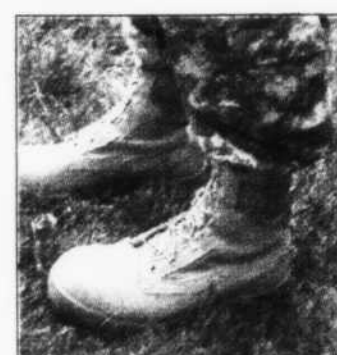


MT defense stifles Belmont

page 6

New ARMY uniform

page 5



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Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Volume 80 No. 42

Hallelujah!



Alice Clements sings "Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion" during Monday night's presentation of Handel's *Messiah* by the Middle Tennessee Choral Society and the MTSU Concert Chorale.

Photo by Rachelle Morvant | Staff Photographer

Grant funds new preschool

By Matt Anderson
Staff Writer

A \$100,000 federal appropriation passed by Congress will allow Murfreesboro City Schools to open a new preschool classroom.

The appropriation, secured by Rep. Bart Gordon, was part of the Omnibus Appropriations bill passed Nov. 20. The bill now awaits the president's signature to become law.

"It's well understood now that the earlier children start getting prepared to learn, the better off they're going to be in later years," Gordon said.

"We do have children on our waiting list," Murfreesboro City

Schools Director Martha Mathis said in a press release. "This new funding source will help us serve those 4-year-olds with the greatest need."

"We are absolutely delighted with being able to open another preschool classroom."

Murfreesboro City Schools is currently looking for a site to house the new class, according to Martha Worley, coordinator of instructional support.

Currently, there are 231 children enrolled in Murfreesboro's preschool programs. Worley said the new class would add about 20 students.

See **Preschool, 3**

Hall appointed editor in chief

By Nick Fowler
State and Local News Editor

Sidelines' Managing Editor Kristin Hall will succeed Jason Cox as editor in chief of *Sidelines* for the spring term.

Sidelines Adviser Wendell Rawls had only good things to say about Hall.

"Kristin is enormously capable and dedicated," Rawls said. "She has shown over the past three years that she is a superb journalist and a fine leader. The future of *Sidelines* could not be brighter or in better hands."

Hall said she is sure the spring semester will be a productive one for *Sidelines*.

"I hope to continue the aggressive reporting that people have come to expect from *Sidelines*," Hall said. "I'm extremely confident in my staff, so I expect a very good news department."

Cox will continue working for *Sidelines*, covering the state legislature from *Sidelines'* capitol bureau.

"I'm proud of what we've accomplished this semester," Cox said. "I'm confident that Kristin will continue to build on our accomplishments and maintain the quality news coverage that the university community has come to expect."



Hall

Cox made the move from *Sidelines'* old office in the James Union Building to their

new office in the John Bragg Mass Communications Building a smooth one, according to Rawls.

"Jason has performed marvelously and has guided the newspaper through some necessary adjustments and relocations that have made the paper far better," Rawls said. "The news coverage under Jason's stewardship has been terrific."

In addition to a new editor and a new office, the business staff structure has been revamped to include full-time accounts and advertising managers.

"We will finally be completely moved into our new newsroom in the Mass Comm building within two weeks," Rawls said. "With our new advertising manager Jeri Lamb and our new accounts manager Eveon Corl, even better prospects lie ahead."

In addition to her tenure as managing editor, Hall was news editor for two semesters and a staff writer. ♦

Honors college saves 'Collage'

By Erica Rodefer
Campus News Editor

The student-produced creative magazine will resume publication under the guidance of the University Honors College beginning next semester.

Administrators cancelled *Collage*, formerly part of student publications, in July along with the MTSU yearbook, *Midlander*.

Collage had been part of student publications since 1968. "We hope that for years to come it will bring honor and glory for the Honors College," said Phillip Mathis, dean of the Honors College. "And then will provide an outlet for a number of students to get their work out and seen by others, and that it will give a number of other students to be involved in a professional publication while in

school."

"That's got to be a leg up if you try to go into the publication world as a job choice in the future."

The name, *Collage*, and the premise of the magazine will remain the same as in past years, according to Mathis.

The Honors College has created a faculty advisory board committed to guiding the student staff to creating a quality magazine.

The faculty advisory board's role will be to select the editor in chief and approve the editor's appointments for other editorial board positions. The magazine will still be completely student-run, and the advisory board will not control the content, Mathis said.

See **Collage, 2**



Folklore plays role in movies

By Erika Decker
Staff Writer

English Professor Ken Deshane discussed folklore and its role in movies in Monday's honors lecture "Representations of Folklorists in Three Popular Films: *Song Catcher*, *Urban Legend* and *Candyman*."

Deshane began by explaining exactly what folklore is.

"Probably the best definition I have encountered is the one Jan Brunvand, author of *The Study of American Folklore* has composed: 'The traditional, unofficial, noninstitutional part of culture. It encompasses all knowledge, understanding, values, attitudes, assumptions, feelings and beliefs transmitted in traditional forms by word of mouth or by customary example.'"

Deshane said that while all three movies present folklore to the audience, they do it in different ways.

"*Candyman* and *Urban Legend* both focus predominantly on students. In *Urban Legend* the students are in a folklore class, and in *Candyman* they are graduate students. In *Urban Legend* the students are involved in the folklore, while in *Candyman* the student folklorists are collecting folklore, and suddenly become involved in the folklore as well," Deshane said.

Deshane first covered the movie *Song Catcher*, which takes place in the 1920s in Appalachia. In this movie, a professor travels into the mountains as a kind of vacation, but she discovers the local culture is rich with traditional Scottish balladry.

"In *Song Catcher*, the protagonist is a professor of what we today would call ethnomusicology, meaning that she studies music and the culture that surrounds that music. Her primary area of study is the collection

and study of balladry," Deshane said.

Deshane pointed out that *Song Catcher* could be viewed as an accurate representation of what a folklorist in the 1920s might have experienced.

He said it is true that the purest examples of traditional ballads would be found in such a "backwoods" area because the population consists of mainly Scottish, Irish and English immigrants who have had little or no contact with the outside world.

Another point brought out in the movie, according to Deshane, is that the locals' lack of understanding of the importance of the ballads.

"Frequently those who folklorists study cannot understand why we are so interested in fiddle music or religious rituals or, in this case, the love songs, or how we see so much meaning in

See **Film, 2**



This week's poll question at
www.mtsusidelines.com

What do you think of the decision to
retain Coach Andy McCollum?

Collage: Increased distribution expected

Continued from 1

Amy Foster, acting editor in chief of the magazine when it was cancelled this summer, has been named the editor in chief for the spring semester.

"It was really great of [the Honors College] to stick their necks out there for us," Foster said.

"We want it to be another little window by which the outside world sees the Honors College," Mathis said. "It sort of goes into a bigger mosaic or puzzle of how we're trying to provide new ways in which people who contact the Honors College can see the Honors College."

All members of the editorial staff will be required to hold at least a 3.0 grade point average. However, any student may submit content for publication consideration. All students are limited to three entries each.

"There will be a greater Honors College imprint on it than there has been in the past," Mathis said.

The staff will be comprised of volunteer workers, where positions had been paid when *Collage* was part of student publications.

"It will be people doing it out of the love in their hearts," Mathis said. "We want to maintain it as high quality as possible with as low a cost as possible."

Foster said she doesn't think the newly acquired requirements and lack of monetary compensation for staff members will have much effect on the amount of student interest.

"I have not actually put out a [release] saying 'Hey, we're hiring' yet, but I've already got four or five people that are interested," Foster said.

Foster expects the honors college faculty to help recruit students to work with the magazine.

Collage should fit in well in the honors college's overall agenda, according to Mathis.

"The Honors College is a place where we value scholarship and creativity probably more than most other academic units, and this is a journal that has historically dealt with creativity and scholarship in the literary and artistic fields," he said.

Collage will be a good complement to the electronic journal in the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, *Scientia*, which is already associated with the honors college, Mathis said.

"We had an outlet for the mathematic and scientific kind of things for the honors students, but we didn't have an outlet for the more artsy and literary type students," Mathis said. ♦

Film: Pop Culture evident on screen

Continued from 1

a simple quilt or a salt box house."

Deshane also said that those studying folklore can become too involved with their subjects and disrupt their lives by introducing new money into a fragile economic situation, becoming emotionally involved with individuals, or exposing them to things from the outside world they may never have experienced otherwise.

"Sometimes the imposition of an outsider's ideas or comments can upset a delicate balance that is already in existence and can create inadvertent consequences," Deshane said.

Urban Legend follows students enrolled in a folklore class begin to see the stories they are studying occur in real life. He said this movie is an example of ostensive folklore.

"In cases in which life is supposedly imitating folklore," he said it ostensive folklore," he

said.

Deshane said that *Urban Legend* contains many motifs that can be found in folklore. Motifs that are present include the "slasher" and the punishment of young people for being less than chaste.

In *Candyman* the characters are also students, as in *Urban Legends*, but this time they are graduate students collecting information on students' knowledge of local folklore.

Deshane said *Candyman* is another example of ostensive folklore, because the Candyman of legend comes to life and terrorizes the public.

Deshane closed with the point that a major part of studying folklore is how it affects people.

The stories may not be true, Deshane said, but after hearing a legend about a man hiding in the back seat of a car, one might still be more likely to check before getting into the driver's seat. ♦

