

SIDELINES

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Editorially Independent ~ Monday, Nov. 12, 2007

Homecoming 2007



Photo by Jay Richardson | Staff Photographer
The two Homecoming Court members crowned as the 2007 Homecoming Queen and King were Emily Porter and Josh McKenzie.



Photo by Jay Richardson | Staff Photographer
The Homecoming parade's winners this year were Chi Omega, Alpha Gamma Rho, Sigma Phi Epsilon and Alpha Phi Alpha, the organizations representing the Air Force.

Solidarity socializing MT through activism

By Andy Harper
Managing Editor

With a decade under their political belt, MT Solidarity, the MTSU socialist organization, strives to raise awareness about inequality and battle human-rights injustices.

MT Solidarity is a branch of the national Solidarity group, an independent socialist organization founded in 1986 and dedicated to forming a broad regrouping of the United States left, according to the Solidarity Web site. The national organization includes activists from many long-standing socialist traditions, as well as younger members from newer movements.

Younger members include the students of MT Solidarity, the only university branch of Solidarity, said Sarah Cozort, graduate in English Literature and active member of MT Solidarity.

"Solidarity is unique among national socialist organizations," Cozort said. "It doesn't have a party line and doesn't align to a particular strain of socialism. A lot of the time, people try to identify us as socialist and criticize us because of that. People saw what happened in the Soviet Union with the Marxists and Stalinists, but no one in our branch would align ourselves with that particular political socialism."

"It's a misunderstanding or misappropriation of the term 'socialist.' People try to impose a particular economic ideology, a preconceived notion of us. We have various notions of what socialist should look like in organization."

The main goal of the organization is to campaign and educate the university community on labor and human rights, Cozort said. The organization runs campaigns that raise awareness and educate about the effects of capitalism on race, class and gender.

"A couple of years ago, we got Taco Bell kicked off campus," Cozort said. "We were a part of a national organization to demand wages raises for the [Taco Bell] tomato pickers. It was a successful national boycott and the wages were raised."

The tomato pickers, located in Immokalee, Florida, are a part of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. In 2004, the Collation of Immokalee Workers funded a penny per pound "pass through" in conjunction with the CIW to raise the wages of the tomato pickers.

The Taco Bell campaign is one of many sponsored by the group over the past years. Other campaigns include a successful petition for Aramark employees and a national cause to raise awareness of Coca-Cola violations of consumer politics.

"Basically, two years ago, Aramark took chairs away from their workers because they claimed it interfered with productivity and made work 'less efficient,'" Cozort said. "We ran a campaign to get the chairs back because many of the workers are older and have various health issues, so sitting was much more beneficial to them."

See Solidarity, 3

Homecoming event winners

- ◆ The Chili Cook-off was broken down into three divisions including alumni, student organizations and local restaurants. Stones River Grill won the restaurant division while Adrian's white bean and Chicken chili took home the alumni division victory. Accompanying these two winners was Alpha Delta Pi, which won the prize for the best chili in the student organization category.
- ◆ The winner of the tailgate competition was Alpha Gamma Rho.
- ◆ The Homecoming parade this year had record numbers of participants, but ultimately the winners were the group representing the air force.
- ◆ Sigma Alpha Epsilon took home the prize for the horse shoe competition.
- ◆ Homecoming court was presented at half time with the following nominees: Emily Porter and David Angel, Noel Roberts and Danny Bounds, Megan Ryan and Matthew Holt, Lauren Simpson and Josh McKenzie and Cassy Venable and Chris Williams. The homecoming king and queen winners were Josh McKenzie and Emily Porter.



Photo by Patrick Cassey | Staff Photographer
Vincent Dave, Jr. performs in the NPHC Step Show as part of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity with several of its' other members.



Photo by Patrick Cassey | Staff Photographer
Stones River Grill wins the restaurant division of the Chili Cook-off along with the winners of the other divisions, alumni and student organization.



Photo by Ryan DeBooy | Staff Photographer
Chris Young, former winner of "Nashville Star," sings the National Anthem at the Homecoming football game.

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on bleeding heart

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are an artform"

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Volleyball wins SBC
East Division Title

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LOCAL FORECAST

Monday



Hi: 72°
LO: 48°

Tuesday



Hi: 73°
LO: 58°

Wednesday



Hi: 72°
LO: 47°

Thursday



Hi: 60°
LO: 41°

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U.S. mortality rate second lowest in developed world

Associated Press

The rate at which infants die in the United States has dropped substantially over the past half-century, but broad disparities remain among racial groups, and the country stacks up poorly next to other industrialized nations.

In 2004, the most recent year for which statistics are available, roughly seven babies died for every 1,000 live births before reaching their first birthday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says. That was down from about 26 in 1960.

Babies born to black mothers died at two and a half times the rate of those born to white mothers, according to the CDC figures.

The United States ranks near the bottom for infant survival rates

among modernized nations. A Save the Children report last year placed the United States ahead of only Latvia, and tied with Hungary, Malta, Poland and Slovakia.

The same report noted the United States had more neonatologists and newborn intensive care beds per person than Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom — but still had a higher rate of infant mortality than any of those nations.

Doctors and analysts blame broad disparities in access to health care among racial and income groups in the United States.

Not surprisingly, the picture is far bleaker in poorer countries, particularly in Africa. A 2005 World Health Organization report found infant mortality rates as high as 144 per 1,000 births — more than 20 times the U.S. rate — in Liberia. ♦

Battle continues against infant mortality problem in Memphis

Associated Press

The first thing you notice is how tiny they are: Row upon row of babies, some no older than this day, hooked to grotesque jumbles of tubes. Press your palm against the incubator wall and the infant inside disappears from view.

It takes a while for something much sadder to occur to you: In a room full of newborns, dozens of them, there is no crying. The sound of beeping heart monitors, the rustle and murmur of observing doctors, but no crying.

"They're too small and too sick to cry," explains a passing nurse.

This is the newborn intensive care unit of the Regional Medical Center of Memphis, universally known around this city as The Med, perhaps two miles from the blues clubs and rib joints of Beale Street.

And these are the children with a fighting chance.

Some of them, a small fraction, will join the sparse field of little corpses buried in wooden boxes at the county cemetery, distinguished only by little metal plates and identification numbers, perhaps remembered with a stray and shriveled balloon.

Others will go home with mothers in a few days, a week, a year, and they will begin a life fighting impossible odds in this city's worst neighborhoods, forging a struggle against poverty entrenched for generations.

A 2002 federal report put this city at the top of the list for infant deaths in American cities: 692 dead babies over a four-year span, a rate of more than 15 deaths for every 1,000 births, more than twice the U.S. average.

Broken down by ZIP code, centering on the poorest places in this very poor city, there are spots where babies die at a higher rate than

they do in some Third World countries (though some health officials say those figures are small enough to call their statistical significance into question).

It is difficult to explain exactly why so many babies die here. It is even more difficult to say whether it will get significantly better any time soon.

Ask people here about their city and they are quick to acknowledge the problems — particularly poverty and racial disharmony, the one exacerbating the other for decades.

They also will physically grab your arm and insist that this is a place with a lot of people pulling for it. And trying very hard, desperately, to figure out a way to save more of the smallest among them.

Infant mortality is not something you catch. There is no vaccine. There is no prescription to make it better. It is not really even something you can describe, beyond the umbrella definition: Infant mortality is a child who never turns 1.

It includes babies born after just five- or six-month pregnancies, children who enter the world with holes in their hearts or devastated lungs and who die in their mothers' arms.

It includes babies born to mothers who simply do not know about sudden infant death syndrome — "crib death" — and who suffocate from being placed on their stomachs to sleep. Or born into poor homes with unguarded space heaters or chemicals within easy reach under the sink.

The U.S. infant mortality rate is just under seven for every 1,000 live births, according to the most recent figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Here in Memphis, a few other statistics drive home both the severity and the intractability of the problem:

—In 1990, about 20 black babies died for every 1,000 born in Shelby County, and about seven white. In 2006, the numbers were little changed: 19 black, seven white.

—Premature birth and low birth weight are by far the biggest causes of infant death. In 2002, they accounted for about a quarter of infant deaths in Shelby County; in 2006 the figure was more than 31 percent.

—Shelby County lost 209 babies in 2006, according to state Health Department data. No other Tennessee County lost more than 93.

And it is a problem with yawning demographic disparities. In Shelby County, which includes Memphis, about 17 black babies died for every 1,000 born in 2004. For whites, it was about six.

