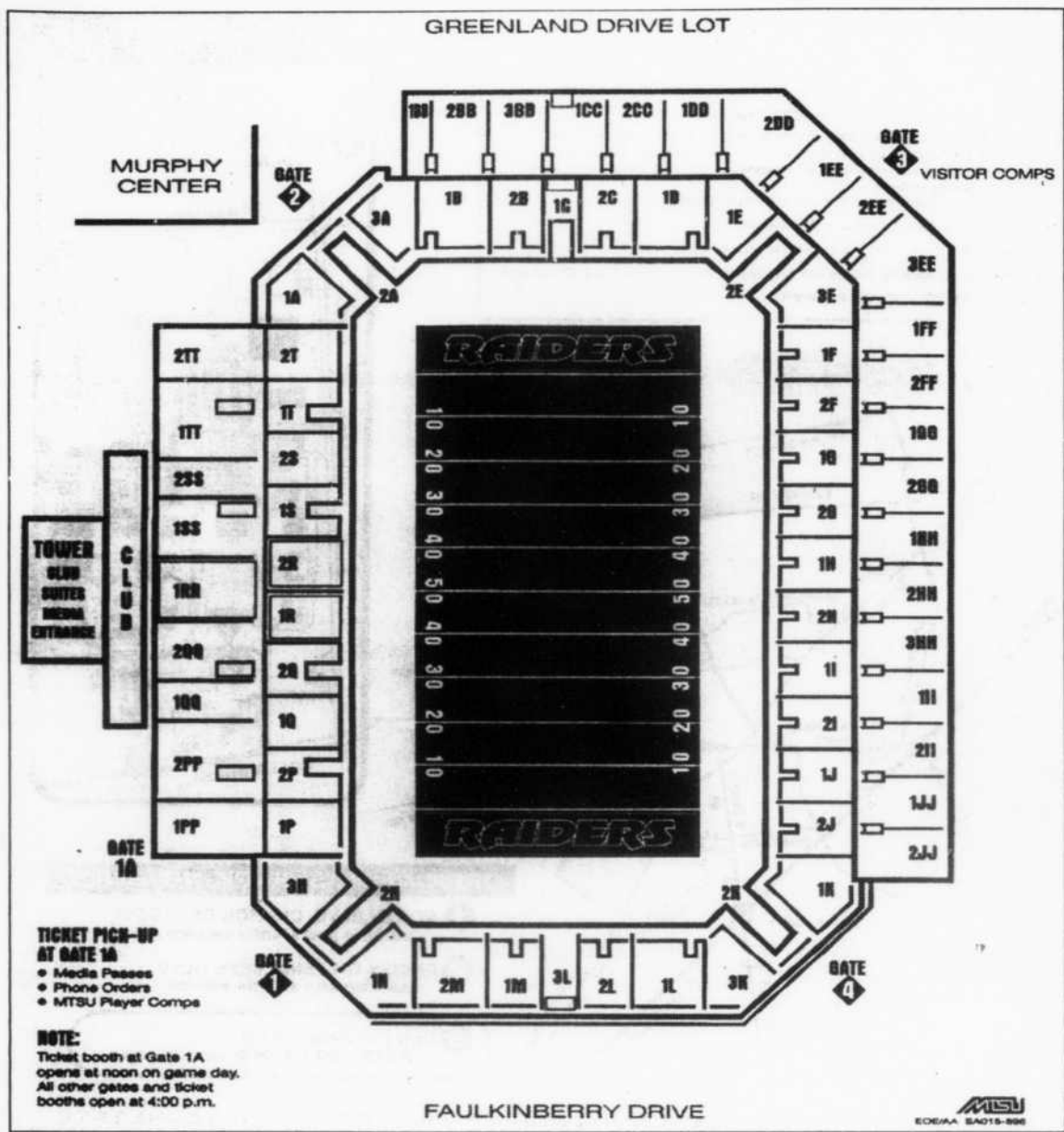


SIDELINES



Big-time parking for big-time game

Dustin Schrimpsheer
Staff Reporter

Blue Raider fans will get a taste of the parking problems that go along with Division 1A football Saturday.

Athletic relations director Larry Counts said that Saturday will be like any other football game: everyone will park anywhere and everywhere.

"We feel like since TSU has beaten us in the past, there should be a good turnout from both MTSU and TSU," Counts said.

Tom Tozer of news and public affairs said a committee to investigate game-day traffic and parking options has created a comprehensive plan to accommodate an estimated 30,000 fans for the opening game against TSU.

"Planning for parking is really good, but what excites me is the plan to get folks out of here," Counts said. "This plan has been coordinated with the city of

Murfreesboro. The traffic lights will be monitored to keep campus-area traffic flowing smoothly. Campus police, the National Guard and Murfreesboro police should be organized to work like a well-oiled machine."

The focus, explained Counts, is on keeping people out of Murfreesboro's town square where bottlenecks are known to occur.

When the crowds leave campus, they will not be able to turn left until they are no longer in the immediate campus area, Counts said.