Sittin' pretty

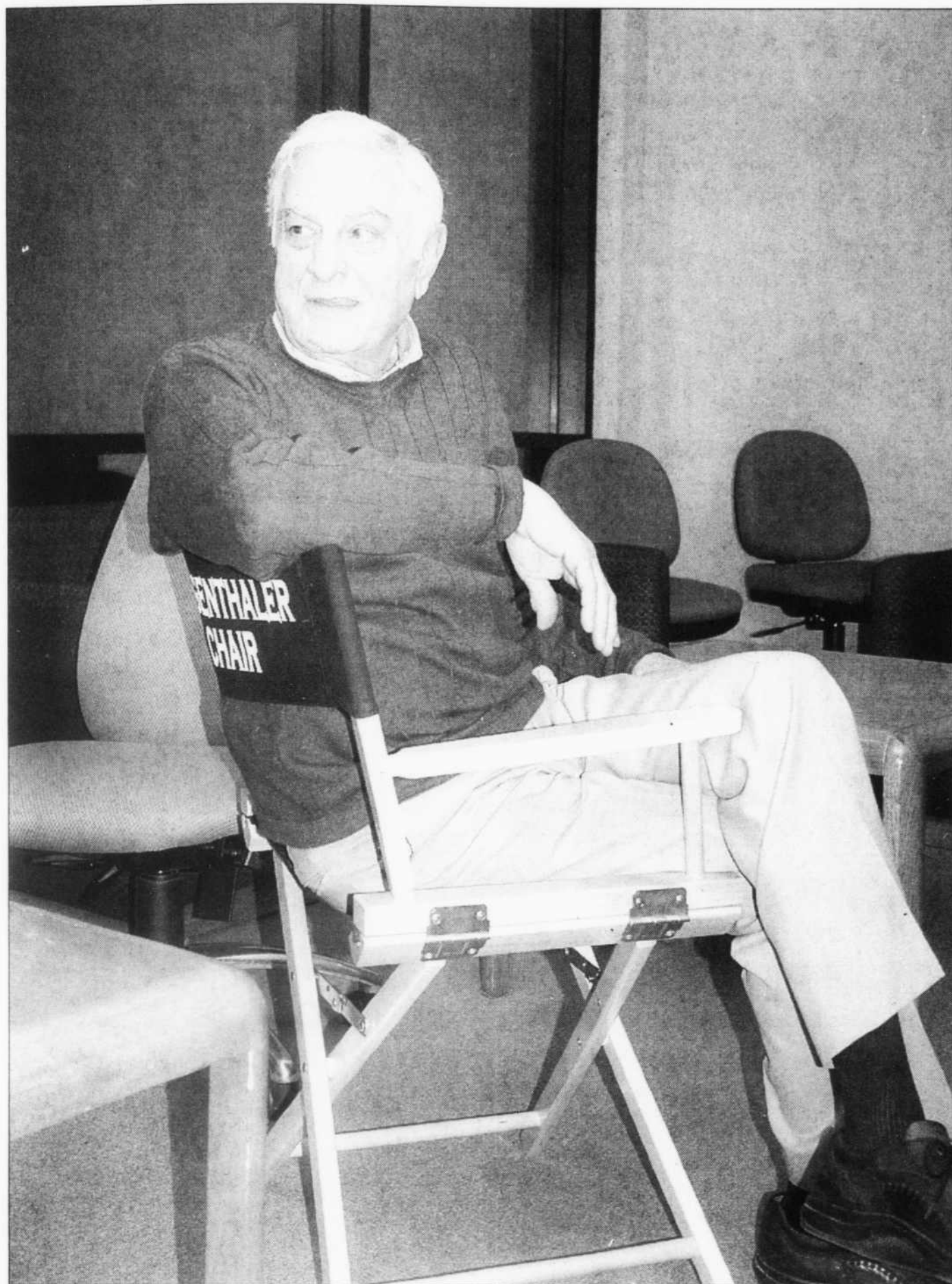


Photo by Mitch Cholerton | Staff Photographer

Siegenthaler Chair Bill Kovach, nationally acclaimed journalist, sits in the Siegenthaler chair presented to him at his official farewell ceremony in the Mass Comm building yesterday.

Got something to shout about?
Sound off!



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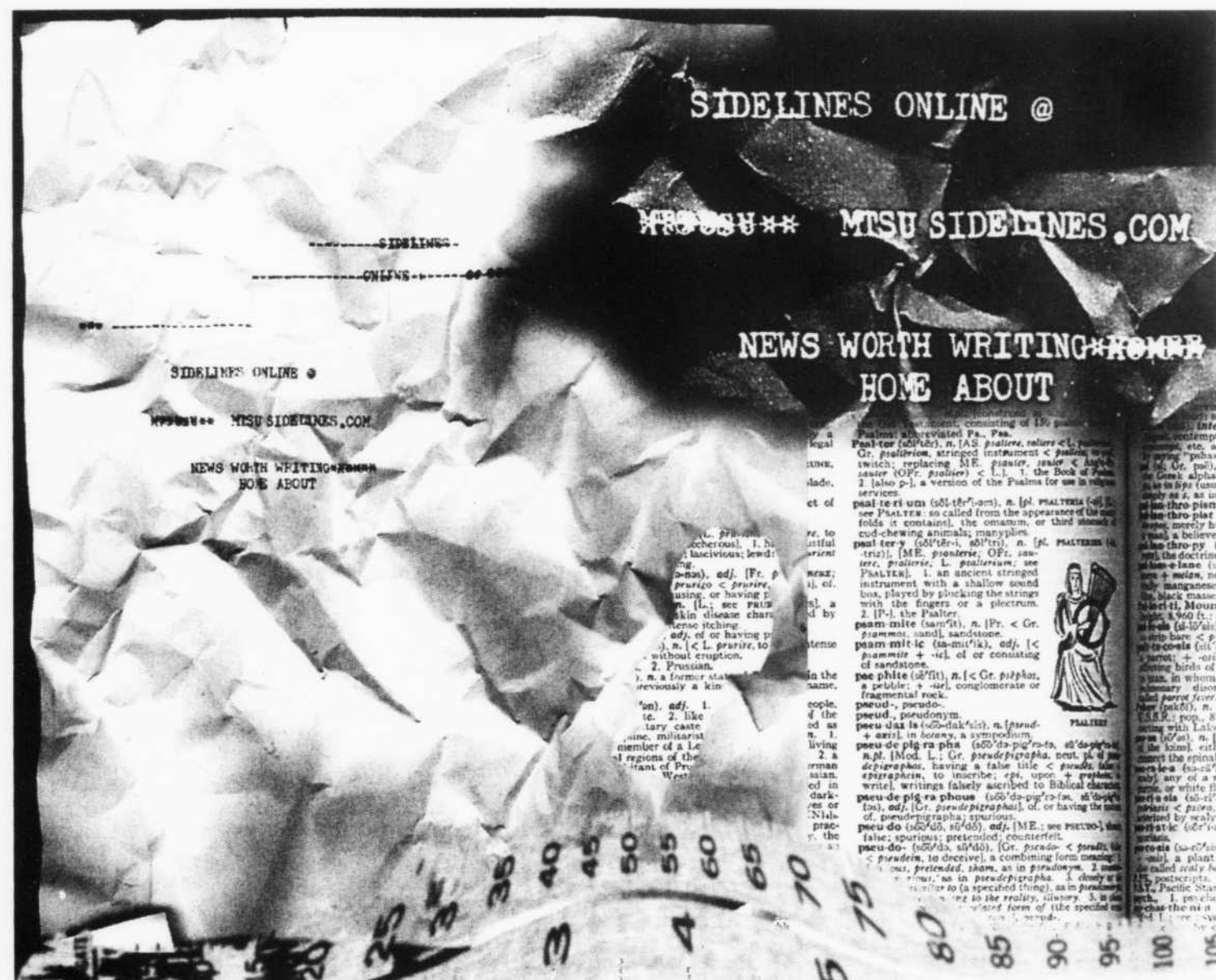
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State Republicans hope to get control of committees

By Matt Gouras
Associated Press Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — State Senate Republicans are offering Democrat Lt. Gov. John Wilder an uncontested selection as speaker in return for a majority on all committees.

The Republicans, at a Tuesday meeting to pick their first-ever elected majority in the state Senate to push the House, controlled by Democrats, on such issues as abortion and gay marriage.

Republicans won a 17-16 majority in the state Senate on Nov. 2, but Wilder appears to have the votes to retain his position as Senate speaker with at least two Republicans backing him for the job.

The Republican majority is the first in the Senate since Reconstruction.

Sen. Ron Ramsey, R-Blountville, elected as majority leader, said Republicans will push Wilder to give the GOP a majority on all committees, not just most committees. Senate Republicans gave their leaders the go-ahead to negotiate with Wilder until Jan. 10 for better positions in the Senate.

"The only recourse we have is to run up a Republican as speaker," Ramsey said.

Wilder has promised that he will be fair and recognize the gains Republicans made in the election, but continue to run the Senate in a "fair" and bipartisan way. He has not promised the Republicans a majority on all committees.

Most expect Wilder to continue his practice of giving the minority party a prorata share of Senate committee chairmanships — a concession given to Republicans since 1986.

Republican leaders said the

party continues to try to convince two of its own to back off from their support of Wilder and get a Republican running the Senate.

"Until the votes are counted, I don't think there's any sure thing," said Sen. Jeff Miller, R-Nashville.

Wilder, 83, has held the post since 1971 and has a reputation for being fair with the GOP. That's why Sen. Tim Burchett, R-Knoxville, and Sen. Curtis Person, R-Memphis, have said they will vote for Wilder as speaker.

Ramsey said Republican supporters don't understand why the GOP can't use its majority to take control of the speaker's seat. But he said the party won't lash out at Republicans who back Wilder.

"We won't punish anybody," he said. "You don't govern by fear, you govern by persuasiveness."

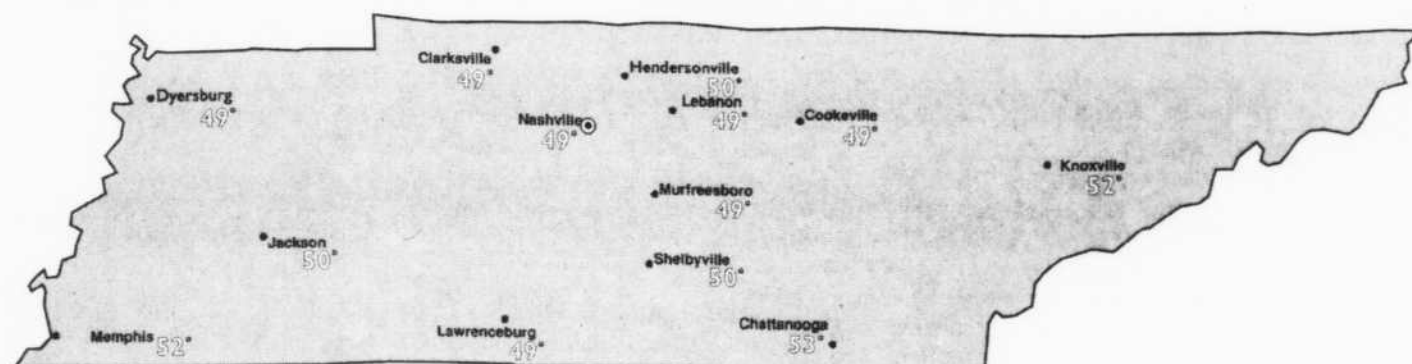
Ramsey said the 17 votes in the Senate will be enough though to push social issues, such as constitutional controls on abortion and bans on gay marriage.

"There are certain issues that I feel very confident that we won't compromise on, and those mostly are the social issues," Ramsey said. "We were elected on that, and we believe that in our heart. Those are not something that are subject to compromise."

Republican leaders said there will be many times they will have to compromise with Democrats, who run the House and hold the governor's office. But Ramsey said they will "contrast the conservative Republican agenda with the liberal Democratic agenda, and we're going to clash heads a few times." ♦

Tennessee Weather – Wednesday's Highs

From the Associated Press



Thursday



Friday



Saturday



Sunday



Monday



McWherter not interested in being mediator

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Former Gov. Ned McWherter says he's not interested in being an official mediator in the TennCare negotiations between the current governor and advocates for enrollees of the health care program.

Gov. Phil Bredesen last month announced he intended to end the \$7.8 billion TennCare program and return to traditional Medicaid to control soaring costs he blamed on court rulings won by the Tennessee Justice Center, led by attorney Gordon Bonnyman.

Eliminating TennCare would leave 430,000 uninsured and disabled people without health

coverage and might reduce benefits for another 900,000.

