unlawful breaking and entering of a vehicle behind the tennis courts.

Two JSU English graduate students, Sarah Moersch and Lara Sisk, presented papers at a professional literary conference sponsored by the South-Central Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (SCSECS) held in Tulsa, Okla., Feb. 22-24.

The SCSECS conference is an annual event featuring presentations by professional scholars of eighteenth-century literature. SCSECS is the largest regional group affiliated with the American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies.

This year's conference theme was "Across & Between Eighteen Centuries" and included over 35 panels as well as presentations on such topics like the future of 18th century studies, the role of women in 18th century literature in China and the role of Native Americans in the Seven Years War.

"I'm incredibly proud of these students," said Dr. Margo Collins, assistant professor of English at JSU and vice president of SCSECS. "It's relatively rare that M.A. students have the opportunity to participate in professional conferences of this caliber, and Sarah and Lara did a wonderful job of representing the university."

In a panel entitled "Boundaries and the Novel," Moersch and Sisk presented papers originally written for Dr. Collins' 18th Century Novels class in fall 2006. The students revisited their work for conference presentation.

Moersch's paper was entitled "The Ravaging Effects of Identity Crisis and Gender Reversal in Delarivier Manley's The Wife's Restraint," and Sisk's paper was entitled "History and Religion in HoraceWalpole's The Castle of Otranto." Both presentations examined the ways in which British culture in the 18th century influenced the literature of the period.

"Both papers were well-received by the conference audience and provoked a lively question-and-answer session at the end of the panel," said Collins. "That's always a good sign; any presentations that cause professional scholars to engage in that sort of debate are clearly the type of thought-provoking work that students of literary studies should be pleased to be producing."

"I was a little nervous at first," said Moersch, "but presenting at the conference ended up being a lot of fun."

Sisk is already planning on attending other conferences.

"Now that I've had this experience, I'm planning to attend the annual Popular Culture conference next," she said.

"I think it's important for JSU students to have the opportunity to participate in academic and professional conferences," Collins said. "For one thing, it can help students determine whether they want to pursue a particular course of study. And of course, this sort of positive exposure always raises the profile of the university."
Day in the Life: Beth Kirch
JSU Nursing Student

By Toni Merriss
The Chanticleer Features Editor

The saying goes that behind every successful man stands a strong woman. But in many cases the same could be said for a strong nurse standing behind every successful doctor.

As far as grueling professions go, nursing is one that often gets overlooked in today’s society. For Beth Kirch, a senior nursing major from Huntsville, studying to become a doctor’s right hand woman, is no exception. Although still dealing with the cancer, she now has a strong nurse standing behind every successful doctor. Nursing school is in such high demand right now, she really could end up anywhere.

Kirch first realized her calling in the nursing field when she was in the tenth grade and family moved to Jacksonville in the late 1970’s, where both Jr. and Sr. enrolled at Jacksonville State.

While at JSU, both Valdezes were active in many campus activities. Both became involved in Milo Club and wore her colors proudly, as her dad was also a member of the Senior Class of 1967.

The day after completing her diagnosis, Kirch was able to return to school to continue completing her studies. The Cancer and surgery only days later on July 12. The thyroid gland controls the body's metabolism and regulates body temperature.

On Aug. 21, Kirch had to undergo radioactive iodine treatment, which targets the cancer cells without bothering the surrounding cells. Due to her health issues and doubts of being able to handle the stress of nursing school, Kirch decided to take the fall semester off from her studies to fully recover.

“Both of my grandmas and one of my aunts are nurses. They did not try to influence me when I was deciding my major,” said Kirch. “But once I did, they really supported my decision.”

The first two years of college are normal for nursing majors in regards to their class schedule. Making the decision to apply to nursing is the easy part; the hard part is actually getting accepted. Once a student is accepted, the hectic part begins.

“Since I began nursing school, I have learned to greatly enjoy my sleep. You never know when you are going to real-

The butterfly effect

By Nick Lehwald
The Chanticleer Senior Reporter

La mariposa, the national flower of Cuba, is also known as the “Butterfly Jasmine”. In many cases the same could be said for a strong nurse standing behind every successful doctor.

