

# SIDELINES

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Editorial

## Law increases popularity of house shows

By Daniel Potter  
Assistant News Editor

A new law has members of Murfreesboro's live music scene leaving bars to perform in private homes, but trouble might just follow them there.

The law, Tennessee's "Non-Smoker Protection Act," requires venues that allow smoking to admit only patrons age 21 and up, limiting the options of many younger music fans; as a result, house shows are gaining in popularity, but stand on tenuous legal ground.

"If there's going to be DJs and multiple bands, that's something that isn't allowed according to the zoning ordinance," said city planner Robert Lewis, whose job includes sending letters to warn house-show hosts of their violation.

"We know your parents love you, and I have kids at MTSU and I love them, and I'd hate to see anything happen to them. Chances are it wouldn't happen, but you never know - accidents happen," Lewis said.

"We're not all a bunch of ogres down here at City Hall, even though it sounds like we are," Lewis said. "We're not trying to come down hard on everybody that wants to have a good time."

In addition to the City's letters, in the last year various houses in Murfreesboro have received fines from the police and threats of eviction from landlords, but despite this numerous house shows still occur each month.

"In this town especially I think it's necessary," said Asher Johnson, a local musician who sometimes hosts live music at an informal backyard venue called the Barn.

A few events there have brought the attention of law enforcement, mostly concerning noise levels, but

Johnson has never been fined or received a letter from the City.

For its Halloween show the Barn saw a surge of guests; some were diverted from another house show - cancelled due to City intervention - like Jenny Stracener, a junior majoring in communication disorders.

An avid follower of local music, 20-year-old Stracener says house shows are her only real option under the new law. "I don't like it and bands don't like it. [We're] going to have to go to house shows."

For Stracener, more than entertainment is at issue; as a photographer for the Murfreesboro Pulse, Stracener wants to cover live music, but thus far has had no luck gaining entry to bars, even for her work.

Once, despite begging a manager and showing her press pass, she was denied seeing her own friends perform.

"I left crying that night," Stracener said.

House shows are also popular because they give a venue to performers that otherwise might have nowhere to play.

Touring musicians may lack the clout to get booked in a bar, or may be too experimental for such an audience, says Trey Bishop, a local musician and senior majoring in outdoor recreation.

"I think

[the law] increases the demand for house shows, because most of the participants at shows at previous 18-and-up venues were 18 to 20 years old," said Bishop, who plays guitar in the group Baby Teeth Thieves. Now, "house shows are the only place kids that age can go."

Bishop helped organize over a dozen shows at a home called the Acid Living Room, which was shut down in spring after a series of run-ins with police led to charges of underage drinking and a \$140 fine for excessive noise.

At least one house has since supplanted the Acid Living Room's experimental niche, but its proprietors declined to comment directly for this story, fearing reprisal from the City or police.

The inability to broadly publicize these events is bad news for musicians who play such shows, Bishop says, because it makes expanding the audience harder.

"The only people that come to those shows are the same people over and over," Bishop said. "People in charge don't want that to be what MTSU is known for; they want it to be football and churches."

Murfreesboro's hip-hop scene has it even worse,

See House Party, 2



## Faces in the Crowd

What do you think about a 2008 Presidential Debate coming to Belmont?



Clayton



Hecker

"I think it's a good opportunity for students to get involved in the vote and getting to know the candidates, and that it would be a good idea to see it."

-Heather Clayton, junior photography major

"I'm definitely glad it's not far away, and hopefully kids from our school will take the chance to go to it."

-Michael Hecker, sophomore journalism major



Hickman



Covington

"It's good that they're open to the public. It provides them with a chance to test the political climate of our generation."

-Robert Hickman, senior recording industry major

"This could be good news for MTSU. The younger students should be less apathetic to the political process. It's their future, and they need to get hold of it now."

-Bill Covington, senior engineering technology major

Information compiled by  
Michael Guggisberg

## Litter grants increase to improve highways

By Michael Stone  
Contributing Writer

On Nov. 21, Governor Phil Bredesen and Tennessee Department of Transportation Commissioner Gerald Nicely announced \$3.8 million in litter grants would be divided and given to Tennessee's 95 counties.

These grants have been given annually since Tennessee's Litter Grant Bill was passed in 1981.

Approximately \$3 million is awarded annually, making this year's grants higher than usual.

"The distribution to each county is based on population and road miles so the amount varies from county to county. The minimum grant was \$29,237 and the maximum grant was \$242,052, which went to Shelby county," said TDOT Public Information Officer Julie Oaks.

The Litter Grant Bill gets its funding from taxes on malt beverage and soft drink companies.

"This was a self-imposed tax so that these industries could do their part to reduce litter along our roadways," said Oaks.

People who pick up the roadside litter

are both paid workers and volunteers.

The majority of roadside litter pickup comes from paid contract workers, like roadside mowers, outside of TDOT.

According to TDOT's maintenance litter pickup figures, \$5,031,170 was paid to contract workers, while \$1,309,187 was paid to TDOT employees.

Volunteer work mainly comes from volunteers participating in various Tennessee programs including Adopt-A-Highway, Keep Tennessee Beautiful, and Great American Cleanup.

Each county is required to use between 15 percent and 30 percent of all grant money towards educational programs.

The specific segments that are targeted for these programs include students, adults, media, government, and business.

Each county uses their education money as they see best fit. Contests, events, adopt-a-tree programs, and public service announcements are just some of the many examples of education programs.

"The trash problem is definitely getting better. Keep Tennessee Beautiful measures the reduction in roadside litter each in

See Litter, 2

## Belmont to host presiden-

By Michael Guggisberg  
Contributing Writer

On Nov. 19, the Commission on Presidential Debates announced that Nashville's Belmont University will host the Town Hall Presidential Debate on Oct. 7, 2008.

Belmont was chosen above 16 national sites to host one of the three presidential debates, and this historic selection will be distinguished as the first time the state of Tennessee has ever held the event.

"It is a distinct privilege to be chosen to host the Town Hall Presidential Debate," Belmont President Bob Fisher said. "This opportunity will provide an invaluable educational experience to our students, allowing them to observe firsthand our nation's political process and to be participants in American history. We are also pleased that the candidates and all of our distinguished guests will have an opportunity to witness the many benefits offered by the greater Nashville community."

The university will accommodate 5,500 patrons, and is expected to attract more than 2,500 members of the media to Nashville, in tow with the candidates' campaigns and supporters, and will subsequently be viewed by millions worldwide. For the first time in what could take decades to repeat, the debate offers a chance for Middle Tennesseans to see both presidential candidates in person and in the community.

"It is always good to get the presidential candidates in your state,"

See Presidential Debate, 2

Hybrids: cars for the future?

See Features, 3

Pravda: "New political on the rise"

See Opinions, 4

Volleyball advances to Sweet 16 at MT

See Sports, 5

### LOCAL FORECAST

Monday



HI: 48°  
LO: 26°

Tuesday



HI: 57°  
LO: 37°

Wednesday



HI: 51°  
LO: 28°

Thursday



HI: 43°  
LO: 35°

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## Presidential Debate

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said John Vile, MTSU Chair of the Political Science Department. "Candidates always have to consider air coverage, and one of the beauties of Tennessee is that it has so many state borders, and it gets more publicity from the surrounding states." Vile is also an author on the subject. In 2002, *Presidential Winners and Losers: Words of Victory and Concession* was published, and he iterated the insistence states have toward reeling in the candidates. Sometimes they even move up their caucuses in order to get the candi-

dates sooner.

Presidential debates mark a close to the election cycle, as the candidates of both major parties will have been decided upon. In three rounds of debate, they argue on all of the current, hot-button issues, and accordingly, provide a preview of their would-be presidency. Since 1960, the debates have been broadcast on radio and television, and from Nixon and Kennedy to Bush and Kerry, they have drawn millions of viewers interested in the election. ♦

## Heritage Center of Murfreesboro hosts grand opening reception

By Tiffany Gibson

Staff Writer

On Friday, Nov. 30 at 3 p.m. the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County hosted its grand opening reception at 225 West College Street on the Murfreesboro Square.