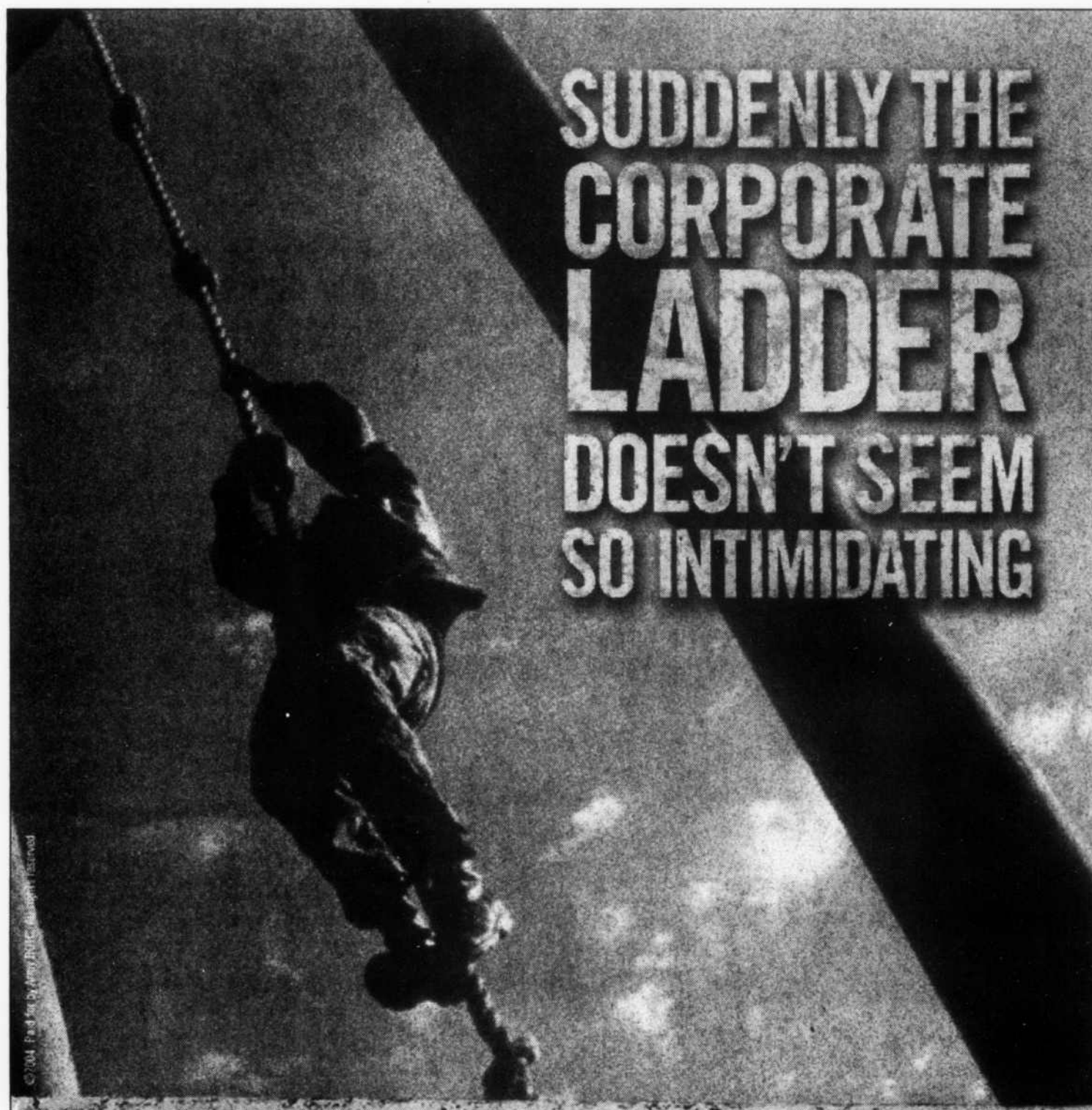
"It touches on every inequality and unfairness you can think of in our day-to-day life," says Dr. Sheldon Korones, 83, who started The Med's newborn intensive care unit in 1968 and still roams it day and night.

Rosanna Stepney, an AmeriCorps volunteer, is a foot soldier in Memphis' war on its infant death problem.

She was assigned to Porter-Leath, a Memphis nonprofit children's center. And now she is holding the hand — figuratively and, once in a while, literally — of a 19-year-old named Crystal Owens, steering her through her first year as a mother.

Stepney is driving through the streets of

See **Mortality**, 3



SUDDENLY THE CORPORATE LADDER DOESN'T SEEM SO INTIMIDATING

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OPINIONS

From the Editorial Board:

The bottom rung in the developed world

We are only a cut above Latvia when it comes to high infant mortality in developed nations. And we're tied with Poland, Hungary and other struggling nations. This means that we're not number one. France is better than us. Germany is better than us. Canada is better than us.

Memphis was listed as having the worst infant death rate in the nation in 2002, at 15 deaths for every 1,000 births. And it's made clear by the numbers that it is a lower income and racial issue. In Shelby County, 17 black babies died for every 1,000 births in 2004, but the rate for white babies was only six deaths.

And this is why – low-quality doctors work at low-funded hospitals in low-income neighborhoods.

There are other reasons, such as the high cost of healthcare scaring lower income families away from hospitals and treating their children. Also, many people simply mistrust the healthcare system.

But we have to start somewhere. A very simple beginning for better infant care in our nation is to target the 20 worst hospitals for infant mortality. Those 20 should be able to apply for a federal grant, which would allow them to hire one top-notch pediatrician each. If these hospitals each have one excellent childcare doctor, that doctor can not only give proper treatment to infants, but can also educate the residents in training on how to properly treat infants.

What would that cost the federal government? \$5 million a year? Big whoop.

And if these hospitals get effective doctors that give great care, most trust builds with patients. More mothers will bring children to the hospital when they are sick, and more lives will be saved.

Letters to the Editor

Many fail to understand satire

To the Editor:

Congratulations to Sarah Lavery on her excellent column in today's *Sidelines* ("Comic strip not hate speech," Nov. 8). She is right on!

As Sarah correctly feared, some failed to understand Frank Hasenmueller's satire, and were quite reasonably offended by what they mistakenly thought it was. I recently read a review on Amazon.com of John Moore's excellent and hilarious novel "The Unhandsome Prince," which excoriated it as anti-Semitic when it was actually ridiculing anti-Semitism, just as Frank Hasenmueller was doing in his cartoon.

I wonder how many "Christian" anti-Semites would have been all for killing that Jew baby Yeshua bar Miriam before he could grow up and cause trouble!

Bret Hooper, '79, '84
Hawksridge Dr.
Murfreesboro, TN

Comic offensive, insensitive, sick

To the Editor:

I find the cartoon extremely offensive. Insensitive and sick. Funny? I think not.

V. Fleming
Twin Oak Dr.
Murfreesboro, TN

A Sidelines haiku:

Newspapers are cool
You should come and write for us
Hippopotamus

Do you think you can do better?
Of course you can.
You're an armchair poet.

Send us your submissions.
Really.

slopinio@mtsu.edu



"And Friends"

frankhasenmueller@gmail.com

Frank Hasenmueller

Video games legitimate art

A friend of mine recently brought to my attention an article by renowned film critic Roger Ebert, in which the author attempts to argue that video games are not and never will be art. Being the video game aficionado that I am, I was naturally incensed by this accusation.

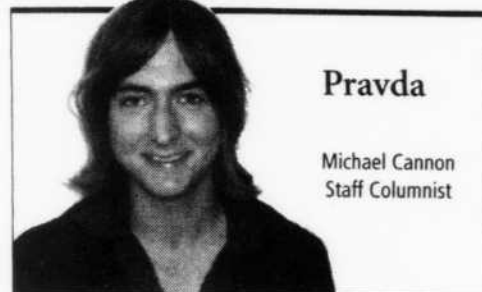
To be fair, Mr. Ebert is not the only one hostile to the inauguration of video games into the art world. A chorus of "intellectuals" and critics are belittling games as incapable of communicating artistic expression. Although this critique is not completely without merit, it is founded upon a rather goofy premise.

Those who decry games as art tend to act in near unanimity when substituting generic, best-selling "shooter" games for the entire medium. In other words, they take a superficial glance of the video game industry and disregard its potential for artistic innovation based solely upon a few games. This would be analogous to me writing off film as an art based on a cursory examination of Hollywood action movies. Granted, "Halo" and "Guitar Hero" are not heavy on theme and do not convey anything of substance about the human condition.

However, unfortunately for Ebert and friends, there is more than one genre in the field of video games.

Those reluctant to consider games art worthy at least concede that the individual elements of a game such as animation and music are art in their own right. Where they falter is in failing to acknowledge the entire work as art.

Video games in their ideal form represent the synthesis of visual art, music, literature and interactivity. This provides for a completely unique experience and reveals that video games are more than the sum of their parts.



