

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

SIDELINES

FEB. 6, 2013

EDITORIALLY INDEPENDENT



All the Same: Local senator proposes bill to eliminate diversity scholarships

YING YANG TWINS

2.07.13

at Tucker Theatre

tickets on sale January 14, 2013 at 5:00 PM

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Sidelines Lens



Students sing "Lift Every Voice and Sing," also known as "The Negro National Anthem" in the KUC on Friday in honor of Black History Month. Photo by Matt Masters.

Cover by Kelsey Klingenmeyer

Visit us at www.mtsusidelines.com

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WMTS gains online streaming capabilities



Radio DJ Josh Fann talks about pro football on his show Sports Express. The show airs every Friday from 10 a.m. til noon. Photo by Emily West.

By Emily West Managing editor

The student-run radio station WMTS can now broadcast tunes and shows outside the Rutherford County radius, as the station regained live streaming capabilities.

"The hardest part is we don't broadcast to a large area," said Logan Propst, station drive time producer. "Most of our DJs aren't from here, so it's been impossible for friends and family to listen."

The live stream went down last spring after the station moved from the Ned McWherter Learning Resource Center into the Center of Innovation in Media. Since then, the station reached its highest number of disc jockeys — around 70 students broadcast live shows. In addition to those 70 students, 25 to 40

students intern with the station throughout the semester. Out of the seven-day week, only 38 hours of the station's music operates on automation.

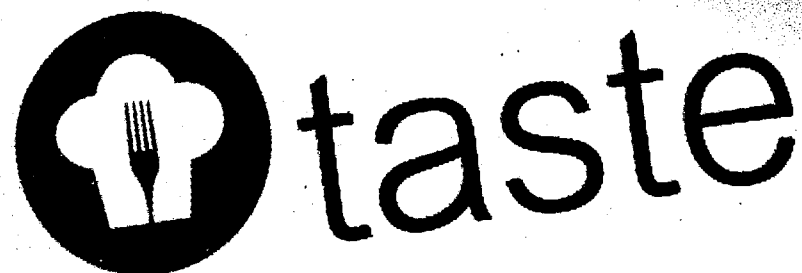
"I think the large amount of students wanting to DJ is something to be proud of," said Robert Jasso, faculty adviser. "The promotion in the mass communication building has paid off."

The station places no restrictions on what its DJs can play, as long as they follow the rules of the Federal Communications Commission. Most recently, the station received a Silver Mic award for outstanding broadcast excellence. One of the station's sports talk shows, "The Beasley and Burnette Show," was nominated for an Intercollegiate Broadcasting System award, which they will com-

pete for against four other shows. The talk radio show airs from 10 a.m. til noon on Mondays.

"I've always strived to be better than my competition at MTSU but more so nationwide," said Justin Beasley, "The Beasley & Burnette Show" host. "After all, it's the nation I will compete with for a job, not just MTSU's best. Since attending MTSU, God has blessed me with a lot of resources and opportunities. I'm just doing my best to make the most of my time here. I'm terrified of not getting a job in the journalism field once I graduate, so I have a mindset of no regrets once I look back at my time in the College of Mass Communication."

Listeners can tune in anytime to the station at wmts.org.



Prepare your taste buds! Check out taste, The Daily News Journal's new online guide to local dining out in Rutherford County. Featuring Dining Out columnist Samantha E. Donaldson.

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A GANNETT COMPANY

Murfreesboro housing market and economy on the rise

By Daniel Jansouzian
Contributing writer

After nearly five years of recession, the housing market has begun to experience growth throughout the nation, particularly in Middle Tennessee, meaning more jobs for MTSU students.

The local economy appears to be on the rise again, according to Joseph Aydelott, Murfreesboro planning director. Although the industry is not booming, it is experiencing a slow incline.

"Year-end reports show that the year ended with considerably more permits issued for construction in 2012 than for 2011," Aydelott said in a press release.

The rise in the industry supplies students with more jobs, and Aydelott explained that building industry creates job openings. The industry improvements also allows for other industries that branch off, such as siding, fencing and appliances, to receive the same benefits.

Ross Bradley, vice president of development at TDK Construction, agreed. He said there are positions opening up.

"A lot of jobs benefit by having a large population of educated young people, like in Murfreesboro," he said.

Bradley gave three reasons why the housing industry is coming back: a drop in unemployment, more financing for housing applicants and popula-



The Kingston Square development at the corner of South Rutherford Blvd. and Greenland Drive represents the burgeoning Murfreesboro housing market. Photo by Matt Masters.

tion increase. In the past year, an increase in jobs by companies such as Nissan and Amazon helped the unemployment rate go down and helped increase the population. These changes opened doors for more housing and increased home financing, according to Bradley.

Another factor to the housing market bounce back is the price increase of homes. According to the Standard and Poors/Case-Shiller Index, home prices in the Nashville/Murfreesboro area are projected to rise 0.7 percent from April 2012 to April 2013.

Michael Hammock,

an economics professor, said there are generally two types of people in this situation. Those who own a home are generally happy when the price of their home goes up because they believe it helps define their wealth, while people who are on the market for a home don't find the same satisfaction.

"People are happy when cell phones and cars get cheaper, but they get upset when housing gets cheaper," Hammock said. "You would think they would want the housing to stay low for when they're on the market again."

However, the struggle to find people for the field remains a major issue with the

transition of the housing industry. During the recession, many people left the industry or

ended up not joining, leaving empty spots that need to be filled, said David Hatfield, director of the land development/residential building concentration at MTSU.

"People are still scared," Hatfield said.

According to Hatfield, many students ask for a guarantee when they ask about the major.

"There's no guarantee that it's all going to be OK, but everyone needs a house," he said. "The population is increasing. It's going to come back."

Many people considering the building program hesitate because of the hearsay regarding the recession and the industry in recent years.

"Parents and students need to know it's OK to go into building," said Hatfield.

He emphasized that everything slows down, but when the industry comes back, others will bounce back as well. ■

CRIME BRIEFS

THEFT **Corlew Hall** **Jan. 28, 10:02 a.m.**

A complainant reported his sweater was stolen from a dryer in room 340 in Corlew Hall.

