

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

EDITORIALLY INDEPENDENT

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Sisco's victim speaks out

Former MTSU student who was brutally beaten in Cummings Hall in 2007 opens up for first time about her mental, physical, emotional trauma from that horrific night in exclusive interview with *Sidelines*

By ALEX MOORMAN
Campus News Editor

On September 23, 2007, just after midnight, a dorm resident found an MTSU student savagely beaten in a blood-soaked room in Cummings Hall. Her ear was cut off, her head was split open, and her mother only indentified her by her pedicure, which she and her mother had received



Manis

the week prior.

Ashley Manis, 19, was found in the dormitory of Kevin Sisco, 20, who claimed

in a 911 call that Manis had taken pills and alcohol in an attempt to commit suicide. Manis was rushed to Middle

"I will never be able to do the things I dreamed of doing with my life because of what he did to me."

ASHLEY MANIS
FORMER MTSU STUDENT

Tennessee Medical Center and then airlifted to Vanderbilt Medical Center where

she underwent extensive surgeries.

Sisco was charged and

pleaded guilty last week to one count of second-degree murder and received a maximum sentence of 14 years in a state prison.

Manis said that while she is happy the trial is over and working hard to recover, Sisco has taken away a lot of things in her life that are irreplaceable.

"I will never be able to do the things I dreamed of do-

ing with my life because of what he did to me," Manis said.

Manis said she suffered severe head trauma and received 80 staples in her head. She said she lost all recollection of that night and has a lacerated liver and scarring from her breast line to her hip.

MANIS, PAGE 3

Students fight against sexual violence

By FAITH FRANKLIN
Community News Editor

Students, faculty, staff and community members gathered at a candlelight vigil to "break the silence" of sexual awareness at MTSU's annual "Take Back the Night," Tuesday evening.

The event, which MTSU has been hosting annually since 1993, is a part of MTSU Sexual Assault Awareness Month, which is sponsored by the June Anderson Women Center.

Terri Johnson, director of the JAWC, said that the night was about "letting it be known that we do not tolerate violence."

"I was really impressed with the student involvement and leadership," Johnson said. "I thought it was a really great community gathering, for everyone standing together against violence against women, men and children."

Many students said they came out to support the cause because awareness needs to be raised about sexual violence.

Kriss Winslett, a senior English major said that she comes out every year because it is an important is-



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor
Students listen to speakers at Take Back the Night Tuesday.

sue.

Zack Craft, a senior sociology major, said that raising awareness about sexual assault and violence are issues that can impact anybody. He said that it is important to support people's equality, and Take Back the Night is a part of that.

VIOLENCE, PAGE 5



See more pictures and videos of the Take Back the Night event online at the Sidelines Web site



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor
President of Women in Action, Allison Lay (right), leads the march with chants at Take Back the Night.

University crowns Mr. MTSU

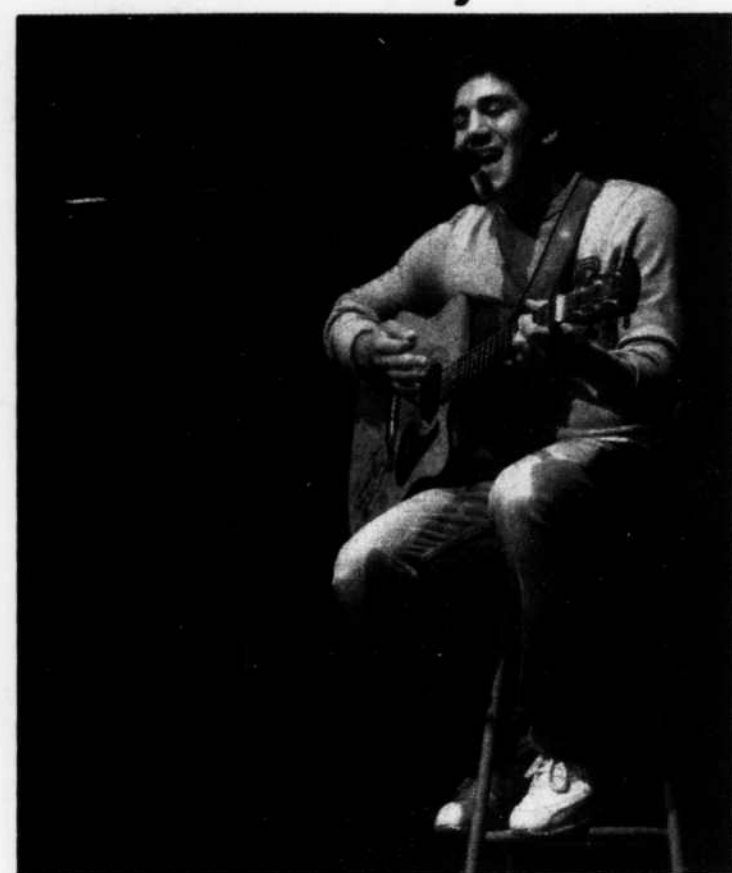


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Sebastian Garcia, Mr. MTSU 2009, sings and plays guitar at pageant.

By JAY BAILEY
Staff Writer

Chi Omega's "Wish Week" ended with the 40th annual Mr. MTSU Pageant, which raised money for Make-A-Wish Foundation on Monday.

Sebastian Garcia was crowned Mr. MTSU in a packed Tucker Theatre. Other winners included Joey Bell, a senior basic and applied sciences major, who won the "People's Choice Award." Second place overall went to Sam Metz, a sophomore liberal arts major.

The pageant is part of a weeklong series of fundraisers and philanthropic events to benefit the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The Wish Week fundraiser is the longest running philanthropic event at MTSU.

"[The Make-A-Wish Foundation] is a good cause, and there's no reason not to join in," said Patrick Mertes, the

2008 Mr. MTSU and a junior mass communication major.

The 12 contestants first competed in a swimwear competition. After donning their swimsuits, the contestants strutted across stage to try to impress the judges while striking a few poses.

"I just got up there [and] played my guitar and had fun," said Josh Wilson, a junior mass communication major and winner of the "Mr. Congeniality" title. "I don't even know what it means, but it's an honor. At least I won something."

Aaron Seldon, a senior mass communication major, displayed an unusual talent by mixing several beats on turntables and dancing on stage.

Following the talent competition, contestants cleaned up for the formal wear portion of the contest.

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Jaz's Jammies holds fourth annual pajama drive

By DUSTIN EVANS
Assistant Managing Editor

Jaz's Jammies will be collecting its final load of pajamas tomorrow, marking the finale of the fourth annual clothing drive for hospitalized and homeless children.

"Top of the Drops," the final event to recognize people involved in the program is scheduled to take place Thursday, April 30 in the Honors Building room 106 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Anyone who brings a pair of pajamas will be able to attend the event, which features games and discounted food from Blue Coast Burritos. Donation boxes can be found in the Keathley Uni-

versity Center, the Business and Aerospace Building, the Honors Building, the Mass Communication Building and the Wal-Mart on Rutherford Boulevard.

Jaz's Jammies is a local non-profit program started by Jasmine Gray, a senior journalism major who was hospitalized for a major portion of her childhood due to severe medical conditions.

"I decided to do something that affects children," Gray said. "I wanted to bring comfort and a sense of normalcy to kids who spend a lot of time in the hospitals or homeless shelters."

JAMMIES, PAGE 4

Greek Life awards outstanding students

By DUSTIN EVANS
Assistant Production Manager

The Office of Greek Affairs hosted the 2009 Greek Awards at Tucker Theatre in an effort to showcase MTSU's chapters of the North American Interfraternity Conference, National Pan-Hellenic Conference and National Pan-Hellenic Council.

The awards were presented to campus fraternities and sororities that have shown achievements in intramural athletics, individual and chapter excellence and hard work in various philanthropies. Among the winners, Alpha Delta Pi won chapter of the year.

"I think it represents our student organizations, particularly our Greek organizations, and what all that they do," said Byron Lightsy, co-coordinator of the Office of Greek Affairs. "A lot of people see them as just social organizations, but they do a lot of leadership development programs within their chapters and within the office."

"This is our first time receiving any Greek award, so this is really great for us," said Monique Denney, a member of Lambda Beta Alpha. "We are a small chapter and we are three years in."

"This is great that we finally got to the point where we are being recognized by the whole campus."

Kappa Delta also took home the awards for Outstanding Alumni Relations, Intramural Softball Champions, Outstanding Senior Kristina Davidson, Outstanding Sophomore Kristen McHue, and the Philanthropy of the Year, due to the success of the Wing Fling, a fundraiser for Prevent Child Abuse in America.

"We are honored to receive this award," said Amy Kinslow,

National Pan-Hellenic Council President of the Year- Kemari Cooper of Kappa Alpha Psi

Community Service Awards- Betsy Jo Culbreath of Kappa Delta, Austin Tenpenny of Sigma Nu, Deante Alexander of Kappa Alpha Psi and Chelsey Gray of Lambda Theta Alpha

All Sports Champions- Alpha Delta Pi and Sigma Alpha Epsilon

Gold Standard- Kappa Delta

Silver Standard- Lambda Beta Alpha

a member of Kappa Delta. "We couldn't be more honored."

Merideth Howell, the representative for Alpha Delta Pi, said that the awards ceremony truly showcases what it means to be Greek.

"The four pillars of Greek Life are scholarship, leadership, service and friendship, [so] it is a great measure of how we are living up to the standards that Greek Life sets for us," Howell said. "It is just a way to recognize the Greek organizations that are giving a good name to Greek Life."

Brandon McNary, student body president-elect and president of Sigma Nu, was awarded Greek Male Senior of the Year, Fraternity President of the Year and the Victor Felts Interfraternity Conference Man of the Year. McNary said that while he is honored, he feels the awards are more a representation of his organization as a whole.



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

Members of sororities and fraternities accept the Bronze Class Greek Awards during the Greek Awards on Tuesday.

"It's a real humbling experience," McNary said. "Not so much about my individual efforts, but what my fraternity has done."