Pravda

Michael Cannon
Staff Columnist

At a University of Southern California talk in 2004, director Steven Spielberg cynically voiced his opinions on gaming:

"I think the real indicator [of gaming's success as an art form] will be when somebody confesses that they cried at level 17."

Well, aside from the fact that most games are not so linearly structured these days, I know I am not the only one who got teary eyed when Sephiroth killed Aeris in "Final Fantasy VII" ... that's right, I said it.

Later in the talk, Spielberg made a particularly ill-informed remark when stating that, "It's important to emphasize story and emotion and character. This is one of the things that games don't do."

Apparently Spielberg had neglected to notice that there are hundreds of games and even development studios that focus themselves on cultivating "story, emotion and character."

Meanwhile, Ebert is still stubbornly failing to understand games as a new medium as he emphatically states that,

"To my knowledge, no one in or out of the field has ever been able to cite a game worthy of comparison with the great dramatists, poets, filmmakers, novelists and composers."

I can cite at least three: "Xenogears," "Metal Gear" and "Shenmue."

These works exemplify what video games

are supposed to be.

"Xenogears" is perhaps the most plot-driven, philosophically informed and socially conscious video game yet written. It was nearly held from release due to its controversial explorations of religion, Freudian psyche and its thickly layered Nietzschean plot.

The "Metal Gear" series examines equally dark themes with its musings on the nature of war in a post-Cold War world and the growing power of international finance over nation states.

"Shenmue" is certainly one of the most well-crafted revenge stories in decades. Furthermore, video game writer/directors such as Hideo Kojima and Yu Suzuki operate in much the same capacity as film directors.

Across the pond, there is one man trying to ensure the respectability of video games as art. That man is none other than the Cultural Minister of France, Reynaud Donnedieu de Vabres. He is trying to secure the same tax status and government patronage for the French video game industry that French cinema enjoys.

"Call me the minister of video games if you want – I am proud of this. Video games are not a mere commercial product," he insisted.

"They are a form of artistic expression involving creation from script writers, designers and directors."

Well, it is good to see someone in a high place taking games seriously. It is about time that we recognize games as an intellectual engagement with art and not write them off so easily.

Michael Cannon is a sophomore sociology major and can be reached at mrc2g@mtsu.edu.

Fossil fuel crisis catastrophic

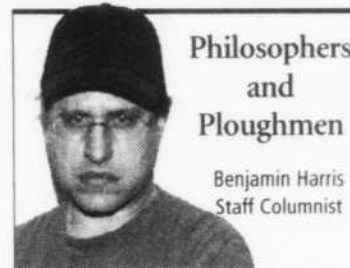
If you were an alien from outer space visiting our planet for the first time you might be inclined to think that the human species was doing everything in its power to render the planet uninhabitable as quickly as possible.

You might be even tempted to intervene on humanitarian grounds. Or, you might decide a species this dumb is not worth saving and just take over the planet.

What you would observe is the process of stripping the earth of fossil mass and converting it into pollutants virtually as quickly as our technology will allow. It would be difficult to draw any conclusions other than that the current inhabitants must be very displeased with the notion of their own survival.

There is overwhelming evidence to indicate that human generated carbon emissions are contributing to a global climate change phenomena that threatens to upset the delicate natural balance on which we rely to survive.

Admittedly, the evidence is not conclusive. But there is a 90 percent probability, according to the Environmental



Philosophers
and
Ploughmen

Benjamin Harris
Staff Columnist

Protection Agency. A study by the University of Colorado and Europe's Laboratory of Climate and Environmental Science at Saclay, France has been able to use carbon isotope measurements in corn plants to positively identify the origins of various carbon dioxide samples.

Basically this means that energy sector-funded global warming denialist research is on the back foot.

It's time to wake up. We're killing ourselves.

We are witnessing an alarming increase in natural disaster phenomena recently. The recent devastating fires in California wrought unprecedented havoc. Severe droughts are gripping large parts of the United States and the world. Water shortages are in the immediate forecast. We are witnessing mass extinctions proceeding at a horrifying

pace. Even your allergies are aggravated. There is good reason to suspect that human influenced climate change is a contributing factor in all of these calamities.

There has been some debate over whether or not Al Gore deserves his Nobel Prize. After all, he didn't do any research. He didn't solve any problems. All he did was participate in a movie.

Those are all valid arguments. Of course, if it turns out that Gore is right about climate change, maybe his role is significant enough to warrant the honor.

Let's hope he's wrong, because the way things are going if he is right, there won't be too many people left around to argue about it.

Carbon stays around for a long time. We have already done damage we can not undo. However, climatologists suggest that we still have a window of opportunity to avoid irreparable damage if we begin to drastically cut emissions now.

However, that isn't looking very likely. The energy sector is the single most powerful lobby on the planet and cutting carbon interests is diametrically

opposed to their interests. There is no current policy agenda approved by the United States that mandates cutting carbon emissions.

Of course, there are those that say this is all alarmist talk and that we must consider the needs of the economy. Even if those people are right, we still need to re-engineer our economic production away from fossil fuel dependence.

For one thing, demand for oil is outstripping supply. This means that the days of fueling a productive economy with cheap petroleum energy are coming to an end.

In fact, the powers that be are positioning themselves to use force to extract the energy they need in the event that the market system breaks down. With nuclear weapons on the table, global warming is starting to look like a picnic.

With the current idiots in charge, it looks like our only hope may be to pray for alien intervention.

Benjamin Harris is a senior guitar performance major and can be reached at bnh2q@mtsu.edu.

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FEATURES

Be still, my bleeding heart

By Jacob Sharbel

Staff Writer

My father used to tell me that I had a bleeding heart. As it turns out, he was right.

My doctor calls it mitral valve prolapse with slight mitral regurgitation.

I'm fascinated with this disease of mine. Basically, the mitral valve leaflet that keeps blood from flowing back into the heart is misshapen, which sometimes allows blood to spill. The more my heart bleeds, the bigger it gets. Sounds terrible, right? Well, it's really not that bad.

Even though the odds are it won't kill me, it still hurts whenever it leaks. For instance, I'm prone to taking pity on strange people, picking them up, and driving them places, which isn't the smartest thing to do late at night.

I first picked up someone in need when I was 16. A scruffy-looking man came up to me while I was sitting on my 19-year-old brother John's front stoop down on Highland Avenue in Knoxville. I had fond memories of that street, it being the first place John had to himself and the first place I could go with my friends to party, so I went there a lot. But John wasn't there that day, so I was just wasting time waiting for him. This man asked me if I wouldn't mind giving him a lift, and I said sure. He motioned at a tree, and from behind it came his wife and two children. We went back to my truck, and he and I climbed into the cab, while my 11-year-old sister Maggie, who was sitting in the passenger seat, looked at me with narrowed eyes and a furrowed brow and silently demanded, "What are you doing, crazy brother?" His wife and two kids climbed into the bed.

I drove this family around until the father in the back of the cab reached his arms around my seat and said they'd go ahead and get out right here, on a Cumberland street corner. They hurried out of my truck and ran off, not looking back. I've continued to do this (though never again for that family) since then, and I have never been robbed, per se. So it's not a fatal condition that I have, just a borderline dangerous one.

Ah, my bleeding heart, my wonderful mitral valve prolapse with slight mitral regurgitation. What trouble will you get me into next? I would be bled dry in a big city such as San Diego or New York. I just know it. About this time last year, for instance, when I visited San Diego for Thanksgiving, a guy sitting on a street corner held out his palm and said, "You got any change?" To this, I said no, and as I walked away without missing a beat, he said, "Yeah, well, happy Thanksgiving to you." I lost another half a pint right then and there. I could feel it.

Usually it's not so bad when I refuse to do people favors. Usually they understand. One time last fall semester, when I was living out of my car for a couple of weeks, I refused to pick anybody up, no matter how needy they seemed. Never invite a stranger into your home, that's what I say. That's about the time that I found out about my condition.

I looked my bleeding heart up on the internet, and there's always the chance that this mitral valve prolapse could be fatal, but the odds are in my favor; I have little to worry about from phrases such as "could be fatal." My life is pretty good. I'm not poor to the point that I have to be hungry when my stomach gets close to empty, not addicted to the point that I drink up the money I should spend on better clothes, not inept or disabled to the point I can't hold a job. Far from it, in fact. That's a good feeling, whenever I think about it. Happiness can be knowing that it can always be worse. Unless you're dead. There's probably no happiness in being dead; that's probably about as low as you can go.

Still, I meet some people and wonder if they wouldn't drag me down with them, if they could.

