

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 3, 2005

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Rainy

MT welcomes Hilltoppers

In Sports, page 6

Cheesy Mary, full of grace

In :Flash, inside



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SIDELINES

Middle Tennessee State University

Volume 80 No. 51

Murfreesboro, Tenn.

MTSU HOPE retention above state average

By Casey Phillips
Staff Writer

MTSU HOPE scholarship recipients are expected to retain their scholarship at a higher percentage than the state average, and university officials said help is available for students at risk of losing the award.

MTSU's prediction of 60 percent retention, which was based on the academic performance of the 2003-2004

freshman class, exceeds the Tennessee Higher Education Commission's projected retention rate of 50 percent for the rest of the state.

"There were 36,672 recipients this fall state-wide," said Erik Ness, associate director of policy planning and research division for the commission. "That includes both freshmen and sophomores. We anticipate that one half on average will maintain their reward from

freshmen to sophomore years."

The university administration officials said they are pleased with the higher-than-average retention rate among its student body.

"My assumption would be that we have better students here than everywhere else," said Robert Glenn, vice president of student affairs. "For the most part, [the higher retention rate] is a result of our raising the admission standards last fall."

All is not necessarily lost for the 211 freshmen with a 2.5 to 2.74 grade point average who are in danger of losing their scholarships. These students still have a chance of meeting the scholarship criteria. The administration has made efforts to keep them informed and provide guidance towards improving their grades.

"After the GPAs came in last semester, we figured out who might lose their scholarships

and sent letters to those students who were at risk," said Shelley Selchow, an adviser at the academic support center.

"Our office is currently calling students who are at risk," Selchow said. "We sent confidential letters to them as well as their parents to let them know they were in danger of losing their scholarships."

In addition to informing students of their scholarship status, the university is making a num-

ber of resources available to help marginal students.

"[The academic support center] reminds them how important it is to work really hard to get their GPA up this semester," Selchow said. "We help students figure out what grades they need to get to get their GPAs back up. We also help students choose classes and get tutoring."

See HOPE, 2

Ground Hog Day Doldrums



Photo provided by Jay Richardson | Photo Editor

Punxsutony Phil saw his shadow in Punxsutony, Penn., Tuesday morning, despite dreary weather in Murfreesboro. According to tradition, if the groundhog sees his shadow, winter lasts another six weeks.

Clark appointed to state commission

By Dana Owens
Staff Writer

MTSU student Dennis Clark was appointed by Gov. Phil Bredesen to the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth last October.

Clark, a junior majoring in political science, was appointed as a representative of the Southeast region to the 21-member board. Clark is only one of five council members under the age of 24.

The council is an independent agency that addresses the needs of children and their families in Tennessee. The commission plays a vital role in influencing legislation on a state level that will affect children.

Clark said his responsibilities on the board include encouraging good public policy regarding advancing the quality of life for children and their families.

He acts as a link between Tennessee state government and young people who are in need by attending various conferences and speaking directly with the people.

Clark was appointed to the commission directly by Bredesen after a grueling two-year process in which he submitted a resumé citing his many achievements and involvements.

"I greatly appreciate the time and effort each of these Tennesseans has committed to serve our state," Bredesen said when he announced appointments to state boards and commissions last November.

Clark said he was ecstatic to be appointed to a state commission alongside other notable members including judges and lawyers.

Clark said he has an overwhelming passion for children and feels he is now part of something important.

He said he loves politics, working with young people and "having a direct link with people who make change."

Aside from the Tennessee Council on Children and Youth, Clark is currently involved in many organizations around campus.

He is the president of the African American Student Association, serves on the University Discipline Committee and is active in the Student Government Association.

Clark said he spends a great deal of time volunteering for hospitals and charitable organizations, including the United Way. He worked on the political campaigns for Bredesen and former Democratic presidential nominee candidate Wesley Clark.

Clark said that many aspects of his life helped to contribute to his interest in politics and human rights, in particular the advancement of minorities and disadvantaged youths.

As an black child growing up in Chattanooga, Clark said he witnessed many devastating things that made him realize the importance of protecting the innocence of children. He said he wants to be remembered for doing something great, especially helping American children.

Clark describes himself as a "political consultant and activist" on his business card. He said he really considers himself as a "hell-raiser for social change" and that he has his sights set on a vacancy in a Chattanooga school board.

He said he plans to continue his activity within the SGA and has hopes for possible internship in Washington, D.C. with Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill.

After he earns his degree in political science and public administration, Clark said he hopes to ultimately be a public official in the U.S. government where he can really initiate change. ♦



Clark

Debate essential to democracy, professor says

Lack of dissent swayed opinion of Iraq war

By Erica Rodefer
Managing Editor

The lack of a strong oppositional political party is responsible for skewed perception of the Iraq War portrayed in the mainstream media, one expert said.

In a lecture Tuesday night, Robert Entman, a professor of communication and political science at North Carolina University, spoke on "Media and Democracy in the U.S. and Iraq."

"To criticize the war is not to be unpatriotic, or to deny good faith to either side," Entman

said.

Entman said he believes that debate is necessary in order to realize the ideal democracy.

"Some people might argue that we are claiming to support the creation of a democracy in Iraq, but some of the fundamental points of democracy are being shortchanged in the media in the United States," Entman said. "In particular there are those that would say the media is part of the problem."

Since Sept. 11, 2001, the media has provided both positive and negative political coverage, Entman said.

"[The media has] combined egregious propaganda, at times, with independent insight," Entman said. "The media are not the villains in this case, but there are deeper systemic prob-

lems that need to be identified and understood if we are to understand the larger question of what the media are doing and what the media should be doing to promote democracy here in America."

Entman cited various examples of how the media, in particular *Time* magazine, included a mix of both positive images of the war and coverage questioning its legitimacy.

However, Entman said he believes that much of the problem lies within the structure of the government itself.

In order for democracy to be successful, there should be a debate between the two major political parties, Entman said.

But the lack of opposition coming from the Democratic Party may have caused public opinion to sway toward

President George W. Bush's agenda without much scrutiny, according to Entman's model.

"There was substantial debate within the administration, and even within Bush's own family. The winning side in this debate may or may not be correct," Entman said.

Leaders of our country infer public opinion from media frames, or how things are portrayed within the mainstream media, Entman said.

In other words, it is in the best interest of the president to try to control how his policies are perceived in the news.

We need argument between two teams of elites so that the administration will perceive the public is getting more varied information, Entman said.

See Media, 2

'Lost chapter' in country music unearthed as Popular Music lecture series begins

By Nick Fowler
State and Local Editor

American popular music expert and MTSU professor Charles Wolfe presented a rare video clip of a Louis Armstrong and Johnny Cash duet during his presentation for the Center for Popular Music yesterday.

"For many years I assumed this piece of footage was lost," Wolfe said. "It was a lost chapter in country music history, but one that deserved to be resurrected."

Cash and Armstrong per-

formed Jimmy Rogers' "Blue Yodel #9."

Both performers appear to be enjoying themselves during the performance. When Cash asked Armstrong to play with him on the show, Armstrong quipped, "I'd say we give it to them in black and white."

Cash played guitar and sang, while Armstrong played trumpet.

The musicians were comfortable performing with each other, Wolfe said.

"You can see that he is in his element, and he doesn't do that

with all his guests," Wolfe said of Cash. "These are great musicians of the twentieth century trading licks."

Armstrong was recovering from a heart attack when he went on the show.

"His doctor specifically told him he was not to play his horn," Wolfe said.

Armstrong died less than a year after the performance.

Armstrong appeared on Cash's variety show in October of 1970 to promote his country music album. The record would be

Armstrong's last before his death, but has been almost completely overlooked by Armstrong's biographer's, according to Wolfe.

At the time, many musicians were recording country music records in attempts to revive their careers. Armstrong did not play his trumpet on the record, he only sang.

The record isn't particularly good according to Wolfe, though his performance of "Crystal Chandeliers" is worth hearing.

See Wolfe, 2



Photo provided by News and Public Affairs

Louis Armstrong and Johnny Cash swap licks in an October 1970 clip from Cash's variety show.



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

How do you feel about
TennCare reform?

Opinions 5 • Sports 6 • Classifieds 7 • Flash Inside

HOPE: Alternative routes of funding available

Continued from 1

For students who met the minimum 2.75 mark last semester, the work is not yet over. All lottery scholarship students are encouraged to not only meet, but also exceed the minimum GPA of 2.75 after 24 attempted hours to keep their scholarships for their sophomore years.

"We've continued to ask students and get the information

out there to encourage them to maintain a 3.0 throughout," assistant director of scholarships John Norrell said. "They've got to hit that 3.0 benchmark by the end of their second years."

Students who have no chance of attaining a 2.75 GPA by the end of the spring semester were sent letters advising them of alternate routes of funding.

"The MTSU foundation scholarships deadlines have not passed," Norrell said. "They've still got about two weeks left until the deadline, and many times, the criteria for the general scholarships are based on service."

In light of increasingly strict criteria for scholarship eligibility, incoming freshmen will have to strive for even higher academic excellence.

Norrell said that for the 2005-2006 academic year, incoming freshmen will be required to have a composite 21 on their ACTs or a 3.0 unweighted GPA, a substantial increase over the earlier ACT requirement of 19.

Based on the 2004 annual report by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, the state average composite score for the ACT is 20.5. ♦

Media: Journalists not villains in Iraq War

Continued from 1

Thus, the administration will be more careful making decisions.

"What the White House identifies as the best interest of the United States at any particu-

lar given point is not necessarily in the country's best interest," Entman said.

Entman has written several books on the news media and democracy including *Democracy Without Citizens: Media and the Decay of*

American Politics and Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America.

He has also taught at Yale and Northwestern Universities.