VANDALISM **James E. Walker** **Library parking lot** **Jan. 28, 11:47 p.m.**

A complainant reported her vehicle's tires were slashed while it was parked behind the library.

WEAPONS **Scarlett Commons** **Apt. 7** **Jan. 29, 12:35 a.m.**

Authorities responded to a report of shots fired in the courtyard area of Scarlett Commons. Upon investigation, officers discovered what appeared to be a chemical explosive device that had been detonated.

MISCELLANEOUS **Womack Lane** **Jan. 29, 2:08 a.m.**

Complainant reported that he was struck in head by a container of liquid thrown from the bed of a truck as it drove by.

ASSAULT **Corlew Hall** **Jan. 29, 2:15 p.m.**

Authorities responded to a physical fight between two females and then separated them. They then advised the girls on how to press charges should they choose to do so.

Aerospace program poised to expand into China

By Quint Qualls
News editor

A graduate student embarked for China last week to co-pilot an aircraft for a Chinese company, marking the start of an aerospace partnership between MTSU and China.

The university's aerospace program will expand its international reach to China to foster a financially and culturally beneficial relationship between the Civil Aviation Authority in China and MTSU.

"We have signed an agreement with the CAAC to train pilots and air traffic controllers," said Sidney McPhee, university president. "It will be a combination of programs where the Chinese will come to MTSU to get training, and we will send faculty to China. Obviously with China being a major economic force, to have that kind of connection will certainly help the state of Tennessee and the U.S."

While details of the partnership remain unresolved, the benefits are clear.

"Anytime we can expand our international involvement, it strengthens the program. It's better for our students and our curriculum," said Ronald Ferrara, chair of the aerospace department. "It gives us much more exposure. And to be coarse, it brings in much more funds. It opens up the avenue for economic

development between Tennessee and China."

Jenny Wei flew the modified Beechcraft King Air 350 to Harbin, China, as a part of her studies.

"I'm actually writing my thesis on exporting the use of modified aircraft into China, and I'm producing a working manual on it," Wei said. "I wouldn't say it's difficult — there are just a lot of procedures and barriers to break through."

Mike Vaughn, president of PacUS LLC, organized and presided over the partnership between four firms and the university.

The CAAC and Flying Dragon, representing China, signed the agreement with the university, Smyrna-based Corporate Flight Management and Vaughn's firm.

According to Vaughn, the Beechcraft King Air 350, originally intended for military reconnaissance use in Afghanistan, will be used for geophysical land surveys in the Tibetan Plateau to look for minerals.

China is opening up to more commercial and individual use after decades of total military control. As it expands, the need for more professional pilots will increase, but according to Ferrara, China doesn't have enough facilities to accommodate their training.

"The U.S. is the leader in world aviation, and they need pilots trained," Vaughn said. "I think they're going to start allowing



MTSU Aerospace program partnered up with Chinese pilots for research flights in the Tibetan Plateau. Photo by Quint Qualls.

more flights of private aviation similar to us ... Over there you have to have the air force approval of the CAAC. They're beginning to relax some of those rules."

Pilot training will likely start this fall. The next steps involve completion of the application, an official visit the CAAC in China, a CAAC inspection visit to MTSU and recruiting promotions in China, according to Vaughn.

Wei and her pilot, John Tackett, CEO of air delivery company RangeFlyers, reached China Feb. 1. From the Smyrna-Rutherford County Airport, they went through Montana, Alaska and Russia on their way to Harbin, China. ■

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Nebraska to Nashville: All-American girl chases songwriting

By Kaela Dalecke
Contributing writer

Nashville is full of people who share a common dream — to play music.

Some musicians leave everything behind to make that dream come true in Music City. Of the thousands that walk up and down music row, few end up seeing their name in shining lights.

You may not know her name, but small-town Nebraska farmer's daughter, Angie Broberg, is making her dreams come true in this not-so-small city. Her brown eyes sparkle as she pushes back a strand of her blonde hair and recalls the dream she had as a young girl.

"I started singing when I was four," she said. "By the time I was 13, I was performing regularly at church and school. My parents asked me, 'Do you want to do this?' I didn't understand what they meant, because I didn't realize I could make music as my career."

With the incredible support of her parents, Broberg began playing at local fairs, festivals and benefits throughout the Midwest. At 16 her dream was to score a record deal.

Her wholesome All-American look lends resemblance to Faith Hill — an artist who inspired her as she began her music career.

"My dream has never been to be famous," she said. "My dream has always been to do



Country artist Angie Broberg performs in front of a live audience. Photo courtesy of Angie Broberg.

what I love, which is perform and share music with people."

After touring four years and releasing an independent record, Broberg headed to Nashville. Sure, it is the ideal place to fulfill a music career, especially country music, but for Broberg, it is also where she wanted to pursue a degree in music business at Belmont University.

While in college, she fell in love with the art of songwriting.

"At the end of the day, the song is what it's about ... there's something magical when you sing a lyric or play a melody that's really yours and someone connects to the message," she said.

Many people continue to connect to her message in her songs such as "If People

Never Dreamed," which landed her an exclusive publishing deal in 2009.

"That song is my blessing and my curse," she said. "It has made it into the studio as some well-known artists have been cutting the last tracks for their records, but that song has never made the cut."

A decade has dwindled by since Broberg began pursuing her

dream of landing a record deal.

"I may not have a record deal or be on award shows, but I wouldn't trade any of my experiences [or] the opportunities to share my music for anything," she said.

However, dreaming isn't the hard part for Broberg as she strives to make those dreams become reality.

"There is not a single

person in this business who hasn't thought about giving up," she said. "Sometimes, you go months without thinking about it, and then you think about it twice a day."

Broberg has fought with the notion of giving up. In some respects, her dreams have changed.

"If I'm no longer meant to be doing this, I pray that God



Angie met her husband, Chad, in the summer of 2005 when she first moved to Nashville. Photo courtesy of Angie Broberg.

closes every door and window," she said. "He hasn't yet, so I'm still playing music."

