The admissions office created a "Pre-Orientation Activities Prep First Years" program aimed at helping incoming students become acclimated to the college setting, "so that they can access on the campus," said Martinez-Canchola. "But it also really emphasizes the community aspect ... making them feel more comfortable." 

"We ran a lot; that was exhausting," said Lilly Martinez '13 of Minnesota. "Also, we couldn't go into the [Village Market] to get a hot dog because it was closed, so we had to get really creative about that. A lot of success in the hunt [was] about creativity.

"The craziest thing I had to do [during the scavenger hunt] was probably the double proposal in front of Sunseri Cottage," said Andrew Gibson '13 of Ohio. "It was me and another guy — we had to propose to the same girl. There were big fireworks, wedding crashes, families torn apart.

The proposal — which involved finding "the most romantic place on campus" and acting out a proposal, according to the list participants were given — was one of many challenges the first year groups had to face during the event, which also included taking an upside-down picture in the upside-down tree and taking pictures of the cemetery, the haunted room in Caples and a gargoyle who liked mummy-wrapping. The three pre-orientation programs engage students in rafting, writing and thinking programs erin Ciarimboli. "Additionally, the program provides students with opportunities to get to know members of the faculty before picking their classes and allows them to get a feel for the layout of the campus before classes start," Fitzpatrick said.

During the pre-orientation week, the writing program leaders organize group activities for the students, attend all of their readings, proofread and pick pieces for students to read aloud, help them get to know campus and answer any questions they might have about writing at Kenyon or about Kenyon in general. "Mostly, we're just an extra resource for them to lean on during their start at Kenyon," said Fitzpatrick.

Fitzpatrick, who attended the program as a first-year student, said it is one of the best ways to get to know Kenyon. "Not only does it teach [first years] the importance that writing plays in communication and learning, but it exposes them to a group of people that are simultaneously like-minded and diverse," she said. "Additionally, the activities of this program build in a way that gives first years a sense of ownership of this college that the regular orientation program doesn't."

Outdoors Club Program

The Outdoors Club took in-coming students on a four-day backpacking and river-rafting trip in Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia and returned Wednesday. "The entire group [of 12 students] had bonded by the time we got to the rafting trip, and everyone was really comfortable around each other," said Charlie Halsted '10, one of the program leaders. "Those who were initially homesick had soon forgotten all about it and were having a great time. By taking these kids out to the wilderness, they learned to work with each other and learned how to get along with a variety of people.

"The backpacking portion wasn't always easy, and they helped each other get through the tough parts and enjoy the good parts even more," Halsted said. "We also had plenty of time to answer their questions about Kenyon throughout the trip. I feel that these students are much more prepared for dividing headfirst into an active and successful college life, more so than those who simply arrive during normal orientation." According to Ciarimboli, "whether you enjoy writing, service or the outdoors, the benefits of meeting friends who have similar interests as you makes a tremendous impact on a student's ability to connect to Kenyon and transition to life as a college student.

In this issue - KEEP Student Reflects First-Year Traditions

Class of 2013 Arrives on the Hill

BY AUGUST STEGMETER

The class of 2013 is not only the largest ever but also "probably the most diverse [in terms of race, nationality and family history] in Kenyon's history," said Director of Admissions Darryl Uy. "We've been telling professors and advisors that it's not going to feel like the same Kenyon that they've been used to over the years." 

Uy mentioned the school's constant search for increased diversity, from scientists and first-generation students to students of color. "We've noticed that there are a lot more farmers this year or people who are very interested in sustainable initiatives and farming and agriculture. Even students from urban areas are finding venues to do that as well, so that was a surprise," he said.

"There are definitely kids who stood out," Uy said. "There is a kid who knows Greek and six other languages, a kid who wrote a version of Macbeth in his native Middle Eastern and there is a student who was a Senate page."

The incoming class consisted of 469 students, which is "a little more than we initially wanted," Uy said. "It's usually around 450 to 460 at most. At one point during the summer it was at 479, but with summer transfers, which have substantially decreased, the number dropped.

"I don't think the College wants a bigger class," Uy said. "This year we were high, $50,000. We admit a little more than usual, not realizing that more kids were going to say yes." The rate of the economy played a large role in admissions and enrollment decisions this year, Uy said. "We saw more appeals for more merit scholarship money for families and we only overturned one in five appeals that we received."

The admissions office created a new brochure this year that specifically addresses financial aid and the issues of value versus price tag. "Hopefully that really helps convince many families that the price is worth the education here at Kenyon," Uy said.