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“She knows when you are going to real-

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Local Concert Calendar

Thurs. Mar. 1
Fly-By Radio
Brother’s Bar

Fri. Mar. 2
Live Acoustic Music
Milestone Mill Restaurant

Sat. Mar. 3
Left Without Stars
Brother’s Bar

Sun. Mar. 4
Gina Smith
Smoking Moose

Mon. Mar. 5
Open Mic Night
Brother’s Bar

So many people are ‘sue happy’ and they will jump on anything, just to make a fuss about it,” said Kirch. Kirch is unsure about her plans after her graduation in December. Because the nursing field is in such high demand right now, she really could end up anywhere.

“I don’t want to limit myself to one area. I have thought about Nashville, TN though. And Colorado. Oh, I am really not sure,” admitted Kirch.

Wherever Kirch ends up, one thing is for sure: with her love of helping others and dedication to making a difference, she will definitely be one of those strong nurses.
La mariposa, the national flower of Cuba, is also known as the "Butterfly Jasmine". The flower was used in Cuba by women during the wars of independence to pass secret messages to and from the battlefields of the Spanish American war. To the Cuban people, it represents purity, rebelliousness and independence. But in Jacksonville, it represents good food, Caribbean comfort and most importantly, family.

La Mariposa owners and JSU alumni John Valdez Sr. and John Valdez Jr. opened their restaurant last June and haven't looked back. As a father and son team, they bring two generations worth of culinary know-how to the table while managing to keep it all in the family. With their extensive knowledge of Latin America and their passion for its food, team Valdez plans to bring a taste revolution to Jacksonville that would make Che Guevara proud.

John Valdez Jr. was born in North Carolina and has lived all over the place. From Panama as a kid, to Miami, Key West and finally the Bahamas, the younger Valdez has an extensive knowledge of the Caribbean and the wonders it holds. Learning to cook from his parents, Valdez Jr. learned the ins and outs of different cooking styles as his family moved from one exotic locale to another. (Attending the Cullinard Culinary Institute didn't hurt either) Valdez Jr. in Communications.

Back to the restaurant. When the Valdez set out to open La Mariposa, they didn't want to be just another restaurant in a town full of restaurants. They wanted something unique, something that wasn't like any of the other sandwich shops and fast food joints that crowd the landscape of the town. So they reached deep down into the depths of the family cookbooks, and pulled out a selection of lip licking stomach teasers that have so successfully hooked the community. "About 90 percent of what we do is family recipes," said Valdez Jr. "Some things we merge with other things, so I'd guess you'd call it a southern, Cuban fusion thing." It's made on site, so that it's completely fresh when you get it.

Running a restaurant isn't all fun and games, though. Especially when you keep it in the family. "You never know what's going to happen. It's very hit or miss every day," laments Valdez Jr.

While everyone knows that it's here, La Mariposa still hasn't made as big of an impact with the university students as it has with the local population. That might be due to the perception that they're just too darn pricey. However, were they to ever stop in and pick up a menu, students would be pleasantly surprised to find that the average price for a plate special is five dollars, less than you will find at most restaurants in town. For those students on the really tight budgets, they have sandwiches that are easy on any wallet, such as the banana sandwich or a BLT. The average price for their entrées is only ten dollars, and you can expect to enjoy every penny's worth.

And the best part is everything is available for carry out. Even their beer prices are some of the lowest in town, beating out even Brother's and Pelham's. But don't expect to go and get tanked, because that's not the right place to go. For those students who think it is pricey or formal to go to when not on a date or trying to impress the opposite sex, La Mariposa is going to be expanding this summer. Assimilating the empty store next door, the Valdezes plan to open an oyster bar which will have a more relaxed, laid back atmosphere. Don't worry though; there will still be great food and cheap beer for everyone.
Vanity, thy name is advertising

By Jessica Summe
The Chanticleer Editor-in-Chief

I'm going to let you in on a little secret. I'm a cross-dresser. All girls should be. Let me explain why.

Last summer, I realized I couldn't put it off any longer -- I had to get a new pair of jeans. This is always been a bit of a trial for me, thanks to they don't understand why.

At least, that's the plan.

As I stepped out of the machine and eagerly grabbed my ticket, I was shocked to see that I was not only a different size in different stores, but I was also different sizes in the same store! Apparently, vanity sizing isn't limited to different brands -- different styles of clothing within the brand label are also designed different body types. My recommended sizes ran from a four to a nine. However, I shrugged it off and bolted to the nearest wall of jeans. I picked out some jeans in the suggested size and even took the luxury of picking out my favorite color. I almost skipped to the dressing rooms, so happy was I.

They didn't fit.