A couple of weekends ago, I tried to go to a show in Nashville at the Exit/In, a venue I've never been to before. They Might Be Giants were playing, and going to that show were Cara and two of her best friends. Cara is a short 23-year-old woman with ever-color-changing hair and a body increasingly covered in tattoos. We get along well because we have nice conversations, but we can also be at odds because when we were together, we had awful fights. I still enjoy spending time with her, but she's a full-time waitress and a part-time student, and we don't get to hang out very much anymore, so I felt I had to make this show.

When I got there on Saturday night, the line was, as I expected, around the building. Cara and I had had lunch earlier that same day at the Clay Pit, and she had told me that tickets were far from being sold out. She called me when I was still very close to the back of the line and told me that she had been wrong. Tickets had sold out earlier that day; she had had to pay a scalper \$40 for a ticket that had originally cost \$19.

I had to make this show. I had to see her, hang out with her. She was, and I consider her still to be, one of my best friends. I was willing to do pay a scalper \$40 if I needed to. When I had arrived, I had noticed a man standing five feet away from the end of the line, just standing there, looking for someone to sell tickets to. He was offering four tickets for \$40. After talking to Cara, I decided to leave, thinking that someone else had snatched up this scalper. But no, as I passed, there he was, still only five feet from the end of the line. He latched onto me and asked if I needed some tickets. He was a slightly hunched over, skinny man with a pockmarked face and a light brown moustache. He wore a red shirt and blue jeans, and he seemed completely normal: a man who had extra tickets to sell and just needed a ride to go and pick them up.

"Yeah," I told him: I was definitely looking for tickets. My immediate question was: "Do you have them on you?"

"No, my sister has them. She's at her boyfriend's house just up the road."

I should have said no thanks at that point, but I couldn't resist. Just up the road meant 10 minutes, 20 at the most. More than 20 minutes later, however, after we found my car, we got in and were off. Steven the scalper navigated me to his friend Mark's place, a dingy two-story apartment in the middle of a ghetto near the railroad tracks off of Charlotte Avenue. It wasn't a well-lit area, and when I pulled up to the curb about a block from the apartment complex, I ran my right front wheel up on the sharp, cold concrete. We discovered later that I'd actually ripped a small hole in the tire, and it was deflating slowly, just another piece of bad news to add to an entirely bad night.

I had told Steven before he got in my car that I only wanted one ticket and I would pay \$20 or \$30 for it. He was really nice in saying that his sister would only want \$20 for one ticket, so when the time came, I was at first glad to give him the \$20 bill. But before I let him round the corner and possibly disappear forever with my money, I told him I wasn't comfortable. I followed him, despite his protests.

"Her landlord is real weird, man," he told me before going inside the chain link fence surrounding the apartment complex. I watched a stray dog on the inside furiously dig a hole and slide out

from under the fence, as if all it wanted in the world was to escape this place. "He won't want you coming inside."

Again, I should have taken my money back and run, but I didn't want to give up. A part of me still felt like I had to make that show.

"Look," I said, "I'm just not comfortable."

"I understand," he said, digging into his back pocket. "Here. Take my wallet. It's got my driver's license and debit cards in it."

That made me feel better, but still I followed him through the chain link fence's gate and tried to mount the stairs with him to the second floor. He held out his hand and told me, no, I needed to wait downstairs. So I did, leafing through his wallet to make sure he had given me his own. He looked back as he climbed the stairs and laughed.

"It's all there," he said.

"Sorry," I said, regretting it as soon as I said it. After all, what's wrong with wanting a little insurance?

He came back out a few minutes later and told me his sister wasn't there. She was over at another house not far away. We needed to go there. I shook my head and kept his wallet in my pocket.

We got back in my car, and we noticed the passenger side seemed to be lower than it should have been. I pulled over to the nearest gas station, a Shell on Charlotte, and sure enough, my right front tire was almost flat. I filled it up with air, but even then I could hear the air hissing out.

I dropped Steven back off at Mark's apartment and barely made it to the Shell station before my tire was completely flat again.

While waiting for Steven to return with Mark's car jack, I spent the next hour and a half asking every customer at the gas station for a lug wrench and a jack. Most people looked at me and laughed, or ignored me altogether. "I have a flat tire. That's all. I just need a jack and wrench."

"No, man, I want nothing to do with it," one guy said.

"You stay away, now," one woman said from the passenger seat as I approached her minivan. "I'm freaking out. I am freaking out!" she said as a violent shudder shook her body.

"All I want is a car jack."

"Can't help you. Just stay away."

Finally, a taxi driver filling up his cab said he would help if I hurried. He had a call, and he needed to pick somebody up as soon as possible. He was a tall Middle Eastern man wearing a gold cross and chain around his neck, and as slow as I was to put my spare on, he was all the more patient.

Together, we got the spare on in a few minutes, and I thanked him. He was gone, and I filled my spare up with air and headed back to Mark's to return Steven's wallet and get that ticket or get my money back. I still had time. It was only 10pm, and the show had started at 8. If I was fast, I could make it.

I crossed the railroad tracks and managed not to hit the curb this time as I parked. I went up the stairs to Mark's apartment and knocked lightly on the door. A skinny woman shivering and smoking a cigarette in the cold a few doors down mumbled something incomprehensible, and I smiled, and I knocked louder. I saw the curtains flutter on the inside and heard a voice say, "Okay, okay, yeah, I'm coming. Hold on!"

Then the door was open and a man in a long, white beard and wife beater undershirt ushered me inside. His eyes were crossed. The living room, furnished with only a beige couch, small lamp, and wooden table, smelled of urine. "Hey," he said, turning on the lamp by the door.

"Hi, I'm Jacob," I shook his hand.

"I'm Mark."

Steven came from the back. "Hey, Jacob. Did you make it here okay? Did you get your spare on?"

He hadn't been able to find the jack, he said, and hadn't wanted to walk the two or three miles back to the Shell in the freezing cold. He said his sister was on her way there, and we just needed to go and get another \$10 for the tickets. Now that he had his wallet back, he could take out the money from his ATM.

"I really don't want to drive too much on my tire," I told him.

"We'll just go up to the Shell and come back. She'll be here by then."

So we were off again. Unfortunately, the Shell had closed its doors and was only offering window service, which meant no ATM. "I really need to get to that show, man. I really need to get to that show," he told me. And so, I drove him down Charlotte, looking for another gas station. We found one, but his check card, which was cracked, wouldn't work. Eventually, we found a SunTrust, and it was the same story: his check card wasn't being accepted. From my driver's seat, I watched him at the ATM with growing contempt, thinking, "Maybe I should just drive off. Let him have the \$20 and just leave. Make him walk back. I'm far too nice, and way too trusting. When my father told me, a long, long time ago, that I had a bleeding heart, he was obviously right."

Steven motioned me out of the car, and I came to him. I read the screen: exactly what it had said at the last ATM, that the card could not be read. "I swiped it three times," he said, playing dumb. "I don't know what's going on."

"All right," I said. "It's okay." I withdrew another \$20 from my own account.

And that was that. When we got back to Mark's, there was a new car sitting in the parking lot, and Steven told me it was his sister's as promised. We got out of the car, and I was again to wait outside. He coaxed another \$10 out of me and went upstairs. I waited 10 minutes, and then I let myself inside the chain link fence, watching dogs trying to get back in. Before I made it to the stairs, Mark came outside.

"Where's Steven," I asked.

"Where's who?"

"Steven. Where is Steven?"

"Oh, he left. 10 minutes ago."

"Screw it then," I said, spinning around, getting in my car, and leaving.

When I rolled back into Murfreesboro riding on a spare that was practically flat, my mind was raging. I had cursed Steven and his apparent friendliness. That was \$30 that I'd just let go.

Cara called me later that night on her way back to Murfreesboro. She had woken me up, but I told her the short version of what had happened, and she was sorry. "I'll call you tomorrow," she said.

"Talk to you then," I said.

And as I sunk swiftly back to sleep, I cursed my ever-loving benevolence.

Yeah, sometimes I curse my bleeding heart. Though it probably won't be the death of me, it'll be a source of great annoyance until the day I die. ♦

Environment briefs

By Seth Borenstein

WASHINGTON (AP) - America's obesity epidemic and global warming might not seem to have much in common. But public health experts suggest people can attack them both by cutting calories and carbon dioxide at the same time.

How? Get out of your car and walk or bike half an hour a day instead of driving. And while you're at it, eat less red meat. That's how Americans can simultaneously save the planet and their health, say doctors and climate scientists.

The payoffs are huge, although unlikely to happen. One numbers-crunching scientist calculates that if all Americans between 10 and 74 walked just half an hour a day instead of driving, they would cut the annual U.S.

emissions of carbon dioxide, the chief greenhouse gas, by 64 million tons.