According to the Athletic Department, statistics suggest that the average football game draws 3.2 people per car. MTSU department of public safety will have to fit 9,375 cars into 8,131 on-campus parking spaces and two off-campus parking lots. In addition to football parking, an estimated 2,000 spaces will be filled by dorm residents and staff.

"We're trying to put 10 pounds

of sugar into a five-pound bag," said John S. Drugmand, director of public safety. "We're going to park as many people as humanly possible. We'll try to bring people in in an orderly fashion. As on-campus parking lots fill up, we will close the lots."

News and public affairs has warned the community and found off-campus parking for football crowds.

"Deborah [Roberts] and I made calls to area churches and businesses," Tozer said. "We came up with two off-campus park and shuttle sites for Saturday's game."

Relax and Ride Regional Transit system will shuttle football fans from off-campus parking areas, located at Fred's on Tennessee Boulevard and the North Boulevard Church of Christ, to Floyd Stadium for free.

Athletic Director Lee Fowler reported that the MTSU ticket office had sold 15,862 season tickets by Friday.

Lawson and students team up to fight for better parking

Jamie Evans
Staff Reporter

Jason Lawson, president of the Student Government Association, led a meeting on Monday which, according to Lawson, was geared toward finding permanent solutions to parking problems on campus.

"Basically, the university has told us whatever we come forth with that is feasible, they'll allow," Lawson said.

In the meeting, Lawson worked with students to decide which solutions were good and which ones were not.

The most popular idea from the students was for the university to move to a mass transit system. Some of the students said they would like a Raider Xpress route bus to be added to service students who live in apartments that are within two miles of the campus.

Going along with this idea, some other students said they would like the university to establish a park-and-ride system at the Stones

River Mall to help commuters. According to these students, this would be an advantage because the mall already has security and lighting to aid in with the safety of students parking there.

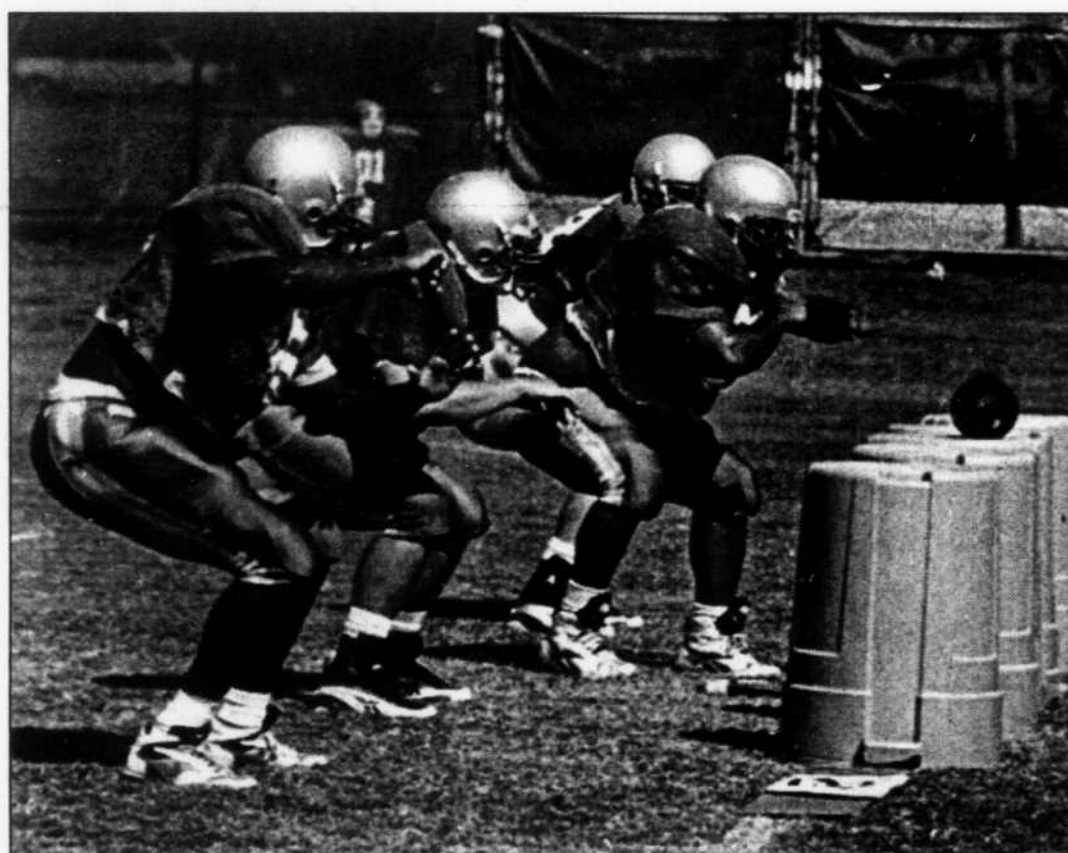
Lawson agreed with the students and said that he would add the idea to the proposal that he will deliver to the administration.

Lawson said he also would like to see more parking spaces on campus to alleviate the immediate problem.

If necessary, Lawson said, more gravel lots can be built. He said these types of lots are less expensive and take less time to build. Later on, these gravel lots can be converted into paved lots, he said.