Aghast, I had the typical feminization assumption that my ass was the problem and tried another pair of jeans off the list. Didn't fit. Another. Didn't fit. No, no, no. As I frantically whirled around the store, trying on almost every type of jeans in three different sizes, I caught several guys out of the corner of my eye, walking in, buying jeans and leaving.

Why was it so easy for them? The answer is that men's sizes depend on two things, waist size and inseam length. In inches. Inches aren't a fluid measurement determined by marketing reps -- inches are inches everywhere inches are sold. The cuts vary in men's pants, but that's a matter of personal preference. Generally, guy's pants fit. All the time.

I decided enough was enough. I stepped back into the machine and demanded that the rather shocked attendant reenter all my information, except changing female to male.

He did, and when the ticket came out, I felt justified in seeing that the sizes were a straight line of 28x30s. I walked over to the men's wall, selected a nice pair of low-rise boot cut and tried them on.

They fit. Beautifully. I was out of there in five minutes, after weeks of searching. There were even added bonuses -- the jeans were cheaper, and you could actually put stuff in the pockets!

My cross-dressing spree continued.

Men's shirts, wallets, belts, shoes... funky colors, awesome patterns, real fabrics...it's a totally different world than the uber-trendy polyester world of junior's clothing. Sure, there will be stares as you peruse the menswear, but isn't it worth shirtsleeves that don't cling to your arm fat? And the whole bathing suit fiasco can be solved just as easily. Find a top you like, and then get a coordinating pair of guys' board shorts. No more thigh dimples or wedgies!

And don't think going to the dark side means you'll have to give up pink. There's plenty of pink clothing marketed towards guys. It might be hard to find those little embroidered butterflies, though. But hey, they've got badass bulldogs instead!

Who knows? Maybe if enough of us start wearing men's clothes the clothing companies will take note and standardize their sizes. Then hundreds upon hundreds of woman-hours spent in the dressing room will be ours for the taking!

Now, I'm not saying every item of clothing should be found on the guys side. For instance, finding bras or dresses might be a little troublesome. I'm just saying take a look. Try something on. Stop stealing your boyfriend's shirts and get some of your own. Join the ranks of the cross-dressing.

Sound Off:

I want to take a moment to ask the administration why did they schedule spring graduation for the same weekend as the big NASCAR race at Talladega?

As a non-traditional student who will complete my master's degree in April, I was really looking forward to coming over to Jacksonville for that weekend and walking for my degree. But the university's poor planning has caused me to really consider if it's worth the booked up for the race, and if by chance you do find one open, they want double the normal rate and a minimum of three-night stay.

I talked to one of the smaller motel operators and they told me that the university does this repeatedly. They schedule graduation on the same weekend as the race every year.

Now, I have no way of verifying this, but if you do this on an occasional basis, it strikes me as very poor planning. It doesn't conflict with the race. This probably mean moving graduation one week later, but that still should not be a major inconvenience for the university, and it would allow more students and family members to stay in the local area for the graduation weekend.

Not only would this increase attendance at graduation, but it would also bring in more money for the local economy. How many of those who will attend gradua-

other weekend. This is our special weekend and to have to share it with NASCAR fans and not be able to have our friends and relatives attend due to lack of hotel rooms punishes us. Move graduation to some other weekend so that we can invite those special people to Jacksonville. Not only will the university benefit, but the local communities' economies will also.

Thank you.
the NASCAR fans in town. The university’s poor planning has caused me to really consider if it’s worth the hassle.

I lived in the local area for the first two years of my degree so I know what kind of mess it’s going to be with all the NASCAR fans in town. On top of this, there are no motel rooms to be found anywhere within a 60-mile radius of Anniston/Oxford/Jacksonville. Everything is messy it’s going to be with all folks at the NASCAR track in Talladega and find out what the race schedule is before they set up the calendar for the spring semester? I am sure that NASCAR knows their race schedule several years in advance. NASCAR is too big a business not to have those races on the long-range planning calendar. Then the university could adjust their schedule by moving graduation so the time to be involved. Morgan also knew all about the computer because of her daddy. She says that he is the smartest person in the world,” said Dobbins.

Dobbins also said that after Myles was born, Belser played a major role in his care—bathing him at night, dressing him in the morning and waking up with him in the middle of the night.

“Donnie was very patient with the kids, and knew how to have fun with them,” said Dobbins.

Jerrod Brown, Belser’s friend throughout high school and college, recalled his friend’s excitement about becoming a father. Brown was at the hospital with Belser when Morgan was born in the wee hours of the morning.

