

MIDDLE TENNESSEE UNIVERSITY

# SIDE LINES

EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE

Blue Raiders' baseball player threatening labrum injuries



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# CONTENT

## NEWS

- 3 Federal Tuition Assistance indeterminate due to sequester  
By Quint Qualls
- 4 Professors research healthier disposal of horse carcasses  
By Elizabeth Glass
- 5 'Jacob Nunley Act' awaits approval by Tenn. House of Representatives  
By Mamie Nash

## FEATURES

- 6 Student Food Pantry keeps students' stomachs full  
By Kayla Moore

## COVER STORY

- 8 Three Blue Raiders seek recovery from career-threatening injury  
By Mark Mize

## RANTS AND RAVES

- 10 Check out local happenings  
By Ashley Clark

## ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

- 11 '20/20 Experience' lacks foresight  
By Becca Andrews
- 12 'Pretty Little Liars' leaves fans in limbo for fourth season  
By Meredith Galyon
- 13 The 'Different Shades' of Ryan Kenney  
By Claire Osburn

## OPINIONS

- 14 Growing debt more than a political problem  
By Alex Harris
- Campus signs stereotype skateboarders into vandals  
By Christopher Merchant

## SPORTS

- 15 Lady Raider seniors reflect on storied career  
By Sam Brown

## Sidelines Lens



Joshua Moore plays his banjo in the quad as another banjo player, Corey Walker, gives him some pointers and a quick song. Photo by Kati Baird.

Cover photo by Emily West.

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# Federal Tuition Assistance indeterminate due to sequester

**By Quint Qualls**  
News editor

The future of Federal Tuition Assistance for active duty military remains unclear following the U.S. government's \$85 billion sequester budget cuts in early March.

Under pressure from the public, lawmakers reinstated aid after its elimination March 8 for students enlisted in the military March 21, but affected students are not yet in the clear, according to Ray Howell, MTSU Veteran's Affairs coordinator.

The cuts threatened 109 MTSU students who now receive aid from FTA. Their aid could have been discontinued in the fall.

"Current students know the Federal Tuition Assistance will cover their financial aid. Whether or not future students, on the other hand, will get the aid is in a state of limbo," Howell said. "We're not sure what the future of the aid program is, and whether or not it will only benefit certain individuals or certain ranks."

The likeliest reason

for the reinstatement of the FTA was the public backlash, according to Howell.

"Whenever they made the cuts, they

the military for the financial aid benefits were immediately placed into a fiscal crisis of their own when the budget cuts were

educational benefits," said Malcolm Stallard, enlisted national guardsman and vice president of Blue Raiders American Veterans

out there for students if the aid is cut.

The university sent out emails to affected students notifying them of alternative financial

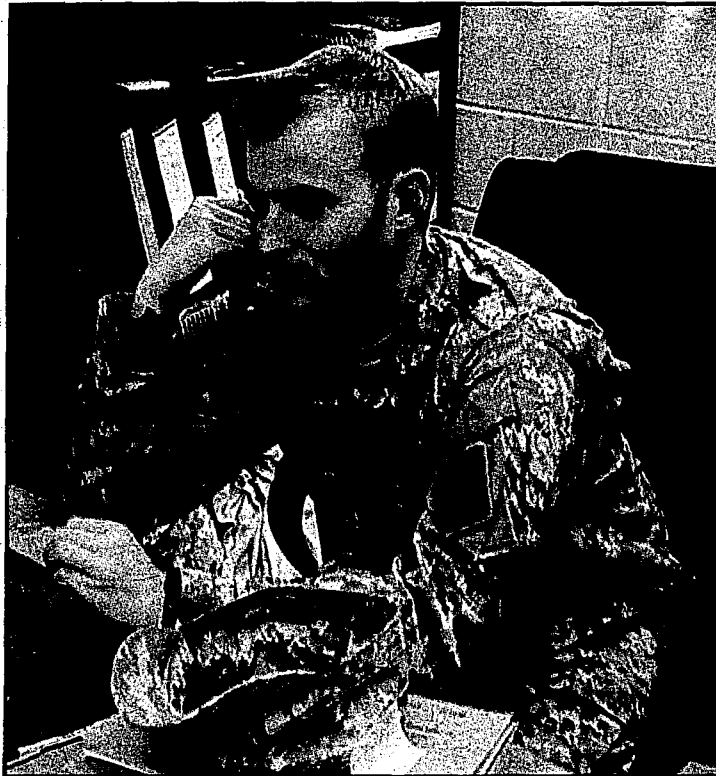
the funding cuts," Stallard said. "It benefited a lot of people who were maybe unaware, misinformed or misled about their financial aid."

Randy Harris, joint public affairs director of the Tennessee Military Department, said students who qualify might also seek to make up their tuition deficits with the GI Bill.

"Soldier students have many resources remaining to assist them with their college tuition. There are four different GI Bills that will assist them in paying for their tuition," Harris said in an interview with WMOT.

While much of the expectations for the FTA are in limbo and subject to speculation, the reinstatement of the program has put confidence back into many of the enlisted military students that their aid will not be discontinued.

"Most of us National Guard reservists have full-time jobs, but we still wouldn't be able to make up for the sequester cuts," Stallard said. "Congress just needs to review their budget cuts." ■



Mike Beckham (left) finishes a quick phone conversation in his office. (Right) The ROTC Hall of Fame, found in the ROTC building, displays pictures of past and present students. Photo by Kati Baird.

didn't realize the uproar that they would get from the public. They upset a lot of high echelon military personnel, politicians and individuals," Howell said.

Many students who signed contracts with

made.

"When you join up, it's one of the perks given to you. A lot of guys don't even know about it when they do, while there are many who do it for the sole purpose of getting the

Organization. "When the cuts were made, many of us found that we would be unable to pay for school."

Stallard, a freshman social sciences major, said other options are

aid after the FTA was discontinued.

"An email was blasted out, notifying students of approximately five scholarships that would help fill the void created by

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# Professors research healthier disposal of horse carcasses