Lawson's first goal is to get the Abernathy Hall parking area, which has been closed down this semester due to construction, reopened. Lawson said the SGA has called for it to be ready within the next two weeks and that he believes the university will comply.

See PARKING, page 3



Four Blue Raiders practice quick-grab drills in preparation for Saturday's game against TSU. See page 8 for full coverage.

Rec Center soon to expand

Barry Gilley
Staff Reporter

The \$2 million addition to the Recreation Center — which is currently under construction — is expected to be finished January 1999. Funded by student fees from 1993-95, the expansion will, among other things, double men's and women's locker room space.

"That's one thing we definitely didn't plan enough for," said M. Glenn Hanley, director of Campus Recreation. "Right now, there's a waiting list for lockers."

Other additions to the indoor portion of the Rec Center are a 1,151 square foot arena for soccer and roller hockey, a new lounge area, and a 317 sq. ft. baby-sitting area attached to a 700 square foot outdoor play area.

Also outdoors will be an "Alpine Challenge" rope climbing course and a new pool with four lap swimming lanes, sunbathing areas and changing rooms.

The dimensions of the pool are 50 feet by 75 feet at a maximum depth of 5 feet.

In March 1999, work should begin on four additional fields for softball and flag football. The fields are expected to be completed next fall.

Several other additions to the Rec Center are still in the planning stage, but do not have funding as of now.

"We are planning to double the weight and aerobics areas and put in a new area for sports clubs which could also be used for meeting rooms," Hanley said. "Right now we are having meetings in a gym storage room. I would like to see that turned back into a storage room."

An Outdoor Recreational Resource Center, where rental of recreational equipment and information on things to do in the area will be provided, and a 12-lane bowling alley are also being planned. When funding will be available for these projects is not yet known.



Above: Rec Center construction workers take a break from the hot sun Wednesday afternoon.

Right: The babysitting area, located on the left side of the main building, was one of the No. 1 requests of frequent visitors.



A Red Cross Blood Drive will be held on the third floor of KUC from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The blood drive is sponsored by Alpha Kappa Alpha.

INSIDE

- Campus Capsule.....page 2
- Editorial.....page 4
- Features.....page 6
- Sports.....page 8


SPORTS

- The Blue Raiders are gearing up for the first game of the season. See page 8.

FEATURES

- The Art Barn Gallery is now showing "Figures, Frogs and Landscapes." See page 6.

WEATHER FORECAST

 THURSDAY SUNNY, 87	 FRIDAY SUNNY, 87	 SATURDAY SUNNY, 88
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ON CAMPUS

To submit an announcement for On Campus, come by the James Union Building Room 308.

Thursday, Sept. 3

The Society of Professional Journalists will have their first Fall meeting and non-member info session from 4 until 4:45 p.m. in John Bragg Mass Communication Building Room 103. All journalism majors, including magazine, graphic communication, news-editorial, news- and photojournalism, are invited to attend. For more information about SPJ, call chapter president Lisa Rollins at 904-8355.

Wednesday, Sept. 9

The Criminal Justice Association will hold a free picnic behind Vaughn House at 5 p.m. All criminal justice majors and minors are welcome. For more information, call Emily Hudgens at 867-4157.

Thursday, Sept. 10

The Division of Continuing Studies will hold an open house from 6 until 8 p.m. in the computer lab. The event is free and open to the public, but pre-registration is required. To register, call the Division of Continuing Studies at 2462.

Saturday, Sept. 12

The Law School Admissions Test prep course will be held on campus. The sessions will

cover test-taking strategies, topics and review questions. For more information or to register, call the Division of Continuing Studies at 2462. Call 2670 with questions about exams and exam dates.

Sunday, Sept. 13

The Law School Admissions Test prep course will be held on campus. The sessions will cover test-taking strategies, topics and review questions. For more information or to register, call the Division of Continuing Studies at 2462. Call 2670 with questions about exams and exam dates.

Tuesday, Sept. 15

Student Placement will hold Career Day from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Murphy Center track. For more information, please call Martha Turner at 2500.

Continuing

The deadline for student organizations to submit organizational report forms and activity fee applications is on or before Sept. 4. Organizations not requesting funds must have their organizational report forms completed on or before Sept. 21. The forms are due in KUC 122, and are currently available in KUC 122 and KUC 306.

Students tired of noise and dust

Elana Ashanti Jefferson
Columbia University

Serylle Horwitz discovered unusual damage in her dorm room last year when she returned to campus after spending winter vacation at her parents' house in Israel.

"There was this massive crowbar sticking through the wall," said the sophomore at Columbia University in New York. "My roommate and I freaked out."

A building that eventually will house the university's new student union was going up right outside Horwitz's room. Someone had hammered a long, metal bar so hard it jutted out of one building and into another — right through Horwitz's wall.

The pipe stuck out just inches above one of the beds. Still scaring Horwitz and her roommate is the idea that one of them could have been sleeping there when the accident happened.

While this dorm horror story is unique, it's not hard to find students across the country who are coping with noisy, dusty construction projects.