Katy Riddle, co-coordinator at the office of Greek Affairs, said the ceremony not only showed how the MTSU Greeks have succeeded, but how they have achieved success together.

"It's important to remember that even though we all take pride in our individual organizations, we should also take pride in our Greek community as a whole," Riddle said. "When one of our members is awarded a scholarship or elected to a student government post or is a star player for an athletic team, we all win."

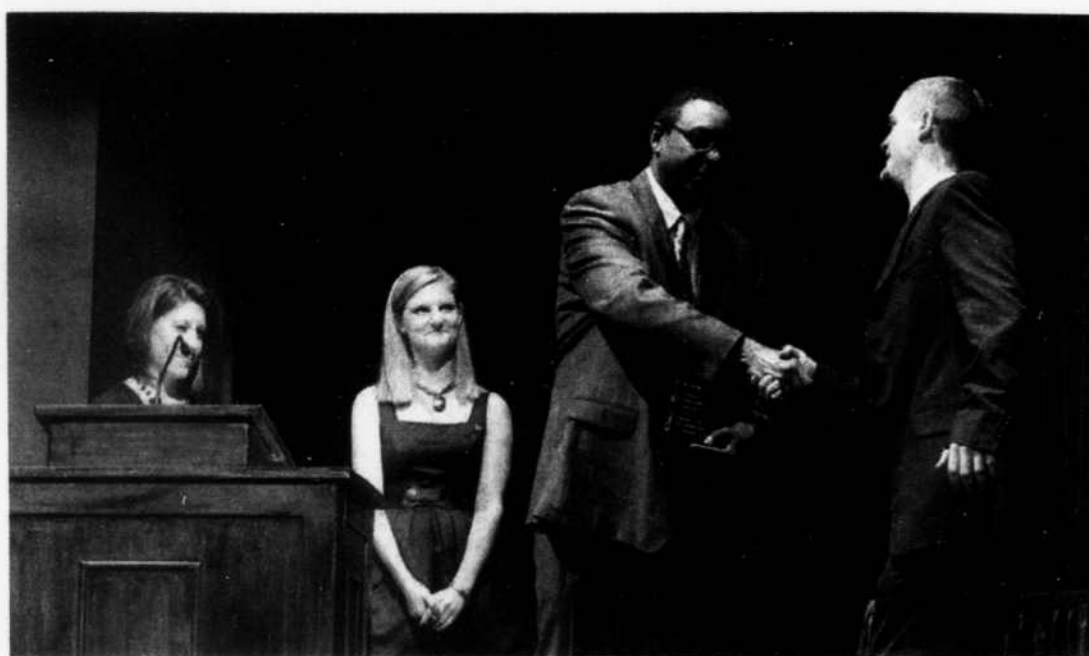


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

Byron Lightsy, Greek Affairs coordinator, gives Brandon McNary, president of Sigma Nu, the Interfraternity Council President of the Year Award.

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Tenn. handgun permit bill moves forward

By ERIK SCHELZIG
Associated Press

A proposal to close off all public access to the names of people with state-issued permits to carry loaded handguns advanced Wednesday in the Tennessee House.

The measure sponsored by Democratic Rep. Eddie Bass, a retired Giles County sheriff, passed the House Budget Subcommittee on a voice vote.

Bass told the panel that personal information like addresses and birth dates contained in the handgun permit database could lead to identity theft. Asked whether similar information could be found elsewhere on the Internet, Bass said he did not know.

"What makes this different than voter registration information that you can get off the Internet, or anything else?" said Rep. Joe Armstrong, D-Knoxville.

"Why are we putting this on a separate level, when we have identifiable incidents where people who have weapons permits who have committed acts of violence?" he said.

The Safety Department last year revoked 276 handgun permits for felony

convictions and suspended another 355 because of pending criminal charges or protection orders stemming from domestic violence cases. The names of people who lose their permits would be closed under Bass' bill.

At the beginning of this year, there were 218,004 handgun permits in the state.

The panel's chairman, Democratic Rep. Harry Tindell of Knoxville, had delayed a vote for three weeks to seek a compromise with open government ad-

has committed a felony, they can still get a driver's license, but they shouldn't be able to get a gun permit."

The companion bill is awaiting a full Senate vote.

Frank Gibson, who runs the Tennessee Coalition for Open Government, has cited several cases where investigations by media including The Associated Press revealed that felons and other ineligible people held handgun permits.

The latest debate over public access to handgun permit records was spurred

“Why are we putting this on a separate level, when we have identifiable incidents where people who have weapon permits who have committed acts of violence?”

JOE ARMSTRONG
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

vocates. But he said he was not able to find any acceptable middle ground.

Bass said another reason for closing the information is because he considers handgun permits a right, in contrast to driver's licenses, which he considers a privilege.

"Philosophically I can see where we disagree," Armstrong said. "If somebody

after The Commercial Appeal newspaper of Memphis posted the full database on its Web site last year.

Gibson has argued that legislation banning the publication of the full list of permit holders might be a better course than closing off access to database under any circumstances.

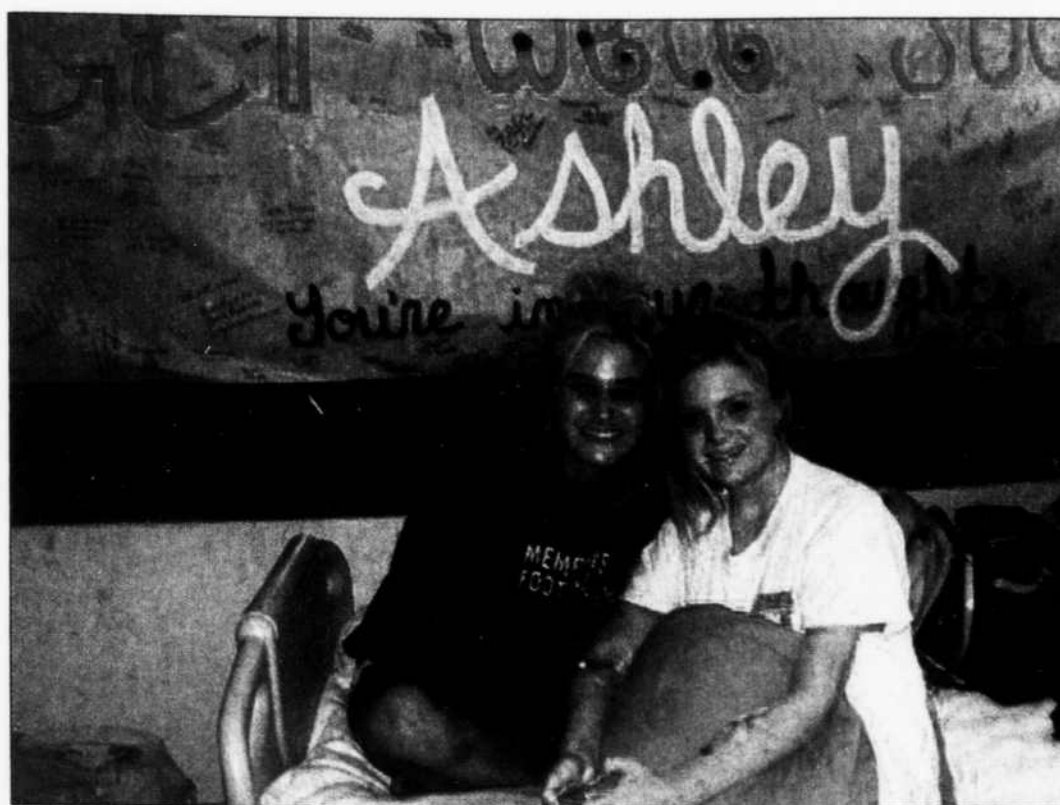


Photo courtesy Ashley Manis
Ashley Manis (right) spends time with her friend Melissa McDonald after her on-campus attack in 2007. Friends sent flowers, balloons and signs to Manis while she was hospitalized.



Photo courtesy Ashley Manis
Ashley Manis (left) leaves Vanderbilt Medical Center with Melissa McDonald after undergoing numerous surgeries caused by a brutal attack in September 2007.

MANIS FROM PAGE 1

"I don't remember anything from that whole day," Manis said. "The only thing I remember is the night before, and I don't even remember going back to my dorm that night; it's scary and nerve-racking to me to not remember any of the incident."

During the attack, Manis said Sisco apparently ripped off her left ear, and she has undergone many surgeries to fix the damage. She said she has not been able to take pain

the bottle of vodka he'd had that morning was completely empty," Manis said. "He said it had been full when he left, and it was empty when he came and found me on the floor."

Manis said that she attended Sisco's trial and was happy that it ended as quickly as it did, but that the image of his face still haunts her.

"I have had severe nightmares waking up and crying ever since seeing him in court that day," Manis said.

Manis said that while Sisco received the maximum sentence for his charge, she

he would always ask me why I wouldn't come up to his room by myself," Manis said. "And then one day I was like 'Whatever, what could happen?' and then this happened."

Cindy Manis, Ashley's mother, said she couldn't believe something like this happened to her daughter.

"We thought it was a very safe place for her to be and obviously it wasn't because the security that night was not doing what it was supposed to," Cindy said. "Otherwise someone would have probably heard her cries and that devastates me."

Cindy said that she had never heard Sisco's name before the incident.

"I think she'd had mild acquaintances for the short time she was in school; I think they were friendly, but I don't think there was anything more than that," Cindy said. "He was a completely new name for us."

Manis said the most hurtful thing about the trial was that Sisco showed no signs that he felt any guilt for the pain he'd inflicted on her and her family.

"The fact that he showed no remorse for me makes me feel very worthless," Manis said. "I wish he would have just said he was sorry, and his family never apologized either."

Manis said that she hopes women in the future will learn from her misfortune and be more alert when dealing with people they don't know.

"I think people should always be with someone else and never be alone with someone in their room until you know them," Manis said.

“The only way I would be happy is if he had to experience the same things that I went through.”

ASHLEY MANIS
FORMER MTSU STUDENT

medication for it because of the damage to her liver.