"When I visited, that's when I made my decision," said Noah Stoege '13 of North Carolina. "It was the most beautiful place I've seen."

Students complete Pre-Orientation Activities Prep First Years

BY AUGUST STEGMETER

News Editor

To prepare for life at Kenyon, early arrivals of the class of 2013 engaged in rafting, writing and mummy-wrapping. The three pre-orientation programs serve to "enable students to become acclimated to campus life in a smaller group setting," said Director of New Student Orientation and Community Programs Erin Ciarimboli.

Writing and Thinking at Kenyon, the Pre-Orientation Service and Writing program; and Club Pre-Orientation Program gave students the opportunity to "learn about academic life and experiences at Kenyon, participate in service projects in the greater Knox County community and connect with like-minded peers before classes start," said Ciarimboli.

Service Program

Tuesday evening, students in the service program participated in a campus wide-scavenger hunt. "They came to our room and wrapped someone [in their group] up like a mummy, they have an egg that they have to get signed by all the leaders; they visit all these places on campus," said program leader Rebecca Katz '11. "It's just a silly thing that fun and helps them feel more comfortable.

"We ran a lot; that was exhausting," said Lilly Martinez '13 of Minnesota. "Also, we couldn't go into the [Village Market] to get a hot dog, it was the most beautiful place i'd seen. "

"I don't think the College wants a bigger class," Uy said. "This year we were high, $50,000. We admit a little more than usual, not realizing that more kids were going to say yes."
KEEP Promotes Education, Enthusiasm and Solidarity

TICKLE ME JELL-O

BY JENNY COLMENERO

Guest Columnist

It is 11:45 a.m. on Day Two, and I am quite ready to jump ship.

Sitting across from my fellow KEEPers on the second floor of Olin Library, I feel the familiar tug of panic begin to settle into my arms. I am well aware of the impending deadline for our first literary analysis assignment (45—oh dear God, 40 minutes left!), I somehow landed on Facebook and am now updating my status to reflect my desperation for the benefit of my friends back home in Tucson.

The computer keys on this unfamiliar Mac feel harsh beneath my fumbling fingers, and I have no idea where to find the start menu, let alone Microsoft Word. Finally—the nail in the proverbial coffin, I accidentally click on the Internet History tab and am treated to a free preview of the debauched Web-browsing habits of my fellow Kenyon students.

That’s it. I don’t belong here.

Panic is more than mere stupefying fright. It has the intrinsic ability to erase months of carefully cultivated self-confidence. Ever since penning my first college essay, the challenge of presenting a self-assured ruse has guided me through SATs, college interviews and even the dreaded small envelopes that haunt the dreams of all high school seniors in the month of April. After all, the college admissions game is one of strategy.

Years of hard work and late nights formulating battle plans in front of similarly grimy computer screens has finally paid off: I am the first in my family to attend college, and am a full ride at that. Go, me! Right?

Unright. It is now 11:57, and I have resorted to an Orwellian dismemberment of the English language in my essay. The novel Beloved represents the “double-plus-good” effect of the academic rigor I have already spent my first night on a lumpy pillow in the dorms. The stated purpose of the paper—to “provide academic, intellectual, and social encouragement and support for scholars of diverse ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds”—is quite possibly the most vague rationale that I have ever followed for flying half-way across the country. Although I possessed all the foresight and intellectual reasoning of a seasoned teenager on the cusp of adulthood, my fears concerning setting foot on campus have had little to do with the academic rigors of the program and much more to do with my own self-doubt and nervousness about meeting other “distinguished scholars.” I left high school quite comfortable in my writing abilities, and within two hours of beginning class at Kenyon I have begun to question my own talent at the pen. 

Rushing to get ahead, I suddenly click on the writing assignment, the computers and the silence, of course.

In short, we’re first years awkward, insecure and a bit emotionally unbalanced. If KEEP has taught me anything—besides how to work under pressure—it has allowed me to develop a sort of detached view of the shared panic that characterizes the first few weeks of school. I feel ready now. I haven’t necessarily changed much in the six weeks that I spent here at Kenyon this summer—“re-search” for this article led me to Facebook for a good half an hour—but I’ve been relieved to give in to hysteria, however attractive it may seem. And I can conjure up a mean analysis of Toni Morrison’s Beloved.