She hopes to continue performing, but ultimately wants her songs to be heard regardless of whether she is the one singing at the microphone.

"Whether you are two or 102, if there's something you've always wanted to do, you owe it to yourself to chase after that dream," she said. "You may not reach what the world says is success, but success is what you make of it and if nothing else, you'll

have a lot of fun along the way. If you're in this to be rich and famous, get out. If you wake up every morning and you can't get the dream out of your head, keep going."

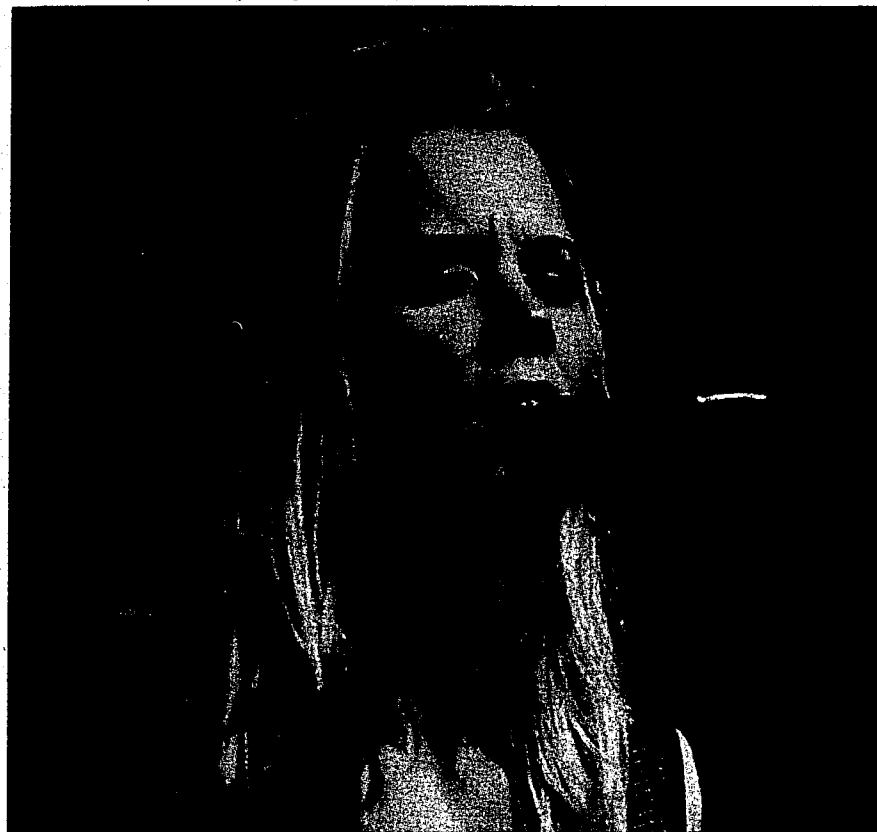
Now, Broberg thinks about fulfilling other dreams like starting a family. She arrived in Music City to pursue her music career, but she has discovered so much more, knowing the move was worth it, if it meant getting to meet her husband.

"It was the summer of 2005. While moving into a new apartment, I met my neighbor. He

offered to help move boxes and furniture," she said, laughing at the memory.

She accepted his help, which led to the start of a new friendship. Six months later, the two began dating. In late summer of 2009, she became Mrs. Chad Withrow.

Our dreams may not always turn out the way we envisioned them, but as Broberg sings, "Where would we be if people didn't dream, had the courage to believe?" ■



"If People Never Dreamed" is Broberg's single that landed her an exclusive publishing deal. Photo courtesy of Angie Broberg.

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COVER STORY

Diversity scholarships threatened by new legislation

By Sinclair Sparkman
and Quint Qualls
News editors

Minority scholarships and diversity programs came under fire in early January when a state senator proposed a series of bills that would effectively end any state funded agenda to promote racial, ethnic and gender variety on college campuses.

Republican state senator out of Dickson, Tenn., Jim Summerville said that the "Civil Rights Initiative of 2013" represents a move toward equality focused on ending discrimination in institutions of higher education.

"I believe the time has come to rid ourselves of these preferences," Summerville said. "Everyone is qualified for the same job and the same college admission."

The bill would not only prevent colleges and universities from assigning diversity officers, but it would also throw out state-funded financial aid awarded based on race, ethnicity or gender.

Summerville's legislation stirred up a great deal of controversy and opposition. Joe Armstrong, Tennessee state representative and president-elect of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, was highly critical of the new initiative to end college campus diversity.

"The programs that he is attacking are about diversity. In order to do business world-

wide, however, you have to have diversity," said Armstrong in an interview with Mike Osborne at WMOT. "This type of legislation is sending the wrong message to anyone who is thinking about investing or coming to live in Tennessee, especially when we are trying to attract international companies."

According to Monica Greppin-Watts, director of communications for the Tennessee Board of Regents, in order to attract more business and industry to the state, Tennessee must have a more educated population and a more highly

trained workforce. "We must do all we can to encourage success among the students who face the greatest challenges and who have historically been the least successful underrepresented minority students, first-generation students and low-income students," Greppin-Watts said. "Simply put, we cannot reach our goals without also reaching out to serve a more diverse population. To do so, we need to be able to continue to track statistics on various demographic segments such as race, gender, ethnicity, income, family education

levels, and more."

Summerville's push to oust diversity programs generated a strong response not just from ethnic minority groups, but also those of sexual orientation, including MT Lambda, the university's only organization which provides support for gay, lesbian and transgender students.

"My opinion of the bill, like most of the bills the Republicans try to pass, is that it's crazy," said Josh Rigby, president of MT Lambda. "If he [Gov. Bill Haslam] wants the economy to get better and jobs to come to the state, we have to stop

doing these things that make our state look horrible."

Another section of the initiative prohibits state government entities from compiling and keeping any statistics by race, gender or ethnicity unless specifically required by federal law or court order.