"You see no one realizes the brain injuries he caused me," Manis said. "I am always off balance, and I still cannot jump; I used to be a gymnast for 10 years and a volleyball player and softball player for eight, and he took those things from me."

Manis said that she had only known Sisco for about four weeks before the incident occurred and that their relationship was strictly platonic. She said she assumes his rage and excessive use of alcohol was what must have spurred the attack.

"I think that he was mad that I wouldn't ever have sex with him, and I also believe that he was drunk because his roommate walked in that night and told the police that

doesn't think 14 years in prison will ever make up for what he did to her.

"The only way I would be happy is if he had to experience the same things that I went through, like learning how to walk, talk, write, straighten my hands, pick up a spoon or run," Manis said. "I think that he should have to go through a year of physical, occupational, psychiatric and speech therapies and see a neurologist and liver doctor for the rest of his life."

Manis said that she doesn't want to have to stay another day in the courtroom with Sisco but that she thinks he should have received a harsher sentence.

"I know he pleaded guilty for attempted second-degree murder, but I think his intent was to kill me because

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

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

Application deadline: 4:30 p.m. Friday, April 24

Editor selection interviews will be held Wednesday, April 30, at 4 p.m.

Sidelines is also accepting applications for the following staff positions in the Summer and Fall 2009 semesters:

Managing Editor

News editor

Sports editor

Features editor

Photo editor

Opinions editor

Copy editor

Assistant editors

Staff writers

Staff photographers

Production Manager

Distributors

To apply, come by COMM 269 and fill out a staff application.

These positions are open until filled.

PRACTICUM CREDIT IS AVAILABLE TO ALL APPLICANTS.

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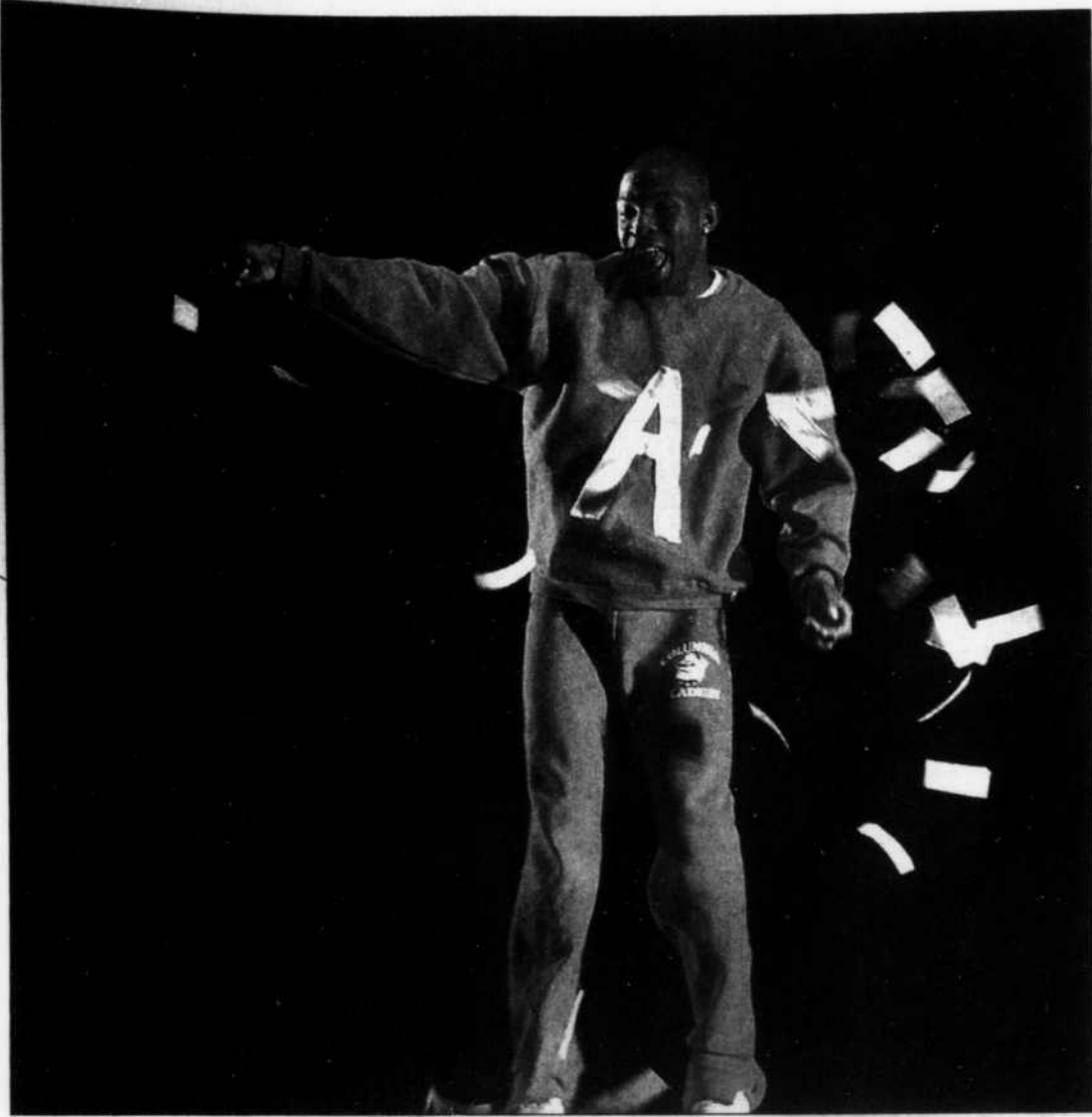


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
JaMichael Smith performed Alvin and the Chipmunks' songs for his talent at Mr. MTSU Pageant.

PAGEANT FROM PAGE 1

During this portion, all contestants presented a flower to Jessica Turri, a guest patient from the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

The final portion of the contest was a question and answer session where judges drew random questions from a hat for each individual.

"I'm just up here to kind of kill some time," said Patrick Mertes while the ballots were being counted to see who won the competition.

"It was a good contest," said Nicole Mazzio, a senior liberal arts major and winner of Ms. MTSU 2009. "The turnout could have been better, but with exams right around the corner, it's a complicated time for students to come out."

The winner of "Wish Week" overall was Pi Kappa Alpha, which raised \$1,500 in a silent auction. As winners, the fraternity's members will receive \$500 and dinner cooked for them by members of Chi Omega.

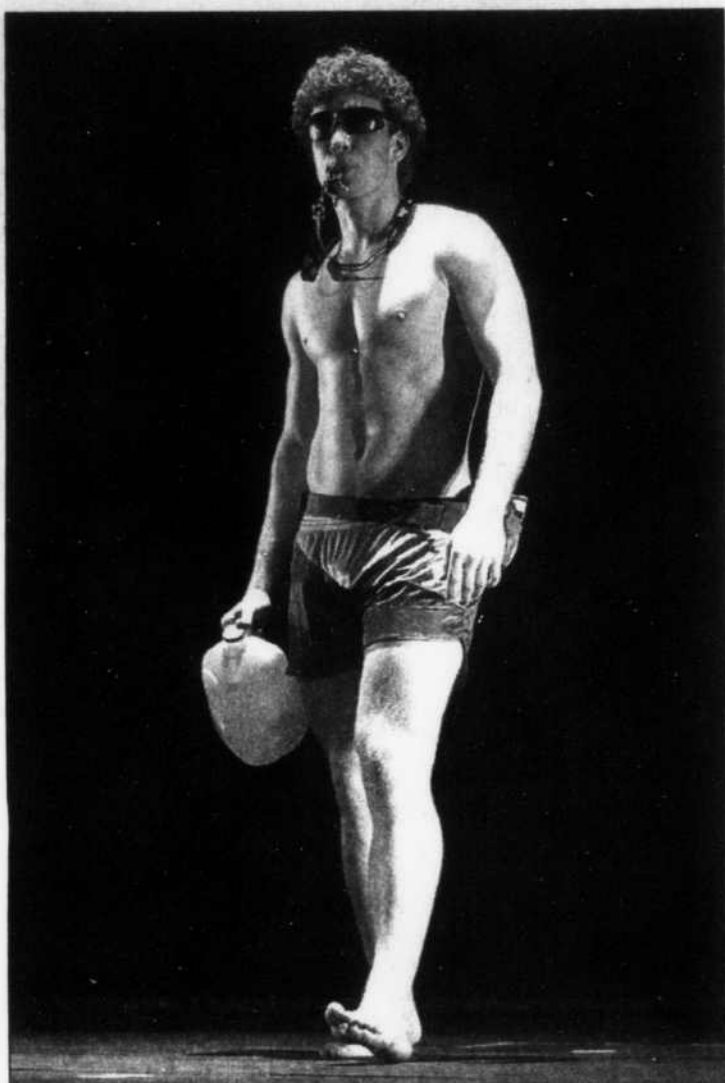


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Aaron Seldon strikes a pose during the swimwear competition.



Photo courtesy Jaz Gray
The fourth annual Jaz's Jammies gathers pajamas from students, faculty and community members for the less fortunate.

JAMMIES FROM PAGE 1

Gray said that while staying in the hospital, many children are forced to wear the all too familiar grey and white backless gowns. She added that the gowns do not provide the comfort and encouragement that a child needs to get well again.

"A pair of pajamas would have really helped me," Gray said. "The first year of Jaz's Jammies, we had a goal of collecting 250 pairs, and we collected 850 pairs."

Gray has been awarded two honors this year, the MTSU Community Service Award through the MTSU Center for Student Involvement and Leadership, and the 2009 Harold Love Outstanding Community Involvement Award from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

Gray said the Harold Love Award comes with a \$1,000 prize, which she will put back into Jaz's Jammies.

"I am just so proud to have her interest in the forgotten people," said Christine Huddleston, director of the Room in the Inn Day Shelter in Murfreesboro, who receives donations from Jaz's Jammies. "The children are just excited to death about the pajamas."

Huddleston said she almost always has children who have to stay at the shelter, and they never have luxuries like warm pajamas.