By Elizabeth Glass  
Contributing writer

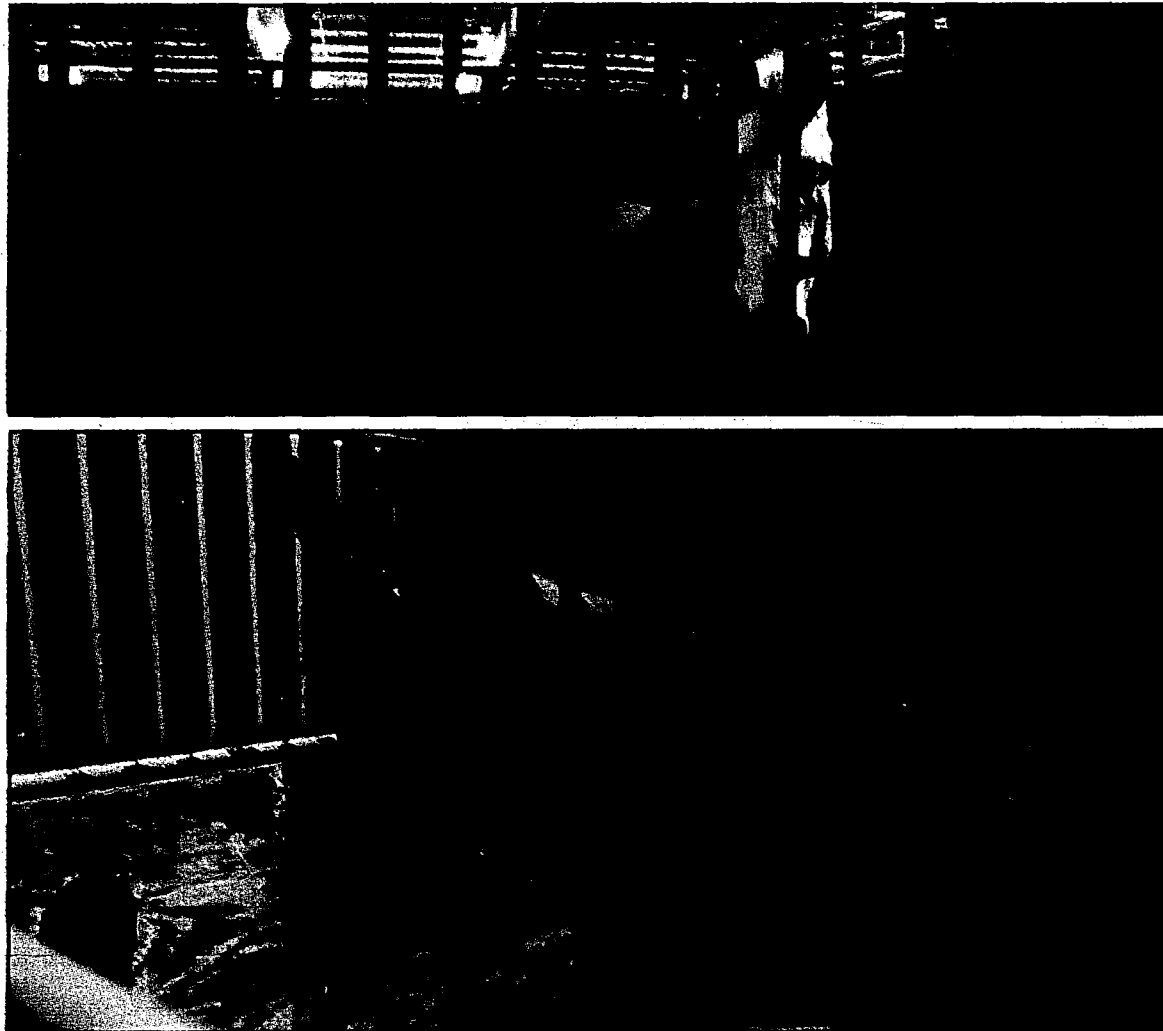
Professors and students are continuing to search for a way to better Tennessee soil and health after the United States Department of Agriculture listed the chemical sodium barbital from decomposing horse carcasses as a top concern.

Mary Farone, associate professor of biology, heads the project that aims to find a way to break down the chemical. The chemical, which is used as both an anesthetic and a sedative by veterinarians, is stable. This means it does not break down easily in the environment.

Biology and chemistry students will conduct studies on soil to find the most effective way to compost safely and engineer enzymes to break down the barbital. Students from the agricultural department will present the findings of the study to horse owners and other interested groups, and both graduate and undergraduate students will be employed on the project.

"These will be good projects for students to be involved with, because they are going to learn techniques that have broad applications in biochemistry," Mary Farone said. "The techniques they will learn have broad applications in many areas of science."

When a horse is put down in Tennessee, there are two humane ways to go



A chemical that is released when horse carcasses decompose is an environmental concern that is being researched by MTSU faculty and students. Photos by Kati Baird.

about it. Euthanasia is the more cost effective and humane way. The job requires a licensed vet and a large amount of the drug sodium barbital.

However, this leaves a large problem for horse owners who have no way to dispose of the deceased animal. Zoos and dog food companies have purchased the carcasses in the past, but the chemicals poisoned the animals, and it is now illegal to sell horse meat in Tennessee. Some horse owners turn to composting as a

solution.

But the chemical is sometimes filtered out of the soil and into human water sources or soaked up by crops that humans consume.

The study hopes to find a way to safely neutralize the chemical and seeks an environmentally friendly way to dispose of the animals.

Paul Kline, a chemistry professor, conducted soil tests to find out how much time the chemical takes to break down in soil. So far, it does not break down.

"We had a grant with Horse and Animal Science with Hugh Berryman [forensic anthropology professor] from the Department of Defense. It was to study decomposition of mass fatalities from natural disasters. This all began as part of that grant," Mary Farone said.

The project already received a grant from the MTSU Clean Health and Energy Fund to kickstart the project. The project also received a nearly \$9,000 grant from the MTSU

Sustainable Campus Fund.

"We work on these projects together, but as far as the [USDA and Clean Energy] grant[s] ... it's all [Mary]," said Tony Farone, Mary Farone's husband and fellow biology professor.

The group also submitted a proposal to the USDA for a \$500,000 grant to be used over a four-year span. It was submitted in late February and will not be reviewed until this summer. ■

## CRIME BRIEFS

### DRUGS/ALCOHOL

**Horseshoe lot**  
**March 22, 3:55 a.m.**  
Authorities arrested Rachel Colleen Dudley, 19, for possession of marijuana, drug paraphernalia and underage alcohol possession.

### VANDALISM

**Parking and Transportation lot**  
**March 20, 2:20 p.m.**  
Complainant reported that her vehicle was vandalized on campus.

### FIRE

**Cason-Kennedy Nursing Building**  
**March 19, 1:34 p.m.**  
Authorities responded to a fire alarm set off by the smell of natural gas. Facility Services said the smell was caused by activated turbines at the Cogeneration Plant.

### DOMESTIC

#### ASSAULT

**Deere Hall**  
**March 18, 11:17 a.m.**  
Authorities responded to a domestic disturbance between an ex-boyfriend and ex-girlfriend who separated before the authorities arrived. Neither party wished to press charges.

### ROBBERY

**Womack Lane Apartment G**  
**March 18, 1:09 a.m.**  
Authorities responded to an armed robbery. The suspect is a black male in his early 20s, approximately 5'10" and 180 pounds with dreadlocks. He was last seen armed with a black handgun.

# 'Jacob Nunley Act' awaits House of Representatives approval

By Mamie Nash  
Staff writer

The Tennessee State Senate passed a bill early this month requiring immunization against meningococcal disease for incoming students prior to enrollment at any public institutions of higher learning in the state.

Named the "Jacob Nunley Act" after the MTSU student who died of bacterial meningitis in September 2012, Senate Bill 93 passed March 4 and was sent to the Tennessee State House of Representatives for final consideration. The House will vote on it March 28.

According to the Tennessee General Assembly bill summary, a student may be exempt from the immunization requirement if a written statement from a physician is presented certifying that the student is excused from the immunization if criteria is met for contraindication or if the risk of harm from the vaccine outweighs the potential benefit.

Meningitis refers to a rare but potentially fatal inflammation of membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord. Several types of meningitis exist, and severity and treatment varies depending on the type.

Symptoms of meningitis include sudden onset of fever, headaches, nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light and extreme sleepiness or confusion. The symptoms

typically develop within three to seven days after exposure.

Nunley remains the only MTSU student with a confirmed case of bacterial meningitis, according to Lisa Schrader, director of MTSU Health Promotion.

"By law, all students are required to sign a waiver saying that

they know the shot is available," Schrader said. "Some students get it from us, and some get it from their family practice doctor at home."

Information on how to avoid catching meningitis has always been provided at orientation sessions, according to Schrader.

"I think that it will be much more relevant now than it has been in past years. We are definitely expecting more questions about it. It will be a much more popular handout to take than it has been in the past," Schrader said.

Tips to avoid catching bacterial meningitis include not eating or drinking after anyone or sharing lip balms or lipsticks, according to Kris Huskey, secretary at the MTSU Student Health Services.

"A lot of students share hookah pipes, and that has always been a problem," Huskey said.

"Don't share cigarettes or drink out of the same bottles as others, either."