The event took place over a two-hour time period and allowed the community of Murfreesboro to view the newly assembled exhibit displaying a great deal of Rutherford County's history.

While enjoying food and beverage, those in attendance were allowed to view the exhibit while conversing with staff and volunteers.

"The Heritage Center serves as a welcome center/museum with exhibits displaying our county's history. Its purpose is to inspire people to go visit these historical places and learn more about them," said Melissa Zimmerman, Heritage Programming Specialist.

Zimmerman went on to say that the exhibit will not only provide as an informational guide, but will also include extra activities such as lectures and book discussion groups covering historical nonfiction and fiction as time progresses.

The Heritage Center of Murfreesboro will also arrange free walking tours Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Even though tours are at no cost to participants, Zimmerman encourages large groups wishing to explore the exhibit to schedule in advance due to the vast material that must be covered.

"Now that we have a space to see interpretations of our history, I hope the community will take advantage of it since it is open for them to enjoy," said Richard Gabel, Executive Director of Main Street.

Some of the exhibits being presented in the center currently are the Modern Age, the Jazz era, the 20th Century of Main Street, Life in a Jim Crow Town, Entertainers of Rutherford County, Famous Historical Female Natives of Murfreesboro and the Civil War.

The 20th Century exhibits displays photographs taken in the 1920s of the Main Street Square, including the James K. Polk Hotel. Albert Gore, participant of the research center at MTSU, distributed the James K. Polk Hotel photograph to the Heritage Center. Gore also contributed many more photographs to be displayed in other exhibits.

MTSU's theater department also donated costumes for the Heritage Center to clothe their mannequins in. The

mannequins will be representing popular styles of the Jazz era and the Modern age.

Directly across from the Jazz era and Modern age exhibits is the Entertainers of Rutherford County feature exhibit. This feature exhibit pays tribute to a famous Rutherford County native known as David Harrison 'Uncle Dave' Macon.

Macon was a popular songwriter and comedian that ultimately became one of the first stars ever to play at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. The Heritage Center pays tribute to his life and accomplishments by remembering 'Uncle Dave' Macon in this feature exhibit.

Another one of the Heritage Center's exhibits on display is the Life in a Jim Crow Town. This exhibit displays a map of African American business and residential districts south of the Murfreesboro Square during the Jim Crow Laws period. The exhibit also illustrates a portrait of an African American education center known as Bradley Academy. The photograph illustrating this academy shows the class of 1922, which consisted of two males and seven females.

In addition to these exhibit, a Famous Female natives of Rutherford County exhibit is also available parallel to the Life in a Jim Crow Town exhibit. The Famous Female natives of Rutherford County exhibit pays respect to several women who have accomplished notable achievements in their lifetime. A few of the candidates listed on the exhibit are Mary Elle Vaughn, Emma G. Rogers Roberts, Mary Noailles, Rhea Seddon and Will Allen Dromgoole. The exhibit lists these women's achievements along with many more.

The main exhibit given emphasis in the Heritage Center is currently the Civil War. The exhibit is quite larger than previous ones as it illustrates a portrait as a background, which was painted by Erin Anfinson, Art Professor at MTSU. The display of the Civil War in front of the painting is a tent set up by staff and volunteers of the Heritage Center. Julie Lenger, MTSU MA candidate in History, is one of the volunteers that helped build and create the Civil War exhibit.

The Heritage Center's facility space for these exhibits were made available to the community by numerous partnerships among the City of Murfreesboro, Main Street of Rutherford County, State Farm, Historic Preservation at MTSU and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area.

"For Main Street it's [the Heritage Center] a chance to thank the partners for their help by displaying this exhibit for the community, college and any public or private sector," Gabel said. ♦

## House Party

Continued from 1

says Lamont "Monty, Burns" Gholston, a senior in the school of mass communication and host of the college radio show "Blazin' in the Boro."

"Any time there's music to shut down they always shut down hip-hop first," said Gholston, who feels the City's actions reflect a resistance to change. "They just want Murfreesboro to continue like the Mayberry of the new millennium."

"My thought is they are scared," agreed Jacob "J. Grizzly" Spaulding, a junior mass communications major and the show's co-host.

"They're just looking for an excuse," said Spaulding, citing one house recently threatened with eviction in connection with live music there. "I think the landlord's a hater."

Gholston doubts anything the City does can diminish conflict at shows though. "Alcohol plus humans equals fights," he said.

Workers at a local bar and venue expressed qualms with the law as well.

"It just doesn't make any sense," said Jacquie Mortensen, a bartender at the Boro Bar and Grill.

Mortensen questioned the logic behind laws that permit people to smoke at age 18, but won't let them do so around people who are drinking until they're 21.

"It [stinks], because the target market is

the college crowd," said Nina Maloney, a junior studying recording-industry business who also works at the Boro. "The age group is divided."

Still, house shows are far from a perfect solution.

"I'm of the opinion that big house shows are much more dangerous than venue shows — there's more of a propensity to let loose," said Clay Cantrell, a senior studying English and anthropology.

Even so, Cantrell's band, the Locust Cloud, sometimes performs in houses, and Cantrell doubts the efficacy of the new law.

"I don't think making bars 21 and up in a college town is going to keep anyone from drinking or smoking," he said.

There are lots of preventative laws though — seatbelts, for instance, noted Sarah Young, a senior who plans to attend law school upon finishing her degree in political science.

Part of the issue between the City and hosts of house shows is a problem of communicating the fine line between a party and a concert, on which house shows teeter.

"There's a huge difference between a concert and a performance for your friends," Young said. "I can understand from a safety perspective trying to stop something before it starts, but you can't prevent everything." ♦

## Litter

Continued from 1

year in affiliate counties and cities as part of their affiliation with Keep America Beautiful.

Those survey results show a definite reduction in litter. Of course we have a long way to go," said Oaks. Litter is not only a problem on Tennessee's roads, but also here at MTSU.

"The litter situation here at MTSU hasn't noticeably improved or gotten worse in the twenty years I've worked here," said Ground's Supervisor Dale Witty. "One issue we have had to deal with in more recent years is campus gathering spots. Places like in front of dorms, around Cyber, and Greek row are some of the places that have seen an increase in litter."

Approximately 120 work-hours are put into litter pick up weekly by grounds services.

These hours include twelve 7:30-9 A.M. litter pickup shifts every weekday, one 6-10 A.M. litter pickup shift on both Saturday and Sunday, and the three hours is takes everyday for someone to change the over 100 trash cans on campus.

MTSU has a policy that punishes students who are caught littering on campus.

According to the website for the Office of Judicial Affairs and Mediation Services "dispersing litter in any form onto the grounds of facilities of the campus" is a punishable offense.

This action is not brought up as often as other violations like drugs and alcohol in the judicial affairs office.

"We only see about two cases a year on littering," said Dean of Judicial Affairs Laura Sosh-Lightsy.

"Litter is unsafe, unsightly, and costly. It is dangerous on the roadways and makes it look as if we don't care about our state," said Julie Oaks regarding litter in Tennessee. ♦

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# FEATURES

## The car of the future?

With gas prices and environmental-concerns rising, hybrid cars may offer an alternative. If you can afford it.

By Katy Coil  
Staff Writer

Between gas prices taking three dollars a gallon out of their pocketbooks and rising concerns about the state of the environment, many people are looking for an alternative to traditional cars.

For some, hybrid-electric cars provide answers to problems caused by rising gas prices and carbon emissions. With an environmentally friendly image, coupled with a nation-wide push to "go green," hybrids seem poised to be the next big step for the automotive industry.

Tye Hargrove, the sales manager of Alexander Chevrolet on Broad Street, links several factors to the rise of consumers buying hybrid cars, from the fact that the cars release less emissions and less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere to the United States' dependence on the Middle East and the high price of oil.

"Hybrids are environment-friendly and get 50 miles to the gallon," Hargrove says. "Too many people rely on [gas]. Thirty years ago, a family might have one vehicle. Now, everyone above 10 in the family has their own car. Everyone's dependent."

Hargrove says that hybrids can provide some advantages to buyers.

"People buy hybrids because the cost of gas is three dollars or more," he says. "You can get a tax break. Some people are just trying to save the ozone."