Without the ability to collect statistics and figures on race, gender or ethnicity, many non-traditional students' ability to receive federal financial aid would be jeopardized, according to Greppin-Watts.

However, something much greater may be at stake.

"Our schools also receive state funding based on how well they help students successfully complete their degrees," Greppin-Watts said. "Without data that tells us how all groups are doing, we cannot effectively respond with appropriate support services."

Summerville, however, still thinks that ending diversity programs and scholarships represents progress, even going so far as to apply Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous "I Have A Dream" speech to his cause.

"I grew up in the age of Martin Luther King," Summerville said. "And

As introduced, enacts the "Tennessee Civil Rights Initiative Act"

Lottery, Scholarships and Programs - As introduced, requires students seeking Tennessee HOPE scholarships, Tennessee HOPE access grants and Tennessee HOPE scholarships for nontraditional students to pass the U.S. citizenship and immigration service's naturalization tests on English and civics to be eligible for the scholarship or grant.

Prohibits state government entities from compiling and keeping statistics and data by race, gender or ethnicity unless specifically required by federal law or court order

Education, Higher - As introduced, prohibits public institutions of higher education from employing or assigning the duties of a diversity officer.

Education, Higher - As introduced, prohibits state-funded scholarships, grants, loans or other financial aid from being awarded to students at public institutions of higher education based on race, ethnicity or gender.

Graphic designed by Keley Klingemeyer.

COVER STORY



The president, Joshua Rigsby, looks through archives of the history of the MT Lambda group. Photo by Kati Baird.

I believe he would be sad to see we aren't farther along in this social revolution."

The university's director of Intercultural and Diversity Affairs, Vincent Windrow, had his own take on the issue.

"A red flag goes up for me when the MLK speech is quoted," Windrow said. "I feel that it is often used as a tool to back people into a corner."

The Department of Intercultural and Diversity Affairs is at risk because of this bill. The department currently houses five scholarships for diversity and minority students, which would also disappear.

According to the IDA portion of the MTSU website, all scholarship applicants are evaluated according to high school grades, American College Test (ACT) scores, rank in class,

extracurricular activities, leadership positions and honors. IDA also sponsors events and programs to help international students feel welcome at the university.

"If big companies think it's good practice to have diversity programs, then why shouldn't the state of Tennessee?" Windrow said. "We are strengthened not by our similarities, but our differ-

ences."

Summerville now has three House sponsors on board to help him work on the bill, along with Ward Connerly of the American Civil Rights Institute.

"I'm not alarmed, but I am concerned," Windrow said. "I am also hopeful that people in the legislature understand what goes on in the outside world. Our own tiny world often

shapes our thinking, and we are not aware of the diversity surrounding us."

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RANTS AND RAVES

February 7

Ying Yang Twins
Concert

Tucker Theatre

Doors at 6 p.m./Concert

7:30 p.m. -12:00 a.m.

Admission: \$10 student
presale/\$25 presale



Atlanta-based hip-hop group the Ying Yang Twins are coming this Thursday at Tucker Theater. The duo, Kaine and D-Roc, made their first appearance on the hip-hop scene in 2000 with their collaborative hit "Get Low," featuring Lil Jon. In 2005, the Ying

Yang Twins grew hotter when songs from their album, *United States of Atlanta*, became more and more popular. Their songs "Wait (The Whisper Song)," "Badd" and "Shake" all topped the charts on urban radio. The fellas might even play songs from their

greatest hits album, released in 2009. So the concert is Thursday night, and you're worried about Friday morning classes, right? No excuse. Buy a ticket and enjoy the show. You will finally have something to talk about with the girl beside you in history.

February 8

Fable Cry

Rocketown

522 5th Ave S.,

Nashville

6 p.m.

Admission: \$8



Looking for a change of pace? Here's something new. Adventure gypsy group, Fable Cry, is a combination of traditional folk music and performance art. The sibling duo, Zach and Kirstie Ferrin, call Nashville home and are locally considered the

White Stripes of experimental folk. That is, if Jack and Meg White ever performed in full-face makeup and made music videos where they dressed in circus attire and sang in a style that sounds more like chanting. While it may be hard to interpret the meanings

of Fable Cry's songs, such as "Stick City" and "Yeti v. Poseidon," the instrumentation does not fall short. It's always positive to see a group set themselves apart in the industry. Unless you're a fan of shadow puppets and nightmares, go ahead and skip this one.

February 8

Deathtrap

Murfreesboro Little Theatre

702 Ewing Blvd., Murfreesboro
7 p.m.

Admission: Adults \$10/
Students and seniors \$5



The Murfreesboro Little Theatre presents the comedy-thriller "Deathtrap," starring Jeff Stateler, Davey Odineal and Lora Hortert. The play is two acts and features only five people. It is famously known as a play within a play. "Deathtrap" centers on Sidney Bruhl,

a down-and-out playwright. Years have gone by since his last successful play, and he is growing impatient. When one of his former students, Clifford Anderson, sends him a copy of his first play, "Deathtrap," Bruhl decides he must have it, killing Clifford to claim

the play as his own work. Bruhl's scheme appears fool-proof until a mysterious medium shows up at his house, and truth and lies become harder to decipher. The play will keep you on the edge of your seat and have you doubled over laughing. You can't lose.

February 9

Corb Lund and the Hurtin' Albertans

Exit/In

2208 Elliston Place,
Nashville

10 p.m.

Admission: \$8/ \$10 at
the door



Alberta-born Corb Lund and his band the Hurtin' Albertans are bringing their western swing mixed with country-rock sound to Exit/In Saturday. Nashville is the heart of country music, but these guys are certainly not all twang. Lund and his band are country gentle-

men who know how to rock and roll. Lund has explained his music by saying he has always been stuck between being a cowboy and living in the city, and in turn, his music is the same.

Corb Lund and the Hurtin' Albertans have released several albums

with their newest, *Cabin Fever*, released in 2012. To make *Cabin Fever*, the band recorded with no overdubs to give the songs an organic sound. Get tickets online or the day of.

February 10

Skyfall

Student Union Video Theatre (208)

7 p.m.