The most effective way to prevent meningitis is to be

ing meningitis may be directed to Student Health Services or to the Rutherford County

Health Department. ■

# PREVENTION



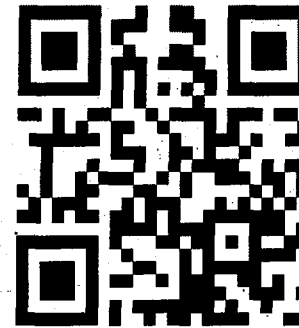
Graphic by Kelsey Klengenmeyer.

vaccinated, according to Student Health Services. The vaccine is available through Student Health Services for \$95.

For students who have been in close contact with someone who has bacterial meningitis, they should consult a doctor even if no signs or symptoms are apparent. For students who experience symptoms of meningitis, Student Health Services suggests seeking medical attention right away. Early detection and treatment with appropriate antibiotics are essential to avoid serious health problems.

"It's sad that it sometimes takes a tragedy to get people's attention about a topic. Bacterial meningitis is just not something you would expect to get when you're young and otherwise healthy," Schrader said.

Questions regard-



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# Student Food Pantry keeps students' stomachs full

By Kayla Moore  
Staff writer

With a multitude of dining options available on campus, it is hard to imagine anyone going hungry.

However, it is the case for a number of students whose financial situation prevents them from being able to buy food. Because of the alarming need, the Student Government Association partnered with the University College Advising Center to create MTSU's Food Pantry.

The Food Pantry is a free service available to students who are financially unstable and in need of food. Created in October 2012, the pantry started in response to an increasing amount of homeless and foster care students, which continues to rise.

"Since Jan. 1, when the FAFSA became available, I've already done eight homeless verifications for students in the fall," says Becca Seul, food pantry coordinator and academic adviser. "And that's only going to increase."

The pantry is not only available to homeless and foster care students – it is a service for all current students who are in short-term need of food.

"We have students that are freshman, we have some graduate students, non-traditional adult learners, we even have students that come in that have kids," Seul says. "We allow them to take



Shelves stacked to the ceiling containing food items from canned goods to non-perishable boxed goods help make a difference in the community. Photo by Kati Baird.

what they need for that week for their family."

Although she says it is common for students to express embarrassment from having to

use the pantry, Seul assures students that the pantry operates with a significant amount of privacy. The pantry is out of reach of the pub-

lic eye in the building, and students only need to check in at the front desk and prove they are a current student. Typically, an individual

student is allowed to come to the pantry once a week and is instructed to take what he or she needs for two or three days at a time.

"We don't ask them a lot of questions, unless we start seeing repeating patterns that there is more of a need than we can sustain," Seul says.

"Right now we're down to a lot of canned goods and not a lot of anything else," Seul says. "Students will take the canned goods. If they're really hungry, they'll take whatever they can get, trust me ... [Students] tend to like taking things they can eat in class or on the way to class, and that's what we're extremely short on right now."



Hundreds of items are kept in the pantry, which students fill each year in the McFarland building. Photo by Kati Baird.

"If it's a long-term need, we send them to Greenhouse [Ministries] because they can handle the volume more than we can."

Since its creation, the Food Pantry received a significant amount of donations from students, food drives and community partners. However, the need for the food pantry increases as word spreads about it. As a result, more and more students need to use the pantry, and supplies are rapidly diminishing.

"We have had 4,200

pounds of food donated since October," Seul says. "But we've given out close to 3,000."

The initial public desire to reach out and help after the Food Pantry first opened guaranteed a large amount of donations and food drives that ensured enough food to last through the holidays and winter break. The pantry established several community partners who continue to donate, and received assistance from Aramark in the form of vouchers for McCal-

lie Dining Hall. This semester, supplies are running low.

"Right now we're down to a lot of canned goods and not a lot of anything else," Seul says. "Students will take the canned goods. If they're really hungry, they'll take whatever they can get, trust me. But we all know hungry students don't go to class. They tend to like taking things they can eat in class or on the way to class, and that's what we're extremely short on right now."

Several means of

advertising are used to help the food pantry obtain more supplies before summer break.

Several sections of University 1010 Seminar did food drives and drop-offs for extra credit. This summer will also mark the first sessions of CUSTOMS where the food pantry will be widely advertised to students and their parents. At this rate, more aid is needed from campus and Murfreesboro communities.

"I think at this point what people really

need to understand and see is that students who are homeless typically take classes during the summer just so they can continue to live on campus," Seul said.

"We really have to get the pantry stocked because [there aren't] a lot of people here during the summer. [There aren't] going to be a lot of people to do food drives and things like that this summer, so we really need to get it stocked up now before the break."

The Food Pantry is

located at the University College Advising Center in the McFarland Building. It is open Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. to anyone wishing to use the pantry or donate food. A list of needed items, as well as printable fliers to spread the word about the Food Pantry, are available on the pantry's website: [mtsu.edu/foodpantry](http://mtsu.edu/foodpantry). ■

## COVER STORY

# Three Blue Raiders seek recovery from career-threatening injury

By Mark Mize  
Sports editor

Around the diamond, baseball players sustain a litany of injuries every season that result in missed playing time and can potentially derail a career.

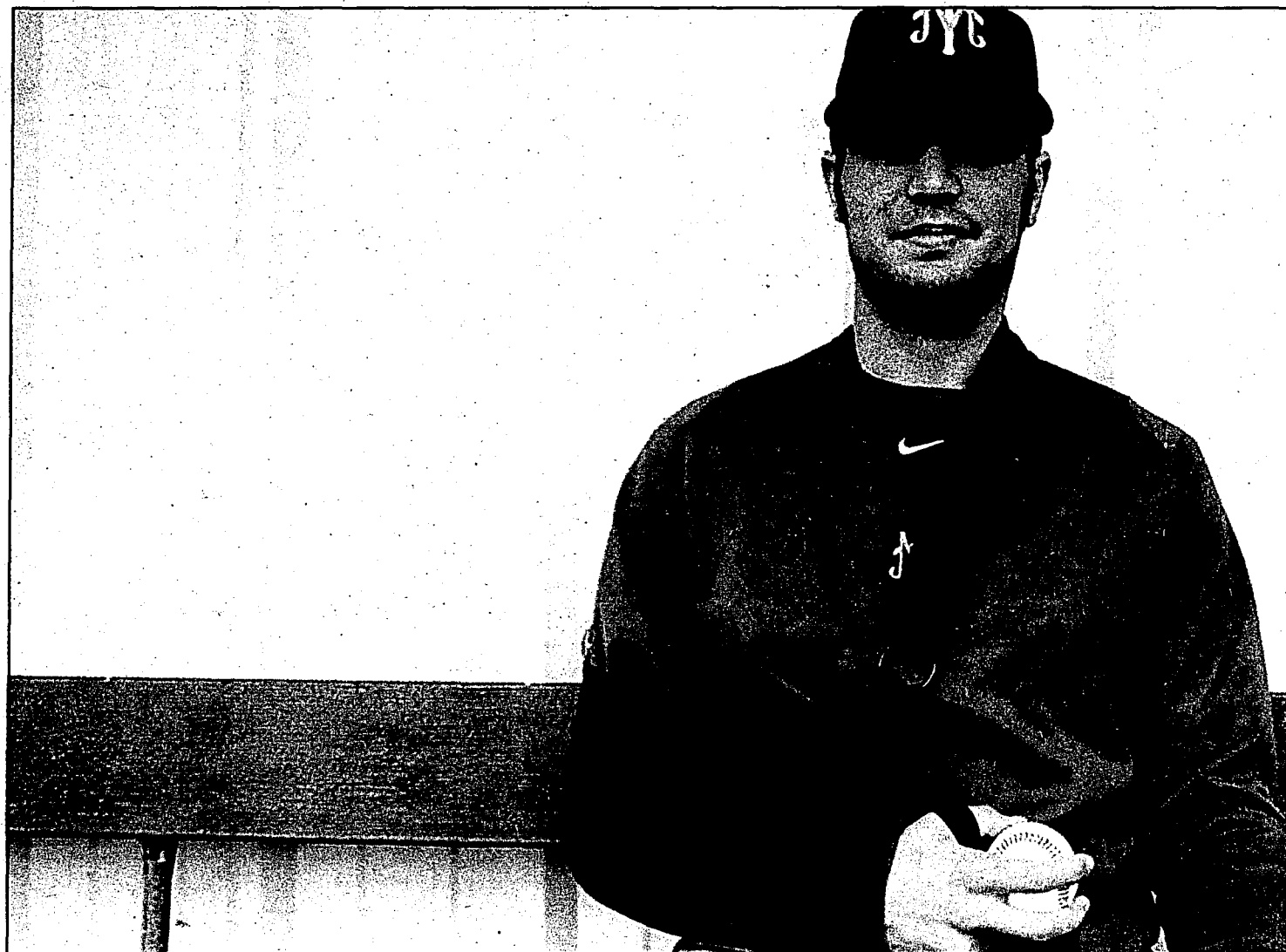
One particularly prolific injury among ball players during the past decade is the torn labrum, an injury that has claimed three victims in the Middle Tennessee Baseball clubhouse throughout the last two years.