With this, but if you even do this on an occasional basis, it strikes me as very poor planning on the university’s part. Graduation is supposed to be a celebration of the completion of several years of commitment to higher learning. It’s a time when families come together to watch those who have made this commitment earn their rewards. Some, like me, will not have to drive a great distance, but it will strike me as a poor planning and implementation on the university’s part. This is indicative of the university’s poor planning and implementation on the university’s part. This is indicative of the university’s poor planning and implementation on the university’s part.

According to Thompson, that “greater cause” also included a sincere dedication to his family.

“Donnie was also a very dedicated loving son, father and husband. Here, too, he placed their needs above his own. This was indicative of Donnie Belser as a person. This man was a selfless servant - to God, to his family and to his country,” said Thompson.

While Belser attended JSU, he not only earned a degree and a commissioning into the Army, but he also met his future wife, Marshawn. The two met at a JSU basketball game where he was working security and she was a Fastbreaker. They began dating Feb. 15, 1999, and Belser’s sister-in-law Marcia Dobbins said that Marshawn always teased him saying that he was too cheap to date her before Valentine’s Day.

The two were wed March 31, 2000, and had their daughter Morgan the following year. The next addition to their family came five years later when son Myles was born. His first birthday was Feb. 9 of this year, the day before his father was killed.

Belser was an adoring father who loved spending time with his children. “Whether it was Morgan’s ballet or cheerleading, he always took out the time to be involved. Morgan also knows all about the computer because of her daddy. She says that he is the smartest person in the world,” said Dobbins.

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Jerrod Brown, Belser’s friend throughout high school and college, recalled his friend’s excitement about becoming a father. Brown was at the hospital with Belser when Morgan was born in the wee hours of the morning.

“[Donnie] came out of the room with a big smile on his face. He was so proud of her,” said Brown.

That big smile continues to be something that people remember most about Donnie.

“He had a perpetual and infectious smile and an optimistic nature,” said Thompson.

President Bill Meehan also remembers Belser’s time at JSU and attended his visitation to give the family his condolences on behalf of the university.

“It is fine young men and women like Donnie Belser who are serving our country. Our best wishes go out to all of them,” said President Meehan.

Donnie Ray Belser Jr. was the first JSU ROTC graduate to be killed in action since the Vietnam War.

His visitation was held Feb. 18, and he was buried Feb. 19 at Jefferson Memory Gardens in Trussville.

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Gamecocks douse the Flames

By Nick Lehwald
The Chanticleer Senior Reporter

The Jacksonville State University softball team took on the emotional 1-0 loss to the Auburn Gamecocks Tuesday night at University Field. The Gamecocks (6-5) faced a tough pitcher in Hottie Currie (4-4) and tried on several occasions to get things started.

Then on the defensive side of the ball proved to be costly again for the ladies in red.

With a runner on first, Currie hit a roller to third and was thrown out by Ciara Wesen. Nikki Prier then turned and threw to second in an attempt to get shortstop Jackie Jarman to apply the tag for the final out, but the ball sailed over her head into left field and rolled to the wall. Auburn's Lauren Walton went across the plate for their lone run of the game.

"The team fought really well tonight," stated Prier. "I have to cut out the errors and things will fall into place."

JSU got things started when Prier sent one through the right side and then stole second on a passed ball.

Daniela Pappano came to the plate and took a walk to put runners on first and second. Currie was relentless and struck out the next two batters, getting out of the inning.

The Gamecocks were tested by the Tigers from time to time but seemed to work themselves out of the situation.

Sophomore Allie Barker threw out only the second base runner this season as Lindsey Harrelson attempted to steal second in the top of the second. Auburn's next runner reached on the second error of the night for the Gamecocks as Prier bobbled the throw from Wesen. The next batter, Walton, reached on a single to third, but Jarman got them out of the inning when she completed a throw to first.

In the bottom of the third, JSU again had two runners in scoring position with one out, but the next two batters struck out swinging.

"We are facing very good pitching and we have to put the ball into play," stated head coach Jana McGinnis. "We have to produce hits from the top to the bottom of the lineup. Kara has been second in runs scored in the SEC this year."

Second baseman Brittany Day gets ready to apply the tag to Auburn's Lindsey Harrelson and complete the double play to end the inning.