Admission: \$2



Raider Entertainment is showing the latest Bond film "Skyfall" at 7 p.m. in the Student Union.

Starring Daniel Craig, Judi Dench and Javier Bardem, "Skyfall" is the twenty-third Bond film produced by Eon Productions.

In this action-packed

film, Bond (Craig) is forced to check his loyalty to M (Dench) when she is suddenly targeted and threatened by a past enemy. If you missed this movie in theaters, there is no excuse to miss it now.

What better way to spend a Sunday night

than watching Bond hunt down bad guys? It definitely beats that Astronomy lab you've been putting off. Throw on your nicest black bowtie and prepare for the mission.

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Fashion student's design wins national competition

By Jane Horne
Arts & Entertainment
editor

Alycia Gillaspie, a senior majoring in apparel design, had the experience of a lifetime last month when she placed first in a nationwide design competition in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Faculty members chose Gillaspie to represent MTSU in the Project OR — Cycle 10 Challenge last month. She competed with four other girls from across the country at the Outdoor Retailer Winter Market. After two exhausting days and little sleep, Gillaspie's garment was chosen as the winner of the competition.

"Our product was a convertible, back-country women's ski jacket," Gillaspie said. "We had 48 hours to go from a concept to a finished product. I did not expect to win. I knew I had a chance, but one of the other girls was a sponsored skier who knew a lot more about this type of garment than I did. But she actually came in second."

Gillaspie has been involved in fashion and design from a young age, sewing since the age of 12. It is something that has always been in her family; grandparents, aunts and even a cousin who was on Project Runway owns his own business. Now, her hard work and dedication have caught the eyes of some of the biggest vendors in the industry.

"It's an honor to even



MTSU fashion design student Alycia Gillaspie stands by one of her many sportswear designs at Salt Lake City's fashion design competition. Photo courtesy of Alycia Gillaspie.

be able to go to this as a student," Gillaspie said. "It's so eye-opening, learning about the industry and getting the chance to learn what companies are out there and show them that I am worthy of working for [them]."

Winning first place in this competition provided Gillaspie further exposure in a national magazine. However, she said the other victories she took away from the competition were more personal: Learning more about herself, gaining job prospects in the industry she loves and being able to make lifelong friends.

"It didn't really feel like we were competing against each other," Gillaspie said. "It was more like competing against ourselves.

We helped each other when we could, and we learned from each other."

The opportunity also helped Gillaspie to realize what area of design she would most like to focus on — the outdoor market. Specifically, she hopes to be able to incorporate some of the aspects of outerwear into areas such as bridal wear.

"Whatever is going on in my life at the time is what inspires me," Gillaspie said. "One of my classes has been focusing on bridal wear, and I would love to find a niche market that uses technical fabrics in order to keep you from getting so hot in a wedding dress. Even though it looks beautiful, it can still breathe."

Undoubtedly, a

convention as large as this one garnered the attention of important people within the fashion industry. Gillaspie said she even had a vendor approach her during this competition who was interested in employing her after she graduates from MTSU. When she began work on her prototype, Gillaspie had no idea what any skiing garments were like, making her win even more of a surprise.

"One of the vendors came up to me at the end and said, 'I walked the show floor. There is nothing like your garment out there,'" Gillaspie said. "That meant to me [that] I had made a completely original ski jacket

and didn't even know anything about that industry."

Aside for being able to prove herself to her competitors, the judges and the vendors present, Gillaspie's victory gave her the opportunity of a lifetime.

"This experience was mind blowing," she said. "It taught me things about myself that I never knew. It showed me how capable I am, and it gave me a chance to work with and learn from people who have the same perspective as me." ■

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ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Independent record store brings new life to local music

By Claire Osburn
Assistant Arts &
Entertainment editor

The little town of Murfreesboro has continued to become a hub for up-and-coming musicians – equally due to MTSU's competitive recording industry major program and the growing live music scene. It's baffling it took retail this long to catch up.

Enter the Little Shop of Records, nestled in downtown Murfreesboro, next to meat-and-three staple City Café. It boasts everything from handmade, local jewelry, to music paraphernalia, to movies and music in every shape and form.

MTSU alumnus Grant Polston and his wife Sandi opened a mere six weeks ago, and the shop has already attracted regulars. Most of them are college students, something the owners anticipated and counted on when choosing a location for their business.

"We were methodical about it," Grant said. "We know that it's a great fit for a college town. It was a no-brainer."

The interior of the shop possesses a vintage atmosphere that ensures shoppers never feel unwelcome. It is illuminated with string lights, filled with radio music and bedecked with posters of the greats. The walls themselves are neatly lined with vinyl, CDs and cassette tapes. The floor is occupied by



Little Shop of Records customers explore the wide variety of music genres the store has to offer. Photo by Kati Baird.

revamped, thrift store finds that were turned into displays, made by Sandi, and were all a part of her vision for their store.

Sandi handles all of the decorating and bookkeeping, hand-crafting the Venus flytrap displayed in the store's front window as a homage to the classic '80s musical, "Little Shop of Horrors," for which the store was named.

The Polstons even plan to incorporate the image of "Audrey II" – adding a record in the plant's mouth – on the T-shirts they intend to make to promote the store.

As far as the actual music is concerned, Grant is responsible for all the purchasing.

"The good thing is I can communicate with

anyone that walks in here on some level," Grant said.

This is evident, as he is not only a music aficionado, but is also well aware of all the music his shop contains at any given moment.

"My dad did mixed tapes for bars," Grant said. "We grew up with not a whole lot of TV and just a lot of music. Like Simon and Garfunkel and The Beatles and all that, I grew up with him listening to it, you know, that's what I wanted to listen to when I got older."

His music passion continued through college, and Grant collected CDs while he earned his degree in finance and accounting.

Business degrees proved handy when he and Sandi decided to take the plunge and

open their own business after meeting four years ago when they both worked for Books-a-Million's corporate office.

"We know we're not going to, like, get rich doing this," Grant said. "It's just part of who we are, and we just love doing it."