The Blue Raiders' Trevor Haggard, Jonathan Sisco and Hank LaRue each underwent surgery to repair torn labrums during the past 26 months, and each player still feels the effects in some form.

"I just got back to throwing fully this fall," Haggard said, a redshirt-freshman outfielder who had surgery on Valentine's Day two years ago. "So it took me a while for all the throwing stuff."

The labrum is a ring of firm cartilage around a person's shoulder socket that maintains its stability. The cartilage can tear or fray from extended overhead activities such as throwing a baseball or lifting heavy objects. Injuries also occur due to an impact to the shoulder such as a fall or hit, as was the case with Haggard's injury, which he suffered in high school.

"I was sliding into second base," Haggard said. "I dove in, and the shortstop tried to turn two and ended up kick-



Junior Jonathon Sisco injured his shoulder his freshman year and looks to return this summer in complete health. Photo by Emily West.

ing my shoulder. I felt something pop."

Haggard attempted to play through the injury for the rest of the summer, but soon realized that something was wrong when the pain continued to increase.

The MT commit elected for surgery months before graduation that would force him to redshirt his first season in his new college program.

Surgery to repair a torn labrum is done via

arthoscopy, a procedure in which a thin tube and camera is inserted into a joint to closely examine a potential injury. Once inside, a doctor can insert surgical tools through the tubing or create other small incisions in the joint in order to make repairs.

Haggard is a success story of labrum surgery and fully recovered to become an everyday player for the Blue Raiders in left field.

The Jackson, Tenn.

native said he the only lingering effect is an occasional ache that he feels in his shoulder on particularly frigid nights.

LaRue and Sisco hope to soon be able to say the same.

Each of the former Blue Raider stars sustained their injuries from the wear and tear that accompanies years of baseball.

"Over the course of [last] season, my shoulder started bother-

ing me a little bit, but not to the point where I couldn't play," LaRue said. "I was still able to be productive enough to help us in some ball games. Then, I went out to summer ball and got there, and it was too painful for me to go. I came back and got an MRI, and the tear was too big for me to rehab through it."

LaRue underwent surgery on June 19 and missed fall practice while he rehabbed in

hopes of playing on opening day. The junior was able to make the opening day lineup, but not at third base, where he had started 113 consecutive games to begin his MT career and become a defensive stalwart.

The cold has made it tough, LaRue said, who has started games as both the team's designated hitter and first baseman this season. "That's why I haven't been able to play



# COVER STORY

the last few games. It's tough to get in a rhythm. It's tough to keep it loose."

Head Coach Jim McGuire protected his young star's recovery, but LaRue believes he will be back at the position where he garnered All-Sun Belt honors in both his freshman and sophomore seasons.

"It's on its way.

Like I said, it's not 100 percent yet. If I went out there today, I think I could probably play third base, but it wouldn't be the greatest display of third base in the world," LaRue said.

For Sisco, the future is less certain due to the added challenges of his position.

The right-handed starting pitcher was a revelation for the Blue Raiders on the mound in his first year after transferring from Volunteer State Community College. Midway through the 2012 season, Sisco was 5-1 and his 1.76 ERA led the Sun Belt, but the former Blackman star slowly regressed late in the season and into summer ball.

"It was just extreme numbness and deadness in my arm, and once it really happened and once I lost that feeling in my arm, it was just downhill," Sisco said. "I just couldn't get any better or get any stronger. It got to the point where I couldn't hardly throw at all. That's when I really made up my mind that I had to go to the doctor and all that stuff and get it figured out."

Sisco said he had originally injured the shoulder his freshman

year, but elected to have surgery after his reinjury. The senior's surgery took place on Aug. 13 and forced him to take a redshirt this

of pitchers who suffered labrum injuries and went on to have all-star careers such as Trevor Hoffman, Curt Schilling and Chris

said. "If I get the feeling back, I mean, it's still a little painful for me to throw, but I get through it. I've just got to keep working. That's

Wellhouse helps Sisco and LaRue in the recovery process and has a program in place to help each player return to top form.

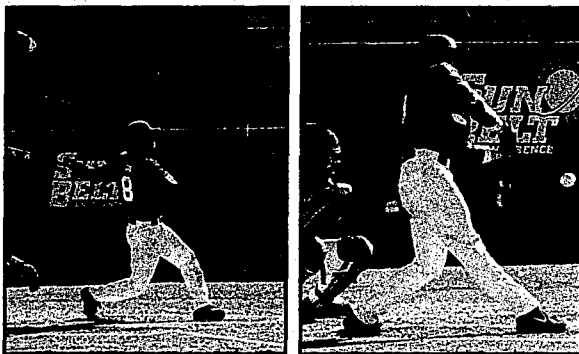
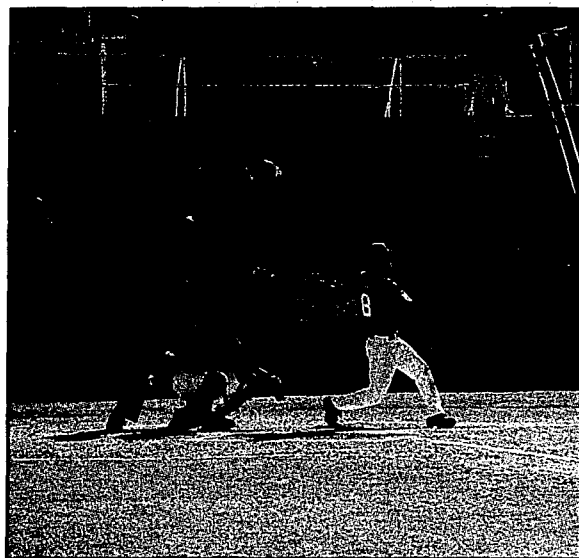
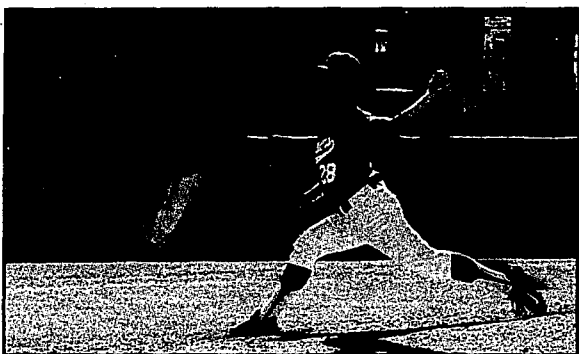
they do is they really help stabilize that shoulder. You can do it to the point that you're stabilizing that shoulder so much that you're keeping it right in the center. You're not even making a lot of contact with the labrum if it's torn or repaired."