The lecture was sponsored by MTSU's College of Mass Communication, the journal-

ism and electronic media communication departments and the John Seigenthaler Chair of Excellence in First Amendment Studies. ♦

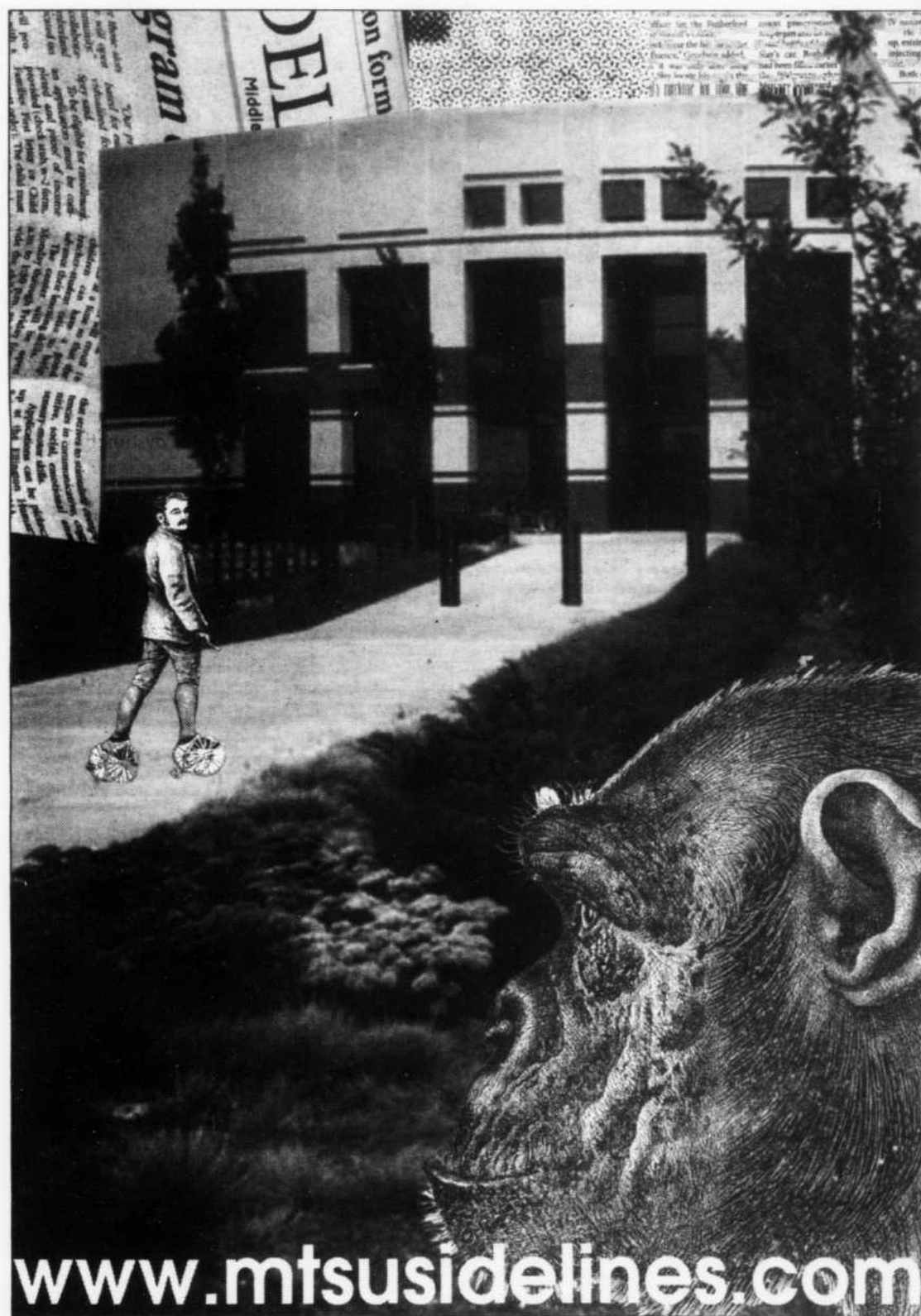
Wolfe:

Continued from 1

"In other songs he seemed out of place. He wasn't used to the stiff back-beat the Nashville studio musicians offered him," Wolfe said.

"Was he making a statement in recording what was generally considered white men's music?" Wolfe asked.

Wolfe's lecture, "I'll Blow Those Cats into the Cumberland River: Louis Armstrong, Nashville and Country Music," was part of the Perspectives on Popular Music series sponsored by the MTSU's Center for Popular Music. ♦



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CRIME LOG

Compiled By

Michaela Jackson - Assistant News Editor

Thursday, Jan. 27 - 2:32 p.m.

Fairview Building - Old Bell Air Church

Leaving the scene of an accident

Subject called the police after someone hit his black Honda Accord and then fled the scene.

Thursday, Jan. 27 - 7:17 p.m.

Beasley Hall

Harassing/threatening phone calls

Subject called to report harassing phone calls.

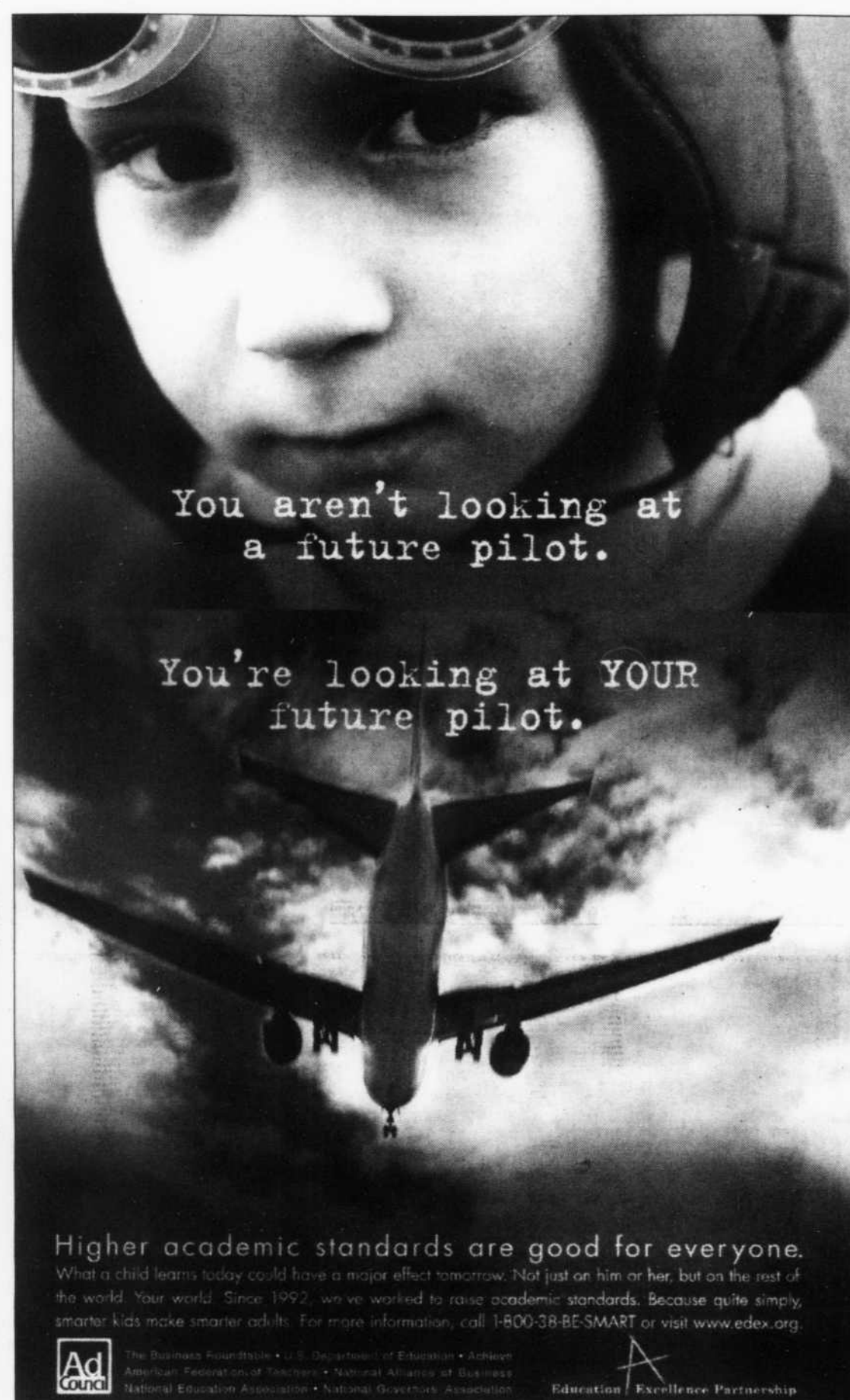
Thursday, Jan. 27 - 10:02 p.m.

Bell Street Lot

Drug possession

Devon Dudley was arrested for simple possession of drug paraphernalia. ♦

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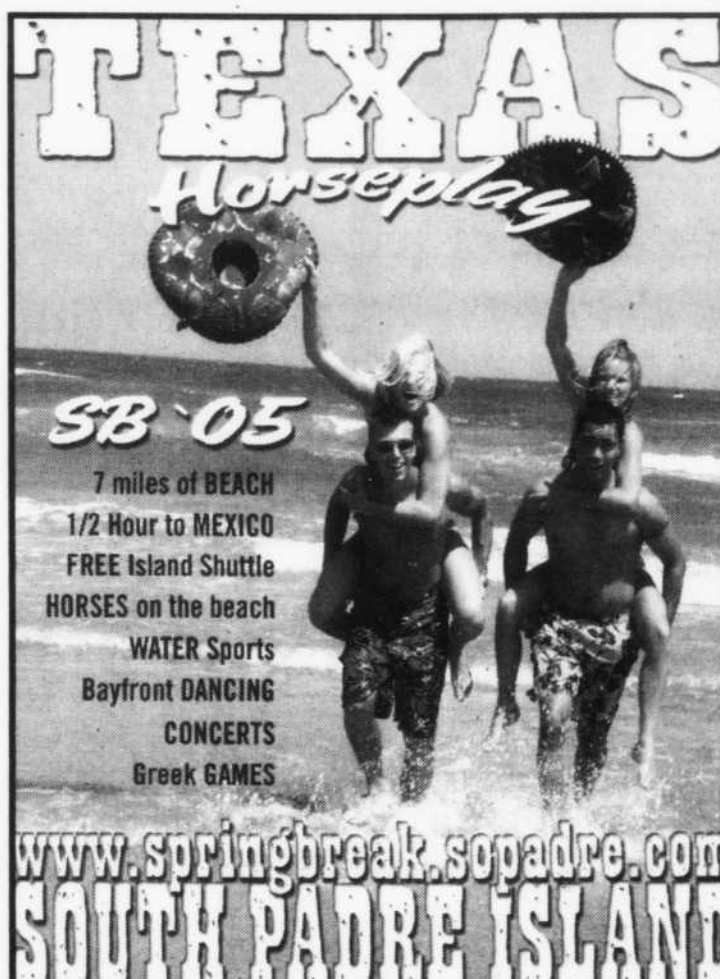
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Bredesen asks FedEx to aid driver's license processing speed

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — The Tennessee company that has developed a worldwide reputation for fast delivery is being tapped by Gov. Phil Bredesen to help speed up service at state driver's license centers.

Bredesen, in his State of the State speech Monday night, said he had been looking for ways to make licensing more efficient without an expensive consulting contract.

"At its core, the driver's license process is really about logistics, technology and customer service," Bredesen said. "We happen to have in Tennessee one of the world's leaders in each of those fields: FedEx. Its CEO, Fred Smith, has agreed to lend us some of his experts to help redesign this process."

Bredesen's special projects director, Will Pinkston, said the governor contacted Smith about two weeks ago to help if the company was willing to ask on a voluntary, unpaid basis and fairly quick.

Smith agreed. "There are a lot of areas in state government — two for example are driver's license offices and child services — where we can be more efficient," Bredesen said. "I'd like to start with something relatively

straightforward and see how we can improve these departments."