About 6.5 billion gallons of gasoline would be saved. And Americans would also shed more than 3 billion pounds overall, according to these calculations.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is considering public promotion of the "co-benefits" of fighting global warming and obesity-related illnesses through everyday exercise, like walking to school or work, said Dr. Howard Frumkin, director of the CDC's National Center for Environmental Health.

"A simple intervention like walking to school is a climate change intervention, an obesity intervention, a diabetes intervention, a safety intervention," Frumkin told The Associated Press. "That's the sweet spot." ♦

OBION COUNTY, Tenn. (AP) - The state's wildlife agency built a levee on the Black Swamp to try to improve duck hunting, without notifying environmental regulators who say the levee could damage trees and water quality in the West Tennessee swamp.

"It's of concern to us, and we're going to take a look and take appropriate action," Paul Sloan, deputy state commissioner of the state Department of Environment and Conservation, told The Tennessean.

With the levee the state Wildlife Resources Agency built over the past several weeks, the 845-acre Black Swamp, with its springs and cypress and tupelo forest, would be turned into a pond every winter.

The TWRA had attempted previously to dam up the area on a season-

al basis. Politically connected Nashville businessman J. Clark Akers III, an avid duck hunter, had pressured his friend, then-Gov. Don Sundquist, to allow it.

The earlier, almost identical plan was quashed in 2004 after two independent researchers said it would undermine trees and water quality and might do little to improve hunting.

Though the levee would flood the same area, it has been placed outside the wetlands area, so an environmental permit is not needed this go-around, said Ron Fox, TWRA assistant director and a friend of Akers who sometimes duck-hunts on Akers' private property.

"This area had tremendous waterfowl use when it flooded naturally," Fox said. "Winter months, those

trees are dormant anyway. It makes sense to put water back to recharge the system."

The construction cost about \$100,000 and was paid for from hunting and fishing license fees.

Officials with the Department of Environment and Conservation say they should have been consulted and are investigating the impact of the levee.

"This is an incredibly important resource ... high-quality Tennessee waters and a critical and rare habitat," Sloan said.

"We need free-flowing rivers," Johnson said. "The salvation of our wildlife and the products that come from these rivers depends on how well we take care of forests that are left like this." ♦

SPORTS

- Middle Tennessee 3, Western Kentucky 0 -



Photo provided by MTSU Photo Services

In front of a near-capacity crowd inside of the Alumni Memorial Gym, Middle Tennessee was able to defeat Western Kentucky 3-0 (30-28, 30-24, 30-28) due to strong performance by Ashley Adams, Leslie Clark, Izabela Kozon and Ashley Asberry.

Blue Raiders win East Division

1,642 in attendance watch Middle Tennessee win the number one seed in Sun Belt Conference Volleyball Tournament; Adams leads team with 18 kills, 11 digs; Volleyball finishes regular season at 29-2 (16-1 SBC)

By Clarence Plank
Staff Writer

The Blue Raiders rushed the court and celebrated, hugging and screaming with the fans, cheerleaders and the Band of Blue that came to see them knock off Western Kentucky and earn a chance to take sole possession of the East Division title from the Lady Hilltoppers.

It was the first time that WKU has not gotten at least a share of the title. This is also the second title in two years for the Blue Raiders.

Ashley Adams led the Blue Raiders team with 18 kills, 11 digs and three block assists and Leslie Clark finished the game with 39 assists and three block assists of her own.

The Blue Raiders swept Western Kentucky 3-0 Friday night and take the East Division title and number one seed in this week's Sun Belt Conference Volleyball Tournament.

The Blue Raiders finish the season at 29-2, 16-1 in the SBC and stand to face Arkansas State, the eighth-seeded team in the championships.

"I think we played a good match," head coach Matt Peck said. "It wasn't one of our best matches, but then its one of our best opponents we've played all year. [Western] plays hard. The difference between here and Bowling Green was that we passed a lot better and we were in sync and we were able to utilize Ashley Adams and Ashley Asberry."

Middle Tennessee was down 9-5 early in the first match before a kill by Adams started the Blue Raiders' rally. A service error by Lady Hilltopper Aquila Orr pulled MT to a 11-11 tie. MT tied the game six times, including once when the Hilltoppers were up by four points and the Blue Raiders chipped away at the lead.

A kill by Adams got the Blue Raiders at game point 29-27 and a mistake by WKU gave MT game one.

Game two was a see-saw match with each team trying to dominate the other. In the past MT has had a lot of trouble putting away teams in the second game. This time it was different with MT taking a 25-20 lead. MT committed some mistakes and WKU took advantage of them, but MT put the game away.

Game three found MT with a 9-5 lead. WKU rallied to tie the game at 13. The score changed as both teams swapped points until the Blue Raiders tied the score 22-22. Western Kentucky tied the game again at 27 as the bottom fell out and MT was able to win the game on a kill by Ashley Asberry.

Asberry had nine kills and five block assists in the game. MT as a team has a 252 attacking percentage and held the Lady Hilltoppers to a .179 in the series. The team had 46 digs.

Adams hit for .349 and 18 kills, 11 digs and three block assists. Isabela Kozon had eight kills and five block assists.

"We were very aggressive on our blocking," Peck said. "We did a lot of things that we did all year to help us to do well. We made more tonight than we have done."

Western Kentucky started freshman Julia Noe after one of their regular starters was out. This made things harder for the Blue Raiders, not knowing what to expect from her.

"They had one of their starters out," Peck said. "She actually did well for them, so we've not seen here before and we didn't know what she was going to do out there. Western Kentucky is a very disciplined team and they don't make a lot of errors. They are very similar to us."

MT will head to Denver, Col., for the Sun Belt Conference Championship on Nov. 15-17. ♦



Photo courtesy of MTSU Photo Services

Senior Quanshell Scott hugs junior Ashley Asberry after defeating Western Kentucky University inside of the Alumni Memorial Gym.

Win streak ends for Blue Raiders

By Chris Martin
Staff Writer

A New Orleans Bowl bid may have been put out of reach for the Blue Raiders in Middle Tennessee's 34-24 homecoming loss to Louisiana-Lafayette on Saturday.

Before the game, MT could have guaranteed a spot in the bowl and won the Sun Belt Conference championship outright if it were to win its remaining games and Florida Atlantic were to lose just one conference game.

However, with the loss and FAU's 34-31 win over Arkansas St., the Blue Raiders' only hope for an undisputed SBC championship will be if Troy and FAU lose their remaining SBC games.

"We still have a lot to play for," MT head coach Rick Stockstill said. "It's a long shot now [to win the SBC championship], but we're going to finish this season. We've got a group of guys in there that are really disappointed and heartbroken. If there's not a conference championship to play for we've got our pride to play for, and I know those guys will do that."

MT surrendered 528 total yards to the Ragin' Cajuns, including 376 on the ground. Junior quarterback Michael Desormeaux accounted for 175 rushing yards and 152 passing yards. Junior tailback Tyrell Fenroy also eclipsed the century mark, running for 100 yards on 24 carries with one touchdown.

"[Fenroy and Desormeaux] were pretty fast guys," freshman cornerback Rod Issac said. "This time we just let them off the hook. We should have made tackles that we didn't. They were obviously faster than the group we faced last week [at Louisiana-Monroe], but we still should have made tackles."

With 8:20 left in the second quarter, Desormeaux scrambled for 86 yards down to the MT 2-yard line to set up a Fenroy rushing touchdown. Desormeaux's run was the second longest in ULL history and it also put him over 1,000 yards for the season, making him the 24th quar-

terback in NCAA history to do so.

"It all starts with their quarterback; he's the best athlete on their team," senior defensive end Erik Walden said. "When he's clicking that's when the rest of the charge [follows]. You got to take your hats off. He made plays. He led his team. He did what he was supposed to do."

Redshirt-junior Joe Craddock completed 8 of 11 passes for 89 yards and two touchdowns for the Blue Raiders. With less than two minutes remaining in the first half Craddock was replaced by freshman Dwight Dasher. Dasher did not play a snap in MT's last six games.

"I didn't think [Craddock] was playing particularly well," Stockstill said. "He took a sack in the right corner of the end zone. He took another sack on first down when he broke out of the pocket. The touchdown pass to Taron [Henry] should have been intercepted. On third down, he threw to Bobby [Williams] when he should have thrown to Alvin [Ingle]. I don't think he played particularly well."

The touchdown pass to Henry was a 32-yarder that was tipped by a ULL defender into Henry's hands. After catching the ball, Henry ran untouched into the end zone.