Though the numbers of people buying hybrid cars are up in every state but Hawaii, more traditional models are still sold.

"Availability is the problem," Hargrove says. "Hybrids are more expensive, which makes it harder for everyone to afford one. And technology has to keep up. Technology is expensive."

For car dealers, selling hybrid cars is often a game of trying to stay ahead of the competition.

"Toyota has a surplus on the roads," he says. "They can't get enough. I read yesterday that Honda dropped their hybrid on the Accord. We've never sold one. I think they're serious. They just want to make sure it's a good product when they get it out."

Bob Scaife, a sales consultant at Alexander Chevrolet, believes the hype around hybrids is mostly from advertisers.

"Firstly, I don't think there's a big, overall push for them," he says. "That'll be determined by advertising."

He also thinks that hybrid cars will eventually be pushed out by better technology.

"I think other things will over check them," Scaife says. "They've been too long in developing them. I think you'll be seeing more of them, but they'll be overtaken by new technology: clean diesel."

"I think America is behind in the development of vehicles," Scaife says. "The rest of the world has far more fuel efficient cars, i.e. clean, quiet diesel. Through Europe, all the gas cars are being converted to diesel. What's been happening in America the past few years has already happened in Europe. The Japanese went in and sold good quality cars at a good price, ousting everyone else."

Scaife also believes that internal problems will lead to hybrids being pushed off the market.

"Twelve to 20 months ago, Toyota and Honda couldn't sell a hybrid because it cost \$8000 to replace the batteries for the hybrid," he says. "The

press came out, gave them bad premiums, and they couldn't sell them."

According to Tim Garrott, sales manager at Neill-Sandler Toyota on South Church Street, their sales of hybrids are selling.

"The sales on hybrids now have increased," Garrott says. "Consumers will continue to purchase them as long as they are educated about them and as long as technology increases."

Garrott says that pushes from consumers rather than the automakers get hybrids off the lot.

"We will sell every hybrid we can get our hands on," he says. "There isn't any extra incentive from the manufacturer. As gas prices go up, the demand for hybrids goes up."

Garrott says there is a "wide range" of buyers for hybrids.

"Most buyers are very educated," he says. "We've had young people in college, elderly people. They're either looking for better gas

"The rest of the world has far more fuel efficient cars. What's been happening in America the past few years has already happened in Europe. The Japanese went in and sold good quality cars at a good price, ousting everyone else."

-Bob Scaife, sales consultant at Alexander Chevrolet

mileage or trying to help the economy."

The emission standards on hybrids are another draw, according to Garrott.

"They're zero emission cars," he says. "The cut down on the emission state. If you go to the emission testing, that's all based on air quality, and with having zero or close to zero emissions, you're doing very well."

Many hybrid buyers are concerned about the environment.

"I think everybody wants to help the environment, whether it be with hybrid cars or garbage," Garrott says. "Our resources won't last forever if we don't protect them, whether it be land or fuel."

Garrott says he thinks that new technological advancements may push hybrid cars off the market.

"I think through time there will probably be something better than hybrids out there," he says. "We're leaving that to the younger generation, still in school. As far as the gas guzzlers go, I don't think they'll ever be completely phased out. Farmers will still need tractors; they'll need to burn the fuel off. I think hybrids are the first step in leading into an alternative fuel because hybrids are part electric. But they still have to run off of gas."

Joe Semmes, a sales

and leasing consultant at Reddell Honda on South Church Street, claims that hybrid Hondas aren't outselling traditional models.

"What's funny about ours is our Hondas get such good gas mileage anyway," Semmes says. "The Civic hybrid gets around 50 miles a gallon whereas the regular Civic can get around 40 miles to the gallon. If I had to guess, I would say in other parts of the country there are more hybrids selling than here. I'd say more people there are 'eco-friendly'. Here there are more people in big SUVs, whereas in New York and places like that, there are more people driving small cars."

Semmes says there is some motivation behind buyers who want hybrid cars.

"Better gas mileage. A regular Civic sells for about \$18000 to \$19000 whereas a hybrid is going to be about \$23000," he says. "It'll take you a while to make up the gas mileage. There are people who buy them strictly to be environmentally friendly, which if you're trying to do that, a hybrid is the only kind of car you can buy."

When it comes to selling cars, Semmes knows what to tell prospective buyers.

"I'd try to find out from you what your buying motives were," he says. "If you were looking into emissions, to take care of the earth, I'd tell you this car has zero emissions. If you have to drive 500 miles every week, I'd stress the gas mileage."

Semmes says that hybrids can have their downsides as well.

"I can see you don't have as much power and you lose a little bit of trunk space because of the battery pack," he says. "But that's about it."

Fluctuating gas prices also cause buyer to fluctuate on which type of car they want to buy from what Semmes has seen.

"If gas prices keep going up, and they'll go up, they'll be trading in their SUVs and when gas goes down, their back to buying 15 or 16 gallon cars," he says.

Hybrids will be the first step for Honda, according to Semmes.

"You'll probably see Honda coming out with diesels in their cars that get good gas mileage," he says. "It'll be a mix. Just real efficient fuel emissions, some hybrids, some diesels. Honda's coming out with the FCX. It's a car that runs off of natural gas."

A technician at Neill-Sandler Buick and GMC on Broad Street, Don Levron thinks hybrids help solve the pollution problem.

"Twenty-five percent of pollution is cars idling," he says. "Electric cars don't idle."

Levron thinks there would be more electric cars on the market if the government would allow for it.

"I think it's because the federal government's making it that way," he says. "We should make it more competitive, make it cheaper and easier to acquire hybrids. That's the main problem right now. We've got the flex fuel on ethanol but not the electric hybrid. We have it just for show, just to say we have it."

As far as Levron is concerned, hybrids are the future.

"I think all cars should be hybrids," he says. "We have the technology. Why not use it?" ♦

## Environment Briefs

WASHINGTON (AP) - The groundbreaking deal in Congress to raise mile-per-gallon standards will compel the auto industry to churn out more fuel-efficient vehicles on a faster timeline than the companies wanted, though with flexibility to get the job done.

The auto industry's fleet of new cars, sport utility vehicles, pickup trucks and vans will have to average 35 mpg by 2020, according to the agreement that congressional negotiators announced late Friday. That compares with the 2008 requirement of 27.5 mpg average for cars and 22.5 mpg for light trucks. It would be the first increase ordered by Congress in three decades.

Majority Democrats plan to include the requirement in broader energy legislation to be debated in the context of \$90-per-barrel oil, \$3-plus pump prices and growing concerns about climate change. The House plans to begin debate this week.

"It is a major milestone and the first concrete legislation to address global warming," said Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif.

While Senate Democrats were quick to embrace the compromise, the energy bill may face problems over requirements for nonpublic electric utilities to produce 15 percent of their power from renewable energy sources such as wind or solar.

Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., on Saturday said that idea "will make this bill untenable for many in the Senate."

Environmentalists have sought stricter mileage standards for years, saying that is the most effective way to curb greenhouse gas emissions and oil consumption.

The energy bill will help accelerate plans by automakers to bring more fuel-efficient technologies to conventional engines and alternatives such as gas-electric hybrids and vehicles running on ethanol blends. For the first time, for example, manufacturers will receive credits for building vehicles running on biodiesel fuel.

Domestic automakers and Toyota Motor Corp. vehemently opposed a Senate bill approved passed in June that contained the same mileage requirements and timeline. They warned the measure would limit the choice of vehicles, threaten jobs and drive up costs.

The proposal would continue separate standards for cars and trucks, extend credits for producing vehicles that run on ethanol blends, and allow automakers to receive separate credits for exceeding standards and then apply those credits to other model years.

Among hybrids, Toyota has dominated the market with the Prius, but several automakers are beginning to bring the technology to large SUVs and pickups. ♦

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — O drought, is nothing sacred?

Christmas trees are the latest crop hit by one of the driest years on record in the state, although the full effect might not be apparent for a few years. Saplings still a few years off from ornaments and tinsel comprised the bulk of the casualties for tree farmers.

"We're telling all our customers that we will not open next year in 2008," said Mary Claiborne, who helps run Volunteer Tree Farm in Lebanon. Although Claiborne expects to sell about 1,200 trees this season, the farm lost about 5,000 more because of the weather.