Plans are under way for some FedEx technical and logistics experts to observe the process of getting and renewing licenses, Bredesen said Tuesday.

"We've developed processes and the supporting technology to provide the best possible customer experience every day," said Anthony Hicks, FedEx spokesman. "We'll share how we make these things work with Governor Bredesen and his team."

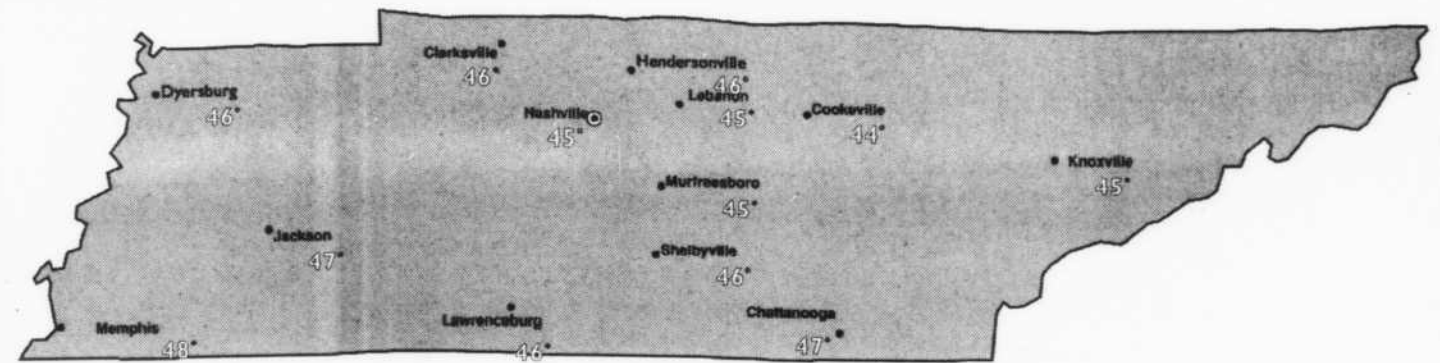
FedEx has tackled similar projects. The company was asked by the Regional Medical Center at Memphis to help with patient flow control. The FedEx Center for Supply Chain Management at the University of Memphis suggested watching the patient flow with radio frequency identification monitors the size of a pack of gum.

The experiment was the first time the devices were used on patients. The idea won a \$250,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which is working to reduce emergency room crowding nationwide.

The company also helped the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs streamline its disability claim process several years ago. ♦

Tennessee Weather – Thursday's Highs

From the Associated Press



Friday



52° ▲
31° ▼

Saturday



57° ▲
38° ▼

Sunday



56° ▲
42° ▼

Monday



55° ▲
44° ▼

Tuesday



57° ▲
42° ▼

Homeland security nominee promises questioned

By Lara Jakes Jordan
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Democrats peppered Homeland Security Secretary nominee Michael Chertoff with questions Wednesday about his tenure as a top Justice Department prosecutor, focusing on whether he had a role in approving improper interrogation methods for terror suspects.

Chertoff, now a federal appeals court judge in New Jersey, maintained he gave the CIA only broad guidance and never addressed the legality of any specific interrogation technique.

Critics have said some techniques used on detainees swept up after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks violated the Geneva Conventions, which prohibit violence, torture and humiliating treatment.

"My answer was exactly the same: 'I am not in a position to evaluate a set of facts based on a hypothetical circumstance,'" Chertoff said under pointed questioning from Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., during his confirmation hearing in front of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

He said he ended those conversations by advising: "If you are dealing with something that

makes you nervous, you better make sure that you are doing the right thing. And you better check it out. And that means doing an honest and diligent examination of what you're doing and not merely putting your head in the sand or turning a blind eye."

"To summarize, you would not, then, have given a yes-or-no answer to that question?" Levin asked.

"Correct," Chertoff said.

Despite the grilling, Chertoff is expected to be easily confirmed as the nation's second homeland security secretary. Levin said after the hearing that he knew of no senator who planned to oppose Chertoff — even though he personally remained undecided.

The full Senate could vote on the confirmation as early as next week. Homeland Security Committee chair Susan Collins said she initially hoped to have the panel vote on Chertoff's nomination Thursday, but that Democrats pushed for a delay until Monday.

Chertoff, 51, who headed the Justice Department's criminal division from 2001-2003, pledged to balance protecting the nation with preserving civil liberties if confirmed. He said he decided to give up his lifetime seat on the 3rd U.S. Court of Appeals, and lead what Utah called the "dysfunctional" homeland security system, to help protect the country in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks — what he called "the greatest challenge of my generation."

Chertoff helped develop the Justice Department's investigation strategy — including policies that critics say violated civil rights — immediately following the attacks. ♦

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WORLD BRIEFS

Associated Press



Pope's spokesman says 'no reason for alarm'

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope John Paul II had difficulty breathing as he battled the flu, the Vatican confirmed Wednesday, but it said tests showed his heart and respiration were normal and that the 84-year-old pontiff rested for several hours overnight.

The pope had "just a little fever," papal spokesman Joaquín Navarro-Valls said in elaborating on a terse medical bulletin issued by the Holy See.

The pope was being treated Wednesday for respiratory problems in the Gemelli Polyclinic. He was rushed there late Tuesday from his Vatican apartment, where he had been battling the flu for several days, Vatican officials said. No further medical bulletins were expected Wednesday, they said.

The papal spokesman said John Paul was taken by ambulance to the hospital after doctors decided "he could be better treated there than here (the Vatican)." In response to a reporter's question, Navarro-Valls denied that the pope lost consciousness, saying: "No, for God's sake!" and he ruled out any need for a tracheotomy.

Influential group of clerics calls Iraq's vote illegitimate

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — Iraq's leading Sunni Muslim clerics said Wednesday the landmark elections lack legitimacy because large numbers of Sunnis did not participate in the balloting — which the clerics had asked them to boycott.

Emboldened by the elections, which U.S. and Iraqi authorities cited as a victory for democracy, the police chief in Mosul demanded the insurgents hand over weapons within two weeks or he would "wipe out" anyone giving them shelter.

Large numbers of militant Shiite Muslims and Kurds took part in Sunday's election for a new National Assembly and

regional parliaments. Although no results or turnout figures have been released, U.S. officials say turnout appeared much lower in Sunni areas where the insurgency is strongest.

In its first statement since the balloting, the Association of Muslim Scholars said the balloting lacked legitimacy because of low Sunni participation. The Association called months ago on Sunnis to shun the polls because of the presence of U.S. and other foreign troops.

Iraqi officials acknowledge voting problems, including a ballot shortage in Baghdad, Basra and Mosul which have substantial Sunni populations.

With many Sunnis having stayed away, a ticket endorsed by the Shiite clergy is expected to gain the biggest number of seats in the 275-member National Assembly, followed by the Kurds and a list headed by interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, a secular Shiite.

With an eye on his legacy, Bush to outline Social Security goals

WASHINGTON (AP) — With four years left to build his legacy, President Bush's State of the Union address outlines his goals to give Social Security a makeover, stay the course in Iraq, push for democratic reform abroad and tackle an array of domestic issues at home.

Bush was delivering his speech Wednesday on Capitol Hill, already the scene of a testy, partisan debate over his plan to offer private retirement accounts.

His ideas for changing the 70-year-old Social Security program scored just two sentences in last year's State of the Union.

This year, it's the signature topic of his 40-minute speech before Congress and a nationally televised audience at 9 p.m. EST.

The White House says Bush will offer new details about his plan to let younger workers divert some of their Social

Security payroll taxes into personal investment accounts. But experts say while the president will seek to reassure Americans who are at or near retirement that they can expect to get their Social Security checks as expected, he'll leave larger questions unanswered.

"He's leading with the dessert and not revealing the spinach," Peter Orszag, an economist at the Brookings Institution and former Clinton White House adviser, said Tuesday.

Social Security is projected to start paying out more in benefits than it collects in taxes in 2018, according to Social Security trustees, and can pay full promised benefits only until 2042. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has projected that the program will be solvent until 2052.

"The real question is how he will restore solvency to Social Security?" Orszag said. "What benefit reductions will be needed and what are the debt implications? The type of questions he's prepared to address won't answer that."

Nepal's king names new Cabinet after assuming control

KATMANDU, Nepal (AP) — King Gyanendra announced a 10-member Cabinet heavily dominated by his own supporters Wednesday, one day after he dismissed Nepal's government, declared a state of emergency and virtually cut his nation off from the world.

Gyanendra will head the Cabinet, state radio said in a report that gave few further details other than to list the new body's members.

"The king has expressed confidence that everyone will support and cooperate with the new Cabinet," the palace said in a statement, according to the report.

An opposition figure said Wednesday that dozens of politicians have been arrested and many more have gone

underground.

"We don't even know how many of our people have been arrested," said Shovakar Parajuli, an official with the Nepali Congress party, Nepal's leading opposition political party.

He estimated that at least 50 of the group's top leaders had been taken away by police.

The arrests, which began Tuesday around the time the state of emergency was declared, were continuing on Wednesday, said Parajuli, who had himself gone underground to avoid arrest.

The tiny Himalayan nation was isolated from the rest of the world Wednesday, with telephone and Internet lines cut. While the airport was open, only a limited number of flights were going into Katmandu. Civil liberties were also severely curtailed.

The situation could grow even more complicated Thursday, when a nationwide three-day strike, called by the country's Maoist rebels, could effectively shut down much of the country. The strike was announced before the current crisis began.

Fed expected to keep raising interest rates at measured pace

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan and his colleagues appear ready to kick off 2005 the way they ended 2004 — continuing a series of modest interest rate increases to make sure inflation stays in check.

Fed policy-makers were wrapping up their first meeting of the new year on Wednesday. It was widely expected that at the end of the two days of discussions the central bank will announce another quarter-point increase in the federal funds rate.

That would be the sixth quarter-point increase in the funds rate, the interest that banks charge each other, since the first move last June when it

had been at a 46-year low of 1 percent.

The funds rate now stands at 2.25 percent. Many analysts believe it will be heading higher throughout 2005, Greenspan's 18th and final year at the helm of the central bank.

The Fed's goal is to move the funds rate from an accommodative stance, where it is still stimulating extra economic growth, to a neutral stance where the funds rate is neither stimulating growth nor holding the economy back.

Iraq's election workers begin second phase of count

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — Under the watch of armed Western security guards and monitors, Iraqi election workers are doing a second count of the country's historic vote, tapping at computer keyboards and sifting through bags of tally sheets.

Papers rustled and scissors snapped as elections employees standing behind a long counter plucked clear bags containing tally sheets from cardboard boxes on Tuesday.

"This is the new future," one election official said at the tallying center inside Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone.

On Monday afternoon, workers at polling centers nationwide finished an initial hand count of ballots from more than 5,200 precincts. Tally sheets and the ballots themselves were then trucked to Baghdad under U.S. military escort.