Bredesen has once rejected advocates' offer to drop some legal challenges, saying he needs them to sign off on the complete reform package. A federal judge suggested McWherter — who as governor created the \$7.8 billion health care program in the 1990s — mediate the impasse between the two parties because he knows TennCare and earlier last month tried to broker a deal to save it.

McWherter told WTVF-TV in a report aired Monday night that he hasn't been contacted about being a mediator. But if he is, he's not prepared to take an active role in resolving the issue. Nonetheless, he believes

the program can be saved.

"I remain hopeful that Governor Bredesen and the Tennessee Justice group with Mr. Bonnyman can issue that out and resolve this issue that will be favorable to the citizens of our state, especially those that need health care," McWherter said.

Neither Bredesen nor McWherter could be reached for further comment Tuesday.

But Bonnyman said he's grateful for the role McWherter "has already played in getting things to the point that we're now talking."

"I understand his reluctance to be involved as a formal mediator," Bonnyman said Tuesday. "Hopefully it won't be neces-

sary, but if we get to a sticking point in the future, hopefully both parties can still call on him for help as needed."

Last week, the same federal judge asked a prominent local civil rights attorney to intervene in the TennCare legal wrangling.

George Barrett, who believes he can help with the negotiations, told U.S. District Judge John Nixon he has a history of bringing closure to contentious litigation involving lengthy civil rights and labor disputes.

Barrett and the Sundquist administration agreed in 2001 to a compromise to end a 34-year desegregation case against Tennessee's higher education system. ♦

Semester abroad: students mull degree overseas

By Justin Pope
AP Education Writer

For some, it's about the adventure of an extended stay at a foreign university. For others, it's about saving money, or just getting farther away from home.

Whatever the reason, as they send out their college applications, attending school outside the United States is an option more high school students appear to be considering. Foreign universities are urging them on, smoothing the logistics and riding the U.S. college fair circuit to talk up their opportunities and often lower price tags.

No overall statistics are available, but the number of U.S. students pursuing degrees in some popular destination countries is growing.

In Canada, the number of American undergraduates and graduate students has more than doubled since 1997 to about 6,000.

In Great Britain, the number of full-time American undergrads is up 53 percent since 2001 to about 2,300.

About 1,600 Americans are pursuing undergraduate degrees in Australia; the growth rate isn't available, but the overall number of Americans pursuing some form of study there rose 10 percent last year.

"We feel it's a) high quality, b) good value and c) it's going to give the students a very different educational experience,"

said Karen McBride, vice president for international affairs at the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

While roughly 175,000 students at American universities go abroad for a limited stay — nine times out of 10 for a semester or less — applicants see enrolling full time as a chance for a richer experience.

"I don't think I'm going to miss out," said Susan Schell, a high school senior from Birmingham, Ala., who is applying to several universities in England. She hopes to work in Europe, and thinks attending college there will help. To her, an American college wouldn't be all that different from high school.

"It seems to me, talking to people that live in Europe, that there's a different aura," she said. "The pace of living there is so beautiful."

Sinead Keegan, from Boston and now in her final year at McGill University in Montreal, said she has gained a degree of independence — socially and academically — she wouldn't have gotten in the United States.

"It doesn't suit everybody, but I think I'm better prepared to head out into the real world than people who have had their hands held all along," she said.

McGill has tripled its enrollment of American undergraduates to more than 1,800 in less than a decade. Recruiters visit 150 U.S. high schools and college fairs each year, according to

Howard Tontini, the school's recruiting director.

Many foreign schools are making the application process easier — often they consider the same materials, like SAT scores and high school transcripts, that American colleges require. Many guidance counselors say they encourage students to explore the option.

"We probably would get behind that, depending on the person, depending on the major," said Tom Hughart, guidance director at Wellesley High School in Massachusetts, who says he has noticed stepped-up recruiting by Scottish universities. "Someone who wants to teach English literature, going over to Trinity College in Dublin would make a lot of sense."

But college abroad isn't for everyone.

Students may come to regret missing out on quintessential American college experiences outside the classroom, like football Saturdays or the "Greek" life of fraternities and sororities. They may discover that foreign universities don't offer the same resources as generally wealthier American ones, and students planning to return to the United States risk missing out on career networks and pipelines.

Gunnar Olson, Schell's guidance counselor at Indian Springs School near Birmingham, said some of his students who initially expressed interest this fall in going abroad — prompted by disappointment with the results of the U.S. pres-

idential election — have since reconsidered. Even Schell said she may return after a year.

Jennifer Shields, a graduate of the University of St. Andrews in Scotland and co-author of the book "Study Away: The Unauthorized Guide to College Abroad," strongly recommends a campus visit to a foreign university.

"If you're completely in culture shock for a week, maybe it's not the best decision for four years," she said.

Shields said St. Andrews — a popular destination with nearly 700 American undergraduates pursuing degrees — was the right decision for her. It exposed her to a wider variety of experiences, and was less expensive than her American options.

That is sometimes the case, and in England, undergraduate degrees can be completed in three years. But buyer beware: Foreign universities often charge international students several times more than domestic ones (hence the aggressive recruiting). More importantly, Americans may have better access to financial aid at home.

But for Keegan, who also considered an American college, McGill was too good a deal to pass up. The top tuition rate is about \$12,600 in U.S. dollars and Americans compete in the same pool as domestic students for merit aid.

"For me, the final decision was I liked two schools equally, and one of them was McGill, and the price and that was McGill," she said. ♦

Preschool: Program could go statewide

Continued from 1

"That depends on what sort of grants we get," Worley said.

The system would prefer to find a classroom in an existing school, Worley said, because a classroom at a new site would be much more expensive.

Gordon said he would like to see preschool programs like Murfreesboro's go statewide. He said Gov. Phil Bredesen has made preschool a priority, and Gordon would like to see Murfreesboro as one of the pilot programs once the state makes that step.

"It's inevitable that as it can be funded, on a statewide basis, it will go to a pre-K to help students," Gordon said.

He added that funding preschool programs would be a choice of "pay me now or pay me later."

"By getting children ready to learn early, they're going to do a better job whether it's in the fifth grade, eighth grade, high school or college."

It's something Gordon has seen first hand. His daughter, Peyton, is currently enrolled in preschool.

"You can just see the improvement that she receives," Gordon said. "I have no doubt that it's going to better prepare her for kindergarten and her academic career."

"We cannot afford to shirk our responsibilities to our children," Gordon said. "Teaching our children the skills they need in today's dynamic workforce is hard work and takes resources, but the end result pays big dividends to our communities and families." ♦

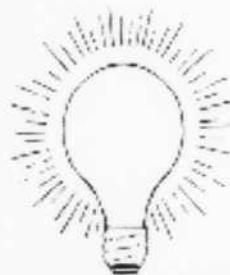


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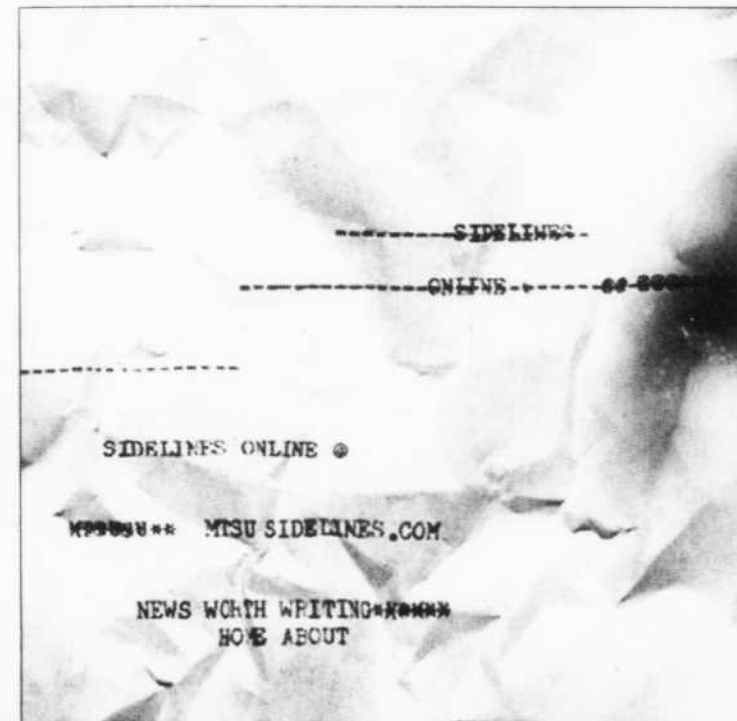
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From the Editorial Board

More pre-K funding needed in Tennessee

More preschools are needed to get the U.S. education system back on track. A \$100,000 grant for a new preschool for Murfreesboro City Schools is a step in the right direction.

Studies have shown that the earlier children start learning, the better they perform as they progress through the school system.

Some parents are able to provide preschool education on their own. Other parents, particularly poor or single parents, tend to have a harder time preparing their children for school. This is where government-funded preschools can step in and make a difference.

The government can be parents, but they can help parents who know they need assistance.

This program is being closely monitored. If successful, the program could go statewide.

Hopefully, our state legislators will see the value in pre-kindergarten education and provide the necessary funding to expand the program.

If we don't find some way to fund the program, from state or federal coffers, Tennessee will likely continue to fall further behind in education.

It is obvious the state cannot afford this.

The state will continue to suffer economically as a result of repeated failures to adequately fund education, from pre-K to higher education.

Jobs for the undereducated are becoming fewer and further between. We are doing a disservice to our children when we don't prepare them for jobs in the modern economy.

Students need to go to college, but if they can't perform well when they get to college because of inadequate education early on, what good is it?

We've got to start at the bottom and work our way up.

Mind you, funding these programs is not going to be cheap. The alternative is not providing funding and producing a mass of undereducated folks, who are either going to be unemployed or employed in low wage jobs.

Funding pre-K education is another necessary in reforming the Tennessee public education system. ♦

From the Opinions Editor

The world is listening: Red Cross needs to speak

In a report leaked to *The New York Times* yesterday, the International Committee of the Red Cross accused the United States of using interrogation tactics at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba that it said were "tantamount to torture."



Matthew Adair
Opinions Editor

This is a particularly serious accusation to level at any nation, but what makes it all the more explosive is the fact that, normally, media like *The New York Times* wouldn't have their hands on such information from the Red Cross.

The Red Cross operates under a vow of confidentiality, where the results of inspections of detainment facilities like the Guantanamo Bay base are revealed only to the government operating the prison. A spokeswoman for the Red Cross in Geneva said that this principle of confidentiality "is the best way to improve conditions for detainees."

I wish I could share the optimism of the Red Cross, but I can't help but disagree with their reasoning.

The media is one of the most powerful communications tools humanity has. In a matter of hours, a story that breaks in one corner of the world can spread to every television, every radio, every newspaper and every Web browser for anyone to see.

When people see things that fire up their emotions, they do something. If they see something they care about, they take action. They make phone calls, they write letters, they rant about it at every opportunity they have where someone might be listening.

The entire world is now carrying the story of what the Red Cross said it saw down in the United States's little military enclave in Cuba. People are reading the story this very moment and are very likely making their voices heard loud and clear on the issue. Surely, someone in Washington, D.C. is listening, if only that.