Wellhouse is unable to comment on individual players' recovery due to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, but he said that he uses dumbbell exercises and static stabilization to replicate certain motions and build stability in the shoulder. At around the four-month mark in recovery, players usually begin a throwing program that gradually increases and eventually leads to position-specific rehab.

"It's a day-to-day process, and I tell my athletes however long it takes is how long it takes. It's like trying to guess the weather. It's easier to predict the immediate future, but after you start looking past 10 days, you're not really sure what's going to happen," Wellhouse said.

Only time will tell if LaRue and Sisco return to the all-conference caliber players they once were, but success stories such as Haggard's give them reason for confidence.

"I couldn't give you an exact date, but, in the near future, there's no doubt in my mind that I'll be back, and I'll be 100 percent," LaRue said.



Three Blue Raiders faced shoulder issues during regular season play and continue regain strength in their throwing arms. Photos by Mark Mize.

season.

The reliance of a pitcher on his arm increases the difficulty of recovery. Although the MLB includes its share of success stories

Carpenter, various others young careers such as Mark Prior and Jason Schmidt were ended.

"It's just one of those things if it comes back, it comes back," Sisco

the only thing I can do, and there's no guarantee that I'll ever be able to come back, but right now it's looking pretty good."

Athletic trainer Mark

"Personally, I like to do a lot of rotator cuff strengthening," Wellhouse said. "... If those muscles are well-trained; and they're really strong, then what

## RANTS AND RAVES

**March 27**

Family of the Year  
3rd and Lindsley  
818 3rd Ave. S.,  
Nashville  
7 p.m.  
\$10



It would be almost impossible for people with nothing in common to harmoniously create music together. For this reason, bands are usually formed by friends, family members or both. Such was the creation of Family of the Year. The indie-rock group hails

from Los Angeles and was formed in 2009 by frontman Joe Keefe and his brother Sebastian, who plays drums. Guitarist James Buckey and keyboard player and vocalist Christina Schroeter joined the group shortly after. The band's music gives off an old-school

vibe and sounds like The Oneders in "That Thing You Do." Every song is upbeat and cheery, and their lyrics are sweet, describing friendship and summer love. They have been compared to The Smiths and Fleetwood Mac. This show is absolutely worth seeing.

**March 28**

"Jack Reacher"  
Student Union Video  
Theater (208)  
7 and 10 p.m.  
\$2



Because the world has not yet had its fill of Tom Cruise, even after 48 "Mission Impossible" movies and a long list of other projects, he made another one. Cruise's latest film, "Jack Reacher," is an action-packed thriller. Because if he isn't whirling guns around and

blowing things up, he will have to actually act. "Jack Reacher" follows a former homicide investigator (Cruise) who investigates the murder of five people, supposedly shot by a sniper trained by the United States military. He is assisted by the beautiful Helen Rodin (Rosa-

mund Pike), a defense attorney and the DA's daughter. Sounds exciting, right? That's so unlike anything Cruise has ever done before. Chase a bad guy and get a pretty girl. Waiting for the rest of the plotline? Sorry. That was it. Don't waste your money on this.

**March 29**

Mayday Brewery Presents Travis Caudle  
Mayday Brewery  
521 Old Salem  
Highway,  
Murfreesboro  
6 p.m.  
Free



Australian-born performer Travis Caudle is playing Mayday Brewery this Friday. Caudle's music is personal and tells stories of lost love and the give-and-take of relationships. But you won't feel sorry for him long. The emotional lyrics are partnered with upbeat

acoustic and electric guitar, making his songs more like fun pop ballads. It's the perfect take-a-drive music. Caudle was awarded a grant by the Australian Federal Government to stay in the states as a performer and writer in Nashville. Since living in Tennessee,

Caudle has been widely accepted and has experienced great success. He is on his sixth North American tour, has been invited to play music festivals SXSW and CMJ Music City Marathon and has had music featured on the TV shows "Gossip Girl" and "Flash Forward."

**March 30**

Perpetual Groove  
Exit/In  
2208 Elliston Place,  
Nashville  
8 p.m.  
\$12 GA, \$15 at door



American jam band Perpetual Groove is playing Exit/In, and they are bringing out the big guns, light show and all. PGroove originated in Georgia in 1997 and gained a large, loyal following of fans who love their mix of southern rock, funk, jazz

improvisation and crazy synth loops. PGroove is famous for their original songs and covers of hits by artists, from Michael Jackson to Rage Against The Machine. Perpetual Groove released five albums in 10 years and played Jazz Fest, Riverbend and possibly their

biggest festival to date, Bonnaroo. Even though the music alone is fantastic, PGroove keeps fans entertained by mixing their music with a crowd-pleasing light show. So change up your normal weekend routine. The club will still be open next week.

**March 31**

Easter Brunch  
Embassy Suites  
Murfreesboro  
1200 Conference  
Center Blvd.,  
Murfreesboro  
10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
\$23.95



Whether you acknowledge Easter Sunday is beside the point. What we really need to focus on is the fact that a hotel chain, that more than likely does not need the extra cash, has found a new way to take people's money. Embassy Suites is now graciously offering

the people of Murfreesboro, and not just guests staying in their hotel, the opportunity to pay \$23.95 to eat food, because apparently one meal should cost that much. Well, first thing's first: Why \$23.95? If people are fed at Embassy Suites, they can probably spare that

extra nickel. If you have \$24 and happen to be hungry Easter Sunday, by all means, please go to Kroger and get actual groceries. Not just rolls and sweet potatoes for one afternoon. Don't spend your money on hotel honey ham.

## ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

# '20/20 Experience' lacks foresight

By Becca Andrews  
Editor-in-chief

It's been six long years since our boy JT has been on the music scene. I was in high school, and my well-loved, well-hidden guilty pleasure was his sophomore solo release, *FutureSex/LoveSounds*, stowed safely under my driver's seat.

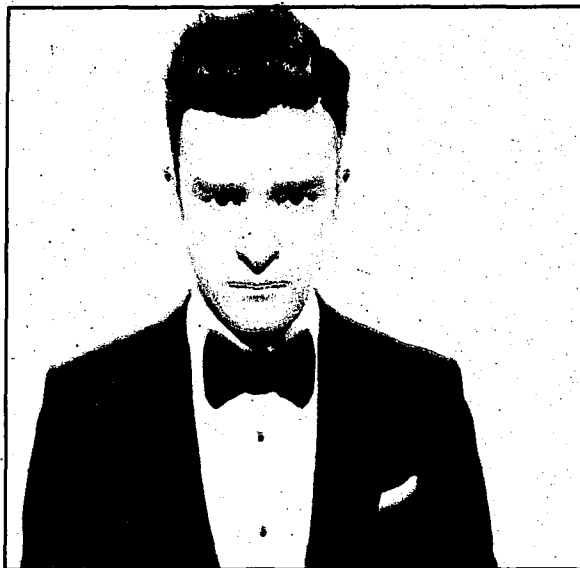
Timberlake has had a lot of time to sit on the new sound he unleashed a couple months ago with surprise single, "Suit & Tie."

One would think that with all that time he would have come up with more sophistication than the mediocrity that is *The 20/20 Experience*.

Don't get me wrong, I'm loving his new style. If there's one man who can pull off the polished formal retro look, it's Justin. His Grammy and "Saturday Night Live" performances were undeniably sexy. The boy can dance better than any pop star out there.

The retro sound interspersed throughout the album also serves listeners well. Timberlake's new band, The Tennessee Kids, are fun to watch and listen to, but sometimes they overshadow the man himself.