One of the perks of owning the hippest new shop in town is an automatic in to the music scene of Murfreesboro, which the Polstons are happy to support by selling local music in their shop.

"We've kind of embraced just the music here since we've been here," Grant said. "Like we'll go to the Liquid Smoke. Whoever comes in and puts a flyer up, we'll make every effort to go Friday or Saturday

night. It helps me because I can tell people once I see the show, 'Hey, these guys kick ass, these guys rock, you need to go check them out.'

Grant clearly realizes the struggle of young music lovers, and as a result, prices his merchandise accordingly.

"Our prices are better than anywhere else because we don't mark up the new much at all. Because I want people, when they buy a new record, to come here first," he said.

Bins are full of \$1 and \$3 records are present for those who crave vinyl but lack the funds. The business also gives customers the option to trade or sell old records, albums or cassettes to add to their collection or earn cash. Grant even holds

items for customers for up to a week, which is especially helpful for those students living paycheck-to-paycheck.

Browsed the shop and still didn't find what you were looking for? No worries, Grant does special orders upon customer request.

So what's in store for this sweet, little shop's future? Record Store Day, of course. It falls on April 20 this year and celebrates all things music.

"We're going to start doing some release parties and live events and stuff," Grant said. "We're not charging anything. You know, like if a band wants to have their CD release party. They'll have to bring their own PA, but we'll set them up in the back." ■

Ra Ra Riot's latest album takes chances but remains catchy

By Meredith Galyon
Staff writer

After falling into the category of "chamber-indie-pop," Ra Ra Riot decided to go a different route with their third album, *Beta Love*, by cutting back on strings and heavily emphasizing the synthesizers.

When Ra Ra Riot broke into the indie-pop scene with *The Rhumb Line* in 2008, they instantly became known for their use of violins and cellos. Although the cello player has since quit the band, the violins remained prominent on their follow up album, *The Orchard*, in 2010.

Even with the success of these albums, the band began to feel pigeonholed in this specific genre and wanted to branch out. The overall result is not necessarily spectacular, but the album still provides quite a few songs that stand out.

Throughout the years, the band remained consistent at providing a good blend of upbeat songs to slower, melodramatic ones, and this album is no exception. The opening track, "Dance with Me," is delightfully upbeat and doesn't fall into the electronic vibe that some of the other songs sink into.

"Binary Mind" and "Beta Love" are the songs that really fall into this category. "Binary Mind" is full of heavily synthesized drumbeats and lyrics about robotic characteristics replacing singer Wesley Miles' human ones.



Ra Ra Riot took an unexpected turn with their sound in *Beta Love*, the band's third release. Photo courtesy of Facebook.

"It's a technocratic future world," he sings.

It was rumored that Ray Kurzweil's book, "The Singularity Is Near," influenced the band with its futuristic theories. While this is an interesting inspiration for the album, the lyrical content combined with the overuse of synthesizers and futuristic beats on these particular songs feel like overkill.

These songs also seem rather out of place compared to the rest of the album, particularly "What I Do for U," which sounds like a poor attempt at trying to mimic an electronic or dubstep band. The heavy bass and unintelligible lyrics make it the worst song on the album.

There is no doubt that their musical style has changed, but the rest of the tracks still

have that endearing quality that drew fans to Ra Ra Riot in the first place. "Angel, Please" and "For Once" provide the right blend of upbeat keyboards and soothing strings and have enough of a pop vibe that makes them fun to sing along to. "That Much" keeps this going with the addition of background organs and the alternating of powerful chords in the intro and bridges to more melodramatic verses, as well as an interesting guitar riff towards the end.

"Is It Too Much" is a slower, xylophone-infused track with standout lyrics about estranged relationships and the process of restoring them. Miles sings, "Wake up for me, father. Is it too much to ask you to bother?" Using a parental figure could certainly be a

metaphor for something else, but I find these words particularly relatable.

My personal favorite, "When I Dream," opens with soft drums and continues with a rhythmic snapping throughout as Miles confesses the guilt that he feels about no longer dreaming of a certain someone. Poetic lyrics combined with his impressive vocal range make this song flow in a hauntingly beautiful manner that is sure to stand out among the rest.

"Wilderness" starts out with dizzying guitar effects and metronomic beats, but the track is one of the more unique songs on the album in terms of musical style that doesn't turn out to

be a bust. The soulful quality redeems it from the repetitive bass line in the background is almost too much.

The last song, "I Shut Off," is slightly reminiscent of video game music, but it features impressive uses of all instruments involved, allowing the album to end on a positive note.

Ra Ra Riot's decision to put a new spin on their sound is one that almost all artists make throughout their career, and while some songs were misplaced and overdone, *Beta Love* is still worth listening to. Regardless of whether they are using strings or synths, they still know how to create an irresistibly catchy tune. ■

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No taxation without simplification

By Alex Harris
Opinions editor

The U.S. tax code is tens of thousands of pages long; pages full of rules regarding the money that the government is allowed to pick from our pockets and subtract from our paychecks.

The code is also full of tax credits, exemptions and loopholes, most of which only apply to politically-connected, politically-protected or politically-favored members or groups in the voting population.

Through the tax code, the U.S. government is able to greatly promote or regulate any activities and situations it sees fit. Exemptions, credits and loopholes are applied to situations desirable to the political class or to industries possessing adequate political pull.

These tax credits and benefits only complicate an already-complex situation. The more loopholes and credits that are added, the more complicated the code gets. It becomes harder for the average person to do their taxes, and easier for a wealthy person to pay less taxes.

With a complicated tax code, professional tax preparation is needed to allow most people the tax breaks they qualify for. The unfortunate side effect of this is that those with less money – and therefore less expendable wealth – are less



Alex Harris

able to afford quality tax help, while those with more money – or in the words of progressive pundits, those more able to “afford it” – actually are able to afford better help, and thus, pay less in taxes.

Though I myself am a proponent of less onerous taxes in general, policies such as doling out tax breaks for political points contribute to calls for higher taxes on the rich. The wealthy, though required to pay a higher rate, are able to pay less through politically-purchased tax breaks.