This is hardly a black and white issue, and the Red Cross should always use its better judgement to decide what it should and should not say in order to best serve the interests of the people it means to protect.

But it should speak up and be heard. After all, the whole world is listening. ♦

Matthew Adair is a sophomore art education major and can be reached at matt.adair@gmail.com.

New taxes aren't cure-all for state

The issue of additional tax revenue has once again reared its ugly head.

Sunday's *Tennessean* gave front-page coverage to the preliminary findings of the 19 member Tax Structure Study Commission, a body of citizens charged with examining Tennessee's tax system and suggesting changes.

It comes as no surprise that the commission members – all of whom were not opposed to a statewide income tax – found Tennessee's taxation system lacking and in need of an overhaul.

Of course, their suggestions include implementation of new taxes – most notably a statewide property tax, vehicle fee and income tax.

Having spent 18 years as a resident of Virginia, I'm quite familiar with these methods of taxation and if you think they will only affect the rich and famous, think again.

Because most of us aren't affected by the taxes on tangible property, we tend to think of property tax in terms of real estate. However, the Tennessee State constitution does give the legislature the right to tax personal property as well. This includes boats, trailers, campers, farm equipment, vehicles, computers, televisions and even your pots and pans.

In Virginia, the department of taxation stopped at the front door and taxed anything they could readily see on the streets or in the

According to Whom?



Juanita Thouin
Staff Columnist

yard – which basically meant vehicles, recreational items, business equipment and farm equipment.

You may have heard about this tax in the news. It was nicknamed the car tax and Gov. Jim Gilmore won an election by promising to eliminate it.

While he did reduce it, he and the legislature didn't eliminate it. They said they couldn't afford to.

The next tax being touted by the commission is the vehicle fee. This tax requires every taxpayer to pay a flat fee on every vehicle that requires a license plate. In Virginia, tax officials enforced compliance by requiring you to display a sticker on your front windshield – a sticker you could only get by paying the vehicle fee.

Then, of course, there is the income tax. Promoters of this tax say enacting an income tax will allow them to reduce the sales tax.

They say an income tax will provide more tax equity for those counties that border states with lower sales tax.

They say it will reduce the burden on the poor and allow the state

to recoup sales tax revenue lost to Internet sales.

The problem with an income tax is that it does not adjust to boons or busts in the economy as well as a sales tax, nor does it allow families to rein in expenses when need be.

Most importantly though, it does not catch any of the income made "under the table" – money made by illegal aliens, prostitutes, drug lords, illegal gamblers and a host of other income-tax-dodging individuals.

While it's difficult to know just how big that figure is, a March 2004 Internal Revenue Service report on anti-money laundering estimates, nationally, there were more than 300,000 potential non tax filers with \$22 billion in currency transaction activity for the 2002 tax year.

It stands to reason then, Tennesseans contributed to that figure. And I venture to say the amount Tennesseans contributed easily negates what the state of Tennessee doesn't collect from Internet sales or from border counties.

Four years before moving from Virginia to Tennessee, I started using a computer program to manage household expenses. This got me in the habit of saving receipts – no matter how small.

With this data in hand, after our first full year of living in Tennessee, I compared sales tax expenses in the two states. Then I added in what we paid in Virginia income

and personal property tax.

By moving to Tennessee, we saved slightly more than \$1,000 in taxes our first year here.

Lest you think we just didn't buy as much stuff in Tennessee as in Virginia, our family's expenses were actually way above normal because we'd built a new house.

So, was life better in Virginia than in Tennessee? I can honestly say, "no."

Schools in Tennessee are as good as those in Virginia (with the exception of MTSU's antiquated science building). Roads are better in Tennessee than in Virginia. The police and rescue personnel are as responsive. My electricity works. My water is clean. My sewer pipes flush away the "you-know-what." The list goes on.

When Gov. Phil Bredesen came into office he sliced the budget, forcing the state to live within its means. Amazingly, the sky didn't fall in. In fact, we had a surplus.

Adding more taxes will not bring better services. Nor will it force government to live within its means.

Instead, it will encourage lawmakers to spend, spend, spend. Remember, politicians get elected by bringing home the bacon – tax structure study or no tax structure study. ♦

Juanita Thouin is a senior journalism major and can be reached at jlt3e@mtsu.edu.

Please, give pot a chance

I don't normally approve of recreational drug use, but I do believe that marijuana should be legalized, at least for medical purposes. This is something our country has argued over for decades. I feel that we're making a mockery of this argument.

I'm baffled at the media coverage of the hearing on legalizing or outlawing marijuana. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, William Rehnquist, will not be present due to thyroid cancer. My point is that his presence doesn't matter anyway, because his mind is made up on the matter, being the strict, conservative that he is – even if he is briefed on the hearings from his bed. The media is already throwing out replacement options if Rehnquist dies. It's kind of embarrassing.

The slaughter of U.S. ideals continues with the media's videos of a woman, Angel Raich, who has a brain tumor and can barely move. In the video, she is pleading for the federal legalization of medical marijuana. Her husband claims that marijuana is the reason his wife has not yet withered away – it eases the pain and increases her appetite. Raich claimed that she would continue smoking even if the drug became outlawed through federal legislation.

Eleven states have left it up to physicians to diagnose and treat certain painful symptoms with marijuana. However, even those physicians have to grow it themselves or even obtain it illegally, according to a recent article in the *Portland Press Herald*.

Let's look at this problem from an economic perspective. Do you know how much tax money is lost preventing the use of marijuana and the resulting lost potential tax revenues? People will smoke marijuana anyway, even if they have to obtain it from unknown sources (this includes the physicians who buy it for their patients), where it could possibly be laced with something dangerous. The money used to buy this drug goes to untraceable recipients. We had the same problem with prohibition in the early 1900s.

If marijuana was controlled, like tobacco – except not as readily available – then we could track what is going on, bring in tax revenue and try to think of the best options we could have to make marijuana "safer."

On The Rocks



Klara Nizki
Staff Columnist

Sure, other more "heavy" drugs would be around, but then we could concentrate on drug education, instead of fighting back and forth.

The tobacco business is a really good example. Once the Master Settlement Agreement legislation was passed in the late 1990s, smoking has been on a sharp decline, even among high school kids. This legislation banned advertising towards children and used the money from tobacco taxes to fund educational programs about smoking. It's been about six years and the difference is tremendous. I feel that a similar result could be achieved with marijuana.

Many of you may not know, but there are several legal herbs and natural stimulants that leave you with a "high." Valerian Root, for example, acts as a tranquilizer, which was heavily prescribed in London during the Blitzkrieg era. Either young adults simply don't know or it's just old news, because you can just get it at any health food store without a problem. It's not cool anymore.

So what happens if marijuana was legal? Maybe people would move on to other, more hard-hitting drugs. Any person, especially a child, will get into something they are curious about.

Our job as parents and a society – after all it does take a village to raise a child – is to educate, educate, educate. And not in a cheesy way, but be forthright about it and honest. Maybe it's the overall feeling of boredom, or perhaps loneliness, that can drive a person ever further down the spiral of addiction. In my opinion, this is something not even worth fighting about. We have much more important issues to worry about, such as education, America's starving population and finishing this war. ♦

Klara Nizki is a junior business major and can be reached at knizki@aol.com.

It's almost over.
Shout hooray. (But not yet.) slopinio@mtsu.edu

Departing anchors signal old media's end

News anchors at the major networks are dropping like flies. Tom Brokaw is stepping down at NBC and Dan Rather has resigned from his post at the CBS news desk.

Brokaw and Rather represent two of the final stones in the old media's foundation that has been rapidly crumbling over the last 15 years. I believe the biggest reason there has been such hoopla over the Brokaw and Rather resignations is that people know that the glory days of network news are in the past.

As I digested Thanksgiving leftovers Friday night, I commented to my dad while watching an NBC special about Brokaw that my generation wouldn't be celebrating big network newscasters. Instead, we will bid the warmest farewells to people like Fox News anchor Shepard Smith, Internet dynamo Matt Drudge and yes, even those much loved radio talk show hosts.

So what happened to the giants of network evening news? There are a lot of theories out there, probably most with some merit to them. One thought is that today's young people don't have any interest in the news.

I readily dismiss this one. Just because we don't watch Brokaw, Jennings or Rather doesn't mean we don't get our news. The saturation of the news media gives consumers an abundance of choices and most of us undoubtedly turn to the internet or cable news to find out the day's events.

The days when America placed all of its trust in one man such as Walter Cronkite are long over (thank goodness). Much of the viewers the big networks still have are of the Cronkite generation, as evidenced by the litany of commercials appealing to older Americans that run during the evening news. Other than the saturated market, I think the most likely reason for the demise of the networks is that Americans have simply lost faith in the networks' credibility.

A Gallup poll taken in September shows that 55 percent of Americans have little or no confidence in the truthfulness of the mass media. A Gallup poll taken in 1976 found only 26 percent of the polling sample with similar attitudes.

The growing distrust of the media has led to the booming popularity of opinions-based programming. Talk radio and various cable television programs have elevated opinion-based shows into the mainstream.

The likes of Rush Limbaugh were laughed at 15 years ago, but now Limbaugh's show and others like it hold incredible power and influence. It all started when Americans began to feel like they couldn't trust supposedly objective news sources. Consumers flocked in droves to shows where the hosts made no attempt at being objective. They presented their opinions out in the open and allowed them to be dissected by their audience, who in turn respected them for being up front about their intentions.

It has been a refreshing return to the roots of U.S. media. In colonial times and early in our national history, media (almost entirely newspapers at the time) outlets were decidedly biased and made no attempt to hide the fact.

The trend shows no real signs of slowing down, as cable television shows such as "Crossfire," "Hannity and Colmes," "Hardball" and "The O'Reilly Factor" have proven enormously successful in addition to Internet blogs.

The hubbub surrounding Rather and Brokaw's departures really isn't really celebrating their careers, but rather eulogizing a dying segment of American media that once held unchallenged supremacy. ♦

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New Army uniform

New Army Combat Uniform increases versatility, functionality while creating a more sophisticated, battle-ready look

By Ryan Smith
Staff Writer

With hundreds of thousands of troops deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan over the past three years, the Army has sought to update its technology for the unique challenges that soldiers have seen in these harsh environments.

Following the example of the new digitized camouflage pattern of the Marine Corps uniforms, the Army has redesigned its battle-dress uniform, removing the color black, while using colors that would make the design functional in woodland, urban and desert environments.

According to the Army's Program Executive Office, there have been 20 changes made to the current uniform, which was first implemented 25 years ago.

The uniform redesign is intended to work comfortably with the newer body armor that soldiers are now wearing overseas.

The bottom pockets were removed and placed on the shoulder sleeves, to give soldiers access when wearing the armor. The collar was designed to prevent chafing by the armor, as well.

Insignia on the uniform will be attached with Velcro, intended to save soldiers money spent on having patches sewn on.

The material is wrinkle-free, and the boots are similar to the current desert boot design, which does not require polishing.

The new uniforms will cost \$88 a set, about \$30 more than the current design.