The first track on the album, "Pusher Love Girl," starts out with a sound more akin to a Rogers & Hammerstein musical than a Top 40 hit. The strings show up in a few more songs, such as "Strawberry Bubblegum," and there



Justin Timberlake returns from a six-year hiatus with *The 20/20 Experience*, which disappoints more than it thrills.

are some nice soul sounds accented by a clever brass progression in "That Girl."

Timberlake's main detriment lies in the tendency to layer in too much electronica, a problem that can more than likely be attributed to his producer, Timbaland. A good beat is essential to a Justin Timberlake album, and he still does this well (see "Let the Groove Get In"). However, a "less is more" approach may have saved the album from synthesized overkill.

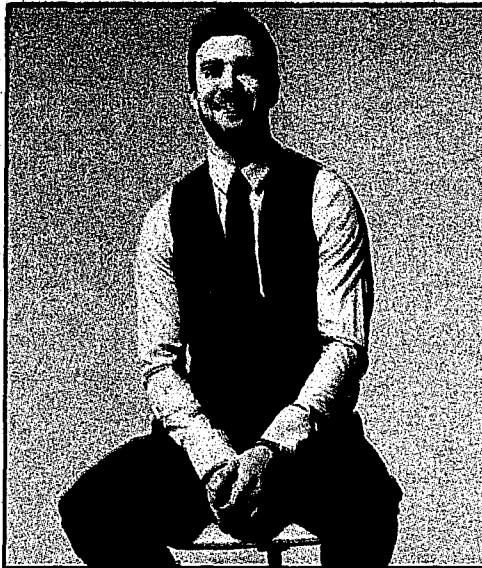
"Don't Hold the Wall" is one of those tracks I can't make up my mind about. I want to edit it for my own listening pleasure because at its core, it's a great dance track. The vaguely Middle Eastern melody is not so out there that it gives me pause, but the weird strangled chipmunk sound doesn't serve any purpose as far as I can tell.

Timbaland's command to "Dance, don't hold the wall," really doesn't make me want to dance. It actually makes me want to stay home in my sweatpants.

Also, I understand that pop music is repetitive. Asking that it be anything else is like asking a Southerner to lose the twang or requesting decaf coffee after an all-nighter. As a writer, I know how painful it can be to cut things down, but I also know it's a necessary evil.

JT didn't get the memo.

"Mirrors" is one of the best tracks on the album. It encompasses all of the old Justin that we know and love (think a more mature version of "Cry Me a River"). It does not, however, have redeeming enough qualities to justify eight minutes and five seconds of the same loop. Generally, listeners don't pull out a Justin Timberlake



"Pusher Love Girl,"  
"That Girl," "Let the  
Groove Get In," "Mirrors"



"Don't Hold the Wall,"  
"Spaceship Coupe"

album looking to feel something, but this song evokes emotion — emotion that eventually transitions into annoyance at about the

four-minute mark. It could have been a new level for him, but a lack of editing again forces it to fall short.

Overall, it's a fun

pop album, but JT's new release lacks substance. Here's hoping that the second half plays up the classy and cuts the crap. ■

# WEDNESDAYS

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# 'Pretty Little Liars' leaves fans in limbo for fourth season

By Meredith Galyon  
Staff writer

The season three finale of ABC Family's "Pretty Little Liars" aired last week and left fans with even more unanswered questions about broken relationships and Alison.

Season three picked up where it left off with the aftermath the "A" revelation, who looked to be Mona. A's antics continue despite Mona's stay in an asylum, and the liars are forced to deal with the night Emily was drugged.

This plot twist extended throughout the season as Emily pieced together different flashbacks, and ultimately revealed something much larger than Mona responsible for A's tricks — an unidentified girl in a red, hooded coat.

Nate, Maya's stalker, who was not the cousin he claimed to be, admitted to killing Maya and tried to kill Emily, but she murdered him in self-defense. Combine this with the discovery of Garrett's body on the Halloween Train, and quite a few deaths are piling up, which left me with that dreadful feeling of "Who's next?" The deaths are not the most shocking part.

The most heartbreaking moment was when Spencer discovered Toby was part of the A Team after she saw a fake ID with his picture and alias for the asylum. This part of the plot infuriated me, but I wasn't surprised.

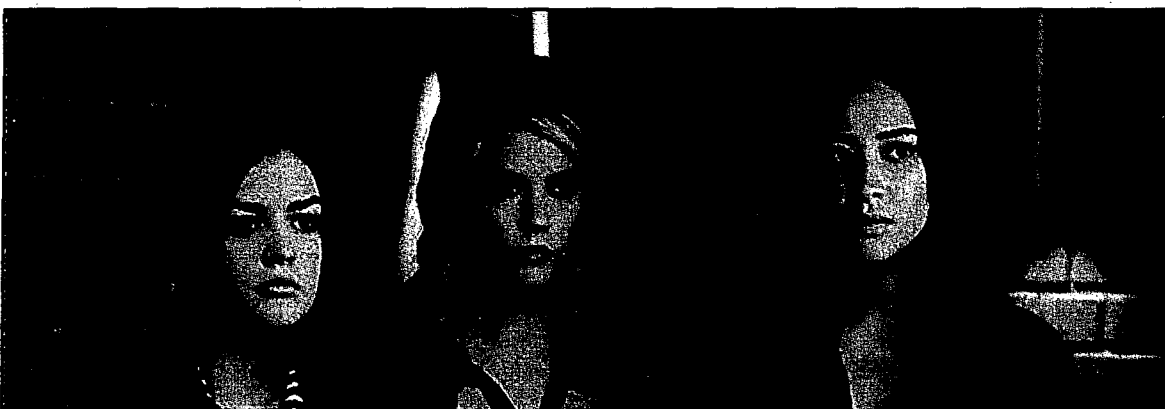
Toby was always a questionable character, but I wanted to trust him because Spencer trusted him. She's the most rational of the group. However, I tried not to lose hope that their story would have a happy ending.

Toby and Spencer's breakup wasn't the only twist — the minor characters' plot lines made for an interesting 24 episodes. Mona returned to Rosewood to continue making the liars' lives a living hell, and Alison's friend CeCe Drake, who brought new information about Ali's hidden secrets, is introduced.

Detective Wilden also popped up in more episodes, shocking viewers when Hanna's mother runs him over with her car after he threatens Hanna. Jenna returns only to be found in cahoots with Shauna, an old flame of Paige's and Melissa Hastings. Melissa seems sketchy because she was in a video of Alison the night she died. There's no doubt the mystery with that trio will continue into season four.

However, the latter half of season three dragged. A tended to set up blackmail, such as when she tricked Spencer into revealing to Ezra that he has a son — a secret Aria kept from Ezra months after she paid a visit to his ex-girlfriend, Maggie.

The season finale expanded on Spencer's torment from losing Toby and the effects from her stay at Radley. I was pleasantly surprised to learn Toby



Aria (Lucy Hale), Hanna (Ashley Benson) and Spencer (Troian Bellisario) of PLL keep fans engaged with dramatic plot twists and cliffhangers. Photos courtesy of Facebook.

was alive and well and not a part of the A Team, but rather serving as a double agent to protect Spencer.

After a near-death experience with Mona, the girls learn she is just another pawn in the game. No one has any idea who the mysterious "Red Coat" is and only know she has complete power. The episode ends with Red Coat pulling them out of a fire, and Hanna hallucinates that it is Alison.

The girls frequently have visions of Ali that

often lead to unlocking another piece of the puzzle. However, the other girls said they also saw Alison pull them out, and now the biggest question for next season is if Alison is actually alive, or the girls are starting to lose their minds.

It might not be that far-fetched for Alison to be alive. Most viewers would not have suspected Mona to be capable of all the torturous acts she inflicted upon the liars. If anyone is capable of faking their death and punish-

ing people from beyond the metaphorical grave, it would be Alison.