...my first trip to prison, but not the last... and when I say, you have no eyes, you have no... (continued on 2nd page)
First-Year Traditions: From Paddles to Processions

BY RICHARD WYLD

Features Editor

Marcela Janet Colmenares, first-year student

Hometown: Caracas, Venezuela

High school: United World College in Duino, Italy

Residence: McBride Hall

Academic interests: Political Science, Economics

The Kenyon Collegian: What was your high school experience like?

MC: It was amazing because I did my high school in Italy, in an international school. I would say it was quite small because we just had high school, so it was just two years and around 100 people per year.

TKC: What were your impressions of Kenyon before you got here?

MC: I thought it was a really quiet place. Small community, so people were going to be nice with each other. I expected, academically, a lot of discussions. I actually didn’t have too many expectations because I just wanted to come and see it.

TKC: What was it like when you got here?

MC: Well, it was quiet. My first day was nice; people were nice and I really liked it. But I suppose it was because of the people we were new. I’ve been doing the Writing and Thinking [pre-orientation] and I think it is really amazing because they encourage a lot of discussions and people talk and write and think.

TKC: Are you excited for everyone to get here?

MC: Yeah, I’m actually excited because now it is a quiet place, but too quiet.

TKC: Have any of your friends from home decided to study in another country?

MC: A lot of them actually. Here in the U.S., there are many of them, [and] in Europe. People usually go outside Venezuela.

TKC: What were your impressions of Ohio before getting here?

MC: It was yesterday. I think it was a sandwich.

TKC: How was it?

MC: Good. I mean, a sandwich never fails.

TKC: Have you had any bad experiences at Peirce?

MC: Yeah, it was a kind of bread with mustard in between, and cheese and ham. The mustard in between was disgusting.

TKC: What advice have you given about coming to college?

MC: They told me, “be careful with drugs.” I mean, all parents do that. They told me the things that I went to Europe. Be careful with drugs, alcohol; be careful with guys—they take advantage of you.

TKC: Have you been to the U.S. before?

MC: No.

MC: I read that it was really isolated from everything and there were cows and fields and more cows. They told me that Cincinnati was a really nice city, though. Some people told me that it is really funny that people were going to look at me badly and stuff. I mean, I’m inside the [College] so I really don’t know much.

TKC: What’s the last thing you ate at Peirce?

MC: It’s really good actually. I mean, unexpected. Usually, people forget a lot of things, and having movies in the U.S. is like Disneyland. I think I feel lucky that it wasn’t.

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First-Year Athletes Adjust to College Sports

BY MARK MOTHERAL
Sports Editor

While most first years have spent the past few days relishing their fading summer vacations and preparing for a new phase in their lives, the rookie fall athletes have worked in grueling conditions to prepare themselves for the upcoming sports season. Making the early trip to Kenyon for training is essential to these athletes, however, because they must adapt quickly to their new teams. Volleyball, men and women’s cross country and men and women’s soccer all begin their 2009 campaigns in early September.

Kyle Bailey ’13, a linebacker for the lords football team, noted the hardships of making such a hasty transition from high school athletics to college athletics. The jump is “real difficult,” he said. “There’s a lot more to learn.”

Chris Brown, head coach of the men’s soccer team, said the changeover from playing high school sports to playing college sports is difficult because “the tolerance for errors is much less and we’re in the results business. [There is] little time for player development because performance right now is key.”

Bailey said that although adjusting to playing a college sport is challenging, both the upperclassmen and the coaching staff have been supportive and invested in the development of first years. “The upperclassmen and coaches are real helpful, he said. “They are always looking out for us. … With their help, I’ve grown up a lot mentally.”

Sophia Khan ’13, a setter for the volleyball team, said, “I think I have grown a lot and learned that being a new kid on a team of oldies isn’t the easiest thing in the world, and definitely takes a lot of mental … strength. The driving forces behind these changes are the coaches and team members whom I know I can rely on. I strongly consider some to be my first great friends here and really enjoy playing with them, wanting them to succeed not just for the team’s greater good, but for their own.”

Tess Waggoner ’13 said she also noticed an improvement in her skills thanks to the help of her peers and coaches. “I’ve learned to adapt to new surroundings well,” she said.

Both the women’s soccer team and the football team appear to have particularly strong newcomers. Kelly Bryan, head coach of the Ladies’ soccer team, said: “We have seven [first years] on our team and they are all doing a fantastic job. They are talented and work extremely hard. They are providing us with great depth in all positions on the field and have the potential to definitely make an impact this season.”

Ted Stanley, head football coach, said his first years are “pretty good” and that “they have decent depth.” Stanley said he expects several first years to make an immediate impact on the team, especially on the offensive line, from which key players recently graduated.