"It seems futuristic and pretty versatile, for either jungle or desert use. It makes sense that instead of having two sets [of uniforms], we can have one and save money," said PFC William Wright of the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell in Clarksville, Tenn. "Also, having one universal uniform

will make us even more combat effective."

Though soldiers have tested the uniform in Iraq already, the Army will formally introduce the design in April 2005. After this time, enlisted soldiers on active duty as well as reservists and National Guard soldiers will be issued the uniforms, while officers will have to pay for them at their own expense.

Cpl. Todd Pruden, an Army reservist from Smyrna, Tenn., says the uniform will be more versatile and functional.

"Having just one uniform for deployments makes it easier on the soldiers," Pruden says. He returned from a deployment to Iraq in April.

"Plus it looks sharp," he added. "It will be a good recruiting tool, just like the Marine uniform was for them."

The Army is also testing a new weapon, intended to replace the M-16 and M-4 carbine rifles.

The XM8, which is used to designate a family of weapons including a baseline carbine, sharpshooter, ultra-small compact carbine and an automatic rifle, has been tested by soldiers in various environments such as the Alaskan tundra, the jungle in Panama and the harsh desert in Arizona, according to the Army's Training and Doctrine Command.

Heckler & Koch, the gun manufacturer that designed the weapon, claims that the XM8's lightweight design and accuracy would make the rifle a candidate to replace the Army's current weapon systems.

Soldiers who have tested the weapon have often found it to be more accurate than the M-4 and M-16 rifles. However, it is up to senior Army leadership to decide whether to implement the design.

If the XM8 is chosen by the Army, it could wind up in the hands of soldiers by next year.



"It seems futuristic and pretty versatile, for either jungle or desert use. It makes sense that instead of having two sets [of uniforms], we can have one and save money. Also, having one universal uniform will make us even more combat effective."

PFC William Wright
101st Airborne Division
Fort Campbell
Clarksville, Tenn.



Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Myhre, the Program Executive Office NCOIC, sports the Army Combat Uniform, the recently approved wear for soldiers. It contains 20 new improvements.

Photos courtesy of Army News Service

MTSU and Tennessee join to improve foster system

New agency to train future social workers

By Tabitha Turner
Staff Writer

Every year MTSU sends out dozens of graduates who will go on to work in the field of social services. These men and women long to make a difference in lives of both children and adults.

MTSU is teaming up with the state of Tennessee to provide these graduates with a training center that would enable them to be better at their future jobs in the Department of Children's Services.

Recently awarded a \$16 million contract, which is the largest in the university's history, MTSU is to provide the principal management behind the DCS' Tennessee Child Welfare Training Center.

The training center's executive director will be Stacey Borasky, who is an assistant professor of social work at MTSU, and is to be guided by a 13-member university board that will consist of both private and public representatives from universities across Tennessee.

"It's good how the entire state is getting involved in this and how our school is in the middle of it," said Jennifer Ralph, a sophomore and human sciences major.

The formal announcement of this project was given at the University's Alumni Center on Oct. 7. Among that day's speakers was Alesha Gresham, an MTSU graduate and an employee of the Exchange Club Family Center, which is a child abuse prevention agency.

Gresham shared her story at the event about being raised with her brothers and sisters in a home where there were drugs and alcohol problems, as well as abuse. Gresham was removed from that home at age 12 by Tennessee's Department of Children's Services and placed in foster care, separating her from her siblings. She knows firsthand just how important the system is to a lot of people.

With the help of her husband, Gresham took

in her brother's daughter, who was born with cocaine in her system, hoping to end the generations of abuse in her family. Recently, they both gained custody of her 18-year-old niece. She stated what good things could come from DCS' involvement in this project and how the department can be improved by the training that will be provided.

Another speaker was the new commissioner of DCS, Viola P. Miller. All parties, such as those in pre-service, in-service, undergraduate and graduate of the agency will receive training, she said.

The new training center will also entail teaching DCS social workers and case managers, as well as providing local courses for personnel by way of regional offices.

Miller went on to say it is her hope that in four to six years everyone in a management position at DCS will hold a master's degree, primarily in social work. She also said that within the next five to seven years, no one who has not completed at least two courses teaching social workers what to do in the public child welfare system, as well as two semester-long internships will be hired by the DCS.

"It will mean new and better standards for all of us who want to go into the social work field, and that will also mean more work, but I think it's worth it," said Emily Ling, a junior and human sciences major. "I think it will bring a lot more people into our major and that's good because we need more people."

The Tennessee Social Work Education Consortium chose MTSU for the honor of overseeing the DCS' training after a 9-2 vote. The contract was officially put into motion on Oct. 1 and will last for approximately the next five years.

"Maybe now, with the state getting involved, everyone will see just how important the social work profession is," said Ryan Johannason, a sophomore human sciences major and foster child. ♦



Campus Club Spotlight:

The Advertising Club

By Matthew Rich
Contributor

Every few weeks, you can find people in a social setting discussing all things advertising and developing friendships that could be useful in the future.

The Ad Club, a member of the Nashville Advertising Federation (NAF), is for students with a major or minor in advertising who are looking to bridge the gap from college to the workplace. Members interact outside of the classroom with students who are on the same career path as they are, and look to build early contacts with potential future colleagues.

"I think it's important for a student to network and now is a good opportunity with the Ad Club," says Erica Hagy, the President of Ad Club. There are several speakers and a few out-of-school trips that club members can participate in to get insider tips from professionals.

"I joined the Ad Club to get to know more about the ad industry in general and being in a club always helps on a resume," says Bryan Kemp, Officer of Promotion and Special Events. "As you start to get into your major, you get more curious about what goes

on in the business you are pursuing."

In November, members went on the NAF's annual Bus Tour. From 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. they toured several agencies and spoke with many professionals from all aspects of advertising.

They went to Bohan, Locomotion Designs, Hi-Fi Fusion and McQuiddy Printing. "I spoke to the vice-president of Bohan, a place I would like to work, and discussed what employers look for in terms of internships and graduate school," Hagy says. "Speaking with such people could make for very good contacts in the future."

Two speakers have come to meetings this semester to talk about different areas in advertising. Mark Caldwell, a 1992 MTSU graduate, is the regional owner of TradeBank. Caldwell talked about how TradeBank works, pay memberships and trade dollars.

The other speaker, Carol Fletcher, also a MTSU graduate, is the first advertising major to be on the John Bragg Building of Mass Communication's Wall of Fame. She is now Vice-President of Media Planning at Buntin Group. Her previous work was with Leo Burnett,

where she worked on many successful campaigns such as Kraft and Blue Cross Blue Shield. She talked about the importance of graduate school and unexpected advertising. And the importance of thinking of alternative means to get the message out there.

Listening to Kemp, members can learn that to network yourself is very important. Once they graduate they will all have almost the same qualifications and they have to show that they are hungry to work and that they are capable of getting the work done. All the speakers this semester have been eager to give out any information that members may be seeking.

They give you their business card and leave an open invitation to call them for future internships or if you just need some advice.

Don Parente is an advisor for the Ad Club and teaches the Survey of Advertising class. He had three reasons that advertising students should join the Ad Club: You get a different perspective of the advertising business than in class, it is a good way to interact with people in your major and members obtain professional contacts.

Being in clubs is something employers look for on resumes. "It shows that you participate in professional activities, most people in advertising are members of a lot of organizations. They understand the power and knowledge that comes with it," says professor Parente.

There are around 60 members in the Ad Club. They meet once a month, about every three to four weeks. The day they meet changes, so they can appeal to the diverse schedules of its members. It costs \$12 to join and that applies for both semesters. ♦

Smith lures Gray back into action

Coach asks senior to return in order to help in backcourt

By Jon Leffew
Asst. Sports Editor

Middle Tennessee women's basketball coach Stephany Smith announced the return of Ciara Gray to the team on Tuesday.

Gray, who had decided to forgo her senior season due to persistent injuries, had been with the team in a managerial role.

She had been assisting with the Lady Raider Rascal Club and organizing the team's ball girls.

"I believe this was an extremely selfless act on Ciara's part," Smith told MT Media Relations at the time.

"She made the decision she felt was best not only for herself,

but for the program and her teammates as well."

However, Smith and her staff found the team missed the defensive ability of Gray, who along with MT graduate assistant Keisha McClinic formed an excellent defensive backcourt last year.

"Losing Keisha to graduation and then Ciara really hurt us," Smith said. "We were missing someone in the backcourt who was more cerebral and had experience and knew the plays."

Gray, who was an all-state selection during her senior season at LaVergne High School, was noted as one of the SBC's best defensive players despite

nagging injuries throughout her first three years.

She played the entire second half of the 2002 SBC championship game, holding Western Kentucky's Leslie Logsdon to one point after scoring 30 in the first half.

Gray enjoyed a great junior campaign before suffering a season-ending injury against Florida International on Feb. 7.

She had played in 22 of the team's games, starting nine and averaging 5.4 points and 2.2 rebounds per game.

The Lady Raiders will likely benefit from Gray's presence, as the team currently averages only 11 steals and one block per game.

"I approached Ciara on Monday and told her we needed her on the court," Smith said.

"Clara told me she would love to and today was her first official practice as a player and she looked great."

Gray will join fellow senior Patrice Holmes in the backcourt, and should provide valuable leadership to the team's nine underclassmen.

The team will continue play on Thursday at Georgia State to take on the Lady Panthers. ♦

File Photo

Lady Raider senior Ciara Gray averaged 5.4 points in 22 games last season.



MT defense stifles Belmont

Blue Raiders hold Bruins to lowest three-point total as D-I member

By Katy Hamlett
Staff Writer

Middle Tennessee defeated Belmont 66-47 Monday night in the first installment of what the MT athletic department hopes will become an annual local rivalry.

Both teams struggled to find their rhythm in the first eight minutes of the game, sloppily exchanging baskets and committing seven turnovers. By the 14:00 mark MT and Belmont had subbed out four of their five starting players.

"Belmont had a lot to do with our offensive inefficiencies," MT head coach Kermit Davis said. "We decided just to run our man offensive against whatever defense that they played."

MT senior Michael Cuffee tied the game at six with 13:15 left to play in the first half. With MT's tallest forward, Kyle Young, sitting on the bench, Belmont's six-foot 10-inch sophomore center Andrew Preston took full advantage of his size advantage. Preston landed two field goals and drew a foul to hold the Raiders at six points going into the final 10 minutes of the half.

Two free throws by Cuffee and field goals by Young and MT's senior guard Mike Dean inched the Blue Raiders ahead of the Bruins 12-11 with 6:26 remaining.

A jumper by Belmont junior guard Brian Collins gave the Bruins their last lead of the game at 13-12.

In MT's Alex Weekes' first moments off the bench, the sophomore landed a field goal and forced a Belmont turnover, which led to a deep three-pointer from Dean to give the Blue Raiders their most decisive lead of the half at 20-13.

Two free throws by MT point guard Bryan Smith landed the Blue Raiders 22 points with 1:22 left in the half. After drawing fouls from Weekes and Young, Belmont forward Will Peeples netted the Bruins' last points of the half, sending the teams into the locker rooms at 22-16.