Major flaws in this theory exists, such as the lack of motive for Alison to punish her friends so severely. It is no secret that she was unreasonably cruel, but in what has been revealed so far, the girls have not done anything to deserve her torment.

On the other hand, there could be more to the story that has not been accessible to viewers yet — maybe the liars are not as innocent as they claimed.

Another concern is the extremity of a faked death. It makes the viewer wonder what motivated it. If she put her loved ones through the grieving process, the situation either really was serious, or Alison is extremely self-involved and reckless.

The long hiatus between seasons will give PLL fans time to brainstorm which outcome they think is most likely, and more time to anticipate the show's return in the fall. ■

# The 'Different Shades' of Ryan Kenney

By Claire Osburn  
Assistant Arts & Entertainment editor

The conversation is candid and the coffee is hot at the Starbucks on South Rutherford. It quickly becomes apparent Ryan Kenney is one of those down-to-earth, easy-to-talk-to people. The 21-year-old is sharply dressed in a T-shirt, cardigan, jeans and boots, a style that has become synonymous with his artistry. However, his persona is never staged, and his relatable nature is genuine.

Match Records' newest addition and self-dubbed acoustic pop artist is ending his third year at MTSU as a music business major and marketing minor, and what a good year it has been.

Kenney released his first professional album, *Shades*, in February and is in the process of creating more honest tunes for his fan base.

Attendees parked in the grass to accommodate overflow at Kenney's album release show – roughly 200 friends, fans and well-wishers showed up in support. Not bad for a guy who only got serious about music in college.

He sang in his church choir when he was a boy and was first inspired to write by Shel Silverstein, although his love for the two didn't collide until after high school.

Kenney initially picked up his guitar in the eighth grade and taught himself to play by imitating John

Mayer, a technique that began as a joke with his identical twin brother Justin.

Originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, Kenney moved around

Family, especially his brother, has been a big part of Kenney's musical journey. When he first seriously wrote songs in college, he Skyped Justin, who

The singer/songwriter fully understands the importance of relationships – one of his most essential is with producer and friend, Charlie Garcia, an au-

notebook in his back pocket for whenever inspiration hits.

To select the final five tracks that would appear on the record, Kenney used an editing

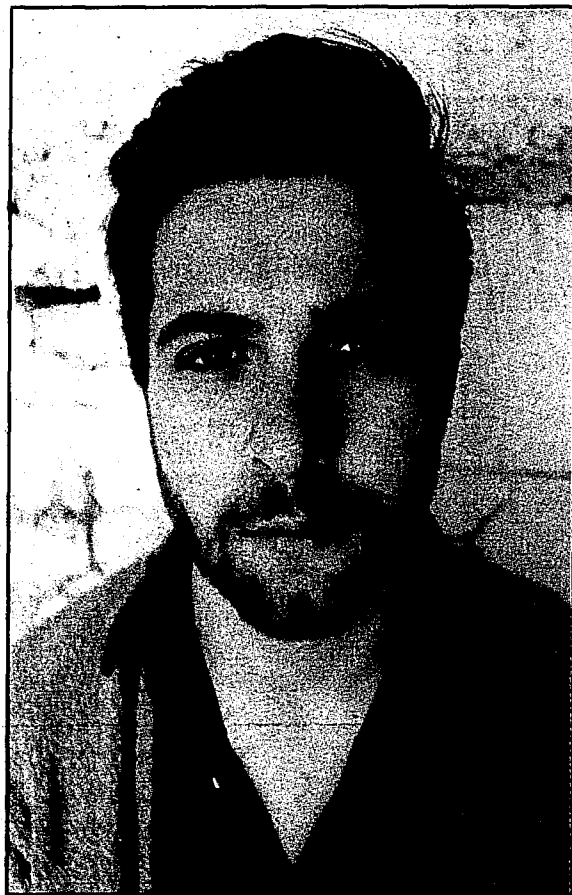
as a tool of building themselves up, in a sense, flattering their ego, so to speak. But then there's people who I feel like are the right people, who are doing this for the right reasons, who it's more so about giving and helping carry people through tough times, just making emotional connections like, 'Hey I've been where you've been through, let's get through it together.'"

Talk with Kenney for a couple hours, and it becomes obvious that he is the latter. He happily plays at least one live show per week to prove it.

"Whatever platform is going to help me get to reaching as many listeners as possible and being able to make an emotional connection with them, that's the dream for me," Kenney says.

In store for his immediate future is a recording session to lay down a brand-new track.

"I have never felt more passionate about anything; I have never felt more connected to people; I have never felt like I was impacting people's lives, and I don't think there's a better way I could be doing so," Kenney says. "So to me there isn't an end date in sight, and the music industry definitely is changing, but I fully intend to pursue this and use what I've been blessed with until it is physically impossible to do so." ■



MTSU RIM major Ryan Kenney is a singer/songwriter who recently released his album, *Shades*. Photos by Matt Masters.

frequently because of his father's job. Among the moves, he found home in music and the old records his parents played.

"To my roots, I'm influenced by people like James Taylor and Paul Simon and Billy Joel, that kind of singer/songwriter," Kenney says.

Kenney's middle name, Vincent, was even influenced by 1970s singer/songwriter Don McLean's song of the same name.

attends Vanderbilt on a trumpet scholarship and lends his brass skills to Kenney's album, such as in title track "Different Shades."

"I do give him credit for kind of molding me into where I'm at as an artist, so to speak, and instilling a sense of self-criticism that I need to get out music that's at a higher quality," Kenney says.

Nearly three years and one contract later, Kenney remains humble and true to himself.

dio production major. After they met at CUSTOMS and rushed the recording industry fraternity Omega Delta Psi, a mutual respect grew between the two out of admiration for one another's work.

"To have someone that I'm such close friends with that believes whole-heartedly in what I'm doing is extremely encouraging," Kenney says.

Kenney writes all of his own songs and keeps a Moleskine

process that included opinions from managers, writer friends and his audience.

He is an advocate for connecting with fans through social media. The importance of the musician-fan relationship is not lost on Kenney.

"There are performers who give and performers who take," Kenney says. "There are people who take the energy and the emotions of the audience, and they take it

## Growing debt more than a political problem

By Alex Harris  
Opinions editor

The 10th anniversary of the Iraq war has led some to reflect on our nation's past choices and actions, as well as actions and choices made today.

Paul Krugman, an economist and columnist for the *New York Times*, is one such individual. In a column titled "Marches of Folly, From Iraq to the Deficit," Krugman compares the consensus of advocating the need for war with Iraq to the consensus of advocating for deficit and debt reduction. He also questions the validity of this new "consensus."

To be fair, many of the those making an issue out of the deficit today are the same individuals or subscribe to much of the same rhetoric and politics as those individuals, who pushed for the U.S. to take action against Iraq. And the "threat to national security" argument has a familiar ring to it.

Although many of the Republicans are likely making political arguments — they certainly had no problem with deficits under Bush — that does not mean that the debt and deficit do not pose serious issues to our country.

True, the issue of our growing debt and the yearly deficit doesn't seem as serious when considered



Alex Harris

in light of currently low interest rates. However, interest payments on our debt for 2012 were only about \$220 billion.

By 2020, as a result of more debt and the possibility of rising interest rates, we could be paying around \$1 trillion a year in just interest payments, according to Erskine Bowles, co-chair of "Simpson-Bowles," the president's bipartisan deficit-reduction committee.

This rise in interest rates will add to the financial liability of the U.S. government, which will further strain the already overblown federal budget and reduce the funds available for government programs.

The main point made by Krugman is that when there is an illusion of consensus by "experts" on an issue, it contributes to the exclusion of any dissenting opinions from mainstream discussion.

Though the point that consensus kills discussion is a valid one,

the mainstream discussion hardly seems to reflect any consensus about a need to make significant cuts to the budget. More often than not, debates about American fiscal issues are shallow and ideological in nature.