On Tuesday morning, about 200 clerks here began logging data from the tally sheets into laptop computers for what could be the final count. In several shifts, they're working around the clock in the brightly lit room.

Several monitors sat quietly on one side of the room. Surveillance video cameras were installed in the hall, and television monitors showed another room where more tally sheets stuffed in clear plastic boxes

were stored.

The image of workers manning the computers was projected onto one of the walls.

Court orders DNA test for tsunami "Baby 81"

KALMUNAI, Sri Lanka (AP) — A judge's ruling Wednesday that a couple must undergo a DNA test to prove they are the parents of the tsunami survivor known as "Baby 81" sparked chaos in a hospital pediatric ward after a surging crowd and the would-be parents burst in and pleaded with doctors to release the infant.

After the court hearing, the man claiming to be the child's father cried out and threatened to kill himself, attempting to swallow an unknown white substance.

The man and his wife, accompanied by friends and relatives, then walked to the hospital where Baby 81 is being kept and forced their way in.

"Here is my baby, look, look," shouted and cried Jenita Jeyarajah, 25, after forcibly entering the child's glass cubicle and picking him up.

The father, Murugupillai Jeyarajah, 31, shielded his wife and the infant from the surging crowd.

"Please give us our baby," Jenita pleaded with the doctors on duty. She then fell on the feet of the head nurse and pleaded: "You are a mother. So am I. Give me my baby."

By then, between 70 and 100 people, most of them relatives and friends, started shouting at the doctors who had earlier testified in court that a DNA test was the best solution.

Baby 81 was the 81st admission to the hospital here on Dec. 26, the day of the Asian tsunami, and his plight has become emblematic of the disaster's effect on families. In Sri Lanka alone, the waves claimed the lives of some 12,000 children, about 40 percent of Sri Lanka's death toll of 31,000. ♦

Creation and Evolution: *Is There A Middle Ground?*

David A. Eakin, Ph. D. (Professor of Biology)

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IN THEATERS FEBRUARY 4

From the Editorial Board

Communication important to keeping students in school

Congratulations to the university for taking the steps necessary to help students keep their HOPE scholarships. It's a considerable achievement to beat the state average by 10 percent. It's even more of an achievement when one of the reasons for the university's above-average score is good communication between faculty and students.

In all of our classes, professors have drilled information into our heads about the standards that must be met in order to retain the scholarship. While it might be repetitive for those who don't have to worry about the award, students who do care benefit.

If you hear something over and over again, everywhere you go, eventually the information will stick in your mind, and when having that knowledge is the difference between staying in college and dropping out because you can't afford tuition, the value of that communication becomes immeasurable.

Since the university has made efforts to improve communication to students so they can know what to do to keep their HOPE scholarship, the administration and faculty should expand their efforts to all students, to provide them with the assistance needed to improve their chances of graduating.

Faculty should stress the availability of resources on campus geared towards students who are having difficulty with their work. Services such as the University Writing Center and the library's research coaches exist to aid students in creating high quality work, but students will be unable to take advantage of those programs and facilities if they are unaware of what kinds of help are available and where they can go to find it.

Just as important is the quality and availability of advisors. While some faculty and staff go to great lengths to ensure that they are available to help students as much as possible, in other parts of the university, the quality of the advice given is lack-luster at best. We've already seen the improvements that can be made with good communication, and meeting with one's adviser should be the best source of important information for the student who wants to graduate with a minimum of stress.

Making sure that students know how to keep the scholarships paying for their education is a step in the right direction. Now we need to make sure those students will make it to graduation. ♦

Don't shy away from Christian heritage

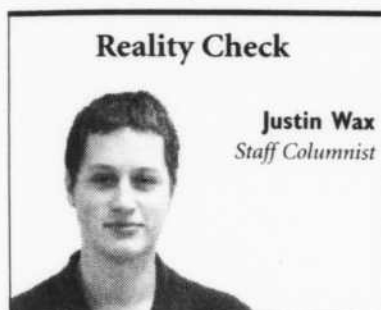
Democrats recently railed against the lack of ideological diversity in President George W. Bush's second term cabinet. Yet, the fact that most Americans rejected their ideology in the last three national elections doesn't seem to register with these folks.

Democrats continue to demonstrate surprise that Bush furthered the policies of his supporters – another example of how the idea of representative government eludes liberals.

If Bush has instituted a ban on ideological diversity in Washington, D.C., how do you explain Sen. Ted Kennedy? The liberal from Massachusetts waged a fierce contest against Ted Turner to dream up the most insane rant of the week. It's always close when the Teds go head to head, but it was Turner who edged Kennedy when he compared the Fox News Network to Hitler, according to the Drudge Report. A Fox spokesperson responded, "Ted is understandably bitter, having lost his ratings, his network and now, his mind – we wish him well."

Yes, we conservatives have a few crazies, but liberals have us seriously outmanned in that category.

It's odd that liberals demand ideological diversity in Bush's cabinet, when they certainly don't support the concept in American academia or the media. The vastly disproportionate number of liberal professors to their conservative counterparts in American univer-



Reality Check

Justin Wax
Staff Columnist

sities clearly demonstrates this point.

The lack of ideological diversity has trickled down into lower education, too. Public school teacher Stephen Williams recently sued his principal and school district for banning the Declaration of Independence from the classroom.

Williams spoke on *The Sean Hannity Show*, and commented that classroom references to Islam and other religions were celebrated as multiculturalism. But the moment anyone uttered a reference to Christianity – wham – they were pounded with the 'separation of church and state' line.

The decision to ban the Declaration of Independence because of its references to Christianity is an example of liberalism run amuck.

The men who signed the Declaration essentially signed their death certificates.

Yet, they believed that they could create a government worth dying for. As historian William Federer noted, one signatory, Dr. Benjamin Rush, stated, "The only

foundation for ... education in a republic is religion. Without this there can be no virtue, and without virtue there can be no liberty, and liberty is the object of all republican governments."

Keep in mind that the terms "religion" and "Christianity" were essentially interchangeable in the days of George Washington and Benjamin Rush. Incidentally, Rush sought freedom for blacks, as he founded the Society for the Abolition of Slavery.

In his farewell address, Washington warned, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity [national success], religion and morality are indispensable supports ... let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

Many liberals embrace the insane notion that any advancement of Christianity into the public sphere is an attempt to establish a Christian theocracy that would resemble a modern-day Islamic state.

Joseph Bottom depicted this paranoia in the Dec. 27 *Weekly Standard*. "A few years ago, the city of Eugene, Ore., banned decorated trees on public property during

the month of December.

"And rightly so. Even a secularized symbol for Christmas is still somehow implicated in it all, a co-conspirator in the attempt to turn America into a theocracy ... If we allow a tree with ornaments on public land, the next thing you know people will be calling out, 'God bless us, every one!' and 'Peace on earth, goodwill to men!' And then, of course, the Inquisition."

Bottom jokes about this paranoia, but the founders were deadly serious when they risked their lives for freedom – including religious freedom.

The framers wanted an America in which religion and government were great allies – not adversaries.

A second Bush term provides ample time for Americans to begin insisting that instructors grant the Constitutional right of religious freedom in academia. We must succeed in stopping the radical left from banning the Declaration and other historical documents from the classroom.

Americans must learn of Providence's guiding role in America's history. Future generations of Americans will be better off for it. ♦

Justin Wax is a sophomore history major and can be reached at Justin@furtheringfreedom.com.

Election in Iraq puts U.S. voters to shame

Sunday, many Iraq citizens left their homes to vote. Even with the threat of attacks on those who ventured to the polls, these people went to vote.

While some say that Iraq holding a free election will be an example for the rest of the Middle East, I think that Americans should look at what is happening.

Roughly 50 percent of eligible voters made it to the polls in 2000, according to www.infoplease.com.

We don't have the looming threat that the Iraqis faced going to the polls, yet, only half of us will make time to participate in elections, and that is only when a president is being elected.

How different would this country be if every person eligible to vote took the time to do just that?

We have a great right and privilege in voting, and too many Americans take that for granted.

We don't have the fear of being in the way of a suicide bomber, or getting shot, simply for voting.

We have the ability to change the path this country takes, and somehow, half of us won't take time to vote.

It will take years before we know if the process of democracy will work in Iraq, but on Sunday, the Iraqi people gave us a lesson that we should try to remember.

That lesson was hope: hope in a system, hope that even one vote can make a difference in a country. Even in an uncertain time, with an uncertain future, democracy might work.



Sandi's Logic

Sandi Van Orden
Staff Columnist

That is the beauty of the voting in Iraq. While so many Americans decline to participate, giving any number of excuses, Iraqi citizens went to the polls, knowing that they might not make it home.

The action that the voters in Iraq took to be proactive in the shaping of their country is inspiring. It should remind us all of how fortunate we are.

Every time an election comes around, the voting population of this country decides the direction the United States will take. With every election, decisions are being made that will have an effect on every American citizen's future. As Americans, we need to find the hope that the Iraqis have found.

Our system may not be perfect, but we need to hope that together we can make a difference.

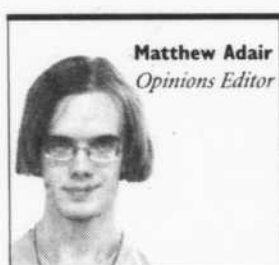
We need to hope that using the system will make our voices heard. ♦

Sandi Van Orden is a junior journalism major and can be reached by e-mail slv2e@mtsu.edu.

From the Opinions Editor

Aging, ailing John Paul must step down as Catholic leader

When a head of state is suffering serious and debilitating illness and is no longer able to perform his or her duties, that leader will often step down from the position of power so that the nation can be better managed by one more physically capable of facing the rigors of leadership.



Matthew Adair
Opinions Editor

Logically, the same should apply to the leader of the Roman Catholic Church. However, the 84-year-old Pope John Paul II still sits on the chair of St. Peter, despite being rushed to a hospital in Rome on Tuesday, due to breathing complications caused by a bout of influenza. Italian doctors have stabilized the aging pontiff's health, but the fact remains that he is no longer as well as he used to be.

Parkinson's Disease has severely impacted the pope's ability to carry out his duties of office, and while he has days where he surprises those fearing for his health – for instance, using a stairway without assistance, on a visit to Canada – the pope's health is steadily decaying.

A pope can resign from office by abdicating his position. It has been almost 600 years since a pope has abdicated, however, and the odds of John Paul II doing so are slim. The pope's conservative, traditionalist stances towards issues such as gay marriage and the ordination of women as priests have caused much controversy; should the pope step down, it is likely that cardinals sharing the pope's opinions would fear that a more liberal cardinal could take his place.

Regardless of their attitudes towards the church, Catholics around the world should face the reality that their leader is weakening physically. They should also come to grips with the fact that the world has changed around the church, and that their leader should at least be open to moving with it.