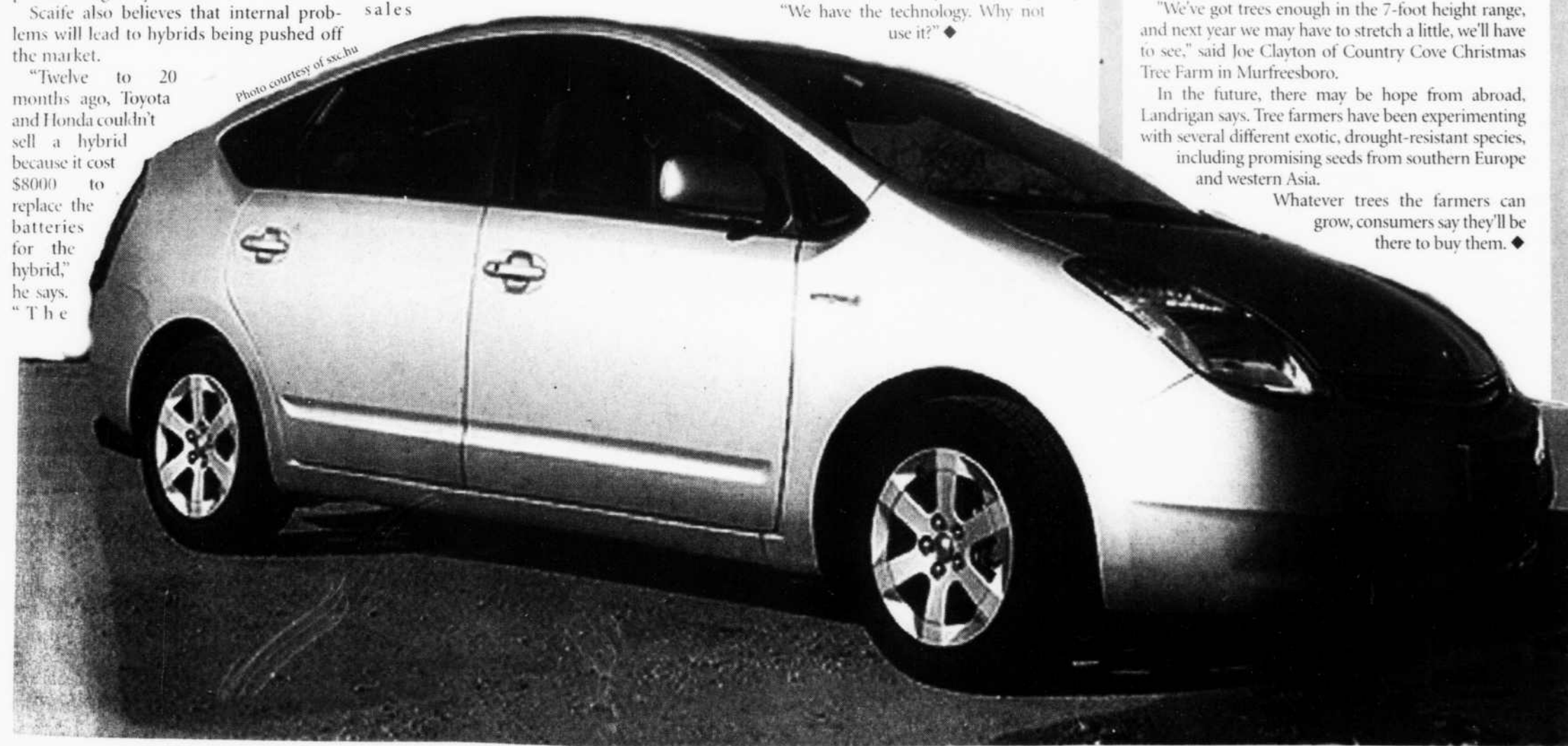
"The combination of the freeze Easter week and the drought has had a disastrous effect on various farms across state," said Crossville tree farmer Art Landrigan, who watched a 7 and a half foot fir tree go from green to dead in three days.

Landrigan is president of the Tennessee Christmas Tree Growers Association, which includes more than 40 farmers across the state. Many farms west of Lebanon have suffered, he said, with some closing down completely this year.

"We've got trees enough in the 7-foot height range, and next year we may have to stretch a little, we'll have to see," said Joe Clayton of Country Cove Christmas Tree Farm in Murfreesboro.

In the future, there may be hope from abroad. Landrigan says. Tree farmers have been experimenting with several different exotic, drought-resistant species, including promising seeds from southern Europe and western Asia.

Whatever trees the farmers can grow, consumers say they'll be there to buy them. ♦





# OPINIONS

From the Editorial Board:

## House show proprietors must take responsibility, self-regulate

House shows are exciting and the *Sidelines* editorial board favors them, but we must stipulate it's important their planners regulate them carefully. After all, if their proprietors don't keep things under control, then the law will step in to do so, and probably in a way that's much less enjoyable than live bands and college drinks.

Regrettably, young people often suffer a double standard, and accordingly their gatherings tend to be held to higher degrees of scrutiny than other activities involving crowds and live music, like church events and political fundraisers. A crowd of college kids milling around at night might be considered probable cause, but a wedding, maybe not so much.

A double standard is also visible when the police crack down on a house show because of underage drinking, but turn a blind eye to the abundance of alcohol on campus during pre-game tailgates.

Still, two wrongs don't make a right, and that means even where the law is not uniformly applied, would-be hosts of house shows should limit their risks by taking a few factors into consideration.

Noise should be cut at a reasonable hour; parked cars should not block neighbor's driveways or emergency vehicles.

Making a routine of frequently hosting house shows can constitute an illegal business simply because a service is being offered, even if nobody's charging cover. Speaking of, if the touring band could use some money for gas, don't make a fee mandatory – just ask for donations.

A group mentality can be a dangerous thing regardless of planning, but we feel that's actually more of a strike against churches and political parties than house shows.

The City should never shut down a house show before it even starts solely on the assumption that something illegal would otherwise ensue. This seemingly violates the principle of "innocent until proven guilty," and we hear that's important, or at least it used to be.

## Universal healthcare responsible decision

By Lauren Pound

Contributing Columnist

As a Bush supporter during both the 2000 and 2004 elections, it took a lot of courage to watch Michael Moore's new movie "Sicko" after a friend spent a lot of time trying to convince me to go.

To many Republicans, Michael Moore is public enemy number one now that Saddam is out of the picture. After watching his previous documentaries, I had my guard up going into "Sicko," and I was prepared for anything this crazy communist was going to throw at me. But something happened that night after I watched the movie, something so miraculous it was almost on par with Moses parting the Red Sea. As a lifelong Republican voter, I agreed with Michael Moore.

After watching the movie, I was torn. How could I maintain my basic political beliefs that are libertarian, right-leaning values and still think universal health care is a good idea?

I came across this crazy idea by a man named John Locke called the Social Contract theory. According to Locke, the people of a nation subject themselves to government in exchange for social order. This government protects its people from external and internal threats, and in turn, the people allow that government to exist.

It clicked, I had the basic justification that universal health care is in league with the ideas of democracy and not just relegated to communist nations.

If, according to the social contract theory, a government exists to protect its people from threats, why shouldn't the government also be expected to protect its people from threats to their health?

Too many of us are scared of the idea of universal health care simply because it has the label of "socialism" attached to it. Our generation is not that far removed from the Red Scare of the Cold War. We are the last generation that will remember when communism did not just exist in Latin America and Southeast Asia. We were alive when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989. On Christmas Day in 1991, we watched on television as the Soviet Union ceased to exist.

We have learned over time to

combine elements of both socialism and capitalism in order to better serve the people of this country. We have socialized education that lets every child, regardless of family income, get an education in public schools. How would people feel if every time they called the fire department, they were asked to pay to save their houses from burning?

How are we, the taxpaying public, going to pay for universal health care? This question was far easier to answer. Since the beginning of the Iraq War, the government has spent nearly \$470 billion fighting in Iraq.

If the government listened to the majority of the American people, that \$470 billion could have been spent on setting up a universal health care system so that all people, regardless of income, could get appropriate health care.