The Republicans argue for less social spending, but generally refuse to touch defense spending, while the Democrats argue for higher taxes on the wealthy and less defense spending, and generally avoid any reform or reduction on social spending. Nobody with mainstream support on either side of the two-party political spectrum is suggesting actually slashing the deficit, helping "fiscal austerity" or making any real changes in our spending.

The argument more often involves which programs should receive funding. There is no mainstream debt-reduction plan that even begins to make reductions to the debt until several years down the road.

Yes, the deficit argument has taken a partisan turn, as most issues in Washington. However, just because an issue is in use as a political pawn, it doesn't mean that the problems faced aren't potentially serious or that solutions shouldn't be sought. ■

## Campus signs stereotype skateboarders into vandals

By Christopher Merchant  
Columnist

Some things are a match made in heaven: coffee and donuts; hot chocolate with those awesome little baby marshmallows; skateboarding and vandalism.

Is anyone else having a "one of these things is not like the other ones" moment?

Apparently, the combination makes perfect sense to someone in the MTSU administration. Signs are scattered about campus as part of the True Blue campaign espousing ideals like respect, scholarship and avoiding tobacco use.



Christopher Merchant

The signs equate skateboarders with vandals.

"Skating isn't a crime, but vandalism is," the signs read.

Thank you, MTSU. I'm glad you drew the line for me. Don't get me wrong, I realize that skateboard-

ing can be destructive. I've watched "Jackass." But I don't recall seeing anyone grinding on the I-beams of the under-construction science building or pogoing through the landscaping around the quad.

The sign is more open-ended than that, though. It seems to suggest that it's not the skating that is criminal, but the rampant vandalism that is inherently associated with it.

Because, you know, people who skateboard are probably into graffiti and trespassing. Hooligans.

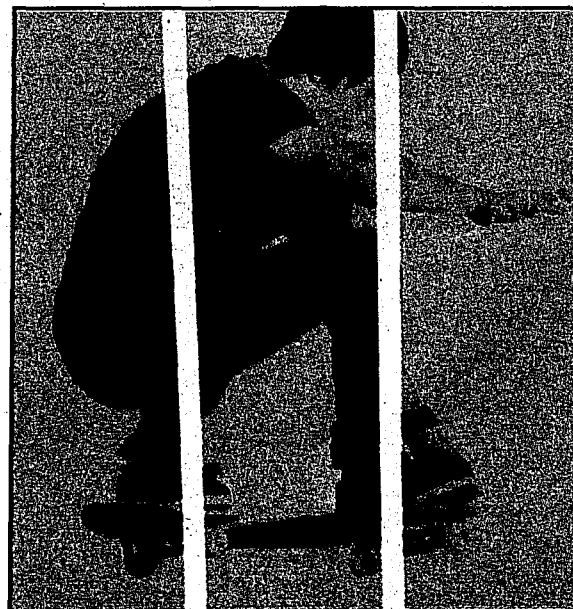
And look at the kid in the photo. He's wearing a beanie. You know what that means.

Actually, I don't know what that means. Maybe someone should make a sign about it.

To be fair, I can understand why students, staff and administrators would want to keep campus shiny and clean. A lot of dollars have gone toward new buildings and a few beautification projects, and it would be a shame to see those efforts tarnished.

However, that doesn't mean the connection should be made between skaters and these supposed vandals.

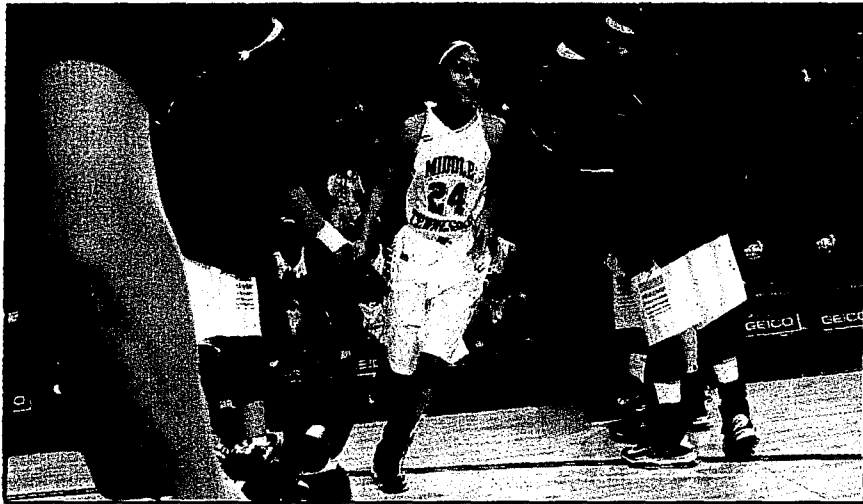
It's a broad generalization and a silly stereotype. It's fine if the administration wants to encourage students to take care of campus, but don't pick on a group of students who look cooler than you on their way to class. ■



SKATING ISN'T A CRIME

BUT VANDALISM IS

## Lady Raider seniors reflect on storied career



Kortni Jones has been known for her 3-point prowess over her MT career. Photo courtesy of MT Athletic Communications.

### By Sam Brown Staff writer

After four full years as Lady Raiders, senior duo Kortni Jones and Icelyn Elie finished their MT careers just one win shy of the century mark.

The impact of Jones and Elie comes not only in the form of stats, but also in the form of leadership. Head Coach Rick Insell did not hold back when he said how much the two seniors meant to the team.

"Everything to be honest with you," Insell said. "They do it all. It's not going to be the same."

Jones was a two-time selection to the All-Sun Belt First Team and set the single-season school and conference records for 3-pointers made and attempted in one season. In her career at MT, Jones accumulated over 1,300 points and almost 500 assists. Insell has coached Jones from the time she was 12, and Jones says she considers

herself fortunate to have had the opportunity to represent the Blue Raiders.

"For me, it's been nothing but phenomenal," Jones said. "I'm extremely blessed and extremely thankful for the opportunity I've been given. I picked a program where I'd be able to showcase my skills and have a coaching staff and program behind me that were truly there because they wanted to be, not because they had to be. So, for me, it's been nothing but great."

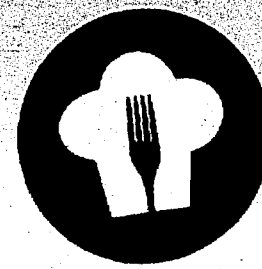
Jones was not the only senior to put up impressive stats in her time with Middle Tennessee. Elie scored over 1,200 points in her career complimented by 122 assists and nearly 700 rebounds. She was also selected to the All-Sun Belt Second Team both her junior and senior years. Elie agreed with Jones that being a Blue Raider was a great experience, and

she learned a lot in her four years.

"It's been a good experience, a learning experience," Elie said. "I've learned so much from it, just from being here. Coming in freshman year was tough, but, I mean, that's where I learned the most, coming in playing with tough players and getting through. But I've enjoyed my experience."

Even though the Blue Raiders will lose two of their biggest contributors next year, they will still have a plenty of talent returning in the form of All-American candidate Ebony Rowe and a host of other players who will look to contribute to find their roles on the team. Insell will miss his seniors, but he knows MT has promise going forward.

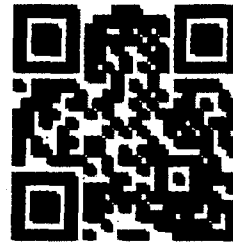
"We don't just have a team at Middle Tennessee, we have a program," Insell said. ■



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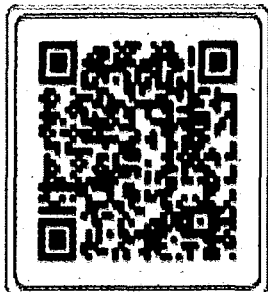


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