"My youngest [child] here now is only three days old," Huddleston said. "So many people forget the homeless."

Gray said that in addition to Room at the Inn, Jaz's Jammies donates clothing to Arkansas Children's Hospital, St. Jude Children's Research Hospi-

tal, Le Bonheur Children's Medical Center and Vanderbilt Children's Hospital.

"We always strive to make the patients feel at home away from home," said Kim Mangrum, administrative assistant to Vanderbilt Children's Hospital Volunteer Services. "When they have fun pajamas, it makes them feel more comfortable."

Gray said that the biggest challenge for her is getting people to help with donations or pitching in to help deliver the clothing to the various hospitals.

Jaz's Jammies started out as a need that Gray saw to fill and has now become an incorporated non-profit organization that helps children across the South, Gray said.

"One thing that I have always learned is that everything you go through is to make you stronger," Gray said. "The things that I have been through have not been in vain."

Up 'Til Dawn raises \$81,000 for St. Jude

Positions are open for next year's Up 'Til Dawn. Once you become part of this organization, you will receive experiences sure to add value to your resume and make you feel good about helping children at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

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Applications are in the KUC room 326-S and are due Friday, Mar. 20. For more info visit <http://frank.mtsu.edu/~uptildawn> or call 615-898-5812.



Up 'Til Dawn is a national student-led, student-run fundraising organization. Over 200 campuses participate in an Up 'Til Dawn event, but MTSU is among the best. For over 10 years, MTSU students have been leading the way in hosting this campus and community wide event, raising over \$640,000 to fight childhood cancer.



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VIOLENCE FROM PAGE 1

"I think feminist things like Take Back the Night or gay and lesbian things are all interconnected," Craft said. "We all have to work toward that single goal, which is to promote equality and make the world safe for minority groups and everybody that does not fit into the patriarchal society or deviates from that norm."

Deb Johnson, director for the Domestic Violence Program, said she came to inform the participants that in addition to JAWC and MTSU's Department of Public Safety, there are other resources in the community that offer aid.

"The Domestic Violence Program is a public walk-in office where anybody can come," Johnson said. "You don't have to be a victim; you can bring someone in, or you can come just to get information."

The DVP also has an attorney that can represent individuals without charge. The attorney assists women who are seeking aid when getting orders of protection for stalking, sexual assault and domestic violence, Johnson said.

District Attorney General

William Whitesell was also present, and said that he was pleased to see men in the audience.

"I don't need to preach to you," Whitesell said. "I am preaching to the choir because if you weren't responsible, you would not be here."

"As you go around this campus tonight and see other students, tell them about what you heard here and to do the right thing."

Several males in the audience were participating in the "Walk in My Shoes," initiative, an event in which men attempt to wear high-heel shoes during Take Back the Night.

Whitesell challenged several of the young men who were participating in Walk in My Shoes.

"At some point tonight, you ought to try and run in the heels and see what a woman has to go through to get away from somebody," Whitesell said.

Malcolm Oyobio, a continuing studies major and JAWC student assistant, directed the Walk in My Shoes initiative.

"I think it went well," Oyobio said. "I only expected six guys, but I had more to participate."

Oyobio said that he felt he understands how women feel.

"I figured that I had to make a statement," Oyobio said. "It's just hard to walk in them."

Jake Luna, a junior liberal arts major, said that it hurt to walk in heels and that he "got a glimpse" of what women have to go through.

"I actually had to try and run in them, and you can't go very fast," Luna said. "It would be pretty scary to try and run away from a predator in heels."

Luna said that it was good for men to attend Take Back the Night because he feels that guys are not familiar with sexual assault and domestic violence.

"I think that guys should take advantage and get educated about this issue," Luna said.

Oyobio said that he would encourage other males to become involved.

"When you find that lady you want to settle down with, she may have gone through either domestic violence or sexual assault, and how are you going to feel her pain if you don't know the information about how it occurs," Oyobio said.

The rally ended with the Open Mic Session, which was

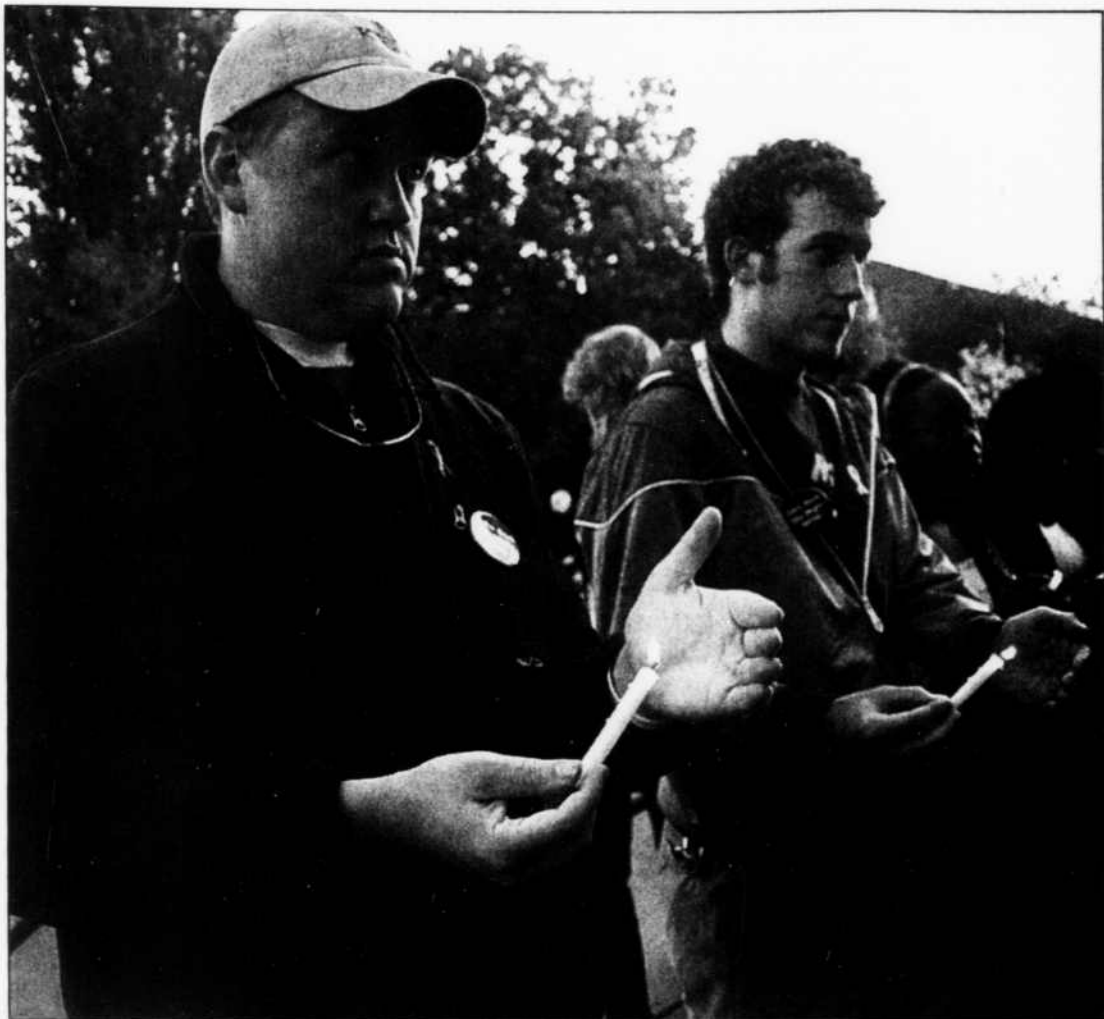


Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

Wes Hall (left), a junior accounting major, and Cody Smith, an undeclared freshman, light candles for women's rights issues at Take Back the Night Tuesday.

set-aside for individuals who were victims and friends of victims to share their testimonies.

Following the rally, participants marched around campus chanting phrases pertaining to

sexual awareness.

The event culminated with a candlelight vigil lead by Shelly Wright, a sexual assault counselor for the DVP and SAS. Candles were distributed in honor of the sur-

vivors and victims of sexual violence.

JAWC is located on the second floor of the James Union Building. For more information call 898-2193 or visit mtsu.edu/~jawc/.

CURRENT EVENTS

9th Annual MTSU Student Film Festival

April 20-24

Visit KUC 308 for more information

The Leonard Brothers Band Reunion With Fuel to Fire

Saturday, April 25 at 9 p.m.

Admission: \$7

Location: 527 Main Street

Anathens EP Release With Dear Future and

The Compromise

Sunday, April 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Location: 527 Main Street

Chris Young & Friends Tornado Relief Benefit

Friday, May 1 at 7 p.m.

Admission: \$15

Location: MTSU Murphy Center

More information: visit chrisyoung-country.com

13th Annual JazzFest Featuring John Ellis,

Percussion XS, the Music City Swing and U.S. Army Jazz Guardians

Friday, May 1 from 6 p.m. until 10:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 2 from 11 a.m. until 9:30 p.m.

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Location: Town Square

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Free Self-Defense Workshop Conducted by Mr. Don

Dennis, Police Officer

Saturday, May 2 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Location: Auxiliary Gym 1 Murphy Center

More Information: RSVP by April 24 to Nancy James at 615.898.2970

Framing Hanley with DJ Cliff D, The Good Side and Flight Case for Sushi

Saturday, May 2 at 9:30 p.m.

Location: 527 East Main

April 17, 3:13 p.m.

Theft

Murphy Center

Subject called and requested an officer in reference to a computer missing.

April 18, 2:47 a.m.

Drug Possession

Bell Street Lot

Christian Woods was issued a state citation for unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia.

April 18, 4:51 p.m.

Miscellaneous

MTSU Police Department

Complainant advised that a former friend was hacking into an ex-boyfriend's e-mail.

April 19, 12:42 a.m.

Traffic

Monohan Hall

Complainant advised he witnessed a vehicle strike his girlfriend's vehicle and leave the scene.

April 19, 7:58 p.m.