Also, in 2007 alone, the federal government has spent close to \$18 billion on the War on Drugs, which, if you go to any Murfreesboro house party, you can see is a war we are losing.

If even part of the money spent on the War on Drugs since its inception was put toward universal health care, the U.S. would be well on its way to joining the other developed nations such as Canada, Great Britain, Australia and France that have instituted universal health care.

But Western European countries and other developed nations are not the only ones to have a universal health care system. Iraq and Afghanistan have joined that list since the United States entered those countries. Taxpayers give money to the U.S. government to help establish a democratic society in Iraq. Our tax dollars are at work providing free health care for all Iraqi citizens, some of whom are no doubt insurgents fighting against our troops.

Don't let the label of "socialized health care" scare you away, fellow Republicans. The government has a social responsibility to provide for the welfare of its citizens.

Ask yourself this simple question: Who wouldn't want free health care? And write this date down, because it's the first and probably the last time a conservative will agree with Michael Moore.



"And Friends"

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Frank Hasenmueller

## New political party on the rise

As the spectacle of the presidential electoral process falls upon us once more, our two traditional parties reveal their impotence more than ever. Amongst leading candidates, there is almost an unspoken consensus to keep discussion of legitimate issues off the table. They are exchanging serious discourse on healthcare, education, and poverty for frivolous debates over abortion and religious credentials.

The Democratic Party claims to represent the interests of average working Americans, but continually sells them out in the interests of the wealthy and big business. Although, they differ on many secondary issues, the Democrats and the Republicans are fundamentally identical.

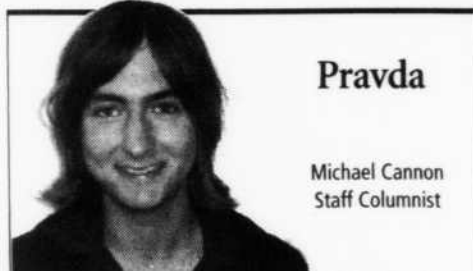
While these stale candidates idly bicker, some working folks have been trying to organize some alternatives to the two-party system.

This is especially true in New Orleans where the emerging "Reconstruction Party" is gaining ground in its attempt to rebuild the region.

Over two years after Hurricane Katrina destroyed the city of New Orleans and mangled much of the Gulf Coast, discontent is still high amongst the region's residents. In the face of a painfully slow and disorganized reconstruction effort, many people are now translating their frustration and anger into concrete political action.

As evidenced by its name, the party mainly focuses on the reconstruction of areas damaged by Katrina. However, they also use the term reconstruction in a broader sense, such as fighting poverty and improving education and health in New Orleans' dilapidated inner city.

Its New Orleans program contains some surprisingly radical proposals to this effect, such as a minimum wage of \$16.00 per hour for all businesses having fifty or more employees, expanding and improving public housing



Pravda

Michael Cannon  
Staff Columnist

for the city's displaced residents, and mandating free health clinics for children.

They also aim to democratize reconstruction efforts by proposing that city council meetings take place in the evening in order to allow more residents to attend and participate in decision-making that directly affects themselves and their communities.

Reconstruction activists are seeking to forge a progressive alternative to the stagnant Democratic Party. After experiencing the complete failure of local Democratic governments to rebuild the Gulf Coast, this is the only logical course of action.

Though still in its formative stages, the party is already gaining a fair amount of momentum. Malcom Suber recently ran for the New Orleans' city council under the Reconstruction ticket and garnered a fair amount of press.

Says Suber, "We want to win this seat so working class and poor black folk have some representation at City Hall and to move forward towards building the Reconstruction Party."

Unfortunately, his bid for office was unsuccessful. This was probably due to thousands of New Orleans' citizens still in involuntary exile.

Despite the defeat at the polls however, the Party has gained attention and is using the momentum from its election campaign to continue organizing at the grassroots level across the region.

Maintaining this momentum could prove difficult. Historically, the death knell of all "third party" movements comes from an inability to make and maintain a connection to a mass base. In other words, the Reconstruction Party must sink deep roots into the working class if it is to become an effective political force.

This could possibly happen by linking up with another group of grassroots organizers, the new U.S. Labor Party.

The Labor Party's goal is for unions to break with the Democrats and create a national mass party of labor that can truly represent the interests of working Americans. This is a very ambitious aim, but if they were able to connect to organize labor, this would lay the basis for a viable third party to challenge the two-party system. The Reconstruction Party could flourish by merging into this movement.

This of course is optimistic speculation, but such developments are possible. All political parties rise and fall and there is no reason to assume that the Democrats and Republicans will last forever.

It is still unclear whether the Reconstruction movement will develop into a lasting political force, but the fact that it is emerging at all is symptomatic of a deep dissatisfaction with the two traditional parties in the Gulf Coast. Betrayed by both federal Republicans and local Democrats, some people in the region are trying to create an alternative that can genuinely represent working people's interests. Suber aptly describes the situation: "If we want real justice and equity, we'll have to do it ourselves. Certainly the Democrats and the Republicans make empty promises to the people."

Michael Cannon is a sophomore sociology major and can be reached at mrc3g@mtsu.edu.

## 'Intelligent Design' bad education

What is the origin of life? What is the origin of humanity? Where should we turn to find the solutions to such perplexing mysteries?

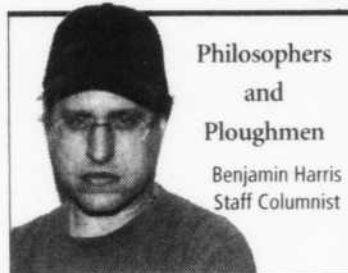
Since the Dark Ages, religious authorities have asserted that there is no need to look any further than your neighborhood theologian to quench your human thirst for knowledge.

However, despite the efforts of the church, technology eventually enhanced the ability to acquire empirical data and more effective ways to analyze it were developed. Modern science was born.

It soon became obvious that church doctrine was not infallible. People began to realize that relying on the authority of the church for basic truth was incorrect and philosophers began to publish and disseminate ideas that became known as enlightenment thought.

A new resistance emerged, which continues to this day: Western Civilization resurrected reason. Religion has since slowly been forced to relinquish its monopoly on thought; kicking and screaming all the way.

In 1859 a British natural scientist named Charles Darwin published a work called "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life." Wikipedia



Philosophers  
and  
Ploughmen

Benjamin Harris  
Staff Columnist

describes it as well as I can, "It introduced the theory that populations evolve over the course of generations through a process of natural selection."

This is controversial to religious authoritarians because it contradicts the Bible's account of the origins of life.

Over time the science that Darwin's book founded, evolutionary biology, has gained a foothold in public education after a long uphill struggle. However, some people want to undermine science education by introducing a religious disclaimer into the curriculum.

They have repackaged Biblical creationism as "intelligent design" in an attempt to pawn it off as science in order to circumvent laws that prohibit pushing religion in public schools. Advocates of intelligent design stress that evolutionary biology is "only" a theory. Another quote from Wikipedia:

In scientific usage, a theory does not mean an unsubstantiated guess or hunch, as it can in everyday speech. A theory is a log-

ically self-consistent model or framework for describing the behavior of a related set of natural or social phenomena. It originates from or is supported by experimental evidence (see scientific method). In this sense, a theory is a systematic and formalized expression of all previous observations, and is predictive, logical, and testable. As such, scientific theories are essentially the equivalent of what everyday speech refers to as facts. In principle, scientific theories are always tentative, and subject to corrections or inclusion in a yet wider theory.

In fact, Darwin's theory has been confirmed by every test modern science has been able to throw at it, including genetics. On the other hand, intelligent design can not be tested. According to Wikipedia:

Intelligent design is the assertion that "certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection."

Basic logic alone refutes it: intelligent design can not be the preferred explanation because it does not succeed in its intent, namely explaining the origins of life; rather it merely complicates the issue by introducing another element which must yet be accounted for.

Evolutionary biology has very

practical relevance as we move forward as a species. It contributes important knowledge that leads to advances in fields such as agriculture and health sciences.

As human beings, we basically have two unique resources that give us our ability to compete for survival in a tempestuous universe: Opposable thumbs, and the ability to reason.