Colleges and universities have dramatically increased spending to build and renovate their campuses. College Planning & Management magazine recently reported that colleges expect to complete \$6.3 billion in construction projects this year — an 8.6 percent increase over 1997.

Public schools appear to be getting most of that money. In 1998, the legislatures of at least 10 states — including Alabama,

Connecticut, Illinois, Nebraska, New York and Tennessee — have approved some of their largest financial commitments to campus construction in decades. In April, Minnesota legislators agreed to borrow \$143 million for rebuilding and repairs — the largest loan ever granted for construction in that state's college system.

"Just like businesses, universities need to grow and make progress," said Lori Kay, director of transportation services at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

While many students say they like the idea of improving their campus, they despise suffering through the inconveniences of construction, knowing that future students will reap the benefits.

"The noise is the real issue," Horwitz said. "You don't really understand what it means to live next to a construction site until you move in."

Then there are those other little issues to worry about, such as parking, sleeping and traveling across campus.

Students at the University of Wisconsin at Madison have watched numerous construction projects tangle traffic, eat up nearly 1,000 parking spaces and foist campus bikers and pedestrians.

At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, students eat in a temporary, plywood hut that serves as a makeshift dining hall while the real one, Lenoir Hall, is gutted and rebuilt.

As if that's not enough, nearly 50 other construction projects,

including the development of a new performing arts center and renovation of several dormitories, mar the Chapel Hill campus.

"It's really disturbing to see it all going on at once," said Hope Jackson, a senior psychology major at UNC. "Descriptions of Carolina as the 'Southern Side of Heaven' are now rendered false by the noise, machinery and open expanses of mud."

At the University of Arizona, students are scrambling to find a new place to hold their annual "Spring Fling," booked as the country's largest student-run carnival.

Construction of what the school is calling an "Integrated Instructional Facility" and expansion of some offices will make it nearly impossible for the ninth annual event to be held on campus next year, which is a particular bummer for university clubs and organizations which use the festival as their primary means of fund-raising.

"I don't think as many students would come if it was moved," said UA junior Gabriell Sweetland. "I know many students, such as myself, who don't have transportation and would have trouble getting somewhere off campus."

Future students at the University of Oregon at Eugene can look forward to a new student union and a Nike sports center, but neither means much to senior Jennifer Gleason.

"I won't be here to use them," she said.

Library renovation is what

bothers dedicated academics most. Sara Cotner, an American studies major at Stetson University in northern Florida, said the process of revamping her campus library "has created a distracting environment that is not conducive to studying."

Unlike much of the grumbling and griping coming from the rest of the country, undergraduates at Columbia say they're not too bothered by the renovation of their main library because construction typically happens between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. when they're in class. But perhaps an even bigger reason for their indifference is that they don't use their library to study anyway. They hang out there instead.

And why is that? Well, their campus options are limited — especially given that they haven't had a student union for the last two years. A new one is, well, under construction.

"The study environment here (at the library) really couldn't get any worse," said Marc Sjolseth, a junior who works at the Columbia library. "It's kind of a pain when the people next to you are eating Cheetos and talking about who did whom at some party last weekend."

Campus Correspondents Mary Brandenberger at the University of Arizona, Amy Cappiello at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Andy Dehnart at Stetson University, Sarah Gray at the University of Oregon and Peter Levine at the University of Wisconsin contributed to this report.



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Campus group rallies against US bombings

Shawn Whitsell
Staff Reporter

A demonstration against the bombing of Iraq was held at the Federal Building in Nashville this past summer. Among the participants in the demonstration were the members of a new MTSU organization, Middle Tennessee Solidarity.

The organization evolved from a group of students taking a Marx and Marxism class taught by philosophy professor Michael Principe. The students were inspired to become active and make changes in the world. They decided to form an organization but they wanted to find a national socialist group in which to base themselves.

"The next step was to find a socialist group to hook up with," said Greg Matherly, one of the founding members.

They chose to model themselves after the national group Solidarity out of Detroit and became affiliated with them.

The first project that the group organized was a demonstration

against the 40-year-old embargo against Cuba. Nearly 40 MTSU students, faculty and Nashville-based activists handed out flyers that encouraged people to contact their representatives to ask them to support bills currently before Congress (HR 1951, S 1391) that would allow the exemption of food and medicine from the embargo. They also carried signs and passed out literature to educate the public on the harmfulness of the embargo. Principe said that very few people realized the harmful effect that the embargo has had on the health of the Cuban people.

"It's a dark thing that a six-year-old cancer patient has to fight for her life because of heart complications resulting from chemotherapy, when there is a drug available for protecting the heart muscle from these bad effects. The problem is that it is only available from a U.S. company," Principe said.

He added that two international health organizations have claimed that the only reason Cuba hasn't suffered a major health disaster as a consequence of the U.S. embargo

is due to the fact that the Cuban government gives a high level of budgetary support to health care.