Vehicle Stop

MTSU Campus

Everett Burbridge was issued a state citation for going 48 in a posted 15 mph area.

April 19, 10:18 p.m.

Stolen Vehicle

Red 1998 Ford Mustang reported missing.

April 20, 3:46 p.m.

Theft

Scarlett Commons

Complainant advised that a Dell Inspiron laptop, a DVD, a PS3 and six games were stolen from his apartment.

April 21, 2:52 a.m.

Trespassing

Scarlett Commons

Ricky Gammond and Kevin Briggs were issued a trespassing warning.

April 21, 9:11 a.m.

Theft

Recreation Center

Subject called and requested an officer in reference to making a theft report.

April 21, 12:29 p.m.

Traffic

Greenland Drive Lot

Subject called and advised that someone had hit her vehicle and left the scene.

April 21, 2:38 p.m.

Vandalism

Business Aerospace Building

Subject called and advised that there was a suspicious note on the bathroom stall and asked for an officer to investigate it.

April 21, 6:24 p.m.

Theft

Davis Science Building

Reported theft of a textbook.

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ARMY STRONG.

Letters Policy

Sidelines welcomes letters to the editor from all readers. Please e-mail letters to slopinio@mtsu.edu and include your name and phone number for verification. *Sidelines* will not publish anonymous letters. We reserve the right to edit grammar, length and content.

OPINIONS

Sidelines is the editorially independent, non-profit student-produced newspaper of Middle Tennessee State University. *Sidelines* publishes Monday and Thursday during the fall and spring semesters and Wednesday during June and July. The opinions expressed herein are those of individual writers and not necessarily *Sidelines* or MTSU.

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Valuable study tips to take on your study day

The end of the semester is drawing closer and so are final exams. As students, we understand the difficulty of having to study for multiple exams and possibly having to hold down a part- or full-time job.

Here are some tips and study methods that students might want to take into account when studying for finals.

First, it has been proven that caffeine and nicotine do not relieve stress. Most people might think that smoking a cigarette will relax them and help them study, but using nicotine while heavily cramming is not recommended.

When it comes to caffeine, most of the time it is impossible to avoid on a college campus with soft-drink vending machines and a Starbucks in almost every building, so students should just keep it in moderation and not use it to stay up all night.

This brings up to the next study tip — keep a healthy sleep cycle. We realize most college students are insomniacs who find themselves awake at 4 a.m. watching infomercials, but acquiring at least eight hours of sleep a night will help concentration. There will be plenty of time during the summer to stay up late and debate whether ExtenZe actually works.

Sleep may help and so may medications such as Adderall, but this is not recommended (or legal without a prescription). Adderall is a commonly prescribed drug for people with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Attention Deficit Disorder, but it can have some negative side effects: loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, headaches, abdominal pain, dizziness, fever and increased heart rate. Students tend to think Adderall is a ready alternative to managing time but cast aside the law in so doing. Students don't need drugs to pass an exam, and it's not worth the risk.

Speaking of drugs, let's talk about alcohol. As tempting as playing a tournament of beer pong on the night before an exam sounds, it's probably not a good idea. If someone drinks too much then he or she might spend the night canoodling with the toilet. If he or she tries to study and drink, his or her memory isn't going to be able to retain all the information needed. This isn't always true, but do students really want to take that chance?

Also, a healthy and nutritious diet will help. This means no high fatty foods or fast food. Forget about staying up late just because Taco Bell is open until 3 a.m. No more McDonald's Dollar Menu. Healthy foods aren't cheap, especially for college students, but there are some logical alternatives for reasonable prices.

And when enjoying a delicious garden salad, why not review a study guide in the restaurant? It has also been proven that studying in different places will help you remember things better.

Take these tips into account and try them out on study day, Thursday, April 30. Use the time wisely.

MTSU could be more accessible

During my time in college, I've seen a lot of construction. It seems like no matter which school I transfer to, there will always be an ungodly amount of renovation being done on the campus, whether in the buildings or around them.

I've noticed, and I'm sure you have too, that when a new building goes up there always seem to be more wheelchair-accessible doorways. These large buttons that magically open doors, while occasionally fun to the ambulant, actually serve a genuine and critical daily function to those who could not open doors otherwise.

It's certainly meritorious that our university would be as forward-thinking and alert to the realities of the world we live in that they would so fully embrace aspects of universal design, a term used to describe architecture that is void of physical obstacles for all people, disabled or not.

But sadly, our university is



Desist! Rely! Conform!

Byron Wilkes

an old one. Not every building here is freshly spawned out of thoughtful drafters and careful school liaisons. Many of the dormitories are hardly habitable, let alone free of restrictions for disabled individuals.

The notion of universal design sounds great in theory, but the reality is it is more universal than the layperson might think.

While most of the buildings on campus do accommodate facets of universal design, very few are completely accessible on all levels and areas as easily as they could be.

One example is the Keathley University Center. While there are indeed wheelchair-accessible doorways, it seems like the building is most accessible only near Room 120, where Disabled Student Services is located.

But I'm not talking about just wheelchair-users here; a shining example is a poster on the third floor of the KUC that reads "YES YOU CAN" with a picture of a professional-looking blind or visually impaired woman with a cane, suitcase and, apparently, a new career in tote. The message is definitely inspirational and has good intentions, but the problem is the poster itself, which offers no Braille translation. Not that any blind person would even see it on the wall.

Regardless, the KUC is not the most inaccessible building on campus. It's the older buildings on campus that present a more formidable foe in terms of a universal design. The reason for this lies in the fact it is considerably

cheaper to build a building that is more accessible from the ground up, while existing buildings require considerable renovation and sometimes even structural reconstruction, both of which come with hefty price tags.

I realize the difficulties that lie within the work of making all space equally available, but this is work that must be done. And while some of the older buildings definitely need more up-to-date improvements, there are even more minute architectural flaws making day-to-day life on campus difficult for disabled students.

Landscape design can be seemingly open to everybody, but just because a sidewalk is sloped doesn't mean it is easy to roll up and down. Far too often have I seen men and women struggling to wheel toward the faculty parking lot behind the honors building. While the recommended slope is 1:12 (that is, every inch of rise should have 12 inches of run), this ratio

is a minimum and can still be difficult to negotiate for varying individuals. A better ratio would be 1:16.

Bathrooms usually have at least one larger stall, but many of the older buildings do not.

What really vexes me, perhaps more than buildings with only one accessible entryway, is incomplete or poorly built entrances. I recently encountered the presence of a wheelchair ramp on the side of the Sam Ingram Building, but the doors did not open with a button, neither inside nor outside.

MTSU has a long way to go in terms of making the campus universally accessible, but it has certainly made some headway. Even in times of budget cuts, this school can't afford not to provide the same building and outdoor access to everyone, not just the majority of the student population.

Byron Wilkes is a senior journalism major and can be reached at bdw3t@mtsu.edu.

Women treated as subordinates in America

While playing in a coed intramural softball game last Thursday, a thought started to become more prevalent in my mind more than ever: women are very subordinated in the U.S.

MTSU coed intramural softball rules say that batting lineups must be structured male, female, male, female — understandable. The rules also say that for every male batter the opposing teams walks, the female batting behind that male gets a free base without receiving a pitch — not understandable.

This rule is in place so that pitchers won't walk every male so they can pitch to just females. Keep in mind that this is slow-pitch, four-outfielder coed intra-



From the Editor

Michael Stone

mural softball.

The best player on my team is female. In our first game of the season, she was the reason we received a tie instead of a loss by making some quick catches on two line drives.

Softball isn't even a sport that is traditionally played by males. Imagine the girl-

walks-after-boy-walks rule in a parallel universe — in intramural coed baseball, for every female that's walked, a male must also be walked. I guarantee that male players wouldn't be too pleased with that.

If a particular female isn't as physically capable as a particular male, so be it. She doesn't need — and I would assume doesn't want — special privileges just because she is a female.

MTSU coed intramural rules are just one bacterium in a plague of double standards that run rampant throughout American society. Just think of how many head-honchos of businesses, organizations, etc. are males and how many times you

hear about sexist pay discrepancies.

Also, women tend to carry a lot of lose-lose labeling: you're either modest or a harlot, too submissive or a bitch, or too manly or totally ignorant toward tools, athletics and other such stereotypically male activities.

Males also receive a lot of sexist flak, only they don't often get recognized for it. For example, at MTSU there is the June Anderson Women's Center, a women's studies minor, the President's Commission on the Status of Women and various events that promote safety for women.

I'm not saying these things are bad, but they are symbolic of how the U.S. recognizes that women

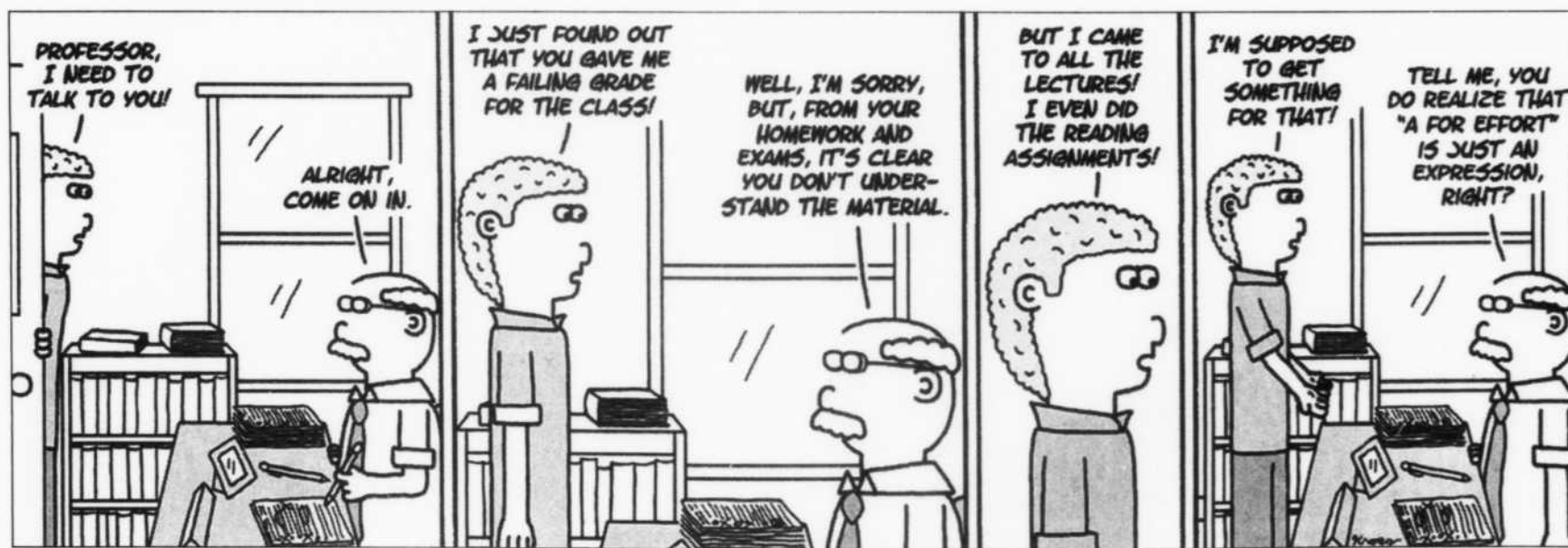
are subordinated against. Meanwhile, men aren't taken as seriously in terms of their culture, feelings or when they feel they have been victimized through physical or sexual attacks.