In 1859 one of the brighter representatives of our species used his ability to reason to enhance our understanding of truth, which is always valuable. However, there are those that would advocate dragging us back towards the Dark Ages by impeding our ability to pass the truth on to new generations through the public education system.

To these people I would say that you are within your rights to educate your children as you see fit. However, in order to comply with existing laws you must choose either private or home schooling if you wish to treat Biblical creationism as science.

The rest of us must exercise vigilance and display courage when battling against attempts to assert religious authority over public matters.

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**SIDELINES**  
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# SPORTS

## The Lowdown

Richard Lowe  
Sports Editor



## Reasons to mourn the unknown

Everyone has felt the sadness of his or her team losing a game. This past week, Middle Tennessee fans felt the sadness of losing a member of our team. Many fans of the Blue Raiders had never heard the name of John Wilson until he passed away on Nov. 23 in a fire at his home in Watertown, Tenn. Little do they know, the Blue Raider nation has admired the work of Wilson for several years now.

Wilson worked with MT on their football and men's basketball coaches' shows, providing footage of the games that were showcased each week. Since his passing, memories have been shared on and off camera of his time working in the middle Tennessee area. As much as I enjoyed those memories, I could not contribute to the conversation. I never got a chance to meet John Wilson.

I sit in the same place today as many sports fan whenever a death arises. The unique thing about the entertainment industry is that when someone passes away it is like your favorite aunt just died. Many of us have never met the athletes we idolize. We just admire from a distance or, thanks to the technological advances of television cameras, observe up close. The nation was in mourning when John Lennon was killed in front of his home in Manhattan. It didn't matter that 90% of the people that knew of Lennon did not actually know him.

A more recent example is this week's passing of Sean Taylor, the Washington Redskins safety that was gunned down inside of his home in Miami. Even with his checkered past, that were no ill words spoken about Taylor after his death. I am not a Redskins fan and even I wanted to shed a tear for the fallen NFL player.

This brings about the question of "Why would you mourn the loss of people you don't know?" In order to be upset about losing someone, they have to have provided something in your life. Very rarely will we see someone in near-depression over the passing of a random person. There is no emotional connection to the victims. If the reason of "I watched them on TV" comes to mind then you aren't digging deep enough.

This is the situation I found myself in when it came to the passing of John Wilson. Nobody asked me to mourn him. Wilson's legacy stretches far enough that the presence of a bandwagon would be insulting. But there I was on Nov. 25 inside of the Kennon Hall of Fame building listening to Charlie McAlexander talk about the dedication of Wilson and how much of a perfectionist he was. Then it struck me; I saw myself in John Wilson.

For years, I was running around the Murphy Center Complex, just wishing someone would say "hello" to me first instead of vice versa. I grabbed a camera from MTVV and started getting footage of athletic events on my own to prove that I didn't need any handouts. I started TV shows and wrote for Web site even though I just wanted to do a sports radio show. I wanted to be the guy everyone looked to and said, "He knows what he is doing."

I will miss John Wilson not because of the relationship he had, or didn't have with me. I will miss him because of the relationship he had with this university. I will miss John Wilson for the same reason everyone misses those they don't know personally; he was always there, even when we didn't know it. You can't ask for anything more.

Richard Lowe is a junior broadcast journalism major and can be reached at [rlowe@mtsutv.org](mailto:rlowe@mtsutv.org)

## MT advances to Sweet 16

### Blue Raiders win historic matches against Louisville, Hawaii

By Clarence Plank

Staff Writer

After downing the Louisville Cardinals a second year in a row, the Blue Raiders moved into the next round of the NCAA Tournament to face Hawaii. This was the first meeting between the two schools, with Hawaii being the team with the most tournament experience.

Middle Tennessee currently has a 14 game winning streak as they downed Hawaii in their first meeting in Louisville in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

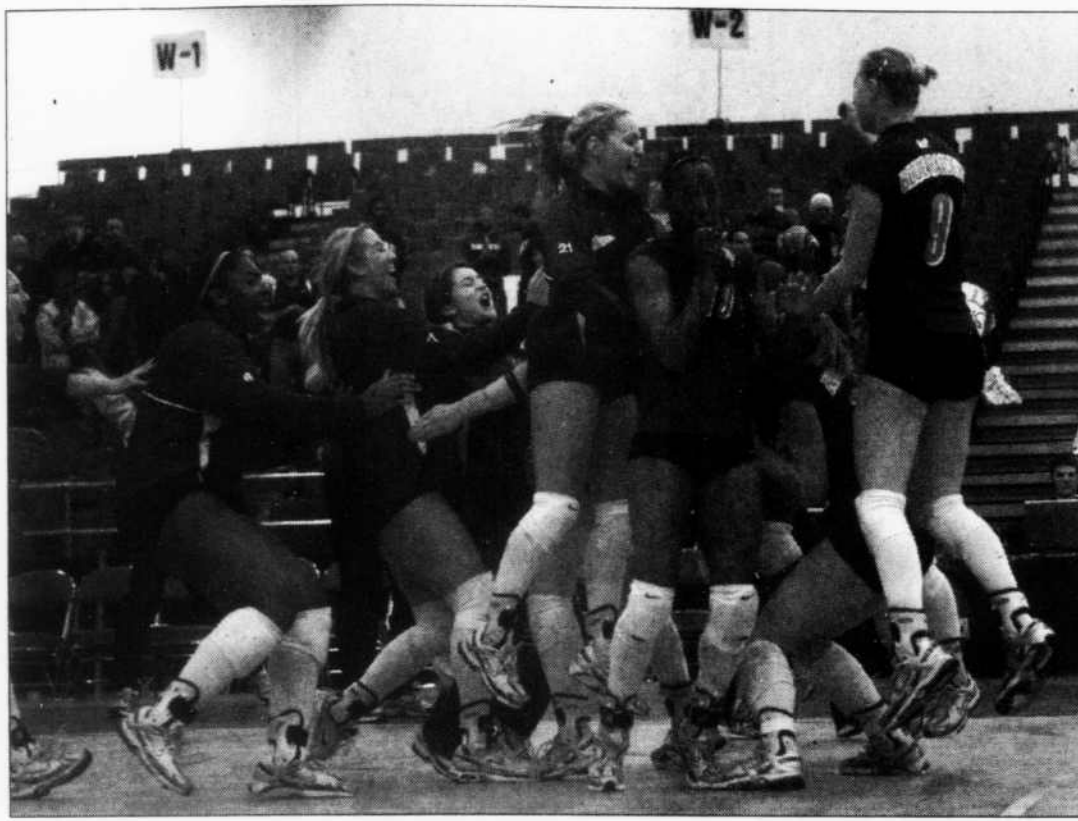
Ashley Adams recorded 22 kills, eight blocks and hit .306 in the series. Ashley Asberry collected 18 kills and hit .556 on Hawaii's defense.

The first game was easy going for MT as they took a 7-6 lead after an attacking error by Hawaii's Aneli Cubi-Otineru. Hawaii tied the match twice, but after the Blue Raiders got a break on a serving error by Hawaii.

Afterwards, the Raiders never looked back as they kept scoring points for a 30-22 win.

Game two was much the same as they got on top early in the match and never looked back for a second game win 30-18.

The Blue Raiders came out of halftime wanting to put away Hawaii, who had other plans scoring first and holding MT at



The Middle Tennessee volleyball team celebrate their victory over the University of Hawaii Saturday. The victory earned the Blue Raiders a berth in the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Volleyball Tournament for the first time in school history. They face BYU Friday.

first. MT rallied to tie the game 5-5 early in the match. Hawaii took advantage of MT to pull out a win, preventing a shutout.

Game four, MT came out swinging, scoring 4-0 before Hawaii could answer. Adams, Asberry and an attacking error by Hawaii gave them their edge.

Later on in the game, the Blue Raiders were down 27-26 after an attacking error on Asberry. Coach Matt Peck called a timeout to calm his players down.

A kill by Asberry from Ashley Clark helped MT tie the game at 27. Clark gave the point away with an attacking error, 28-27.