Middle Tennessee Solidarity looks forward to a very active school year. Matherly, Christy Rose, Gretchen Adreon, and Dylan Ross attended the annual Solidarity Summer School and the bi-annual Solidarity Convention in Chicago, where they participated in the week's worth of workshops. The workshop subjects ranged from Feminism to Black Liberation. Matherly said that all who attended felt energized and that they planned a full range of activities for the near future such as lectures and films. A benefit concert is also an idea.

Middle Tennessee Solidarity defines itself as a democratic, socialist, feminist, anti-racist organization that is open to anyone who wants to join and help make positive changes for a better world. Anyone interested in joining contact Greg Matherly at 848-0787.

MTSU P. O. Box 2771, Murfreesboro, TN 37132 or eng2001a@frank.mtsu.edu.



Students gather in front of Federal Building in downtown Nashville during summer break.

PARKING

continued on page 1

An additional 200 spaces are planned for the gravel lot beside the Recreation center, Lawson added.

However, the big project that Lawson wants is the expansion of the Bell Street parking lot.

"The Bell Street area has only a very small portion actually being used for parking," Lawson said. "The only problem we have with [the area] is that it has a drainage ditch."

This ditch, which runs through the field adjacent to the parking lot, would make it impossible to build a gravel lot. Lawson said that means

the expansion of this lot will take longer to be completed.

"Construction always seems to go a lot slower than I would like it to," Lawson said.

Other ideas for improving the parking situation is to change the hours during which the white lots are ticketed.

Lawson said a majority of these lots currently are ticketed from 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. He wants to change the hours in some lots so that the ticketing stops at 4:30 p.m.

He explained that most of the faculty who are here after 4:30 p.m. are usually already here, so changing the ticketing times would not affect them.

This would not do much for students who take classes during the peak daytime hours, Lawson said, but it would help students who have organizational meetings or take classes at night.

All of these things will help for now, but later on additional measures will have to be taken, he said.

"I think one of the problems is the

people responsible for solving the problem are also the people who receive all the profits."

To overcome this, Lawson wants the formation of a committee which will act as the "boss" for Parking Services. This committee will regulate the normal operation of Parking Services and would also work full time on parking solutions, he said.

"We can't continue to increase our student enrollment and decrease our parking spaces. Hopefully a committee can

get better direction than that."

Lawson said a parking garage will be an inevitable necessity, but he is not in favor of one right now. In order for the administration to generate enough money for the down payment on the project, tuition would have to be raised over \$1,000 per student, he said.

"I don't want a tuition increase right now. I think that we have the money to deal with this [parking problem] effectively."

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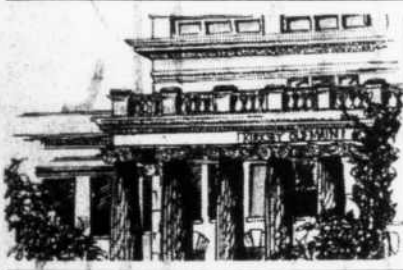
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OPINIONS

"Were it left for me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."
—Thomas Jefferson

Murfreesboro, TN



4 ■ SIDELINES

Editorial

Attitude is everything. You can get a job, make a friend, earn an A, make someone laugh, help someone in pain and brighten your or someone else's day simply by having a positive attitude.

You can also get fired, lose a friend, earn an F, make someone cry, leave someone hopeless and dampen your or someone else's day by having a negative attitude.

See the pattern? The first football game of the season is Saturday and the negativity count is sky high. Complaints are flying left and right and, frankly, it's a bit depressing.

"The stadium was a waste..."
"The team isn't that great..."
"The money spent on the stadium should've been put towards more parking..."

Here's a few things to chew on:

■ As far as delegating funds is concerned, there is not a huge pot of money where out of which administrators sporadically pluck dollars out of for construction, academics or athletics. Everything on campus has a designated fund which comes from various sources. It is impossible, for instance, to take money from the athletic department and use it to solve parking problems. That's not how the system works.

■ If you think the new stadium was a waste, too bad. If you haven't noticed, it's already built. And, if you really didn't notice, people are buying season tickets. Yes, there are fans out there — people who think the Blue Raiders can turn over a new leaf and improve.

You have a right to a negative opinion, but don't spoil the hope and promise others have for MTSU athletics.

■ So the football team doesn't have a blow-out winning record... Why don't YOU pad up and represent a university of nearly 20,000? Why don't YOU get up by jersey and practice until the jersey becomes your second skin? Why don't YOU listen to all the negative remarks about your performance but stick to the team because you made a commitment?

Hopefully, the team will feel the support of its school this Saturday and mark the first game of the season with a winning score. If not, there's a whole season ahead of us to make up for it.

Good luck, Blue Raiders

MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM



MADD says Diana's death preventable

Knight-Ridder Newspapers

Much has been said about the shocking death a year ago of Diana, Princess of Wales.

She was elegant. She was gracious. She was royalty yet with a common touch.

All true. Also true: She was killed by a drunken driver. In a final common touch, the princess died just as many other people do each year, an innocent victim of that longstanding lethal mix, alcohol and automobiles.

All the wealth, fame and adulation were powerless to protect her from a drunk behind the wheel, ironically one of her boyfriend's security guards.