"I ran the route a little bit deeper than I was supposed to run it," Henry said. "I came back to the ball and I saw the defensive back cut in front of me, but just by the velocity on the ball, I kind of knew the ball would make it through. So, I just stood there and waited on the tip, and the tip came and I took it into the end zone."

The catch was Henry's fifth touchdown reception for the year. On the game, Henry had three receptions for 52 yards and a touchdown.

Redshirt-sophomore punter David Defatta put up a monster game. He punted seven times for 371 yards, giving him a 53-yard average. Also, three of Defatta's punts landed inside the Ragin' Cajuns' 20-yard line, and three of his kicks sailed for at least 63 yards.

Several Blue Raiders were hampered by injuries. Sophomore tailback Philip Tanner and freshman safety Jeremy Kellem did not play, while

See Win Streak, 8

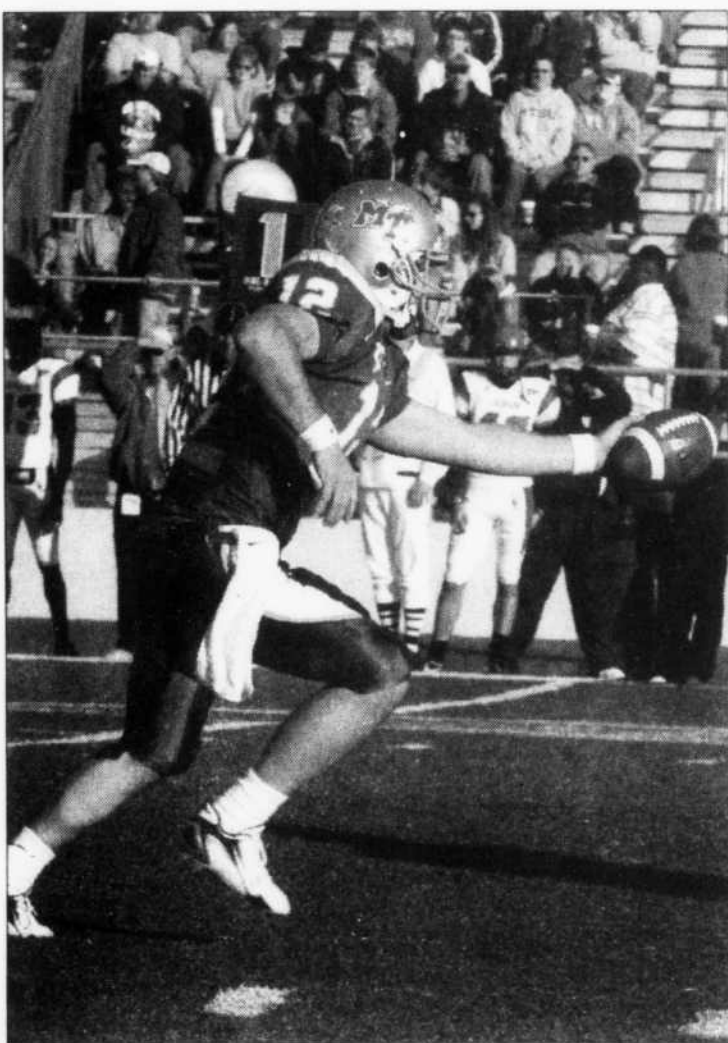


Photo by Ryan DeBooy | Staff Photographer

Redshirt junior Joe Craddock was pulled during the game Saturday because of poor play. True freshman Dwight Dasher played the rest of the game, a 34-24 loss to ULL.

In the 'middle' of dreams

Middle Tennessee play-by-play announcer takes childhood dream, develops following among the campus community

By Brian Estes

Staff Writer

Have you ever wanted to be like John Madden? Did you ever just want to climb into the announcers' box and call the play-by-play during a heated championship showdown? Perhaps you've wanted to emulate a famous sports figure. For Russell Luna, broadcaster for GoBlueRaiders.com, it was the announcers on the Madden NFL video game series that drew him to his life passion: broadcasting.

"When I was little kid, I used to play video games," Luna said. "I liked to pretend I was John Madden or Eli Gold."

But MT's next few contests will not be pretend for Luna. When he ascends the steps into the broadcasters' booth to do the play-by-play, don't doubt for a minute that his nerves will be frayed. As Luna puts it, he will probably be more nervous than the players are. Starting this week, the Sun Belt Conference Tournament begins.

"It's going to be electric," Luna said. "It isn't like football or basketball, but you have the band and the cheerleaders, and the rivalries are great. You can't ask for anything better than that."

The Lady Blue Raiders carry a 29-2 overall record into the conference tournament, in which they will be the top seed. The tournament will take place at the University of Denver's Hamilton Gymnasium on Nov. 15-17.

Middle Tennessee will be facing number eight-seeded Arkansas State in the first round Thursday.

"We have to make sure we don't play with a trap game mentality," Luna said. "If they just play their game, they should have a chance to win the conference tournament."

Luna is unsure whether this will be his last season as the announcer for MT volleyball. He is only a junior, but said he is considering graduating early.

"MT is my dream job. I want to be here forever, hopefully, but I don't know. I think I'll probably be back as a student," Luna said.

But Luna's road to MT's play-by-play booth wasn't as simple. His childhood intrigue with broadcasting and sports led him to contact Robert Portnoy, an announcer for the Huntsville Stars AAA baseball team.

"I got a good knowledge of how broadcast works in the professional leagues," Luna said. "I did that for three years, and it really reeled me in."

He began broadcasting baseball and football while in high school at Lincoln Co., and then announced various sports for Blackman High School in Murfreesboro during his first two years at MTSU.

"I announced for football, hockey, softball, you name it," Luna said.

But he also received the call to announce MT sports. He's in his third year with the softball team and in his second with volleyball.

"[Volleyball] is a tough sport to broadcast," Luna said. "You need to be enthusiastic, energetic and alert at all times, because it's a fast-moving sport."

Matthew Kauffman is Luna's partner in the broadcast booth. The two met last year while working on high school football games.

"I got into that because I wanted to do broadcasting," Kauffman said. "Russell was impressed enough with me that he invited me to work with him on softball and other things. So this year I called him up and asked him if he needed help with volleyball."

Kauffman said he thinks minimizing mistakes and finishing strong will be the key for the Blue Raiders.

He also said MT will need a strong effort from its bench.

"Sasha McGlothlin comes off the bench and usually gets three or four blocks, and Alicia Lemau'u is a good defensive player," Kauffman said.

You can hear Luna this week during the Sun Belt Conference Volleyball Tournament starting Nov. 15 on GoBlueRaiders.com. ♦