An American father seems to be more prone to tell his son to physically fight back rather than teaching him to take an alternative course of action. This is reflected in society through our emphases on physicality rather than mentality.

Women and men do have different genetic predispositions. But this should not justify sexist subordination in American society.

Michael Stone is a senior journalism major and can be reached at mjs3v@mtsu.edu.

COMICS



"Last Ditch Effort"

kroes@lde-online.com

John Kroes

FACES IN THE CROWD

What did you do for Earth Day this year?



Ferraro

"I picked up some free swag from the tables in front of the KUC promoting Earth Day and I haven't driven anywhere all day."

Danielle Ferraro, RIM junior



Ingram

"I got up at 5 [a.m.]... I planted some greenery... and I've abstained from petrol-chemicals except driving here, which I did reluctantly."

Ray Ingram, digital animation senior



King

"I sat down and divided up my trash to recycle it properly. Then I went outside and just enjoyed the earth while trying to stay off the grass."

Taye King, pharmacy sophomore



Parker

"Well, I forgot about it... but since someone reminded me I've been avoiding waste products and trying to recycle everything that I can."

Tim Parker, RIM sophomore

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FEATURES



DID YOU ATTEND KAPPA DELTA'S WING FLING?
BASED ON VOTES FROM MTSUSIDELINES.COM.

Filming indie movie over Spring Break

Twenty-eight EMC students make picture, 'The New, True Charlie Wu,' with help from professor

By PAUL BERNARDINI
Contributing Writer

Movie-making isn't necessarily a typical day for anyone, yet a handful of MTSU students experienced first hand what the words, "lights, camera, action" truly mean.

Under the direction, inspiration and personal check-book of Bob Pondillo, an associate professor of electronic media communication, "The New True Charlie Wu" is underway. However, Pondillo says nothing would have been accomplished without the help of 28 aspiring student filmmakers from MTSU.

"I really felt that everyone had my back and I had theirs," Pondillo says. "All of us on set were in service to the script, helping to birth ideas and helping to tell a mythical story to the best of our abilities."

Mythical is one way to put it, but musical explains it better. "The New True Charlie Wu" is a story about a young accountant stuck in a job that he hates. The money's nice, but his life lacks happiness. Then one night, a wild dream full of jazz tunes, soulful blues, old-school hip-hop and gospel choirs, convinces Charlie to break free from the nine-to-five lifestyle of suits and ties and to follow his dream in life—to become a marching band director.

"I'm certainly a prime example of following what my heart told me, and I'm really thrilled that I did," says David Lawrence XVII, antagonist of Wu and actor on NBC's *Heroes*.

Lawrence didn't necessarily follow the course of

whistles, cadences and funny-looking hats. Instead, he was a radio personality for 30 years before revamping his life to pursue his passion for acting. He plays Charlie's boss, Mr. Nugatorious, in "The New True Charlie Wu", and currently plays the role of Eric Doyle, or the villainous Puppeteer, on NBC's *Heroes*.

"Working with David on a professional level was a great experience," says Brian Harstine, MTSU senior and assistant director on the film. "And he has been a great friend throughout the production."

Production began over Spring Break. The crew, consisting of film professionals, students, gospel choirs and high school marching bands, crammed into DR&A studios in Nashville to what promised to be a great learning experience for the MTSU students.

They forfeited warm water, sunbathing and the usual debauchery on the beach for a crowded studio, the pressure of meeting deadlines and the inevitable long days.

"I was aching," says Pondillo, who also wrote and directed the film. "We were standing for 12 hours at a time. It really was like being a bartender, but without the booze."

Through the aches and pains, the right shots were successfully "captured." Pondillo says that the familiar term, "filming," has been ousted since "today's cameras no longer use film" but rather "capture" the images on a digital storage unit. Besides the fancy camera talk though, the crew had a lot to accomplish in little time.



Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photographer

Robert Pondillo, an electronic media communication professor (second from right), talks to Michael Liu, who played Charlie Wu.

In Hollywood, a typical movie is shot at a pace of two to three pages a day with a crew the size of a small army and plenty of time for rehearsals. The small MTSU crew conducted no rehearsal and had only five days to shoot 30 pages of script. To say the least, they were in overdrive but completed the film in the allotted studio time. However, the most crucial work is yet to come.

"Post-production is moving, but we need to complete an extensive file database for the clips and give a copy of the final drive to each of the editing areas," Harstine says. "And from this point we can progress with the edit."

To complete this "extensive file database" the editing crew will have to sort through nine-and-a-half hours of footage, find the best takes and compile them together.

From there, post-production will adjust and scrutinize the compilation among the various editing entities not once, but six separate times to finally produce a master copy. And according to Harstine, he expects editing to take a couple of months to complete, which, in the end, will produce a film only about 30 minutes in length.

"I rarely encounter a group more eager [or] more ready to buckle down and do it than the students on this film," Lawrence says. "They were fantastic."

Lawrence and Pondillo have been good friends for the past 35 years, and have had the opportunity to work side by side on previous films. In 2007, Pondillo's third film, "My Name is



Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photographer

Robert Pondillo advises NBC's *Heroes*' David Lawrence, who plays Mr. Nugatorious in "The New, True Charlie Wu."

CHARLIE, PAGE 8

Despite struggles, music keeps band thriving

Pico vs. Island Trees makes its own kind of music, performs with idols The Flaming Lips

By JESSICA PACE
Staff Writer

Under the retro glow of the lights at Mercy Lounge, the stage is cluttered with instruments beyond the typical rock-band setup. Lead vocalist Bryan Carter and guitarist Jeremy Bullock of Pico vs. Island Trees are accompanied by a stand-in drummer, bassist and keyboardist as well as musicians playing brass and string instruments.

The vast collection of musicians and the energy of their performance causes the EP release show to resemble a party more than anything else. And there is sufficient reason for the two-man band to celebrate.

"Getting a record out has been a really frustrating experience," says a very zealous and affable Carter. "We've had two or three records canned in the last two or three years. When we decided to do this EP, we decided to put all of that behind us and look towards the future."

This lead to the EP's title "Futura," which Carter describes as simple and like the album's melodies, without a lot of "bells and whistles."

The sunny six-track EP is equal parts symphonic and

danceable and is the autobiography of Pico vs. Island Trees in the last three years.

"It's about hope and also putting to bed the things of the past and realizing what you've done," Carter says.

The number of band members has very recently dwindled to two since bassist Brian Howell peacefully left the group in search of different

musical pursuits. This leaves core members, Carter and Bullock, but it

isn't unnatural for the two to be carrying the entire weight of the band.

The duo has been best friends and co-writers since seventh grade, and now, at age 24, they are still as musically collaborative as they were 10 years earlier.

"I'm a melodies man," Carter says. "I'm a lyrics man, and Jeremy's the glue. He can put it all together. He can come up with this great riff. Neither of us can function without the other so it has to be collaborative by nature."

Carter and Bullock hope to eventually have a solid five-or-six-piece band. In the meantime, Pico vs. Island Trees is sustained by the pair's snappy pop, peppered with influences of Motown, '60s rock, disco, electronic and even some ad-