French police said the alcohol content in the blood of Diana's driver that night, Henri Paul, was three times more than is legal.

Mothers Incomplete Drunk Driving, the relentless force behind most of America's tougher drunken driving laws, was one of the few organizations to see Diana's death for essentially what it was: another tragedy that could have been prevented. In a national advertising campaign last year, MADD listed 120 girls and young women who died just like Diana, saying, "We've seen too many princesses die."

MADD can take credit for making drunken driving the national scourge it has become. It is simply no longer regarded as a very funny or cool thing to do.

Still, the U.S. Department of Transportation reports 16,189 alcohol-related traffic deaths last year. Take it as an encouraging sign that alcohol was a factor in only about 39 percent of all traffic deaths, down from 41 in 1996 and more than 57 percent as recently as 1982.

But it remains discouraging that an average of 44 people a day die in this country because of drunken driving. Given what we know about the propensity of dangerous drivers in Michigan to get back behind the wheel, despite jail time and revoked or suspended licenses, the state ought to keep pursuing its efforts to immobilize their cars as one more tool to reduce their terrible toll.

Princess Di will not be forgotten. Nor should anyone else who died the way she did.

Clinton's air strikes test a nation's trust

Knight-Ridder Newspapers

Four days after he admitted that he had misled the American people, Bill Clinton reminded the nation why presidents must have credibility and moral authority.

In the midst of a national-security emergency, the president in essence asked for full restoration of the trust he had so casually violated.

Clinton on Thursday ordered U.S. armed forces to strike at terrorist sites in Afghanistan and Sudan in retaliation for the bombings of two American embassies and to prevent other planned attacks.

He attributed the bombings to a wealthy Saudi Arabian named Osama bin Laden, whom he described as a major sponsor of global terrorism.

At such moments, it is essential the American people trust the president's judgment. Claiming that the targets were

linked to the bombings, Clinton said he had "convincing information" and later that he had "compelling evidence" - phrases similar to those that have circled around the White House for months, but in a context unfavorable to this chief executive.

This attack may well have been the right response at the right time: the evidence may be overwhelming, the response appropriate to the provocation, the bloodshed limited only to the guilty.

But it is impossible to watch this president explain his decision to the nation and the world without a queasy twinge of cynicism inspired by Hollywood. In a recent movie, "Wag the Dog," a president dodged a sex scandal by starting a war. As moral authority drained from the fictional president, he replenished himself with indignation against terrorists.

The real president - who for months fought court orders, squirmed under oath and ducked responsibility - yesterday spoke

for the moral imperatives and the "rule of law" in the hunt for terrorists.

Clinton needs the public's trust and confidence at precisely the worst time in his presidency. On Monday, the president indirectly acknowledged that he had lied to his staff, members of Congress and the public for the past seven months about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky.

In times of crisis; the natural desire of American people is to rally around the president as the embodiment of their values, moral leadership to the world and national honor. Bill Clinton benefits from that powerful instinct.

Some of his harshest partisan critics on Capitol Hill responded with forceful, unflinching support for the president's actions. Ordinary citizens dismayed by a president who has lied to them may not be so quick with their support.

This is a severely wounded presidency that may not survive the report expected

from special prosecutor Kenneth Starr. In the meantime, the president should be grateful for the traditional allegiance that flows to the office, despite the flaws of its occupant.

Later, in a quiet moment, when the president weighs both the power and trust vested in his decision, he should be ashamed of how he has treated the nation and his office.



I NEED HELP



The Siamese Twins visit England.

Critics distort idea of gay lifestyle

Martha Knox
The Latern

All Americans can now thank Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott for opening the flood gates to yet more prejudice in this country. For those who aren't aware, Lott made a statement in which he referred to homosexuality as a disorder comparable with alcoholism.

Appearing in the New York Times, the Washington Post, and USA Today were countless advertisements calling for gays to seek help for their "problem," and accusing gay activists of using their influence to turn American children homosexual.

These ads reminded me of a Christian film I watched called "The Gay Agenda" that was shown last quarter by Ohio State's Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Alliance in a presentation called "Images of Hate."

In the film, former gay Christians, who had sought help and become either celibate or straight, were interviewed, "proving" homosexuality was a choice and curable. All this was despite years of

medical research opposing that claim and the word of the American Psychiatric Association.

Finally, it is ridiculous to claim that what worked for one person will work for someone else. The film mostly focused on the so-called "agenda" of gay activists. It grossly misquoted a famous activist, entirely changing the meaning of his statement and made him out to be an angry gay activist. The film's narrator proclaimed that gay ministers were fighting to lower the age of consent, while simultaneously filming a naked infant girl on a man's shoulders.

In actuality, gay activists are only trying to make the age of consent for homosexual activity the same as heterosexual activity, which it is not in many states.

These manipulative tactics and veiled messages of hate which make homosexuals out to be frustrated pedophiles are too prevalent to be excused as mere oversight or ignorance. This is a case of paranoia about gays entering mainstream American culture.