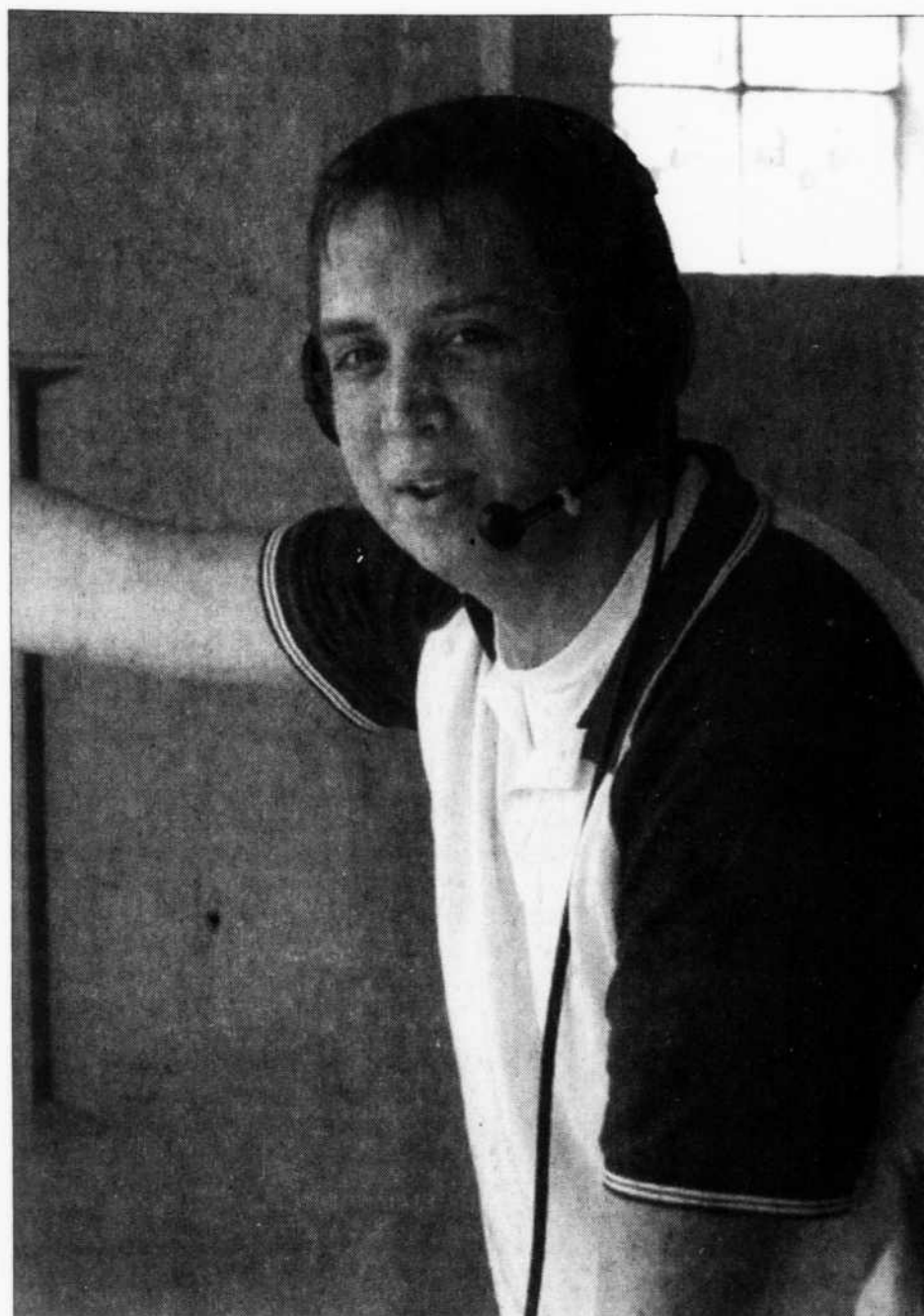
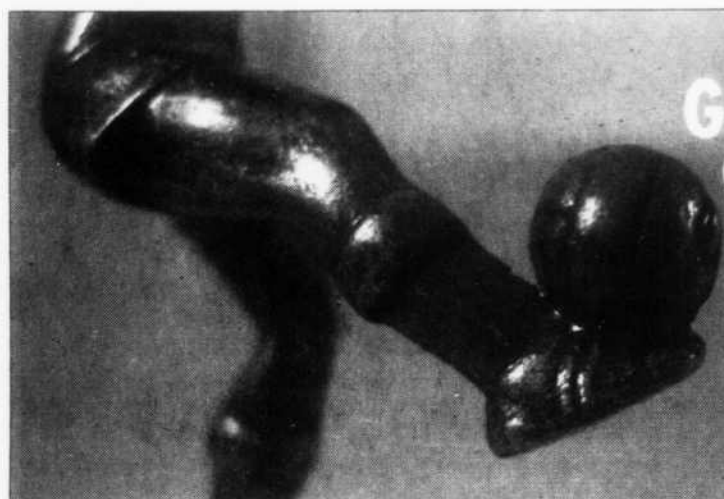


Photo courtesy of MT Media Relations

Russell Luna is a native of Flintville, TN, and graduate of Lincoln County High School. He currently broadcasts games for Middle Tennessee's volleyball, soccer, and basketball programs on GoBlue Raiders.com.



Get on the ball.
(Whatever size or shape it is.)

Sidelines is looking for sport writers. Think you can make the cut? Visit our office in COMM 269 to get into the game.

Local high schools win in first round of playoffs

By Brian Estes

Staff Writer

The dream of playing in the BlueCross Bowl at MTSU ended for many Nov. 9, but some area teams were able to stay alive for one more week.

Riverdale High School took the first step toward the state championship game with a 28-7 victory over Warren County High. Jeremy McClain led Riverdale's rushing attack with 117 yards and two touchdowns. However, it was Riverdale quarterback Trey Smith who could often be seen darting down the field for 106 yards and a pivotal touchdown that extended their lead to 14-0 late in the third quarter. Riverdale's passing game faltered as Smith was 0 for 7 on the night. However, the Warriors eventually put Warren Co. away. Riverdale will host Wilson Central next week, a 45-0 winner over Coffee Co.

Meanwhile, the Smyrna Bulldogs, last year's 5A state champion, fell behind early against the Cookeville Cavaliers, but were able to claim a 28-10 win thanks to a strong defensive effort.

Cookeville jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the first quarter after recovering an onside kick.

After a pair of Smyrna touchdowns, the Cavaliers answered with a score of their own to cut the Bulldogs' lead to 14-10, which shut down the Cookeville offense

from that point on. The Bulldogs will play at Lincoln Co. in round two of the playoffs. Smyrna quarterback Sonny Gray threw 7 of 21 passes for 100 yards, and running back Jeremiah Bryson had 178 yards and three touchdowns on 20 carries.

The Franklin Rebels were also victorious, claiming a 35-14 win against Overton. The Rebels rang up a 28-0 lead before Overton was finally able to answer with a pair of fourth quarter touchdowns. Keylo Lee, who ran for 117 yards, scored the first of his two touchdowns in the second quarter to open the scoring for Franklin. Franklin will be on the road against Hunter's Lane next week.

Sadly, the dream ended for two other area teams. Lebanon was dispatched by the Region 3-5A champion Lincoln Co. Daley Sallis' 10-yard touchdown run put Lebanon ahead 17-13 in the fourth quarter, but the defense was unable to make it stand up. The Hunter's Lane Warriors narrowly beat the Brentwood Bruins by the score of 14-10. Hunter's Lane quarterback Randall Lewis connected with Joseph Wilbert for the game-winning touchdown with only 37.6 seconds to play. The Bruins had taken the lead with A.J. Krow's quarterback scramble with 8:14 to play.

The BlueCross Bowl will be played Dec. 7 and 8 at Johnny "Red" Floyd Stadium. ♦

Riverdale 28
Warren Co. 7

T. Smith (RHS)
12 carries, 106 yards

J. McClain (RHS)
12 carries, 117 yards

Smyrna 28
Cookeville 10

S. Gray (SHS)
7-21, 100 yards

J. Bryson (SHS)
20 carries, 178 yards

Franklin 35
Overton 14

K. Lee (FHS)
9 carries, 117 yards

A. Steele (FHS)
16 carries, 81 yards

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES seeks an Editor in Chief for the Spring semester

Candidates must be currently enrolled students in good standing.

To apply, complete a Sidelines staff application (available in COMM 269) and attach a resume, cover letter and the names and contact information of three references, and deliver to:

Steven Chappell, Sidelines Director, Box 8 or deliver applications to COMM 269

Application deadline: 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 21

Sidelines is also accepting applications for the following staff positions in the Spring semester:

News editor
Sports editor
Features editor
Exposure editor
Photo editor
Opinions editor
Copy editor
Staff writers
Staff photographers
Design editor
Staff designers

To apply, come by COMM 269 and fill out an application. These positions are open until filled.

ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK PARTICIPANT APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE

Applications available in KUC 326-S and online at www.mtsu.edu/~camporgs.

DEADLINE TO APPLY: NOVEMBER 21, 2007

Alternative Spring Break is a life-changing experience that provides service opportunities outside of Tennessee during spring break. Students participate in intensive service experiences that provide them an opportunity to make a true difference in the lives of others.