Hawaii was set to win their second straight match, forcing a game five on the Blue Raiders. With the score knotted at 31 all, after a blocking error on Izabela Kozon, Adams got a kill to move the Blue Raiders into the lead for match point.

Hawaii committed an attack to give MT their first second

round win to advance to the Sweet 16 at Penn State next weekend. This was the first second round loss for Hawaii since 1997.

Ashley Mead rounded out the group with 13 kills. Defensively for the Blue Raiders, Alicia Lemau'u and Kozon had 18 and 15 digs, respectively.

Clark finished the game with 58 assists and Sasha McGlothlin ended the game with five blocks. Overall the Blue Raiders held Hawaii to 60 kills and 12 blocks, while shutting them down offensively making the Rainbow Wahine hit .161.

MT continues to dominate with opponents offensively as they got 69 kills and 13.5 blocks. MT hit .241 in the game.

Middle Tennessee beat Louisville 3-2 in the first round. Mead gathered 19 kills, while teammate Kozon finished the game with 15 kills and hit .419 against the Cardinals.

The Raiders struggled to get any blocks against the tall Louisville team. MT got seven blocks as a team, with 52 dig and assists.

Middle Tennessee advances to the Sweet 16 in the Penn. State Regional to face BYU Dec. 7 and 8 at Penn State.

The winner of this match faces the winner of the Penn State-Michigan game. ♦

### - Houston 83, Middle Tennessee 68 -

## Defensive woes doom MT

### Blue Raiders end road trip with a loss to UH

By Chris Martin

Staff Writer

In only their second appearance at home this season, the Lady Raiders were unable to give the crowd the victory that they have grown accustomed to seeing. The Lady Catamounts of Western Carolina defeated Middle Tennessee 77-71 in a game that was close until the final minutes.

Amber Holt led all scorers with 28 points, which ties her career-high in that category. The only other player to score in double digits was Angelique Burttis, who scored 12 points in 11 minutes.

This was the second loss in the row for the Blue Raiders (3-3), losing their first one against Chattanooga. "We are going to make plays and the bottom line is that in D-1 basketball, you have to make some plays," says MT head coach Rick Insell. "We didn't make any plays at Chattanooga and we had some opportunities [today] to grab the game around the neck and we didn't do it."

The losses come at a bad time for the Blue Raiders. They are set to play the University of Maryland and the University of Tennessee, who are ranked number three and number one in the nation according to the Associated Press and ESPN/USA Today Polls.

The loss also ended a 14-game home win streak that began almost a year ago, Dec. 4, 2006, against Austin Peay State University.

The game was close throughout, with 13 ties and 12 lead changes. Neither team lead by more than nine points.

The Lady Catamounts jumped out early in the game, 15-6, but the Blue Raiders put together a 13-1 run midway through the first half to take a 19-17 advantage. The two teams traded buckets the rest of the half, and Chevons Keith's 15-footer for WCU with five seconds remaining tied the score at 37 at the break.

The first 10 minutes of the second half were no different, with the teams trading shots, although WCU did much of its damage at the foul line. The Lady Catamounts were 16-of-23 at the charity stripe in the second half and 25-for-35 for the game. WCU offset its 26 turnovers by out-rebounding the Blue Raiders, 53-27, including a 20-rebound effort from Brooke Johnson.

Neither club led by more than three points

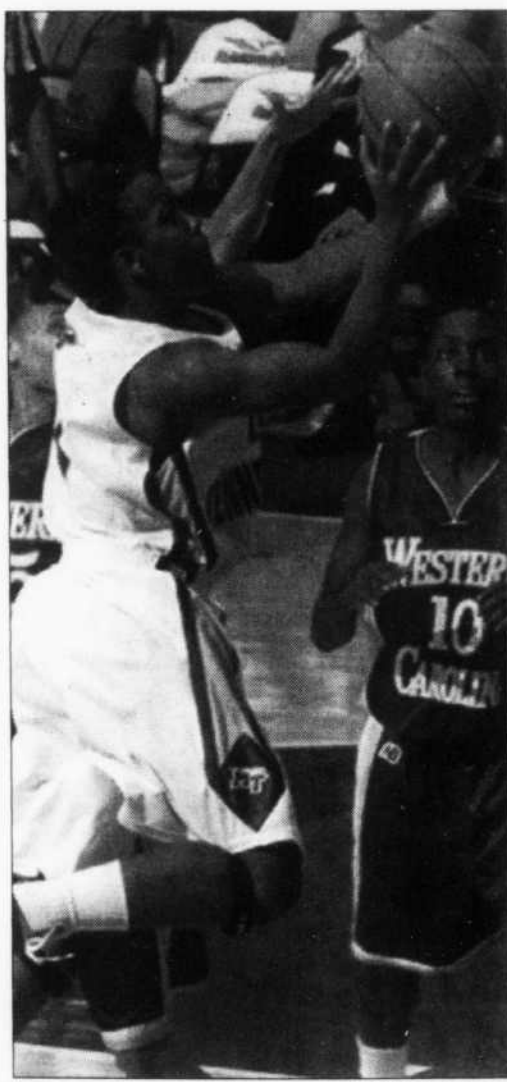


Photo courtesy of MT Media Relations  
Senior Amber Holt led all scorers with 28 points on 13-of-22 shooting.

in the second half until consecutive buckets from Amber Holt gave the Blue Raiders a four-point cushion, their largest of the game, at 58-54 with 10:51 to play. But the Lady Catamounts scored the next eight points to take the lead for good, with Johnson completing an old-fashioned 3-point play, Feemster's jumper and a dagger of a 3-pointer from Lauren Powell, prompting a timeout by Middle Tennessee.

Two minutes later the Blue Raiders cut the deficit to one after another Holt basket for two of her game-high 28 points, but then WCU starting knocking down foul shot after foul shot, pushing the lead back to as many as seven with 5:02 left.

Middle Tennessee would get no closer than three the rest of the way, although the Blue Raiders had the ball down one score several times down the stretch but came up empty each trip.

Powell led WCU with 17 points, while Monique Dawson scored 14 points, including a perfect 12-for-12 at the foul line, and Johnson added 12 points to go with her 20 rebounds.

The Blue Raiders take on the Terrapins of the University of Maryland Tuesday in College Park, MD. Game time is 6 p.m. and can be heard on 89.5 FM, WMOT, with Dick Palmer handling the play-by-play duties. ♦

### - Western Carolina 77, Middle Tennessee 71 -

## Blue Raiders end 14-game home win streak

By Richard Lowe

Sports Editor

Three-point shots were raining down on Middle Tennessee as the Blue Raiders lost on the road for the third straight time against the Houston Cougars on Saturday.

Houston (7-1) nailed 16 of its 30 3-point tries against the Blue Raiders (2-5) en route to an 83-68 victory. In fact, the Cougars had a higher percentage behind the arc than inside it; they were 8 of 17 on two-point field goals.

Senior guard Robert McKiver led the way for the Cougars, contributing 32 points. McKiver knocked down nine 3's, tying his own school record. This is the third time in his career McKiver has hit nine 3-pointers in one game and the second time this season.

McKiver's long-range accuracy put the game out of reach for the Blue Raiders in the first half. At one point, he hit five 3-point field goals in a row which increased the Houston lead from 21-15 to 36-17. From there, MT was unable to pull within 15 points.

"We knew he was a talent coming in and he showed what he can do when he gets on a roll," MT head coach Kermit Davis said. "He single-handedly turned the game in their favor with those five straight 3-pointers late in the first half and a lot of those shots were contested. He was the difference tonight."

Sophomore forward Desmond Yates led MT in scoring, dipping in 21 points while also contributing four rebounds. Junior guard Demetrius Green was the only other Blue Raider to score in double digits, scoring 11 points to go along with a team-leading eight rebounds and four assists.

Kevin Kanaskie, MT's leading scorer coming into the game, was held to just eight points on three of eight shooting. Kanaskie didn't score in the first half and took only two shots in the first frame. Before the game Kanaskie was averaging 11.2 points per game.