The Chanticleer Senior Reporter

The error of their ways

By Chad Hoffman
The Chanticleer Senior Reporter

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In the bottom of the third, JSU again had two runners in scoring position with one out, but the next two batters struck out swinging.

"We are facing very good pitching and we have to put the ball into play," stated head coach Jana McGinnis. "We have to produce hits from the top to the bottom of the lineup. Kara has been second in runs scored in the SEC this year."

Second baseman Brittany Day gets ready to apply the tag to Auburn's Lindsey Harrelson and complete the double play to end the inning.

Junior Rachel Fleming and freshman Prier were the only two Gamecocks with hits on the night.

"Every pitcher has different timing and we have to use our time on deck to prepare ourselves in the batters box," commented Fleming. "Our defense and pitching are solid and we will work things out. We are going to show up this weekend and win this weekend."

This weekend the Gamecocks will travel to Orlando, Fla., and participate in the Knight Classic. They won 1-0 against Eastern Tennessee, the ladies fell 1-0 to South Carolina, and 5-1 to Radford.

The defensive had some miscommunication and throwing errors at first over the weekend but rebounded well on day two.

Fleming, along with Jarman, Prier and Alana Hicks led the way with the bats as they had a combined 14 hits over the weekend. Others scattered them across the field, but it did come around in time.

Sophomore pitcher Melissa Dowling suffered her first loss of the season as she pitched the complete six innings against Radford. She allowed five runs on six hits, with one earned run.

This weekend the Gamecocks will travel to Orlando, Fla., and participate in the Knight Classic. They play their first game against host University of Central Florida at 2 p.m. Friday. They return home for the OVC opener against Morehead State on March 17 for a double header starting at 1 p.m.
Jacksonville State's basketball seasons have now officially come to a close. With a chance beforehand to gain even the seventh seed in the conference tournament, the men fell out of contention with Morehead State's victory over conference champion Austin Peay. The Gamecock men got the victory over Southeast Missouri State 78-72 on Senior Night, while the women took a 35-point beating from the Redhawks.

On Thursday, both squads were defeated by Eastern Illinois, the women by a score of 82-76 and the men, 69-65.

On Saturday, seniors Courtney Bradley and Nick Mathews graduated as the Gamecocks Division I athletes. Bradley set the pace for the victory. Bradley ended his Gamecocks career with his highest double-double, scoring 28 points and pulling in 10 rebounds. Mathews also went out with a career night from the floor, dropping 24 points, the most in his two JSU seasons. Harold Crow, the final senior, got 10 points of his own.

The Gamecocks (9-21, 7-13 Ohio Valley Conference) shot the ball extremely well, 48 percent from the floor and 38 percent from 3-point land.

All three seniors were junior college transfers. Bradley landed here after a great stint with JUCO power Itawamba College. Crow and Mathews played all four seasons together, their first two at Seminole State in Seminole, Okla.

Bradley graduates as the Gamecocks Division I record holder for most points scored in a single season, with 510 points this year.

Thursday night was once again the same story of the season. With less than five ticks on the clock, Smith drove to the basket and drew a foul while shooting. The ball hit the rim softly and came to a stop on the back of the rim, not wavering in any direction.

"Nick got a big rebound and made a play, but the ball just sat there and wouldn't fall," said head coach Mike LaPlante. "We played hard. We just had some good looks that wouldn't go down."

Courtney Bradley led the Gamecocks with 20 points, but it was EIU's Jake Byrne that doomed JSU. Averaging just seven points a contest, Byrne dropped 28 on the Gamecocks.

"Our focus was to stop their two scorers, (Mike) Robinson and (Romain) Martin, and I thought we did a good job of that, but Byrne stepped up for them," said LaPlante.

Becky Geyer's first season with her women's team was not a very pleasant season. Saturday night, SEMO clinched their second-straight OVC regular-season crown with the victory over Geyer's Gamecocks. A 31-10 SEMO run to begin the second half gave JSU no real chance at making a comeback. For the entire half, JSU shot an dismal 16.7 percent while SEMO scorched the nets with 58 percent shooting from the floor.

Kelsey Johnikin led all JSU scorers with 11 points, while Efezokhae added 16 points and 13 rebounds.

McMichael led the young attack with 19 points, while Efezokhae added 16 points and 13 rebounds.

West contributed 13 points of her own in the freshmen tandem.

"Our freshmen really carried us tonight," Geyer said. "There were times when we made some runs to get back in the game and we did it with our freshmen. I think we saw a glimpse of what our future will look like tonight."
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