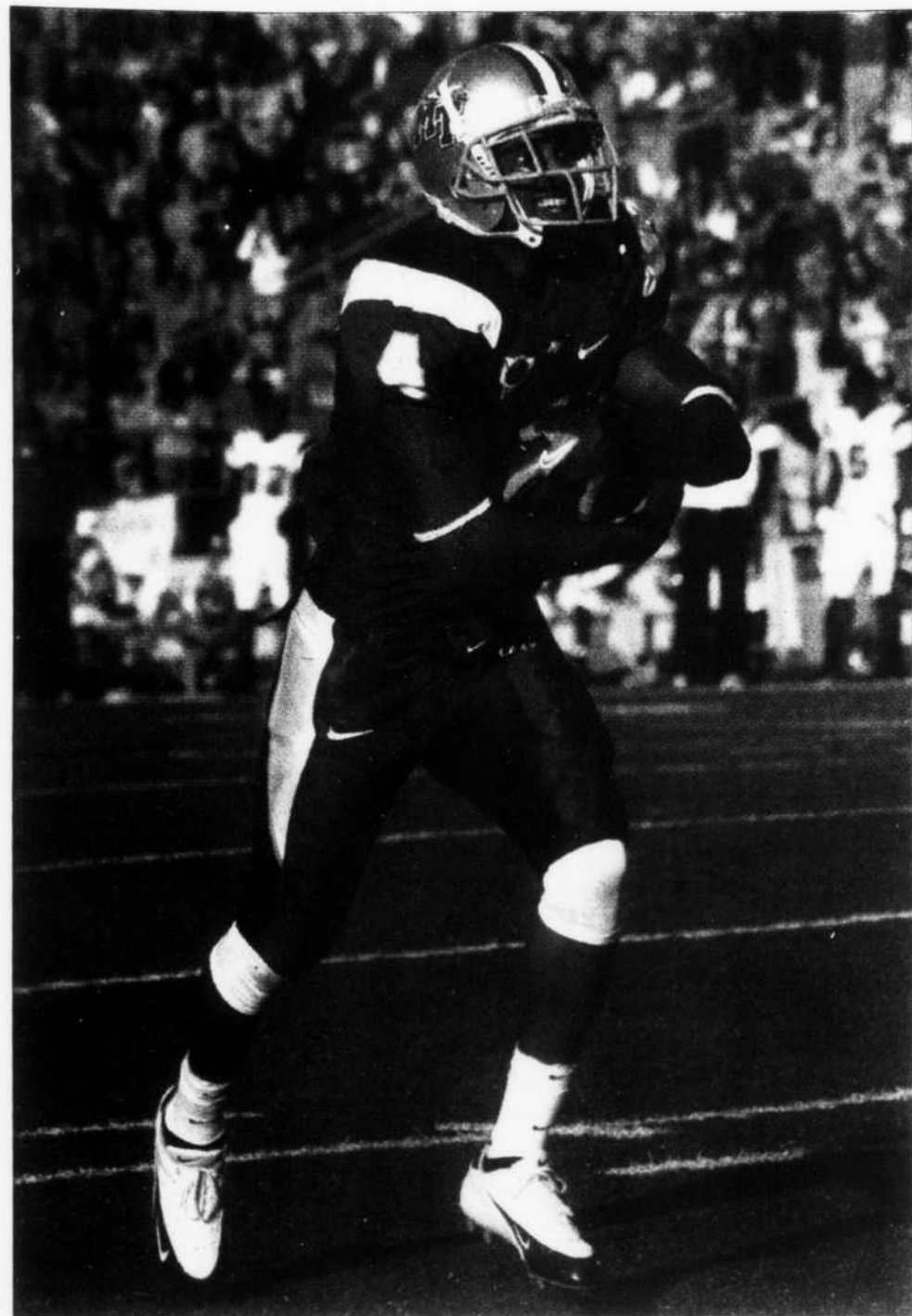


Photo by Ryan DeBoer / Staff Photographer
Senior Taron Henry watches himself score the fifth touchdown of the season on the "Blue Tube" jumbo screen inside of Johnny "Red" Floyd Stadium. Saturday was the last game he will play in Murfreesboro, his hometown.

Win Streak: Team struggles for bowl bid

Continued from 6

others played the game injured.

"[Kellem] was hurt, [Tanner's] still hurt," Stockstill said. "We had a bunch of guys that couldn't go. Rod Issac was out there hobbling; he re-injured his ankle. You could probably see Desmond [Gee] and DeMarco [McNair]. They're not full speed the way they're running. We've got a lot of guys that are nicked up, banged up."

MT will get an extended rest as they prepare to take on the Troy Trojans on Tuesday, Nov. 20. Troy is undefeated in SBC play and the Blue Raiders must win to have a chance of making it to the New Orleans Bowl.

The game is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. at Movie Gallery Stadium in Troy, Ala. ♦

Blue Raider overseas: *The Diary of Chrissy Givens*

About Chrissy:

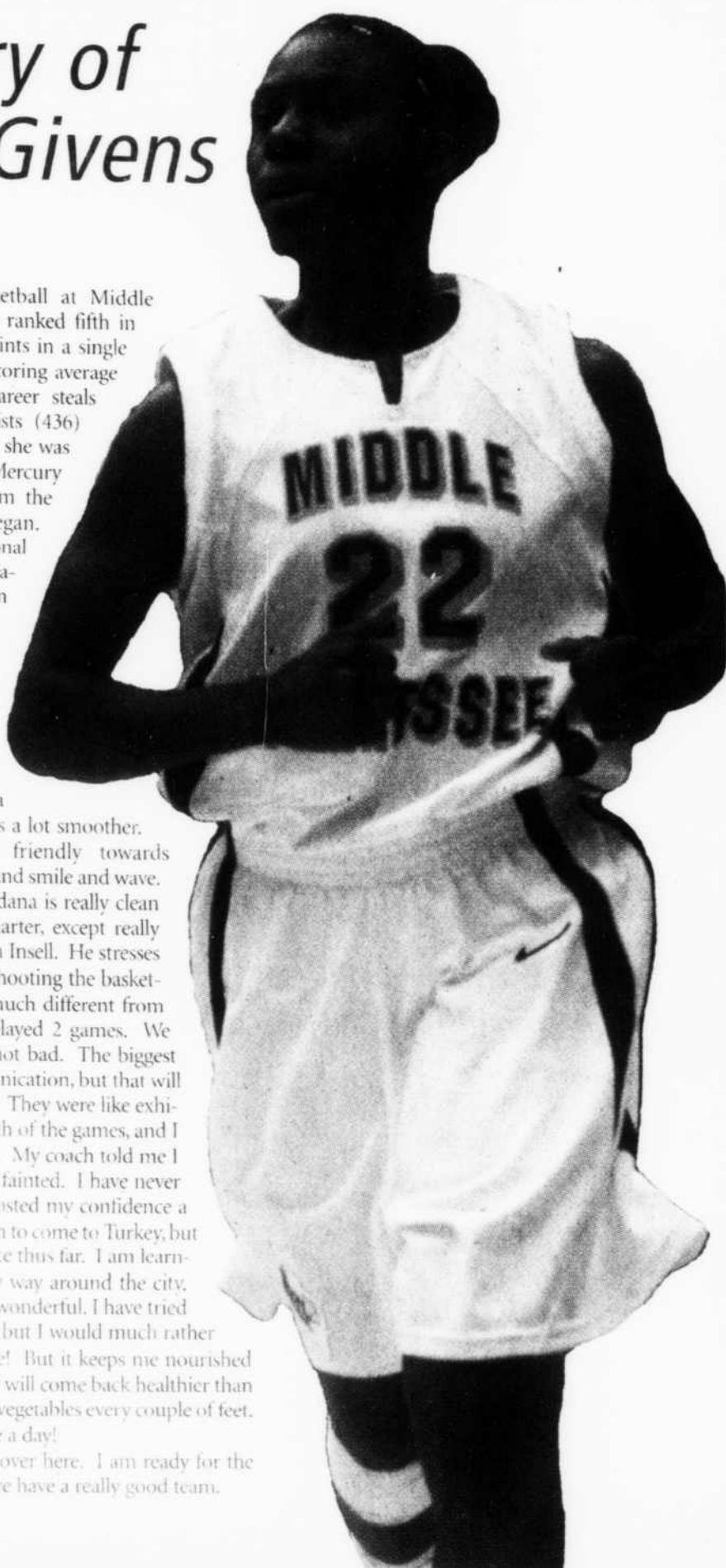
Chrissy Givens played basketball at Middle Tennessee from 2004-07. She is ranked fifth in career points (1,915), first in points in a single season (768), tied for third in scoring average (22.6 points/game), third in career steals (290), and third in career assists (436) among others. After last season, she was drafted by the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury but was eventually released from the team before the season began. Currently she is playing professional basketball in Turkey. She will occasionally write *Sidelines* to inform the readers of her experiences. This is her first installment.

In her own words:

Well, things are going well so far. We have a McDonald's and a Burger King, so that made things a lot smoother. The people here are really friendly towards Americans. They look and stare and smile and wave. It is very exciting. The area of Adana is really clean and it looks like the French Quarter, except really clean. My coach is a lot like coach Insell. He stresses defense, running the floor, and shooting the basketball, so the style of play is not much different from [Middle Tennessee]. We have played 2 games. We won one and we lost one. It is not bad. The biggest problem we are having is communication, but that will come. The games did not count. They were like exhibition games. I played well in both of the games, and I am getting back into my rhythm. My coach told me I was a great shooter and I almost fainted. I have never heard those words before. It boosted my confidence a lot. I can't lie, I was scared to death to come to Turkey, but it has been a wonderful experience thus far. I am learning the language and finding my way around the city. Like I said before, the people are wonderful. I have tried some Turkish food. It's not nasty but I would much rather eat my mom's red beans and rice! But it keeps me nourished and I am thinking that I probably will come back healthier than when I left. You can get fruit and vegetables every couple of feet. I try to only eat McDonald's once a day!

So far I am enjoying my time over here. I am ready for the season to kick off because I feel we have a really good team.

Chrissy Givens #20



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