The Blue Raiders dominated the Bruins' perimeter players, holding Belmont to zero-for-10 from three-point range in the first 20 minutes.

"The coaches had a good plan for us to guard the wings on the outside," Cuffee said. "We weren't going to let them hit any threes."

The Bruins went six-for-seven in free throws at halftime, while MT was free-of-eight from the line. MT's poor free throw percentage was a substantial factor in the Blue Raiders' 67-62 loss to Rice University last week.

"We just had to come out in the second half with more intensity," Cuffee said. "We took a really bad defeat the other day [against Mississippi Valley State] so we had to come out at home and play hard."

During the second half MT took advantage of its deep bench and demonstrated a revitalized energy, while Belmont continued to struggle to get the ball to their perimeter players.

Two field goals by Collins and Peeples brought Belmont within four points of the Blue Raiders with one minute gone in the second half, but the Bruins were unable to penetrate MT's defense for the next five minutes as the Blue Raiders went on a 14-0 run. Weekes gave the Raiders a 38-22 edge

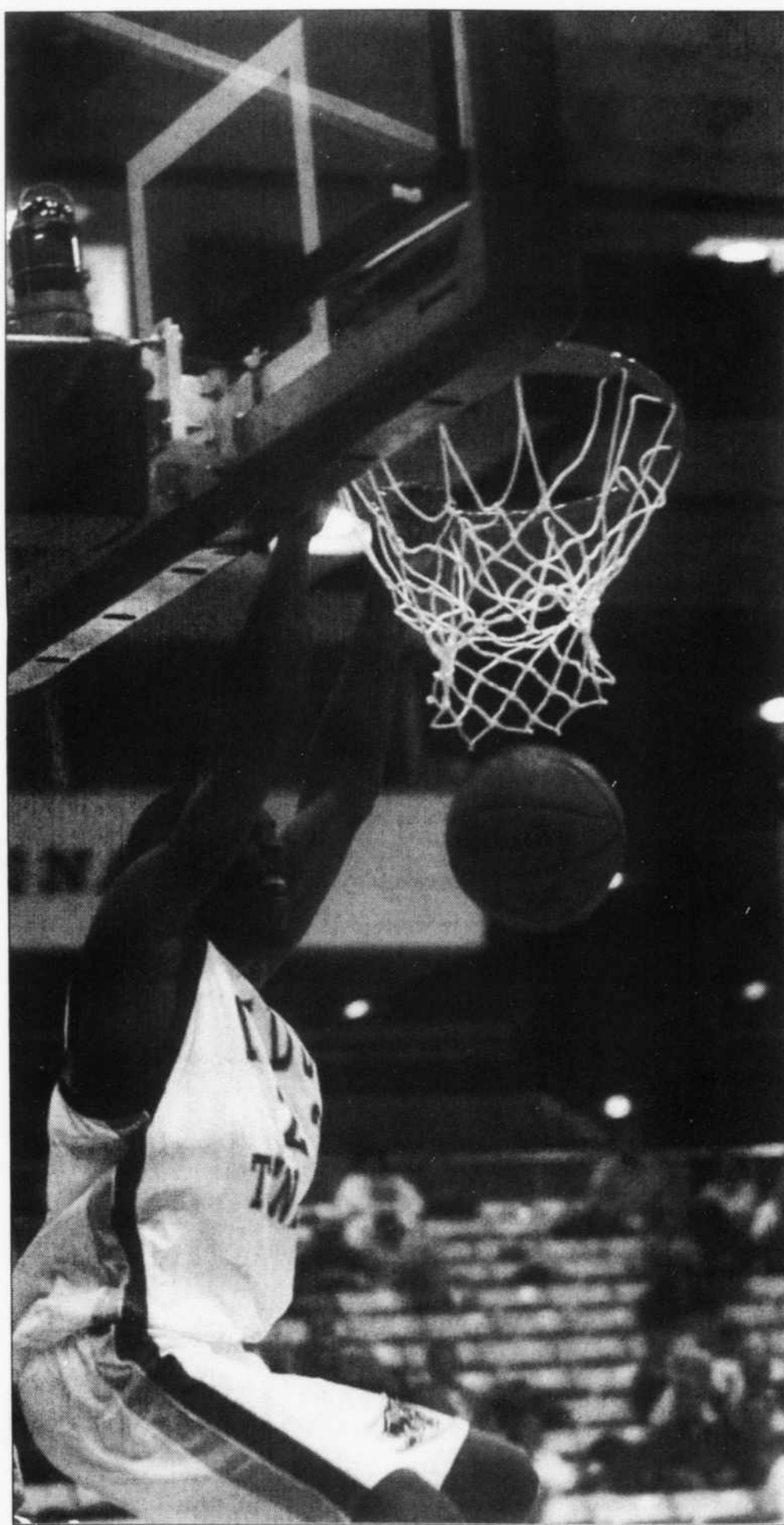


Photo by Steve Cross | Staff Photographer

Blue Raider junior Marcus Morrison had nine points and seven rebounds in 27 minutes in MT's 66-47 victory over Belmont University on Monday.

with 13:30 on the clock.

Morrison and fellow first-year transfer Fats Cuyler formally introduced themselves to the crowd of 3,023 by showcasing their best performances to date in the Murphy Center in the following minutes. Morrison's two dunks and layup and Cuyler's deep three-pointer put the Blue Raiders up 50-31 with 8:14 remaining.

"It was good to see Fats play because we need his offensive capability shooting the ball," Davis said. "He's a very good shooter. He had some open looks and he finally got some balls to go down."

"That's how I want to come play every night: come out, play hard and try to get everybody involved," Cuyler told MT Media Relations.

Two turnovers by Belmont resulted in Cuyler and Smithson field goals giving MT their largest lead of the game, 60-35, with 5:28 left to play.

The teams traded baskets until Belmont junior Dan Oliver scored the last points of the match at the free-throw line with 51 seconds left to play.

"They worst thing that happened to us was they [MT] went down there [Mississippi Valley] and lost the other night," Belmont head coach Rick Byrd said. "And I don't think coach Davis was in a good mood. They [MT] played like they were physically tougher than us."

MT held the Bruins (0-3) to 27 percent shooting from the field. Belmont was two-for-17 from three-point range, the Bruins' worst total since joining Division I in basketball.

The Blue Raiders (2-2) also had trouble from beyond the arc as they shot just 23 percent from three-point range.

"We take a lot of shots and so we miss a lot of shots, but we're just going to keep shooting because that's what we do," Cuffee said.

MT moved to 16-6 all-time against the Bruins in the teams' first meeting since Nov. 26, 2001, when the Bruins won 65-59 in Nashville.

"I didn't know they were a local rival until today, so if it's a rivalry I guess we came out on top this time," Cuffee joked. ♦

Letter to the Editor

Alumnus demands change in leadership

To the Editor,

If you had told me back when MTSU went Division I-A in football that the situation would be as it is today, I would have said, "no way."

We now in 2004 find ourselves facing the real possibility of being downgraded in football to Division I-AA status due to not attaining the required 15,000 per home game attendance mark.

The attendance figure is a result of lack of winning but also bad decisions in the selection of athletic director after Lee Fowler left, poor coaching and terrible marketing of the football season tickets.

When Lee Fowler left as A.D., a committee was formed to interview a list of candidates selected by a search firm hired by the university. Several excellent candidates were interviewed from schools such as the University of Tennessee, Notre Dame, Marshall and the University of Missouri. All had strengths, but the man from UT stood out in my mind.

Also a candidate was Boots Donnelly, the former MT head football coach. However, Donnelly had no prior experience in marketing and big time fund raising.

McPhee went with Donnelly over the marketing and fund-raising expertise that other candidates possessed (and which we badly needed). The rest is history.

I think McPhee chose Donnelly because less money would have to be spent in salary. As it turned out, this was a bad decision. The current head football coach and his staff have made the problem worse. His first year at the helm looked good, but the last three have not been good. Bad coaching, lack of development of players and too few victories killed attendance.

Most mid-major university football programs face a similar problem. The alumni and student support is based upon a winning football program each and every year. There is not a big margin for error. You have to be the right A.D. who is a salesman and marketer of the highest order and a head coach who can recruit and develop players.

Our A.D. says he has done everything he can do to put people in the seats at home games. This included the terrible decision to hire a rap group after a game for \$80,000. I could have gotten some good ole' boys together and had a redneck rap group

that could have attracted more and we would have done it for free. The best thing that could have happened the last three years would have been a winning record, which would have resulted in much better attendance.

Because of the above mentioned items, I call on McPhee to do the following before the Christmas break. McPhee needs to terminate Donnelly and then Football Head Coach Andy McCollum. I would leave the assistants in place until a new coach is hired.

Here are additional points why this needs to occur now:

1. If you look around the country at the successful young athletic directors at mid-major schools, they have extensive backgrounds in marketing and athletic fund-raising. They can sell air conditioners to Eskimos. They have vision, charm, and can make friends with alumni as well as students. They are assets to their schools. We don't have this in our current athletic director.

2. Like it or not, a head football coach has to win today at Division I-A schools. Sound cruel? No, it is just a reality in the world of big time sports. The A.D., head coach and school president know that under Title IX, all women's and men's sports share revenue 50-50.

However, only two sports pay for themselves and they are football and men's basketball. If the revenue is not there it is mostly because of non-winning in football every time. Some schools are even forced into terminating certain minor sports which may result in the loss of conference status and even Division I-A status. Folks, this is the real world. Welcome to big time college sports.

Some alumni and students complain, saying that the attendance requirement of 15,000 is too high. I say that if we cannot attain this figure each year, we should leave Division I-A.

We need to get real. We cannot continue as is. It is a blueprint for failure. I ask you, the concerned students, faculty, staff, and alumni who agree with me to e-mail, write, or call McPhee. His e-mail address is smcphee@mtsu.edu.

If McPhee does not make these decisions, then prepare to find the Blue Raiders back in the Ohio Valley Conference. ♦

Jim Gaines
MTSU Class of 1969

Fans showing support for men's basketball team

Sports commentary

Mark Emery
Staff Writer

The attendance at Middle Tennessee home games continues to be consistent as 3,023 fans showed up to watch the Blue Raiders beat Belmont 66-47 Monday night at Murphy Center.

It has been a continuing trend for fans to come and watch the Blue Raiders play at home. Many people might think that the attendance may have been a little low, considering the Blue Raiders were playing a team so geographically close to MTSU, but really the figures were about where they have been.

If you go back to the 2002-03 season, attendance was only more than 3,000 in three out of 14 home games that year, and one of those three was against Sun Belt Conference rival Western Kentucky.

For the whole season that year the average attendance per home game was right around 2,500.

Last year those numbers were higher, as more than 3,000 fans showed up at eight out of 13 home games last year. One of those games included a record crowd of 11,807 against WKU.

In two home games this year attendance has averaged more than 3,000, the first time that's happened since the 2000-01 season, when attendance topped 3,000 for the first three home games of the season.