More importantly, electing a younger pope, regardless of whether he is more liberal than John Paul II or not, would relieve this aging man of the strain of guiding one of the largest organized religions in the world, so that he can live out the remainder of his life in peace. ♦

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

Don't put stock in privatizing Social Security

By Derek Dickson
The Daily Cougar

(U-WIRE) HOUSTON – Social Security is no security for the youth and young adults of America. Theories are born every day. It seems everyone has the answer to the Social Security crisis, but there's still no solution.

Part-time working students might not even notice the tiny amount of money that is taken out of their paycheck, and I hope they don't plan on ever seeing that money again. Once young Americans are eligible to collect Social Security, they will be fishing in a dry hole.

Congress' budget analysts estimate the program's trust funds will be depleted in 2052, which means beneficiaries will most likely only receive about 78 percent of their scheduled benefits.

However, in March 2004, the Social Security Board of Trustees estimated the trust funds would be empty in 2042. The future of social security is looking grim. President George W. Bush wants to give younger workers the option of holding back a portion of their payroll taxes into personal retirement accounts, which makes sense – at first.

Privatizing Social Security makes sense until you consider a few things. Once the government allows citizens to keep the money that would have gone into Social Security, it will leave the government at fault. Or, should I say, citizens will blame the government for not taking care of their money.

Those who are smart with their money could benefit from privatizing Social Security. I would want the option of keeping the money I earned anyway and investing it. Making my own retirement plan suits me better than letting the government handle it for me.

Privatizing Social Security would most likely fail even more than the program established now. Citizens would invest their money into stocks, which could plummet at any time, or agree to a retirement plan that wouldn't work well in the end. This would increase the amount of poor and homeless people in America.

Also, it would inflate the already growing problem of expensive medical needs for the elderly. If the stock they placed all of their retirement money in goes down the drain, so does their dream of retiring peacefully.

The Social Security program in place now isn't a bad program. It has worked for quite some time, but since the surplus in the 1980s, the government has been taking advantage of it. By using the money we have saved for our retirement, the government has put us all in a tough situation. Both monetarily and by jeopardizing the chance for America to retire to the back porch of its country home.

The solution to the Social Security crisis is for the government to quit "borrowing" from it. If Americans have nothing to fall back on when they retire, it's going to be a hard and painful fall for us all. ♦

So, you think that we
regurgitate political rhetoric?
Spit something back at us.

slopinio@mtsu.edu

SIDELINES

Middle Tennessee
State University
1301 East Main Street
P.O. Box 8
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Editorial: 898-2337
Advertising: 898-2533
Fax: 904-8193
www.mtsusidelines.com

Editor in Chief Kristin Hall*
Managing Editor Erica Rodefer*
Production Manager Brandon Morrison
Campus News Editor Matt Anderson*
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SPORTS

6 ♦ SIDELINES

Thursday, February 3, 2005

Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Peterson entertains supporters at annual luncheon

By Jonathan Hutton
Staff Writer

Rain did not affect the Blue Raider baseball team's annual Groundhog Day Luncheon, which has sold out the past three years.

This year was no different, as around 500 Blue Raider baseball supporters packed the Tennessee Room in the James Union Building Wednesday to remember the past and dream of the future.

Among those in attendance were former players, coaches, alumni, local area high school teams and several major league scouts.

Groundhog Day signifies to Blue Raider Baseball head coach Steve Peterson that baseball sea-

son is just around the corner.

"To me this is the opening day of hope, of high expectations and momentum heading into the 2005 season," Peterson said at the luncheon.

Peterson also spoke to those in attendance about the recent success of the baseball program at Middle Tennessee. In the past two years, MT has produced two Sun Belt Conference championships, two NCAA Regional births and has had the largest crowd to watch a game in the history of the Blue Raider baseball program.

Needless to say, expectations are high going into the 2005 season.

"We have new faces, but we have some very experienced guys," Peterson said. "I like the

way they work, I like the way they get after it, and I believe they are going to be a very entertaining ballclub."

MT will return a very experienced infield, but lost some outfielders to the major league draft.

"The most experience we have is in the infield. I still don't know what I am going to do in the outfield," Peterson said. "I believe this outfield has the ability to be the best that has ever played here with their power, speed and arm strength."

Pitching has been on the minds of every Blue Raider baseball fan, as MT lost several seniors last season.

"Our lack of pitching is in starting pitching. We don't have a lot of experienced starters coming back, but we have expe-

rienced pitchers coming back," Peterson said.

"We have guys on this ballclub that will get their opportunity. Our pitching is there; it's just got to come along," he added.

Peterson also spoke on how being picked in the preseason as a low contender does not bother him. The Blue Raiders were picked to finish fifth in a poll of SBC coaches.

"We were picked to finish somewhere in between fourth and sixth every year in the SBC, so it really doesn't matter," Peterson said.

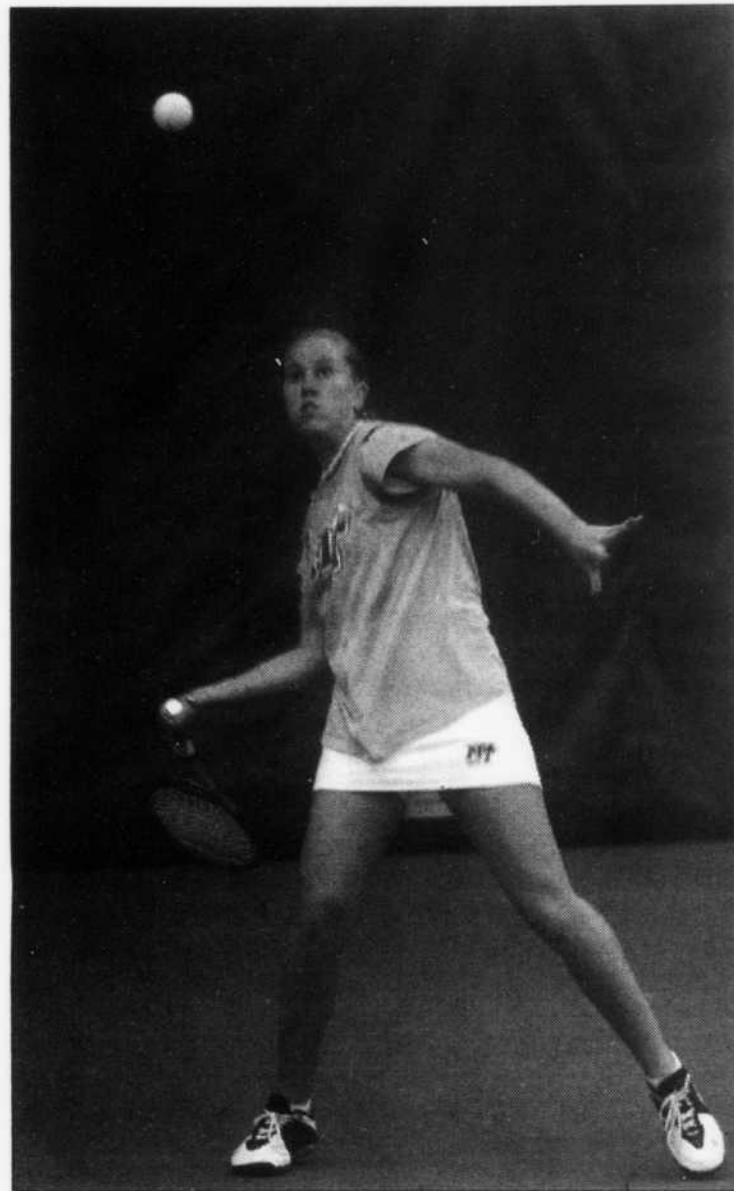
Those wanting to attend a home game will not have to dig deep into their wallets to find extra cash. General admission

See Groundhog, 9



Photo by Rachelle Morvant | Chief Photographer

MT head coach Steve Peterson adopts a team slogan.



File Photo

Jennifer Klaschka leads this year's women's tennis squad.

Lady Raiders begin season with Belmont

By Jill Davis
Staff Writer

With the recent resignation of former head coach Randy Holden, the women's tennis team faces not only a new season, but also a new head coach.

Neil Stapp, owner and operator of the Murfreesboro Racquet Club, is taking over the head job after Holden resigned Monday for undisclosed reasons.

However, the sudden step up to head coach has not interfered with Stapp's ideas about the spring season.

"I want the team ... to just really max out their abilities as best they can," Stapp said.

"I think if we do that, practice hard and go out there with a good attitude and play hard, we're going to do well."

A new coach, a new season and new strategies are the elements that will not affect the players greatly, but instead make them work even harder, Stapp said.

An ingredient of Stapp's plan for success this season is organized, constructive practices. As head coach, he says he is going to add in his own philosophy and intensity while keeping the game fun.

This changing structure will come in handy when the Lady Raiders play Vanderbilt, who is ranked No. 6, on Feb. 22.

Although Stapp hasn't set any goals for the season, he is looking for a positive mindset and union within the team.

Although the women's tennis team has only seven players,

strong assets to a successful season are not sparse.

Stapp noted that he is "only going to take it one match at a time." He wants to see the team enjoy themselves and have fun on the courts but play hard and play well at the same time.

One advantage to the team and a component of its outstanding leadership is Jennifer Klaschka, a senior from Germany who transferred here in the spring of 2002.

Klaschka was ranked 63rd in the ITA poll in the fall of 2004, the highest singles ranking of her career. Her leadership capabilities and experience are a benefit to the team.

Senior Ana Marie Cibils won the MT Fall Invitational at the MT Fall Singles Title in 2004, and senior Emily Vest is ranked in the top 60 in the South and has been named the most improved player on the team according to www.goblueraiders.com.

Rounding out the squad are on junior and three underclassmen.

Britni Short is a junior from nearby Oakland who should help provide the team with leadership.

Jacqui Williams, a native of Canberra, Australia, is the team's lone sophomore.

Ann-Kristin Siljeström, who hails from Sweden, and Claudia Szabo, who is from Morwell, Australia, round out the team.

The Lady Raiders open the season playing host to Belmont on Feb. 6 at 5 p.m. at the Murfreesboro Racquet Club. ♦

MT welcomes Hilltoppers

By David Hunter
Senior Staff Writer

Don't be surprised if the glass breaks this weekend in Murfreesboro.

The Middle Tennessee men's basketball team returns home against two key Sun Belt Conference opponents, Western Kentucky and Florida International.

After going on the road last weekend, defeating New Mexico and losing to Louisiana-Lafayette, the Blue Raiders will take on conference rival WKU at the Glass House tonight. With both schools located so close to each other, it's more than your typical conference matchup.

"It's definitely a big rivalry, and it's a big game for both of us," MT forward Kyle Young said.

"It has developed into a nice rivalry," MT head coach Kermit Davis. We have a lot of respect for Western's program, and [we] look forward to the game."

Last year's game, which the Blue Raiders

won by the score of 73-59, broke the Murphy Center attendance record with 11,807 fans.

"We just got to practice hard and just come out and play Thursday night," MT senior Michael Cuffee said.