Likewise, lower income brackets can qualify for enough tax credits to get back more in a tax refund than they actually paid in taxes. Though helping the less fortunate is an admirable desire, doing so through the tax code exacerbates an already complicated issue.

This also breeds resentment for the rich and the poor alike from those who get stuck with a higher bill because they don’t qualify for tax breaks aimed at the elite, or for the tax

credits aimed at helping the poor: the lower middle and middle classes.

Additionally, many states have been fine-tuning their individual tax codes, providing credits, breaks and exemptions to businesses as encouragement to relocate to that particular state in order to give the politicians creation and pro-business bragging rights.

A perfect example of this are the tax credits that Tennessee pays to the TV show “Nashville.” The producers of “Nashville” get several million dollars worth of tax credits each year so that they will actually film the show in Nashville.

The claim is that, if we don’t offer them the tax credits, some other state, say Georgia for example, will offer them credits, and they could just as easily film there. The claim is also made that money spent in tax credits is paid back in other taxes through local production, increased tourism and more jobs.

It’s a form of bribery that the state governments are participating in with their constituents’ money in order to purchase political capital. And it’s become politically unpopular to suggest that the state shouldn’t be providing these credits to businesses – that instead, the state should attract industry and people by providing the best services with the lowest taxes and the least restrictions.

Even if tax credits do ultimately increase revenue, that doesn’t make it good policy. Should the taxpayers of Tennessee really be beholden to pay bribes to television producers, so that they’ll film a show in the city that the show is named after?

When he was Candidate Barack Obama, he promised to work to simplify the tax code, to make it easier to follow and less convoluted. Unfortunately, through the first four years of President Obama, we have just seen more of the same: taxes get a little more complicated, with a little bit more exemptions and the code gets longer.

As it is in the nature of politicians to look for re-election, and as tax credits are a popular item with constituents, it will most likely continue on the same path of continuing expansion and complication

until the only real solution is absolutely unavoidable: Congress must throw out the old tax code and start anew.

The best solution for our complicated code would be to institute a low, broad flat federal income tax with minimal, simple exemptions such as tax credits for charity or exemptions for those with children in a lower income bracket.

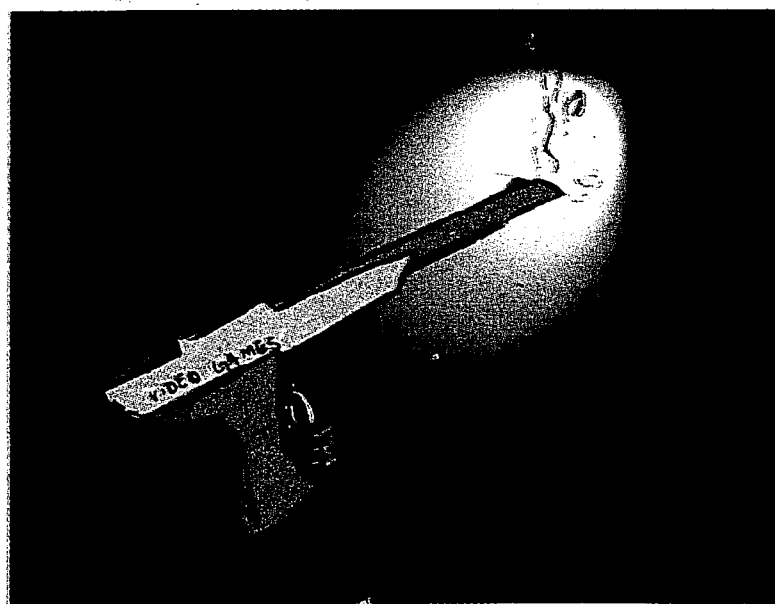
Some may argue that this would not bring in enough revenue and that government is expensive, and that we should be fine with paying taxes because “taxes are the price we pay for civilization.”

To those I say this: Why is the problem a revenue problem, as opposed to a spending problem? And why is it that historically our government has on average only ever brought in 19 percent of our nation’s gross domestic product in tax

revenue, no matter how high the tax rates on the rich are?

Based on this, it would seem to me that the best way to increase our nation’s revenue would be to broaden the tax base and allow more people to keep more of their money, increasing the money available to be spent by the public and the money available to businesses to invest. This would aid in producing a more vibrant economy, which would add to an increase in gross domestic product, which would result in more tax revenues.

The time has come for Congress and the state legislatures to make the tough admission that they and their forebears have made many mistakes, that the system is broken and it’s time to start over and do something different for a change. ■



Comic by Matt Masters.

Softball team looks for redemption in last Sun Belt season

By Emily West
Managing editor

First season head softball coach Jeff Breeden gathered up the girls before they separated for infield and outfield drills. On a small piece of white paper, he repeated Magic Johnson's quote, "Ask not what your teammates can do for you. Ask what you can do for your team."

"I want to set an example for my teammates this season," said Kayla Toney, junior infielder. "I want to let my actions do the talking."

The All-Sun Belt First Team player said she feels like the demeanor of the team has improved their game and become closer after the team suffered through a losing 2012 season of 16-31 and 5-18 in conference play. The Lady Raiders finished eighth in the Sun Belt.

Junior second basemen Nina Dever said the main problem last season revolved around not being able to finish games in extra innings or rallying hits in late innings.

"I don't want to blame it on any one position because that's not fair to do, but we just couldn't finish," Dever said. "We have a better angle of how we should play this season. Everyone comes from high school winners, so we never want to lose. Everybody is going to think they are going to come out and beat us, but we are going to

more aggressive especially since it's our last season in the Sun Belt."

The program is under new leadership with new assistants and a head coach. Breeden comes locally, coaching all over the mid state and formerly coaching at Riverdale High School and Coffee County Central High School. Pitching coach Fallen Catalano comes to the team after attending Union College, and assistant coach Kelley Montalvo brings in experience from her pro softball and University of Alabama playing days.

"I want to see our kids compete every pitch," Breeden said. "We've been working hard in the weight room, and I want them to remember that all their hard work is going to pay off."