The Blue Raiders' first three

opponents that year were St. Francis, Tennessee State and Central Florida.

This year MT's first two games were against in-state teams. There could be the potential for a growing non-conference rivalry between MT and Belmont, but the question remains whether that will actually come to fruition.

As odd as it sounds, in order for MT-Belmont to become a rivalry, the Bruins must win more. With Monday's victory, the Blue Raiders improved their overall record against Belmont to 16-6. It wouldn't make for much of a rivalry if the Blue Raiders continually dominate Belmont.

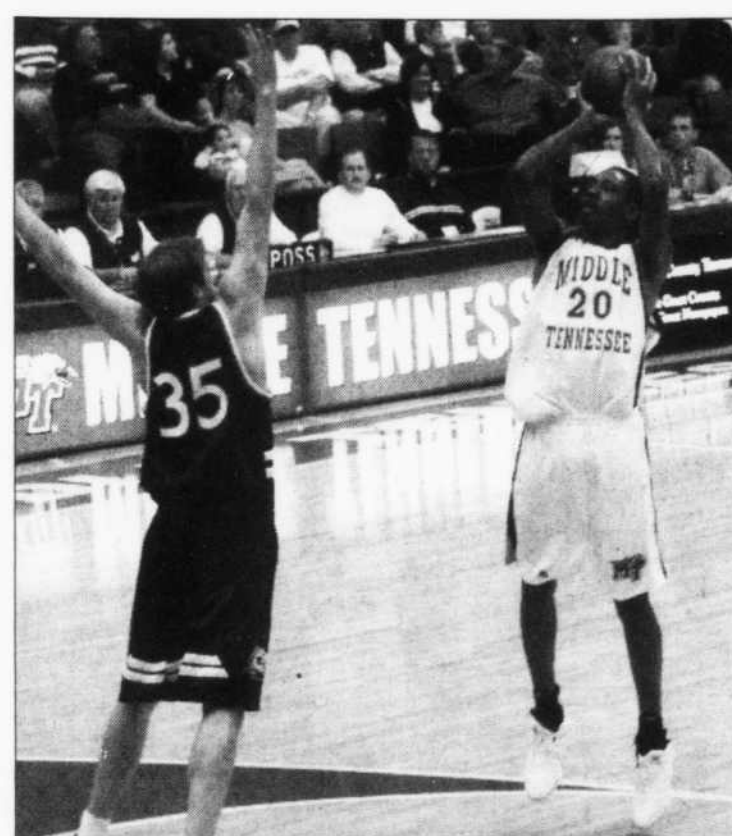
And with Belmont being no more than an hour away, one would have thought the atten-

dance would have been higher than 3,000. In order for this game to become a rivalry and for the Blue Raiders to continually schedule Belmont, Belmont fans must show up to Murphy Center, just as MT fans must show up when the game is at the Curb Event Center in Nashville.

The Blue Raiders will continue facing in-state teams this week as they host Tennessee Wesleyan and Tennessee State. Hopefully MT fans will continue to show their support and keep the attendance above 3,000. ♦

Mark Emery is a senior mass communication major and can be reached at mpe2c@mtsu.edu.

Photo by Steve Cross | Chief Photographer
Alex Weekes scored four points in MT's 66-47 win over Belmont.



North Texas will take on Southern Miss

Sunbeltsports.org

Officials from the Wyndham New Orleans Bowl announced an invitation and acceptance to appear in the 2004 Wyndham New Orleans Bowl to the University of Southern Mississippi against Sun Belt Conference champion North Texas.

The Golden Eagles will take on the Mean Green on December 14th in the Louisiana Superdome at 6:30 p.m. The game will broadcast live on ESPN, as the first game of the college bowl season.

"This is the kind of matchup our Bowl has been excited about since we formed it four years ago," Wyndham New Orleans Bowl Executive Director Ron Maestri said in announcing the Conference USA representative. "The regional draw that Southern Miss brings to the table and their level of competition are both very valuable for the game. When you look at the strength of New Orleans and Louisiana talent on their roster, the local Golden Eagle alumni and fan base, as well as the convenience of travel, local attendance and regional interest for

this year's game should be at an all-time high. I'm certain that Southern Miss is as excited to play in the Wyndham New Orleans Bowl as we are to be hosting them."

North Texas (7-4) will represent the Sun Belt Conference after finishing with a perfect 7-0 league record. Southern Miss (6-4) will be representing Conference USA after finishing in a four-way tie for second place with a 5-3 conference record.

The Golden Eagles still have one regular-season game remaining against California this Saturday after the originally

scheduled meeting was forced to be rescheduled in the wake of Hurricane Ivan.

It will be the seventh all-time meeting between North Texas and Southern Miss, with each team winning three of the previous six meetings. The last meeting came in 1981 with Southern Miss winning 22-0 at Fouts Field in Denton.

This will mark the fourth straight New Orleans Bowl appearance for North Texas. The Mean Green lost to Colorado State in 2001 and Memphis in 2003 but defeated Cincinnati in 2002. ♦



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Part-time Youth Minister for local Southern Baptist Church. Flexible week-end hours. Phone (423) 837-7455, leave message.

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ATTENTION! We are currently recruiting volunteers to participate in a research study involving Depo-Provera. Who? Females age 18 or older currently using Depo-Provera. Why? To determine the impact of daily activity on bone mineral density. What's in it for me. You will receive a free bone mineral density scan. Interested? Contact Stephanie Otto at 615-497-0016. Call now, Space is limited.

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Small entertainment center fits 27" TV, light wood color, great condition barely used. \$75 oboe. If interested contact Beth or Step @ 615-542-9860 or 615-895-3462.

Wedding Gowns for sale. Elegance on a budget! We sell gently used wedding gowns; store displays photography props, discontinued styles. Original Retail to over \$2000! Our prices \$159-\$299! See photos online at www.treesjolis.com. Call Lashae 427-2411 or Kristin 589-0083. Also sell hairpieces and wigs.

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'98 Blazer For Sale 4x4, 4Dr Excellent Condition. Need to Sell! Call 931-592-2494.

4, ZR18 Yokohama Parada Tires with 18" Niche Road Wheels. \$1500 oboe. Call Mike @ 533-0273.

Roommates

I am looking for a female roommate who is responsible and doesn't party much (at least at home). I have a really pretty house in a nice subdivision about 2 miles from MTSU. Please call ASAP to see the house. Thanks! 615-653-8003.

Male roommate needed to share house w/3 guys. \$250/mo. + 1/4 utilities. Biking/walking distance from MTSU. No deposit. 817-913-4898.

Nonsmoking female roommate needed to live with 2 outgoing females! Rent is 216 & 1/3 utilities. 3 Bd Brick house CLOSE TO CAMPUS!! For info call Samantha at 931-581-6064.

I am a graduate student who is looking for a non-smoker, responsible and clean roommate to share 1300 sq ft. apartment only blocks from campus. Renter would have own private bath and walk-in closet. Rent is \$305 plus half utilities (phone, cable, electric, water). Deposit required. Please call 615-904-7246 or 931-334-0985 for more information.

21-yr-old female seeking roommate to share 2bd/ba at Oak Park

Apts. \$279/month + \$150 deposit. Washer and dryer included. Possible first and last month's rent upon move-in. No preference regarding sexual orientation. Please call 615-631-8479 ASAP!

Female sub-leaser wanted for one bedroom in a two bedroom two bath apt @ Univ. Courtyard. Located on 1st floor 2/no noisy neighbors above or around. This apartment usually rents for \$525 but get in NOW for \$495 w/a \$99 dep. Move in ASAP, lease will end in July. Contact me Me ASAP at 615907-0794 or Hnp2b@mtsu.edu

Female roommate needed ASAP. 3 BR/2BA house Stonegate subdivision. \$325 plus 1/3 utilities; 5 minutes from campus. Brand new house, 2 car garage, high speed internet, W/D included. Call 731-693-9595 or 615-585-4802.

Male, non-smoker roommate wanted to share 3 bd/2ba with female. 20 minutes from campus. Must sign 6 months or 1 year lease. \$350 plus 1/2 utilities. \$100 deposit required. Call Lisa 615-415-9302-leave msg.

Subleaser

University Courtyard 4 BD/4BA free sublease! Move in Jan. 2005. Male transferring student! Must sublease! \$395 a month. 615-351-0448.

Subleaser needed to share 3 BR apt. November rent paid. Will only have to pay from December - August 2005. Rent is \$439/mo. includes all utilities and the apartment is fully furnished. If interested please email becmash@bellsouth.net or phone 423-842-6452 collect.

Subleaser Needed for apt. in University Courtyard. It has 4 BD and 4 BA and only one current resident. Please call 901-508-4606.

Sterling University Gables. Female subleaser needed for spring/summer semester. \$335/mo. Utilities included w/ internet. Awesome roommates, just moving to Fla. Lease starting in Jan. Call Maggie at 770-778-1498 cell

Female subleaser needed. University Courtyard 1st floor. Fully furnished 4BD/4BA \$395/mo utilities included and internet access. **1st Month Free-Move in Now!** Call Katie at 770-778-1497 or 770-459-7435.

2BD/2BA apt. @ Raiders Crossing. Lease is from Jan1-Aug 13. Completely furnished to include full-size washer/dryer, fridge, microwave, dishwasher, & stove. Also included: high-speed internet, private balcony, pool & hot tub, volleyball court, BBQ grills, fitness center, tanning bed, and computer lab. All inclusive rent \$485/person pays for water, sewer, trash, pest control, internet, modern furniture, electricity, premium cable, and intrusion alarm. Awesome deal. Call 615-504-5963 or 615-542-2820.

Campus Crossings 2BD. Rent \$505/mo. All girl apt. 1 Rm. vacant during spring semester. All utilities included. Call Shea at 615-218-1888. Lease until July, stating Jan. 1st!!

Need female roommate to sublease 4 bedroom house starting after school commences in Dec. Rent is \$240/mo including all utilities, cable and internet! Right directly across from Murphy Center. Can walk to class. Please call 516-457-0904.

Subleaser needed immediately to share 4BD Apt. at University Courtyard with three males. Rent from Dec.-Aug. 2005. Rent is \$365/mo. Includes all utilities, fully furnished, hot tub, pool, fitness room, free tanning, high speed internet in room, cable and HBO. Call or e-mail adam at Talonguy17@aol.com or 615-319-7054.

For Rent

Apartment for rent at the Woods. Free utilities, cable and high speed internet. Free month of December. \$389/mo. Call 615-633-8691.

New 3 BR, 2BA House, CH/A, stove, refrig, D/W, washer/dryer, screened back porch, 1 mile from campus. \$975/mo. \$500 deposit, 1 yr. lease, no pets. 895-0075, 417-4009.

Got friends? Looking for an apartment? 4 BR/2 BA, remodeled apartment; very close to campus; \$295 per month / per bedroom. 615-758-9298.

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\$Reward\$ - Guitar equipment stolen from truck on 10/30. Includes Vox wah, Sabine turner, Samson Wireless system, channel switcher, cables. All in black box. Murray 496-7053.