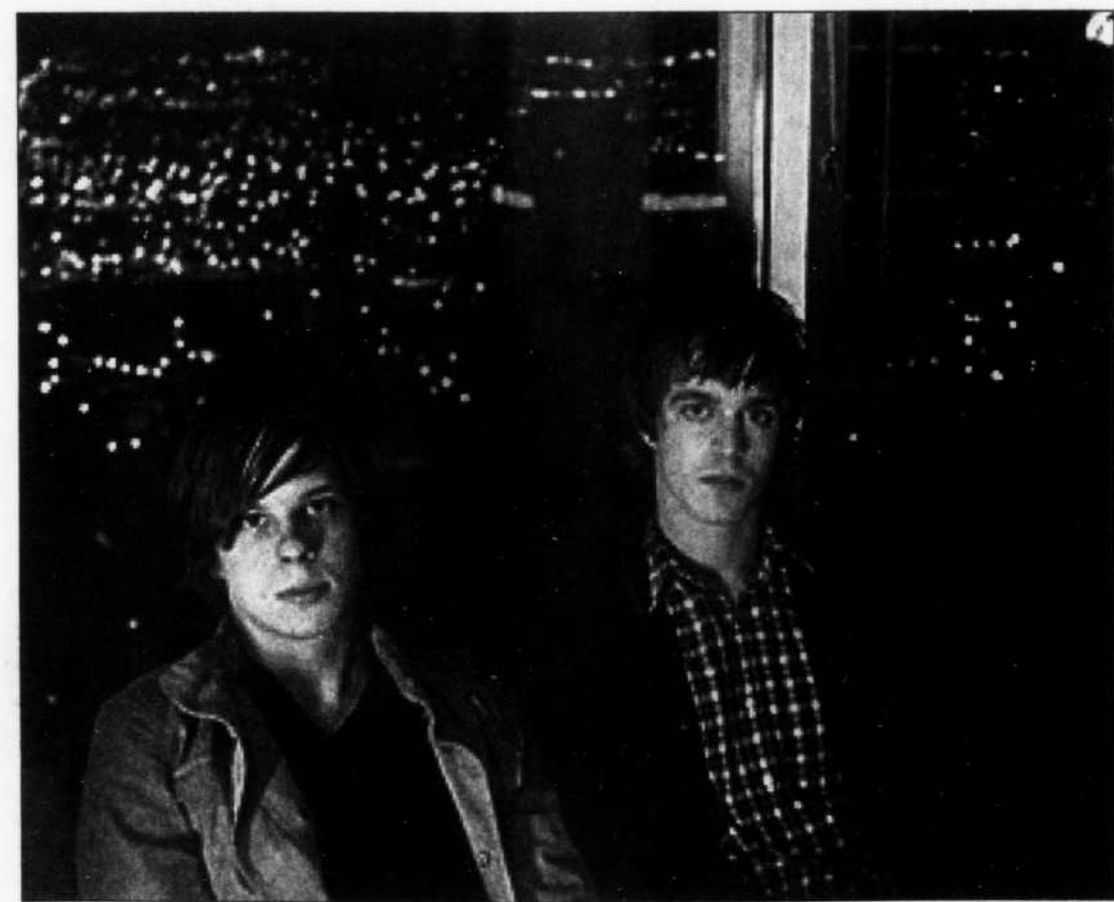


Photo courtesy of Pico vs. Island Trees

Bryan Carter (left) and Jeremy Bullock have been friends and musical collaborators since seventh grade. Now both 24, they still have a strong friendship and working relationship.

mitted Madonna and Michael Jackson '80s influence from older sisters.

"We go through phases just like anybody of music you listen to and kind of cast away after a while," Carter says.

It's really the older, aforementioned styles that have really meshed with Pico's whimsical, jazzy pop that finally has found its place on an album.

Previous experiences with shady Los Angeles producers took Pico from its native

state of North Carolina out to California. There, the band wrote and recorded which ultimately turned out to be a fruitless endeavor that fell through.

It may be true that one can never go home again because, back in North Carolina, the band found itself craving more musical resources and to be surrounded by musicians who would challenge them.

"We wanted to get out of town, and Nashville seemed

like a logical choice," Carter says.

In Nashville, Derek Garten, up-and-coming producer and good friend of Pico vs. Island Trees, took care of "Futura."

"He's someone we trusted to see our vision through and there weren't any weird business things," Carter says about Garten. "It was all about the music and we talked about business later."

Alongside the EP release, Pico vs. Island Trees played the Rites of Spring Music Festival

on April 18 at Vanderbilt University. They scored the gig after merely mentioning their interest to an individual involved with the concert. They never anticipated landing a spot in the lineup with The Flaming Lips, a band of which Pico is a huge fan.

"Jeremy has been seeing them every New Year's for the past two or three years," Carter enthuses. "It's unbelievable, so we're really excited to be a part of that."

At Mercy Lounge, the band performed with the same charisma and exuberance they demonstrate off stage. Between songs, there is a flurry of instruments from horns to tambourines being switched out. Feist-like singer/songwriter Madi Diaz also joined the band on stage to sing along for a song.

In addition to older recordings, Pico vs. Island Trees played every song from the new EP.

"Call Call Call" has a base of smooth disco-pop with an aquatic sounding guitar riff underneath Carter's complementary, gravelly vocals. The love metaphor combined with the Gwen Stefani-esque synth of "Sugar Rush" makes another catchy and upbeat track, while songs like "Able Bodies" slow the EP down with mellow jazz piano and a nod to Van Morrison with the inclusion of brass.

PICO, PAGE 8

CHARLIE FROM PAGE 7

Wallace," won "Best of Fest" at the Reel to Reel Film Festival in Cleveland. It also swept Oklahoma's Trail Dance Film Festival in 2007 for Best Actor, Best Screenplay, Best Comedy, Best of Fest, and won a distribution deal that placed the film for rent on a compilation DVD at all Hastings Bookstores.

Pondillo plans to submit "The New True Charlie Wu" to all of the same film festivals again this year and hopes for the same results.

"As long as we don't screw it up in editing, I think we really have something here," Pondillo says.

Lawrence, too, has been busy during post-production. He's created a Web site where anyone can be-

come a part of the film and have their name displayed at the film festivals for all of the big Hollywood hotshots to see. Basically, fans donate money to earn points and refer friends to donate money, which gives both participants points. The more points earned the higher, they will climb the credibility ladder.

"At every film festival, your name will be right there along with the people that actually produced the film," Lawrence says.

"The New True Charlie Wu" is expected to be finished by fall. A time and place for a public viewing has yet to be decided. Those interested in becoming a part of "The New True Charlie Wu" project are encouraged to visit youandcharliewu.com.



Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photographer

Cast and crew members of "The New, True Charlie Wu" review a musical scene at DR&A Studios in Nashville.



Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photographer

Cissy Catcher, Michael Liu and David Lawrence star in the upcoming short film, "The New True Charlie Wu," to be released in the fall.

PICO FROM PAGE 7

"Take it Witchu" is the stand-out for Carter on "Futura" because it reflects the entire EP's theme and pays tribute to those who have supported the band through times of uncertain success.

"It's always good to know that they're there for you," Carter says. "It's kind of, 'You go do what you need to do. I'll be here. That means a lot to me.'"

Whatever era Pico vs. Island Trees is encapsulates on each track, all are undeniably pop songs. It has no real rock edge, but pop is just what comes naturally for the band. Carter says pop music

is simply the result of their natural writing and musicianship, not a conscious effort to "sell out."

Ultimately, Pico vs. Island Trees is a small band with big instrumentation.

And somehow, they manage to work every instrument to their advantage.

"We don't set a palette for ourselves," he says. "One song can require synth and is really stripped down, and then if we hear strings and we hear horns, why not? There are themes that go between each song so we have a wide palette, and hopefully it will be made wider. Eventually, we'd like to focus it a little bit more, but at the same time, why limit yourself, you know?"



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SPORTS

Award-winning coach takes tennis to title

Blue Raider tennis takes SBC championship with help of recently named Sun Belt Coach of the Year

By CHRIS WELCH
Sports Editor

The Blue Raiders utilized two nationally ranked singles players, a ranked doubles team and an award-winning coach to earn the title in the Sun Belt Conference Championships in Denton, Texas on Sunday.

The men's team defeated Florida Atlantic University 4-1 in the championship match. The Owls were ranked No. 80 in the nation, and the team ended its 2009 season with an 18-8 record.

MT, currently ranked No. 60, picked up the doubles point to begin the match. The No. 57-ranked pair of junior Victor Melo and sophomore John Peers clinched the point, but only after seniors Robert McKenzie and Morgan Richard took on FAU's Daniel Vardag and Joshua Scholl for the early advantage.

"I am extremely proud of the guys after an emotional match last night to come back 12 hours later and get the job done," head coach David McNamara said. "I am very proud of John. He and Robert have led the team all year. John was 6-0



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

Junior Robert McKenzie volleys against a University of South Alabama opponent during the Sun Belt Shootout.

in the tournament in singles and doubles and just did an outstanding job this weekend."

No. 104 Peers began sin-

gles play in style, defeating Vardag 6-1, 6-2. Sophomore Kyle Wishing followed, falling to FAU's Santiago Nieto in a 6-2, 6-3 decision.

But MT made sure that Nieto's win would be the Owls' only point in the singles match, as freshman Matthew Langley began the sweep of

the remaining matches with a 6-2, 6-0 victory.

Richard would finish the match by clinching the championship for the Blue Raiders, shutting down Scholl with a 6-2, 7-5 win.

"[Langley], who has been injured most of the season, performed very well and for [Richard] to clinch the championship match for us was very special," McNamara said. "It is very exciting and we are especially proud of the guys who faced adversity during the season because of injury."

The Blue Raiders came to the championship match after defeating Denver in a 4-3 match just 12 hours before. The match lasted four hours and 20 minutes before Melo finally conquered in a three-set match.

MT garnered an automatic bid to the NCAA team tournament, taking place May 8-10. The team will gather at Toot's in Murfreesboro on April 28 to watch the 2009 NCAA Selection Show on ESPN.

Members of the Blue Raider Nation are invited to come support the men's tennis team as it sees where it will begin its postseason

play.

Upon winning the Sun Belt Championship title, the Blue Raiders have moved up the Intercollegiate Tennis Association poll to No. 56, as listed in a Tuesday release.

McNamara was also given recognition, earning the title of Sun Belt Coach of the Year for his efforts with the Blue Raider tennis team. McNamara led MT to a 16-9 regular season record, and victories over nationally ranked opponents including Old Dominion, BYU and Denver.

"I am extremely honored to be named Coach of the Year because this award is voted on by the other coaches," McNamara said. "To be respected by your peers means a lot and is something you want when you are a new coach to the league."

McNamara says he will waste no time in preparing the team for the NCAA tournament. "We are going to work as hard as possible to prepare for the NCAA's, and make sure we are a force in the tournament once play begins."

The NCAA Selection Show is scheduled to air April 28 at 4:20 p.m. CST on ESPN.

Blue Raider baseball wins again, defeats MSU

Bryce Brentz, Rawley Bishop power MT offense to 10-6 victory to improve record to 28-10 overall

By STEPHEN CURLEY
Staff Writer

Sophomore left fielder Bryce Brentz and senior third baseman Rawley Bishop each had four hits as the Blue Raiders beat Mississippi State 10-6 Tuesday night in Starkville.

Brentz and Bishop both went 4-for-5, with Brentz's three RBIs coming on a home run in the fifth inning. Bishop finished with just one RBI, but his two doubles were key in manufacturing runs for the Blue Raiders.