The Lady Raiders lost some of its major power hitters in graduates Kaycee Popham and Kelsey Woodruff who batted .331 and .328. Both Popham and Woodruff left infield slots at first base and behind the plate. Toney is anticipated to lead the team in hitting after batting .425 last season.

Jordyn Fisherback will finally return to the mound this season taking over Caty Jutson's spot as

leading pitcher. Injuries plagued Fisherback for the past two seasons — stress fractures in both her foot and arm — and she only managed to play four games in 2012.

"It's been a tough, but I have had the support of my teammates and been going to rehab," Fisherback said. "It's just the end goal to get through the season after I spend all summer working to get

back. It was worth it."

Fisherback plans to use what she considers her two best pitches: her curve and screwball. Her average pitching speed sits

around 63 mph.

"I am excited for the season, and I am up for the challenge," Fisherback said. "At the end of the day, anybody can be anybody, and I am going to treat every team I pitch against the same."

Even with key losses, the program recruited nine freshman from Tennessee, California, Illinois and Oklahoma. Age doesn't mean everything on this year's team, and Breeden made that clear.

"It doesn't matter to me who to me if we have freshman playing or not,"

Breeden said. "I am going to put the folks on the field who hustle."

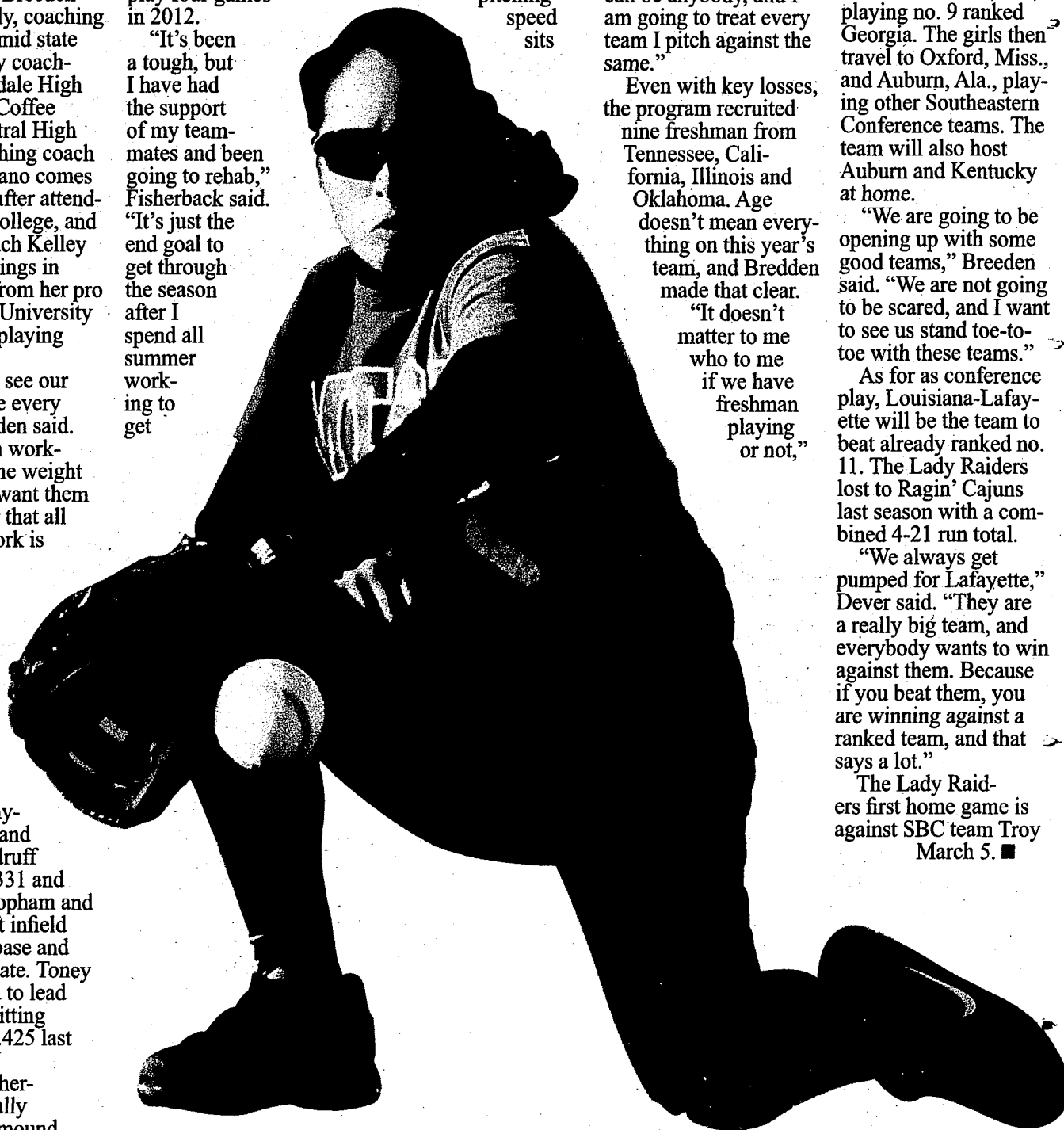
The team's strength of schedule definitely improved, and the Lady Raiders will kick off the season in Athens, Ga., playing no. 9 ranked Georgia. The girls then travel to Oxford, Miss., and Auburn, Ala., playing other Southeastern Conference teams. The team will also host Auburn and Kentucky at home.

"We are going to be opening up with some good teams," Breeden said. "We are not going to be scared, and I want to see us stand toe-to-toe with these teams."

As for as conference play, Louisiana-Lafayette will be the team to beat already ranked no. 11. The Lady Raiders lost to Ragin' Cajuns last season with a combined 4-21 run total.

"We always get pumped for Lafayette," Dever said. "They are a really big team, and everybody wants to win against them. Because if you beat them, you are winning against a ranked team, and that says a lot."

The Lady Raiders first home game is against SBC team Troy March 5. ■



Sophomore short stop Samantha Nieves fields a ground ball at practice.
Photo by Emily West.

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