One bright spot for the Blue Raiders was their resilience on the boards. Heading into the game, MT was getting out-rebounded



Photo courtesy of MT Media Relations  
Sophomore Desmond Yates scored a season-high 21 points on 9-of-12 shooting and four rebounds against UH.

by its opponents by an average margin of 7.2 rebounds per game. However, the Blue Raiders actually came out on the boards, collecting 31 boards compared to the Cougars' 28. MT also grabbed eight offensive rebounds to contrast Houston's six.

"I thought our team made some strides tonight and we just have to continue working and seeing progress and we will be OK," Davis said. "We were much better on the boards and there were signs of improvement so that's encouraging."

The loss was the Blue Raiders' third straight road defeat as MT has yet to win outside of the Murphy Center. Even worse for the Blue Raiders is the fact that all three road losses have come by margins of 15 points or more, including a 109-40 loss to Tennessee. When playing outside of Murfreesboro this season, MT has lost by an average of 35.6 points.

The Blue Raiders will return to the Murphy Center on Dec. 12 to play a grudge match with in-state rival Belmont. The Bruins defeated MT 85-62 in Nashville on Nov. 26. The Bruins are coming off a 90-49 loss at the hands of Xavier. The game is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. ♦

Information for the article provided by GoBlueRaiders.com.



## LSU earns No. 2 spot opposite Ohio State in BCS title game

By Eddie Pells

Associated Press National Writer

LSU has a ticket to the title game. Everyone else has a pretty good gripe.

The latest chapter in this crazy, unpredictable college football season was written Sunday when LSU won the sport's version of the lottery, being picked to play Ohio State for the championship and leaving about a half-dozen other candidates with plenty to complain about.

The Tigers (11-2), ranked second in the latest Associated Press poll, will be the first team to play in the BCS title game with two losses.

No. 1 Ohio State goes into the game, Jan. 7 at the Superdome in New Orleans, at 11-1.

"We always talk to our guys about the fact you better win all your games," Ohio State coach Jim Tressel said. "We didn't do that but we still have an opportunity in a crazy football season."

Missouri and West Virginia, which came into the weekend ranked 1 and 2, lost Saturday to blow their title chances. Missouri was left out of the BCS championship altogether.

Why did LSU, which was seventh in the BCS standings heading into the final weekend, make the jump to No. 2 and into the big game, while Oklahoma, Southern California, Georgia and a number of others were left behind?

The 174 poll voters and handful of computer nerds whose calculations make up the BCS rankings probably all have their own reasons. Among the best is LSU was rewarded for winning the Southeastern Conference, which is traditionally viewed as one of the toughest leagues in the nation.

There's also the argument coach Les Miles and athletic director Skip Bertman offered up Saturday night: The Tigers went undefeated in regulation — their two losses both coming in triple overtime.

Paper-thin as that line of reasoning may sound, it's as good as any in this topsy-turvy season during which the top-ranked team lost four times, the second-ranked team lost six times since October and Nos. 1 and 2 lost on the same week three times in the last two months.

"The brass ring was there for a lot of different teams to grab it," SEC commissioner and BCS coordinator Mike Slive said during a conference call Sunday night. "Sometimes they did and sometimes they didn't, and when they didn't it allowed two teams that were seen as two of the better teams in the country early in the year to find their way back."

The rest of the BCS games are filled with teams that had every bit as good an argument as LSU for a spot in the title game.

In the Sugar Bowl, Georgia will play Hawaii. The Bulldogs (10-2) were fourth and idle coming into the final weekend — behind Missouri, West Virginia and Ohio State — but didn't automatically rise two spots the way coach Mark Richt thought they should. Richt felt even though the BCS rules state a team doesn't have to win its conference to play in the national title game, the fact the Bulldogs didn't play for the SEC championship was held against them.

"At least we shouldn't have gotten disqualified before we got started," he said.

Hawaii (12-0) is the nation's only undefeated team, but is penalized for playing a weak schedule in the Western Athletic Conference. The Warriors won't

complain. They just wanted to get a big-dollar bowl, make about \$9 million for the WAC the way Boise State did last season, and get a chance to prove themselves against top competition.

"It doesn't feel real right now," Hawaii quarterback Colt Brennan said. "It's been a great ride ..."

The Warriors qualified automatically by finishing 10th in the final BCS standings. They needed to be in the top 12.

The Fiesta Bowl will pit West Virginia (10-2) against Oklahoma (11-2). The Sooners beat top-ranked Missouri twice this season, including 38-17 on Saturday in the Big 12 title game.

The Rose Bowl stuck with its traditional Big Ten vs. Pac-10 matchup, going with Southern California (10-2) against Illinois (9-3). USC, thought to be playing as well as anyone in the nation right now, was one of the two-loss teams that had a legitimate claim at the title game. A loss to 41-point underdog Stanford in October, however, probably doomed the Trojans.

The Orange Bowl chose Atlantic Coast Conference champion Virginia Tech (11-2), also a two-loss team. Hurting the Hokies was a 48-7 loss to LSU back in September. Virginia Tech's opponent will be Kansas (11-1), which leapfrogged Missouri for a BCS spot even though the Jayhawks lost to Mizzou 36-28 only a week ago.

Logical? Of course not, though even in the most uneventful of years, the controversial practice of voting on bowl bids inspires debate among pundits, outrage among fans and outright indignation among coaches whose teams get spurned.

Need it be said this would have been a perfect year for a playoff? Or maybe the plus-one format, which would look something like a four-team mini-playoff and set the championship game after the four major bowls are played.

"I really feel like it's heading in that direction," Virginia Tech coach Frank Beamer said.

There would have been no clear favorite in a playoff this season.

Ohio State has been roundly criticized since the beginning of the season, after losing players from a team that was heavily favored in last year's title game but flopped mightily in a 41-14 loss to Florida.

The Buckeyes were ranked first in November, but surrendered that with a 28-21 loss to Illinois that only added fuel to those who said they weren't deserving. But they backed into the BCS game without even playing, beneficiaries of the fact the Big Ten doesn't play a title game while many other conferences do.

Their opponents will be LSU, a program that appeared on the verge of losing its coach as late as a few hours before kickoff Saturday.

That's when Miles held an angry news conference and said reports he would be leaving the Bayou for Michigan were false. In fact, he said, he had agreed to a new contract to stay in Baton Rouge.

Then, the Tigers went out and won. Later, they sat calmly and watched chaos reign for the rest of the day. On Sunday, they learned they were in the championship game for the second time in five years.

Weird. Wacky. A roller coaster. Yes, it was all of that. Or, maybe it was the only fitting way to close out a very imperfect 2007 in college football. ♦

AP Sports Writers Rusty Miller in Columbus, Ohio, and Jaymes Song in Honolulu, and AP College Football Writer Ralph D. Russo contributed to this report.

## HOUSING REAPPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR FALL 2008 / SPRING 2009

The Housing and Residential Life Office is now accepting housing reapplication forms from returning students for the Fall 2008/Spring 2009 academic year. Students are encouraged to reapply for housing as early as possible, particularly if they are requesting to move to a different location on campus next year, as new assignments are made by application date.

Students requesting to remain in their same location on campus next year will be given first priority to do so as long as their reapplication and \$300 prepaid rent deposit are received by the deadline. The reapplication deadline with priority for the 2008/2009 academic year is **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2008 at 4:00 PM.**

Students need to complete a reapplication form available in the Housing and Residential Life Office, pay the \$300 prepaid rent at the business office cashier windows in the Cope Administration Building, 1st floor, and return the reapplication form stamped "paid" to the Housing and Residential Life office in the Keathley University Center, Room 300, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Students also have the option of reapplying for housing with priority online at [www.mtsu.edu](http://www.mtsu.edu). The \$300 prepaid rent is paid by using a credit card, MasterCard or Visa, or by completing an online check. There is an additional \$18 nonrefundable service fee charged by the third party for processing the payment online.

To obtain a **HOUSING REAPPLICATION FORM**, please come by the Housing and Residential Life office during office hours, 8AM to 4:30PM, Monday through Friday, in the Keathley University Center, Room 300.

\*\*Summer '08 Housing Applications are also available in the Housing Office. Reserve your summer space now by completing the housing application and submitting it with the \$125.00 prepaid rent deposit. It is not too early!!

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For additional information or questions, please contact Housing and Residential Life during office hours at 898-2971.

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