Senior center fielder Nathan Hines and designated hitter Grant Box also drove in one and two runs, respectively.

MT's break came in the fifth inning, when it scored five runs to take the lead 7-2 helped by Brentz's three-run shot to left-center field. The next inning, junior first baseman Ben Darlington's two-run blast gave the Blue Raiders a 10-2 lead, and the team never looked back.

Junior pitcher Chad Edwards was credited with the

win, allowing two runs on six hits in five innings of work. Seniors Brett Smalley and Chad Coley each threw a scoreless inning in relief before sophomore Jud Stoltz was hampered for four runs in the eighth.

Edwards improves to 6-1 with a 5.51 ERA with the victory.

Junior Coty Woods picked up his ninth save, striking out two of the three batters he faced in the ninth inning. Woods leads the team with a 2.38 ERA.

Bulldogs relief pitcher Lee Swindle was stuck with the loss after giving up five runs on six hits in three innings. Starter David Hayes and reliever Tyler Whitney each gave up two runs in their appearances.

Leading the Mississippi State offense was third baseman Russ Sneed, who drove in two with his home run in the eighth inning. Center fielder Grant Hogue also had a hot bat, going 3-for-4 and scoring one run.

Brentz's performance improves on his already terrific



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

Senior catcher Grant Box calls a meeting on the pitcher's mound during Saturday's double header against the University of Louisiana Monroe.

season, bringing his home run total to 20 and batting average to a high .478 with 49 RBIs. Bishop's average now stands at .393.

With the victory, the Blue

Raiders improve to 28-10, including a 20-3 home record, while the Bulldogs fall to 20-21. MT continues to fight with Western Kentucky for first place in

the Sun Belt Conference.

Middle Tennessee will travel to Mobile for a weekend series with the University of South Alabama starting Friday at 6 p.m.

Top Performers

P/OF Bryce Brentz #7 SO-1L
4-for-5, 1 home run, 3 RBIs, 3 runs

IF Rawley Bishop #17 SR-3L
4-for-5, 1 RBI, 2 doubles

Rising NFL prospect proves athletes have heart

To most of us, sports is all about doing manly extreme feats of athletic awesomeness like slam dunking a ball over a hapless defender. But sometimes a softer, more human side of sports needs to be emphasized.

Yes, the idea might be a little gushy, but bear with me.

Athletes are more than just physically fit bodies and million dollar contracts. There's a heart inside of them just like the rest of us. One such individual rose above the endless stream of negative media and presented a positive image that you can truly smile and feel good about.

In a few months time, NFL prospect Aaron Curry will own a contract with a ton of zeros in it, suit up for a big-money football franchise and play a sport once a week for



Mr. Irrelevant

Zach Reves

a living. But first, after four extremely successful years as a linebacker for Wake Forest University, Curry will be selected in the NFL Draft this Saturday.

And he won't be doing it alone.

Along with his parents, fiancé and siblings, Curry will share one of his life's most important events with a person he admires very much:

12-year-old Bryson Merriweather of Memphis.

Merriweather has been battling leukemia for two years, and through extensive chemotherapy at St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, the disease has gone into remission. After fighting through the disease, Merriweather and his family have been strong fundraisers and supporters of bone marrow transplants, which caught Curry's attention.

Now Merriweather, who plays football himself, will travel to New York and be a part of something special.

"After meeting Bryson, I just think it was the perfect route to go," Curry told ESPN. "Bryson has already done so much in the community, and he's only 12."

So I told him, 'Come to

New York with me and get drafted into the NFL."

You can only guess Merriweather's mindset after being invited like that, but a picture of shock and big smiles probably wouldn't be too far off. It's not often that a person takes advantage of his or her fortunes and shares it to bring happiness to others. It's even more rare when there is little driving force behind the actions other than kindness.

Curry has never experienced a loss in his family or friends due to cancer, yet he is reaching out to Merriweather because he can. Sure, the cynical audience could claim that it's all cooked up by his agent, but I don't buy that. Curry seems involved and truly wants to bring joy and hope to a child who is less

fortunate.

And let me remind you, that Curry hasn't even made it into the NFL yet. Officially he is still a 22-year-old college player without a lot behind his name, but he is still doing what he feels is right. Curry could be spending his time at clubs like other athletes, but instead he frequents local hospitals.

There's also very little that Curry stands to gain professionally by doing this favor for Merriweather. Curry is already slated to be a top-five pick in this year's draft, so he can't really improve his stock any more.

Sure some teams may see this kindness as a sign of good character, but that hardly puts him in a position to make more money. It's a horrible truth, but teams pay

for how players play, not how they act. It's no secret that the NFL has its fair share of lawbreakers and hooligans, so it's a refreshing change of pace to hear that some of the young aspiring stars have good heads on their shoulders.

Frankly, I'm tired of hearing about Michael Vick or the latest NFL player facing off against the rules of law and decency. I want to hear more about guys like Curry who stand up and make the right choice. These guys aren't trying to change the world—they are just trying to make what we have a little better.

My hat goes off to you, Mr. Curry, and I wish that more athletes avoided excess and added to the world's well-being like you.

Unearned run costs softball doubleheader sweep



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Junior Lindsay Vander Lugt throws a pitch to a University of North Texas opponent on April 5th.

By ZACH REVES
Assistant Sports Editor

The Blue Raider softball team split its doubleheader against Evansville University with a 4-0 victory and a 6-5 extra innings loss Tuesday evening at Cooper Stadium.

Junior Lindsey Vander Lugt (7-14) continued her impressive season for the Blue Raiders as she allowed only one earned run over a combined 14.2 innings in both games of the doubleheader.

MT (9-30, 3-15 Sun Belt Conference) was coming off a 9-4 loss to then No. 18 Louisville before the doubleheader.

In game one, Vander Lugt pitched her fourth complete-game shutout of the season. She gave up five hits and struck out two to lead MTSU to a 4-0 victory.

Senior third baseman Martha Davis led the Blue Raider attack, going 2-for-4 with two RBIs in the victory. Fresh-

man designated hitter Shelby Barrett also had a solid game, going 2-for-3 with her first career home run.

MT started fast, scoring a run in the first through solid softball mechanics. Sophomore outfielder Kelsey Dortch led off the game with a single before advancing to second base on a sacrifice bunt by junior Caitlin McLure. Davis brought Dortch home with an RBI single to take a 1-0 lead.

MT added two insurance runs in the final inning as Davis and freshman catcher Natalie Ysais each provided an RBI single.

The Blue Raiders went 12 innings in game two before falling short 6-5 against the Purple Aces.

MT used three pitchers in the contest including Vander Lugt, who pitched the final 7.2 innings of the contest. Vander Lugt gave up no earned runs on four hits with five strikeouts in the loss.

McLure had a clutch game for the Blue Raiders, going 3-for-5 with two runs scored and a stolen base. She provided MT with the tying run in the bottom of the seventh to send the game into extra frames.

The Blue Raiders continued their fast-scoring ways, picking up a two-run lead in the first inning. Davis supplied a sacrifice fly and Barrett notched an RBI single up the middle to give MT a 2-0 lead.

However, EU stormed back with two home runs, including a three-run bomb to take a 5-3 lead in top of the third inning.

MT stormed back to tie the game at five with McLure's RBI hit with two outs in the bottom of the seventh, but the Purple Aces won with an unearned run in the bottom of the 12th.

The Softball team will return to action with a three-game home series against SBC rival Florida Atlantic University this Saturday starting at 1 p.m.

Men's golf wins Sun Belt Championships in final round

By CHRIS WELCH
Sports Editor

The Blue Raiders ended the final day of the Sun Belt Conference's Men's Golf Championship in Houston with a four-stroke lead over Denver University giving them the Sun Belt Championship.

With the victory, the men's golf team earns an automatic bid into the NCAA Championships.

In round two, MT shot for the best round of the day—a 1-under-287—and came from behind to erase all of the University of South Alabama's 12-shot lead. MT entered the final round of the championship tied with DU at the par-72 Tradition Course, located at Cypresswood Golf Club.

The comeback effort was spearheaded by juniors Kent Bulle and Craig Smith, who shot 1-under 71. Senior Chas Narramore shot even-par at 72, and sophomore Jason Millard was 1-over 73.

"We still have work to do, but what a day for these guys," head coach Whit Turnbow said after round two. "I had no doubt our guys were going to come out and have this type of day. It's their character. They have a lot of fight in them."

Six teams were separated by three shots in the top-six standings entering the final round. All teams were vying not only for the championship title, but also the automatic berth into the NCAA Regional Championships.

While the Blue Raiders were lighting up the course, South Alabama managed to come back to the leaderboard with a 13-over 301 after shooting

5-under on Monday.

"There are no guarantees when it comes to the post-season unless you win your conference championship," Bulle said after round two. "We have a chance to win a conference championship and guarantee ourselves a spot in the NCAA Regional going into the last day of the league tournament so we put ourselves in position, but now we have to finish."

"We put together a solid team effort today, and that's what you have to do to overcome the deficit we faced."

Bulle is tied for third overall and maintains a 2-under-142—only two shots shy of the individual lead—going into the final day of the championship. Bulle managed to overcome a slump on the back nine that included three bogeys with consecutive pars in the closing round.

Narramore is tied for 13th after he improved three shots from the first round for a 3-over 147. Narramore's second round was highlighted by an eagle on the par-5 No. 12 hole which helped to ignite the Blue Raiders' charge.

Millard is tied for 18th, with a 4-over 148. Smith made the biggest leap forward, cultivating his 1-under 71 on Tuesday for an improvement over Monday's score.

"These Championships are not won in a day, and our players have been in enough of them to know that," Turnbow said. "We didn't panic after getting behind in the first round; we just came out and did what we had to do. Now we have to do it again"

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MEN'S GOLF
Top Performers



Kent Bulle Jr.
1-under 71
tied for 7th



Craig Smith Jr.
7-over 79
tied for 49th