See LIFESTYLE, page 5

SIDELINES

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"Sidelines" is the non-profit, editorially independent student newspaper of Middle Tennessee State University and is published every Wednesday during June and July and on Monday and Thursday during the fall and spring semesters. FLASH!, the entertainment magazine, is published every Wednesday during the Fall & Spring semester. The opinions expressed herein are those of the individual writers and not necessarily "Sidelines" or the university.

SPADE PHILLIPS



Free at last: now do something!

The Daily Targum
Rutgers University

Well, you've finally made it. You're probably in your dorm room, sitting on your bed, reading this strange newspaper you found in front of your residence hall. Your parents are out of your hair, and you're tasting the sweetness of freedom.

Mmmm freedom. What a delicious idea. But look at what you're doing. You're by yourself reading this newspaper. Boring. Go out and do something (but wait until you're done reading this).

You're going to find that with this new-found freedom comes a lot of responsibility. And, most likely, you're going to abuse it.

Maybe you'll go to some of your classes. Maybe you'll play Nintendo 64, and maybe you'll

meet a few friends. You'll drink, you'll study very little, you'll eat (and eat), and then, all of a sudden, you'll be in your senior year and realize your college life has been one, big blur.

Part of that is because your nocturnal eyes will not be able to adjust to light, and part of that will be because you will have done only enough to get by.

The funny thing is that you'll complain from time to time about having nothing to do — but you still won't do anything about that.

Wake up. Take advantage of your freedom, which isn't just about being away from home. You can go anywhere. You can do anything. You can be anybody.

You can join any club or organization on campus, from academic groups to sports teams to campus media. You

can get a radio show, join a cultural club or find a religious organization.

You can get a job on campus or in town. You can take random road trips to other states if a friend has a car, or you can learn your own campus — and its history — like the back of your hand.

You can also free your mind. "Redemption Song" by Bob Marley makes an excellent point: "Emancipate yourself from mental slavery. None but ourselves can free our minds."

Don't let the past govern your thoughts entirely. Ditch your preconceived notions of people. Throw out your high school ways. Consider new ways of thinking. Give serious thought to views differing from your own.

Become a college student. Now put down this paper, get off your lazy butt and go outside.

LIFESTYLE

continued from page 4

These are people afraid of the lesbian couple moving in next door, or a gay English teacher in their schools. They do not want gay lifestyle to improve or become dignified and socially accepted. They want children to continue using slanderous insults towards gays. They wish to keep gays exiled to the closet of shame, secrecy and degradation.

We should be careful not to blame the Republican party for Lott's statements. Republicans do not suffer as a whole from this extreme homophobia, shown by groups like Log Cabin Club, a gay Republican organization. Nor should be blamed Christians as a whole, shown by groups like the Catholic Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries.

Those endorsing the ads are specific fundamentalist Christian organizations, such as the Christian Coalition, the American Family Association and Family Research Council. These groups, which do not speak for the majority, have proven to have much influence and power.

I worry when a Senate majority leader can publicly denounce homosexuals and get away with it. I also worry when the largest and most respected newspapers in the country run these type of ads.

To end on a happier note, I remember a gay activist saying once that the religious right is actually the gay rights movement's best ally, in that without the publicity it has stirred for gay issues, the movement would have never gotten so ahead, so quickly.

So thanks.

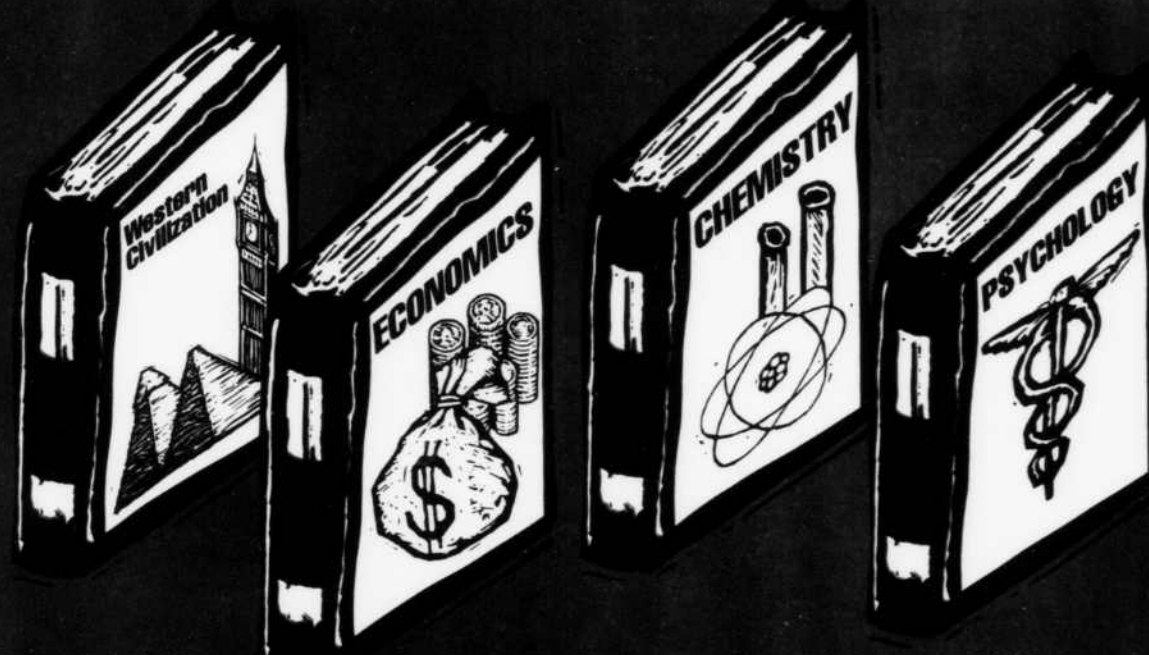
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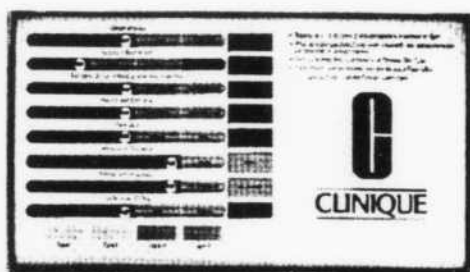