WKU will be looking for revenge, however, after losing to MT in last season's SBC tournament on WKU's home court 76-62.

Anthony Winchester, who averages 17.6 points per game (fourth in the SBC), leads the Hilltoppers.

"Right now, I think Anthony Winchester might be the MVP of our league. His stats prove it," Davis said.

Courtney Lee scores 14.4 per game, while Antonio Haynes averages 13.3. Elgrace Wilborn leads the SBC in field goal percentage at 67 percent and blocks at 2.94 per game.

It will be a classic showdown between offense and defense. WKU's offense scores 77 points per game, second in the SBC,

while MT gives up 63 points per game, which leads the conference.

The Hilltoppers are currently in third place in the SBC East (13-5,3-3).

On Saturday night, FIU comes to the Murphy Center. The Golden Panthers will have an entire week to prepare for the Blue Raiders, but they might need all that time after picking up their first conference win of season in five overtimes against Arkansas-Little Rock last Sunday.

MT defeated FIU in both meetings last season, 54-53 on Feb. 7th and 60-42 at Murphy Center on March 1st.

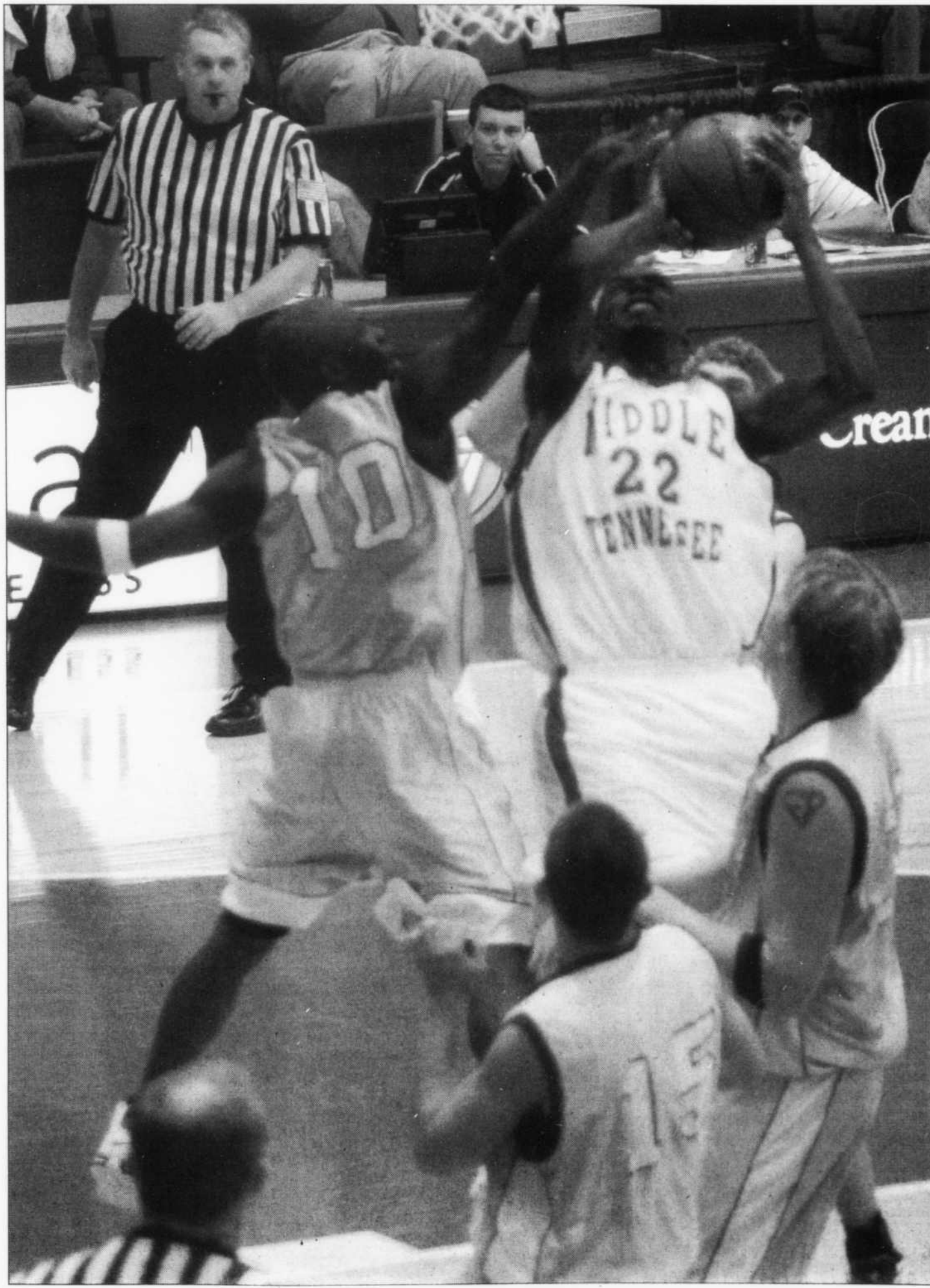
FIU is led by Ivan Almonte's 16.8 ppg (eighth in the SBC), while Ismael N'Diaye is second on the team in scoring with 14.5 ppg.

"We'll be very prepared for Florida

See Rivalry, 9

Photo by Jay Richardson | Photo Editor

MT junior Marcus Morrison leads the team in 3-point percentage.



McCollum announces new recruiting class

By Mark Emery
Staff Writer

The 2005 Middle Tennessee football recruiting class can all be summed up in one word: defense.

Brandon Perry, a 6-foot-3-inch, 285-pound defensive tackle, leads the list of 25 recruits that MT head coach Andy McCollum feels is a great recruiting class.

In his senior season, Perry recorded 102 tackles (24 for a loss) and eight sacks. Perry chose MT, despite receiving offers from Florida, Auburn, Nebraska and Florida State.

"He is a defensive lineman that does well in school," McCollum said. "And I think he will have a chance to come in and make an impact on this football team at the defensive linemen position."

Perry is one of five defensive linemen the Blue Raiders have recruited. Trevor Jenkins, a 6-

foot-2-inch, 270-pound defensive tackle, and David Johnson, a 6-foot-4-inch, 254-pound defensive tackle, were rated two-star recruits by Rivals.com.

Nick Mobley, a 6-foot-3-inch, 315-pound defensive lineman, recorded 52 tackles and five sacks in his senior year at Dublin High School in Dublin, Ga. He was rated a two-star recruit by Rivals.com.

Chris McCoy, a 6-foot-5-inch, 250-pound defensive lineman, played basketball and football in high school, but only started playing football his junior year. During his senior season, however, he recorded 120 tackles and 11 sacks.

"I think this is good as any defensive line, as a group, that we've had," McCollum said.

The team also added size and athleticism in the defensive backfield. McCollum signed two 6-foot cornerbacks, Joey Moultry and junior college transfer Reggie Doucet. Moultry

was selected honorable mention all-state as a defensive back by the Alabama Sports Writers Association and voted first team all-state as an athlete by *The Montgomery Advertiser*.

The defense was not the only side that added size and depth. MT was able to sign five wide receivers and two running backs. Alex Suber, a 5-foot-9-inch, 175-pound running back, was rated a two-star recruit by Rivals.com and rushed for 1,592 yards and 16 touchdowns his senior year.

Eddie Brown, a 6-foot-2-inch, 218-pound wide receiver, was voted first team all-state as an athlete in 2004 and played basketball and football. 6-foot-4-inch, 200-pound Jay Robinson, will also add size to the receiving corps.

"We're excited about the class," McCollum said. "It was a long night last night and we were ready to close on some, especially at the end." ♦

2005 Middle Tennessee football signees

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown/HS/JC
Eddie Brown	WR	6-2	218	Fr.	Jacksonville, Fla./Arlington Country Day
Chris Burnett	WR/CB	5-9	175	Fr.	Covington, Tenn./Covington HS
Michael Cannon	WR	5-10	170	Fr.	Memphis, Tenn./Whitehaven HS
Lonnie Clemons III	FS	6-2	210	r-Fr.	Milledgeville, Ga./Baldwin HS
Reggie Doucet	CB	6-0	195	Jr.	Prunedale, Ca./El Camino JC
Franklin Dunbar	OL	6-5	366	r-Fr.	Waycross, Ga./Ware Co. HS
Chance Dunleavy	LB	6-2	231	Jr.	West Covina, Ca./Mt. SAC CC
Dale Galvin	WR	6-2	185	Fr.	Bunnell, Fla./Flagler Palm Coast HS
Craig Harris	DB	6-0	175	Fr.	Brownsville, Tenn./Haywood HS
Bryant House	S	6-1	195	Fr.	Kingsland, Ga./Camden Co. HS
Trevor Jenkins	DT	6-2	270	Fr.	Macon, Ga./Stratford HS
David Johnson	DT	6-4	254	Fr.	Swainsboro, Ga./Swainsboro HS
Derek Mason	OL	6-4	270	Jr.	Starkville, Miss./East Mississippi JC
Chris McCoy	DL	6-5	250	Fr.	Villa Rica, Ga./Villa Rica HS
Nick Mobley	DT	6-3	315	Fr.	Dublin, Ga./Dublin HS
Joey Moultry	CB	6-0	175	Fr.	Troy, Ala./Charles Henderson HS
Ralphael Ousley	LB	6-2	245	Fr.	Fort Walton Beach, FL/Fort Walton Beach HS
Brandon Perry	DT	6-3	285	Fr.	Hawkinsville, Ga./Hawkinsville HS
Jay Robinson	WR	6-4	200	Fr.	Wetumpka, Ala./Wetumpka HS
J.K. Sabb	LB	5-11	230	Jr.	Augusta, Ga./Georgia Military CC
Alton Sanders	RB	6-1	190	Fr.	Warner Robins, Ga./Warner Robins HS
Alex Suber	RB	5-9	175	Fr.	Tampa, Fla./Thomas Jefferson HS
Mark Thompson	OL	6-4	290	Fr.	Old Hickory, Tenn./DCA
Coy Williamson	LB	6-1	225	Fr.	Niceville, Fla./Niceville HS
Jordan Wilson	ATH	5-10	185	Fr.	Tampa, Fla./Chamberlain HS

Young convicted on three counts in Means recruiting case

By Woody Baird
Associated Press Writer

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) - A federal jury convicted millionaire businessman Logan Young on Wednesday of paying \$150,000 to get a top football recruit to sign with Alabama five years ago.

The jury deliberated 5 1/2 hours before returning the verdict.

Young, 64, of Memphis was convicted of racketeering conspiracy (by breaking state bribery laws), crossing state lines to commit a crime and arranging bank withdrawals to avoid reporting rules.

Young could receive prison time and a large fine. No date was scheduled for sentencing.

The charges carry a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison, but federal guidelines would call for a much lighter sentence.

Young was convicted of paying former Trezevant High School head coach Lynn Lang to make sure Albert Means, a highly recruited defensive lineman from Memphis, signed with the Crimson Tide.