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Beautiful white kitten with bright blue eyes needs a loving home. He is neutered and will give paperwork. Please call 516-457-0904.

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Three Blue Raiders named to All-SBC team



By Jon Leffew
Asst. Sports Editor

The Sun Belt Conference announced its all-conference teams yesterday, and MT had three different players make the lists. Coaches and media selected Kerry Wright, Quinton Staton and Colby Smith.

Wright, the team's only first-team selection, capped off a stellar MT career with his second straight 1,000 yard receiving season.

A two-time first-team all-SBC pick, Wright broke his own mark for touchdowns in a season with 11 this year.

Through last week's games, Wright ranked in the top 20

File Photo

Blue Raider senior Kerry Wright had 1,048 receiving yards this season.

nationally in receptions per game and receiving yardage.

He holds several MT receiving records, including most touchdowns in a career (22) and most receptions in a season (76).

Staton, a junior who started all 11 games at left guard, made the all-SBC second team after transferring from East Tennessee State University.

The junior from Chattanooga, Tenn., led the Blue Raiders with 128.5 knock-downs and a cumulative grade of 82 percent while playing 778 total snaps.

Smith, who was surprisingly not named to the first team, was given second-team honors after leading the league in field goals made, field goal percentage, and scoring by kickers.

The junior was second in the league in total scoring and was

successful in all 32 of his extra point attempts. In addition, he was one of only 20 semifinalists for the Lou Groza award for the nation's top kicker.

"I am extremely proud of all three guys," MT head coach Andy McCollum told MT Media Relations.

"They had great years for us, but the first thing each of them will tell you is that the team deserves the credit. Kerry [Wright] had another phenomenal season and was a real leader on our team, and Quinton [Staton] made a big sacrifice by moving from the defensive line in fall camp. And I can't say enough about the job Colby [Smith] did in his first year as our kicker. He was the best in the league, and one of the best in the country."

North Texas' Nick Badaldua was instead named to the first

team as kicker, joining several teammates on the list after the team won its fourth straight SBC title.

UNT freshman running back Jamario Thomas was named the conference's Player of the Year after replacing Patrick Cobbs, who led the nation in rushing last year.

Thomas, who has rushed for a league record 1,709 yards and has one game remaining, also took home the Offensive Player of the Year award and the Freshman of the Year award.

Troy's Demarcus Ware, a senior defensive end, was named the Defensive Player of the Year after leading the conference in both sacks (11) and tackles for loss (17.5).

UNT's Darrell Dickey was named the Coach of the Year for the fourth consecutive year. ♦

MT finishes Houston Classic with loss

By Jill Davis
Staff Writer

Sunday was not Middle Tennessee's night to play basketball as the University of Houston forced the Lady Raiders 80-56 in the final game of the Houston Classic at Holfheinz Arena.

The whole contest was in Houston's favor, as the Lady Cougars forced 28 turnovers and turned them into 27 points. With the win, the Lady Cougars moved to 5-0 for the second straight season.

MT had no answers for the Lady Cougars and standout freshman forward/center Sancho Lyttle, who scored a game-high 19 points.

Poor rebounding also added to MT's misfortunes, as the Blue Raiders were dominated in that category, 39-28.

Houston forced the Lady Raiders to work hard and earn their points early in the first half. A three-pointer from Patrice Holmes tied the game at 8, then a field goal tied the game once again at 10.

MT managed their only lead at 11-10 when Chrissy Givens made one of two free throws after a foul by the Lady Cougars' Daphne Andre. From then the Blue Raiders could not catch up to the high-powered running force of the Lady Cougars.

The Lady Cougars had complete control of the boards and also held a 38-34 edge in scoring in the paint.

Houston went on 16-0 run within eight minutes, and the Lady Raiders managed to bring some action to the game off a score from Holmes with 6:45 left in the half.

However, the Lady Cougars remained

unstoppable.

They opened the second half with a 31-10 run to gain their largest lead at 40, 71-31.

MT then finished the game with a 25-9 to lessen the margin to 24.

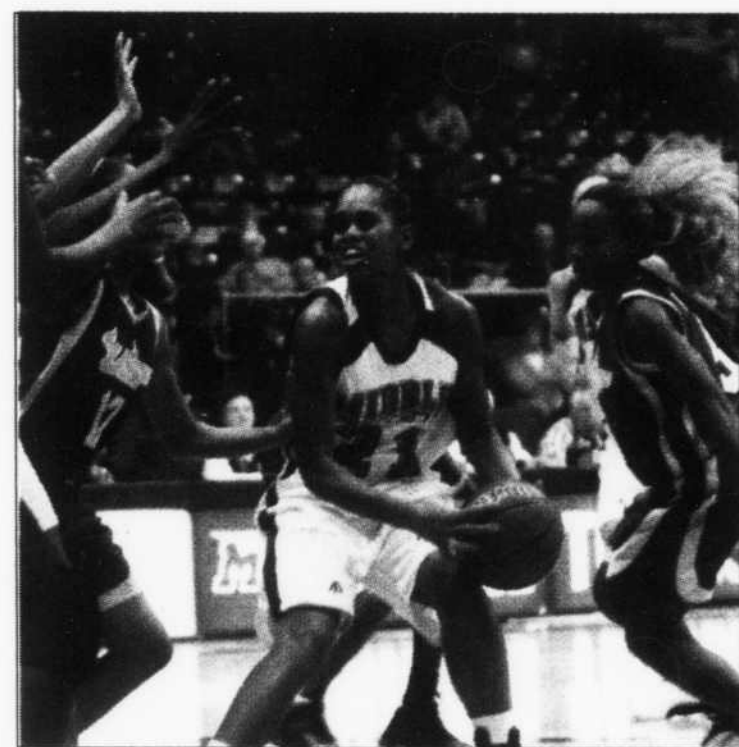
Lyttle scored her 19 points on 8-of-15 shooting, and Kiki Harris put up 14 points for the Lady Cougars.

Holmes had 17 points for the Blue Raiders and Tia Stovall added 14 points and 8 rebounds, the fourth time in five games she has scored in double figures.

The Blue Raiders continue on the road as they head to Atlanta to take on Georgia State on Thursday. Tipoff is set for 4 p.m. ♦

Photo by Steve Cross | Chief Photographer

Tia Stovall scored 14 points in the Lady Raiders' 80-56 loss at Houston.



Irish dismiss Willingham after only three seasons

By Tom Coyne
AP Sports Writer

SOUTH BEND, Ind. - Notre Dame's return to glory under Tyrone Willingham was brief. Too brief.

That's why he was fired Tuesday after just three seasons at Notre Dame - the shortest tenure of any full-time coach since Hunk Anderson was there from 1931-33.

"We simply have not made the progress on the field that we need to make," athletic director Kevin White said. "Nor have we been able to create the positive momentum necessary in our efforts to return the Notre Dame program to the elite level of the college football world."

During Willingham's first season, he got off to an 8-0 start - the second best start in school history - and after a surprisingly easy victory at Florida State, the Irish, at No. 4, had their highest ranking in eight years. Then they played Boston College.

Fans wearing green "Return to Glory" T-shirts flooded Notre Dame Stadium, and the Irish wore green jerseys for good luck. The Irish lost 14-7, though, and the glory days were over.

The Irish went 2-3 their last five games that season, including a 28-6 loss to North Carolina State in the Gator Bowl. They went 5-7 last season, losing by 30 or more points to Michigan, Florida State and Southern California.

This season the Irish pulled off upsets of Michigan and Tennessee but also were beaten badly by USC and Purdue. They also lost games they were expected to win against BYU, Boston College and Pittsburgh.

"We've been in and down and sideways a little bit, a little bit inconsistent," White said. "I think the program is closer than when he arrived. I think we were making progress, by in my view and in the view of the university, we just didn't make enough progress."

Players were considering whether to play in the Insight Bowl on Dec. 28, and White said he didn't know who would coach the game. Notre Dame accepted the bowl invitation Sunday.

White said he met Tuesday morning with Willingham to tell him he was fired, then both met later with some players to tell them.

Players were stunned.

"I think it's a shock to everybody," tight end Jared Clark said.

Other players declined comment, but were clearly surprised and saddened by the announcement.

"As a player, you think it's our fault. We didn't get the job done," Clark said. "I think coach Willingham was a great coach, and I enjoyed playing under him."

Notre Dame officials said Willingham had decided not to speak publicly Tuesday about his firing.

White praised Willingham's handling of the team, especially the Irish's strong academic record.

"From Sunday through Friday our football program has exceeded all expectations, in every way," he said. "But on Saturday, we've struggled."

The timing of Willingham's ouster broke with recent Notre Dame practice that even gave struggling coaches Gerry Faust and Bob Davie five seasons to prove themselves.

"If it says anything, it's an underscore of the notion that football is very important at Notre Dame and the competitive expectations are not downwardly negotiable," White said.

Notre Dame hired Willingham, the first black head coach in any sport for the Irish, from Stanford to replace George O'Leary. The former Georgia Tech coach resigned five days after taking the job because he lied about his academic and athletic achievements on his resume.

With Tony Samuel fired by New Mexico State and Fitz Tony resigned from San Jose State last week, there are now only two black head coaches in Division I-A: Karl Dorrell at UCLA and Sylvester Croom at Mississippi State.

Floyd Keith, executive director of the Black Coaches Association, said he was disappointed with Notre Dame's decision.

"In three years, I think he has done everything, short of winning a national championship, and I don't think he inherited national championship talent," Keith said.

So White, who conducted the searches that led to O'Leary and Willingham being hired, said he would set out Wednesday in search of a coach.

He said he would head the search and likely would not talk to the media again until the search is complete.

One coach certain to be mentioned as a possible replacement for Willingham is Utah's Urban Meyer, a Notre Dame assistant from 1996-2000.

The Utes are 11-0 and ranked No. 5 in their second year under Meyer, who has a clause in his current deal that allows him to leave for Notre Dame without a buyout.

Meyer wouldn't say whether he'd be interested if Notre Dame called.

"I have great respect for that university. That's the reason it's in my contract," Meyer said after Tuesday's practice.

"I think a lot of people look into it more than what it is. I'm sure that this is going to spark a lot of discussion, but I'm just trying to get a team ready to play in a bowl game."

Other possible candidates include California's Jeff Tedford, who has had success at a school with high academic expectations, Iowa coach Kirk Ferentz, who was hired as head football coach at Maine in 1990 by White when he was athletic director there, and Tampa Bay Buccaneers coach Jon Gruden, whose name was mentioned prominently in the Notre Dame search three years ago. He grew up in South Bend and his father was an Irish assistant under former Irish coach Dan Devine.

Notre Dame has won eight AP college football national championships, more than any other school, with the last in 1988 under Holtz.

Players from the school have won the Heisman Trophy seven times, also the most in college football, with the last one being Tim Brown in 1987.

But the Irish haven't won a bowl game since ending the 1993 season ranked No. 2 after beating Texas A&M 24-21 in the Cotton Bowl.

Since then, the Irish have lost six straight post-season games and haven't finished a season ranked in the top 10 since 1993. ♦

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