While the jury convicted Young on three criminal charges it remained undecided on a "forfeiture count," common in racketeering convictions, that would require Young to pay the government the amount of money involved in the conspiracy.

The jury was to return Thursday to make that decision. In the meantime, U.S. District Court Judge Daniel Breen left a gag order in place, barring comments to the media by the defense or prosecution.

Breen rejected government requests to set a "substantial" cash bond for Young and ban him from alcohol use while awaiting sentencing.

Trial testimony painted Young as a heavy drinker. Young has been free without bond since his indictment in October 2003.

A scandal surrounding Means' recruitment played into an NCAA investigation that resulted in sanctions against Alabama in 2002, costing the Crimson Tide scholarships and bowl eligibility.

Two former Alabama assistants, Ivy Williams and Ronnie Cottrell, lost their jobs and are suing the NCAA, claiming defamation. They contend that a conspiracy by enemies of Alabama's foot-

ball program set off the NCAA's investigation and Young's prosecution.

Thomas Gallion, the attorney for Williams and Cottrell, said Young's conviction would not affect their lawsuit.

"Fortunately, they didn't tie my clients to Logan Young or any improper acts," Gallion said from his office in Alabama. "I will say I was stunned at the verdict. Football's a powerful thing. You being tried in Tennessee and you're an Alabama booster - that's a difficult thing."

Young's lawyers tried to convince the jury that Lang's long history of lying about Means' recruitment made his trial testimony worthless.

Lang testified that Young gave him a series of cash payments below the \$10,000 threshold for IRS reporting.

Prosecutors said bank and phone records bolstered Lang's testimony, showing numerous calls between him and Young and numerous cash withdrawals and deposits during the time of Means' recruitment.

Lang also testified he took money from two colleges hoping to recruit Means - Georgia and

Kentucky - and offers of cash, jobs or other incentives from Arkansas, Memphis, Mississippi, Michigan State and Tennessee.

Former coaches Rip Scherer of Memphis and Jim Donnan of Georgia testified Lang was lying. Tennessee coach Phillip Fulmer was not asked to testify in the case, but he has been linked to the recruiting scandal by attorneys in Alabama who say he was part of a conspiracy to bring down the Crimson Tide football program.

Fulmer's attorney, Jeff Hagood, said the jury's decision provided some vindication.

"I've said all along the stakes in this entire affair were very high and this criminal conviction proves that. We've also said the lines between the good guys and bad guys were extremely clear, and this criminal conviction like the NCAA findings proves that too," he said. "[Logan Young] tried to rig the recruiting game, and after he got caught, he tried to tear down the entire NCAA. He has completely failed on both counts."

Lang has pleaded guilty to conspiracy in Means' recruitment and is cooperating with prosecutors as he awaits sentencing. ♦

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Blue Raiders embark on three-match road trip

By Mark Emery
Staff Writer

The Middle Tennessee men's tennis team will play three teams in three days, two of which are ranked in the top 75.

They begin their road trip today by playing at No. 48 Louisville.

Louisville is currently 2-3 on the season. They have lost three consecutive matches to No. 26 Oklahoma State, No. 46 Tulsa and No. 4 Georgia.

The Blue Raiders are 15-2 against Louisville and have won three of four matches in the last three seasons.

Photo by Matt Orenstein | Staff Photographer

MT sophomore Andreas Siljestrom, who was ranked 63rd in ITA's preseason polls, works on his serve during a recent practice at the Racquet Club of Murfreesboro last Saturday.

The only player ranked for the Cardinals is Damar Johnson, who is ranked 124. He has posted a record of 3-2 on the season, with all but one of those matches coming at the No. 1 spot.

"We want to take it one match at a time," MT head coach Dale Short said. "If we can play well at Louisville, we have a great chance of doing well on the trip."

The Blue Raiders will then get a small break by not having to play a ranked opponent in Indiana State.

The match against MT will be the first team match for the Sycamores for the Spring season. The Blue Raiders are 4-1 all-time and 3-1 against ISU in the last four years.

Then, on the final day of the road trip, MT will travel to Bloomington to take on No. 67 Indiana.

The Blue Raiders will try to end a losing streak against IU, as they lost the last two meetings, including a 4-3 in Murfreesboro last year.

Indiana has started the season 2-1, with their loss

coming to No. 34 Notre Dame. Jakub Praibis, ranked 61, leads the Hoosiers and has won both of his singles matches at the No. 1 spot.

David Bubenicek, a sophomore, is undefeated in 2005, having won both of his matches on Jan. 29 in straight sets.

After the team's loss to the Fighting Irish, the team picked up a pair of wins against Murray State (7-0) and Butler (7-0) on Jan. 29.

In both of the matches, the team won each match without losing a single set.

"We've had some wars against both Louisville and Indiana the last few years, and this should be no different," Short said. "We have some confidence, but it's going to be hard to beat good teams on the road."

Despite winning their first two matches of the season with 7-0 sweeps, the Blue Raiders fell three spots in the latest rankings. The new rankings that were released on Feb. 1 have the Blue Raiders ranked No. 57. ♦

MT track squads host indoor meet

By Katy Hamlett
Staff Writer

This weekend the MT track teams will host other schools from around the South in the Middle Tennessee Open.

Arkansas State, Western Kentucky and Belmont are the confirmed teams that plan to compete in the event.

The weight throw will be one of the spotlighted events, featuring ASU's Candon Powell who set a Sun Belt Conference record for the event at the Indiana Open over the weekend. Powell's 66-8 throw got him tapped for the NCAA Indoor Championships in March.

"He set the record in the preliminary throws and then set it again during the finals," ASU coach Jay Flanagan told ASU media relations after Saturday's meet. "This performance places him in the top 10 nationally now."

WKU's Raigo Toompuu also hit NCAA provisional marks in Saturday's weight throw competition, taking second place with 57-9.

MT's serving up some home-cooked competition of their own with Alex Pruitt, who was named Sun Belt Performer of the Week this week for his second-place performance and NCAA qualifying marks in the high jump at the Indiana Open.

On the women's side, WKU will be looking for repeat performances from Shanea Wilson and Vallery Delaunay, who broke school records at

the Middle Tennessee Invitational two weeks ago.

Wilson's 57.05 mark in the 400-meter dash annihilated WKU's previous 58.2 record set in 1996. Delaunay broke WKU's more recent 38-5 1/2 triple jump record, set by Delaunay's sister Jessica eight days earlier, with 39-2 3/4.

The Lady Raiders continue to nurse the injuries of sophomore Shanna-Kay Campbell and senior Kishara George, who were both unable to participate in Bloomington last weekend and will most likely sit out at the MT Open.

"We let [Campbell] run this weekend, just take a lap, but she didn't like it," MT head coach Dean Hayes said. "Right now I'm just trying to get her to run some."

Also benched for the upcoming MT Open are key distance runners Steve Safstrum, recovering from a dental operation, and Johnathon Guillou, who injured his knee moving furniture.

"That's why you hire people to move furniture for you," Hayes joked.

The MT Open is the first of a two-match homestand followed by an off week and the Sun Belt Conference Indoor Championship.

"We're trying to give [MT] a big boost of confidence so they can play their best in the Sun Belt [Conference tournament]. That's really what we're looking for," Hayes said.

The all-day event kicks off at 11 a.m. this Saturday at Murphy Center. ♦

Lady Raiders travel to WKU

MT, Lady Toppers battle for first place in SBC East

By Chase Williams
Staff Writer

The two best women's basketball teams in the Sun Belt Conference collide on Thursday night in Bowling Green, Ky., when the Western Kentucky Lady Hilltoppers (13-6, 6-0 SBC) play host to the Lady Raiders of Middle Tennessee (14-5, 6-0 SBC).

Both squads will be looking to come out strong in the latest installment of this spirited rivalry, as the winner earns sole possession of the top spot in the conference's Eastern division.

The all-time series stands deadlocked at 21-21. These two programs have met in each of the last two Sun Belt tournament championships, with each team winning once.

WKU swept last season's regular season series, but MT hammered the Lady Toppers in the conference title game 79-57.

The contest should be a good one, as both teams will be looking to remain perfect in SBC play.

WKU head coach Mary Taylor Cowles' squad has recorded some solid non-conference wins over Southeastern Conference power Vanderbilt and on the road at Duquesne.

Even more impressive is the Lady Hilltoppers' 22-point average margin of victory over conference foes.

WKU currently holds an eleven-game win streak at E.A. Diddle Arena and has not lost in nine straight outings. The Lady Toppers' league-leading 79.7 points per game is the third best in the nation. WKU also leads the conference in free-throw percentage (70.5) and assists per game (18.68).

Freshman forward Crystal Kelly is averaging 20 points and 12 rebounds in SBC games. Junior guard Tiffany Porter-Talbert averages 18 points a game and leads the team in steals. Senior guard Leslie Logsdon chips in 15 points per game.

MT head coach Stephany Smith's Lady Raiders hope to give WKU its first loss of 2005. MT has tallied its share of notable non-conference victories, defeating such schools as Wisconsin, South Carolina and Xavier.

"We are definitely pleased to be 14-5 overall, 6-0 in the SBC," Smith said. "We have nothing to be displeased about, but what pleases me the most is that we're almost halfway there in our game. We are reaching our potential at our peak."

The Lady Raiders are winning their conference games by an average of 13 points. MT will rely heavily on their defense, as they lead the SBC in defensive rebounds per game (34) and steals per game (12.7).

"I am very impressed with our defensive effort," Smith said. "I think it continues to get better. We continue to understand the

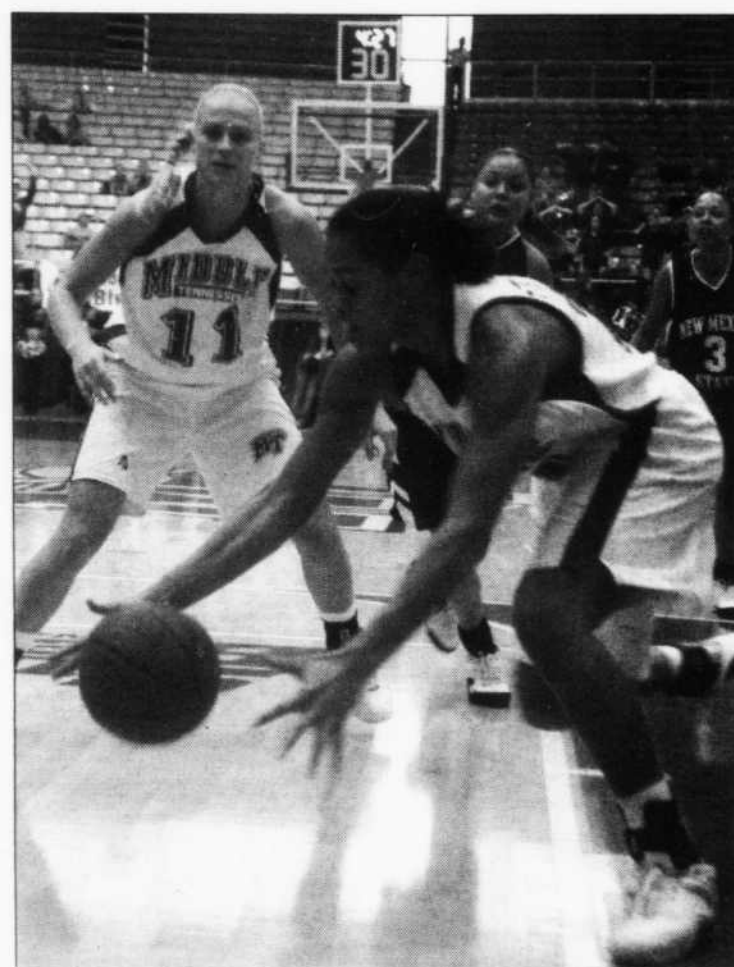


Photo by Rachelle Morvant | Chief Photographer

Tia Stovall leads the Lady Raiders in rebounds per game.

floor."

Offensively, senior Patrice Holmes leads the Lady Raiders. Holmes leads the team in points per game (14.8) and assists (3.6). Her 3.5 steals per game leads the conference. Junior forward Tia Stovall averages 13.5 points a game and pulls down a team-leading 5.8 rebounds. Sophomore forward Krystle Horton totals 11.8 points and 5.5 boards per outing.

Both squads will be up for this contest. "Our team doesn't need any extra motivation to get up for this game," MT assistant coach Kim Rosamond said. "We have a lot of respect for their program and tradition. WKU has a top program year in and year out, and this is a great rivalry. They will present quite a challenge; we just have to respond by playing our best game."

Thursday's tipoff is set for 7 p.m. at E.A. Diddle Arena. ♦

Staff writer Jori Rice also contributed to this report.

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Rivalry: FIU visits Saturday

Continued from 6

International. They've been close in two or three conference games," Davis said. "You knew they would get over the hump against somebody. It was good they beat a good Little Rock team."

MT's leading scorer Mike Dean returned to action in the ULL loss and practiced at full speed this week. In the loss, MT was held to a season-low 27 percent shooting.

"We're good offensively, we've

just got to execute and just continue to believe in our offense," said MT center Steve Thomas, who had a double-double in both games last weekend.

The Blue Raider defense wasn't too shabby either, as it held ULL to 32 percent shooting, which was the Ragin' Cajuns' second-lowest total this season.

The Blue Raiders will be looking to snap a two-game home losing streak.

Tipoff for both games is at 7 p.m. ♦

Groundhog: Season nears

Continued from 6

tickets start at \$5, and students attend free with a valid MTSU ID.

The Blue Raiders will begin

their 31-game home schedule when, on Feb. 18, fans can once again break out the sunflower seeds and blankets to watch the first pitch of the 2005 season against Ball State. ♦

Sides still far apart in NHL dispute

By Ira Podell
AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Nearly five months into the NHL lock-out, the players' association still won't accept the league's demand for a salary cap. The league says it's too late to talk about alternatives.

And now time is about to run out on the hockey season.

The union needed only a few hours Wednesday to reject the latest league proposal that would place minimums and maximums on what the 30 clubs can spend on player costs. That didn't quite put an end to the hope for hockey, but it sure pushed that prospect to the forefront.

"If we're trying to meaningfully and reliably reduce player costs, we believe there are a number of ways that you can do that, and it's not only through a salary cap," NHLPA senior director Ted Saskin said.

The players' association invited the league back to the negotiating table for another meeting Thursday, but neither side showed any real hope that progress could be made now — even if NHL commissioner Gary Bettman and union chief Bob Goodenow are making a return to the talks.

Bettman and Goodenow haven't taken part in negotiations since Dec. 14, when the players' association rejected a counterproposal to an offer it made five days earlier. In the past two weeks, the sides held five small-group discussions without the leaders.

That hasn't helped move the

process closer to a settlement, either.

"We're at the end time-wise in terms of being able to continue this process and still play games this season, so there's not a lot of room flexibility-wise," said Bill Daly, the NHL's chief legal officer.

It is unclear what will happen Thursday in New York when Bettman and Daly join Goodenow and Saskin. The players' association doesn't want a salary cap, and the NHL said there is no time to talk about something else.

"There isn't much in this offer that's attractive to us or that we consider fair or necessary for the sport," Saskin said. "I don't want to mislead anyone and suggest I'm optimistic at this point in time."

The sides met Wednesday for four hours in Newark, N.J., the fifth time in two weeks they've talked. The NHL is in danger of becoming the first major North American sports league to lose an entire season to a labor dispute.

"They asked for a meeting again tomorrow, and we'll see what they have to say," Daly said. "The proposal was put together with their interests in mind, what they've communicated to us across the table."

The lockout reached its 140th day Wednesday, and has forced the cancellation of 762 of the 1,230 regular-season games plus the All-Star game.

The NHL proposed a six-year deal that contained a cap that would force teams to spend at least \$32 million on player costs but no more than \$42 million — including benefits.

This offer will not be presented to the players for a full vote,

since Saskin said it's nowhere near what the association is looking for.

"There hasn't been a change on what we recognize as being the critical issue," Saskin said.

Bettman has said that teams lost a total of more than \$1.8 billion over 10 years and that management will not agree to a deal without a defined relationship between revenue and salaries.

Last season's average salary was \$1.8 million, and the NHL wants to push that back with a salary cap. This offer would give players between 53 and 55 percent of league revenues.

An economic study commissioned by the NHL found that players got 75 percent of league revenues. The union has challenged many of the league's financial findings.

If a deal is reached in time for hockey to be played this year, the NHL proposed that players would still receive 53 percent of revenues generated from a full playoff schedule that would follow a shortened regular season.

Also included in the offer — which could be reopened by the union after four years — was a profit-sharing plan that would allow the players' association to evenly split revenues over a negotiated level with the league.

On Dec. 9, the players' association proposed a luxury-tax system with an immediate 24 percent rollback on all existing contracts. The NHL liked the idea, but called that offer a short-term fix.

That portion of the union's plan, however, was accepted and included in the league's new proposal.

An entry-level contract cap of \$850,000 — including bonuses — also was proposed by the NHL. That would return the ceiling to that of the 1995 draft class. Last season, the cap on entry-level contracts was \$1.295 million.

The four-year, two-way contracts would also cap bonuses for each year of the deals. The league has proposed giving its own bonuses to entry-level players who finish in the top five in voting for the Hart, Norris, Vezina and Selke awards — including \$500,000 for winning each award.

Players would gain unrestricted free agency at 30 instead of 31, starting with the 2006-07 season. That age would drop to 28 if the NHL elects to eliminate salary arbitration during the course of the deal.

The minimum salary would be raised 62 percent to \$300,000 per year, and guaranteed contracts would remain in existence but would be limited to three-year deals.

The league agreed to retain arbitration, a change from its Dec. 14 counterproposal, but the NHL wants to make it so teams can take players to arbitration instead of it being a one-way process.

The NHL has been operating under the same collective bargaining agreement since 1995, when the last lockout went 103 days before a 48-game season was played.

"We have lived with a system that has been incredibly inflationary and caused dramatic, league-wide losses over the last 10 years," Daly said. "We only know one way to fix that." ♦

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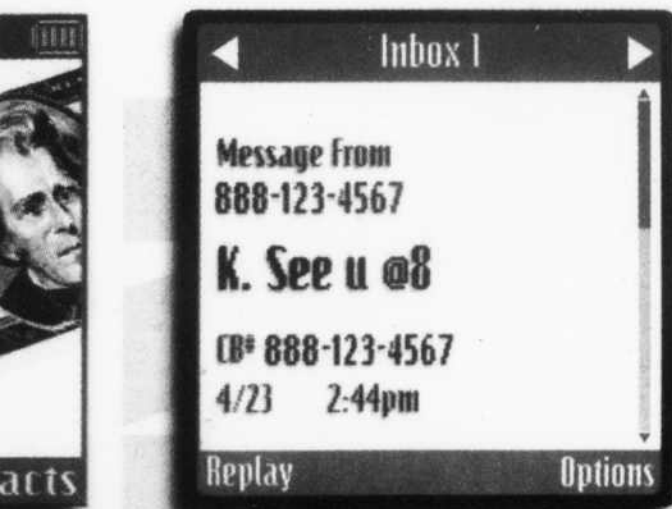
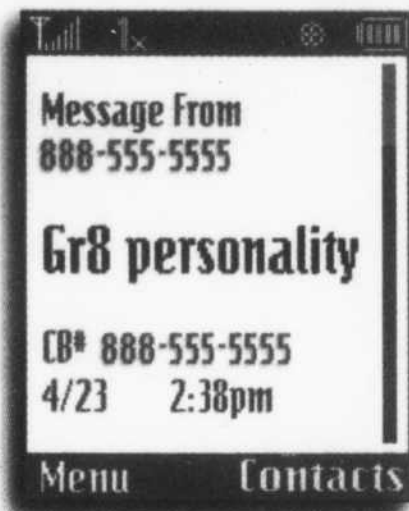
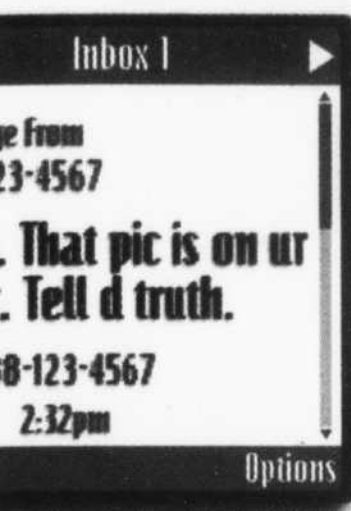
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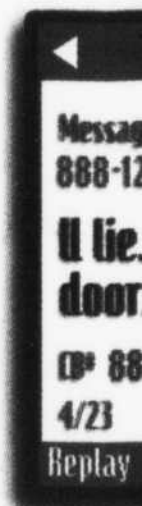
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GOODLETTSVILLE
Rivergate Mall
859-2355

HERMITAGE
5036 Old Hickory Blvd.
902-6015

*Our Surcharges (incl. 2.31% Federal Universal Service (varies quarterly), 5¢ Regulatory/line/mo., & others by area) are not taxes (details: 1-888-684-1888); gov't taxes and our surcharges could add 6% to 28% to your bill. Activation fee/line. **IMPORTANT CONSUMER INFORMATION:** Subject to Customer Agreement, Calling Plan & credit approval. \$175 termination fee per line, up to 45¢/min. after allowance, other charges & restrictions. Usage rounded to the next full minute. Offers and fees apply; may require connection in National Enhanced Services Coverage Area. Network details, coverage limitations & maps at verizonwireless.com. Limited time offers. While supplies last. ©2005 Verizon Wireless.