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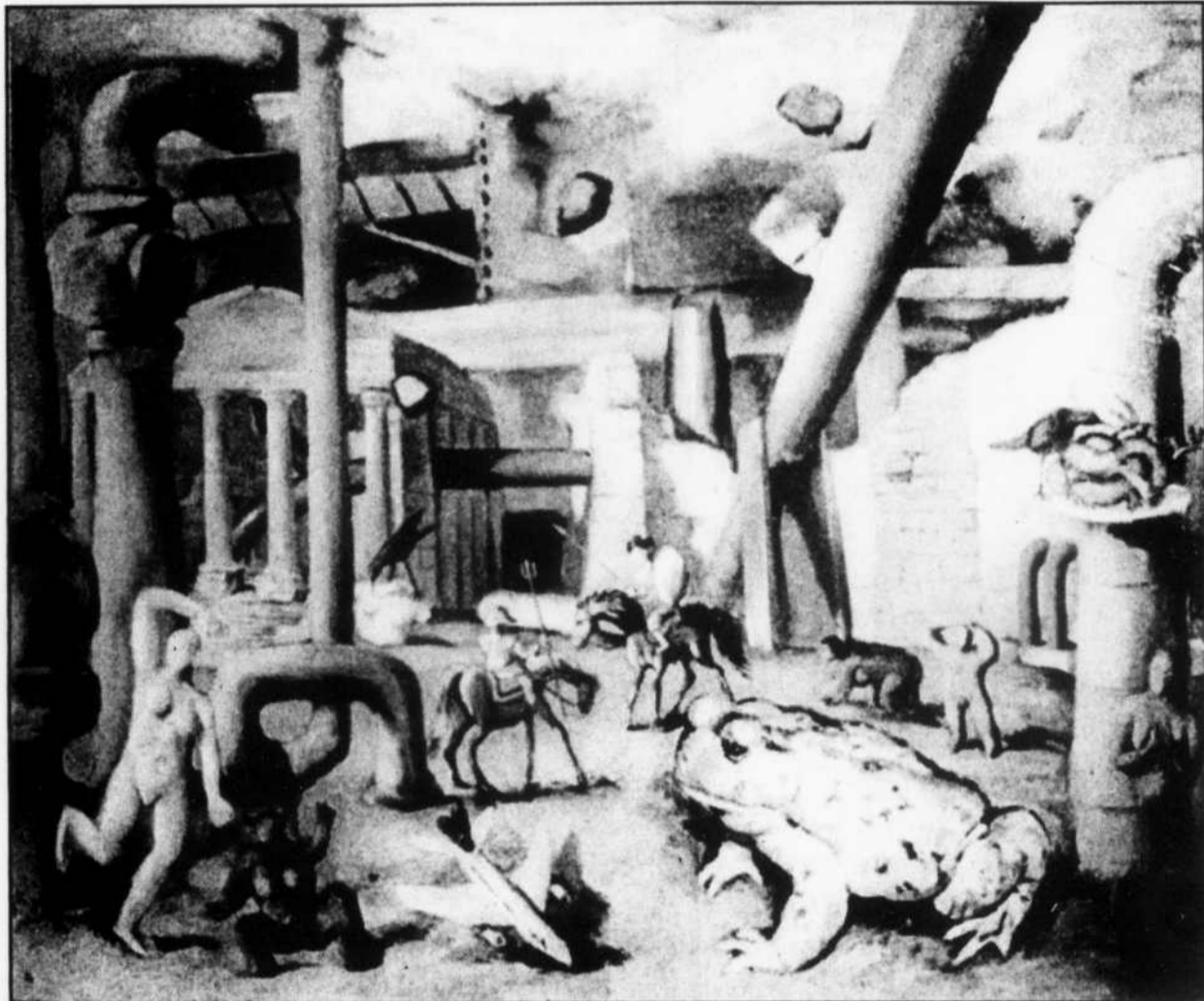
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FEATURES

Art Barn Gallery

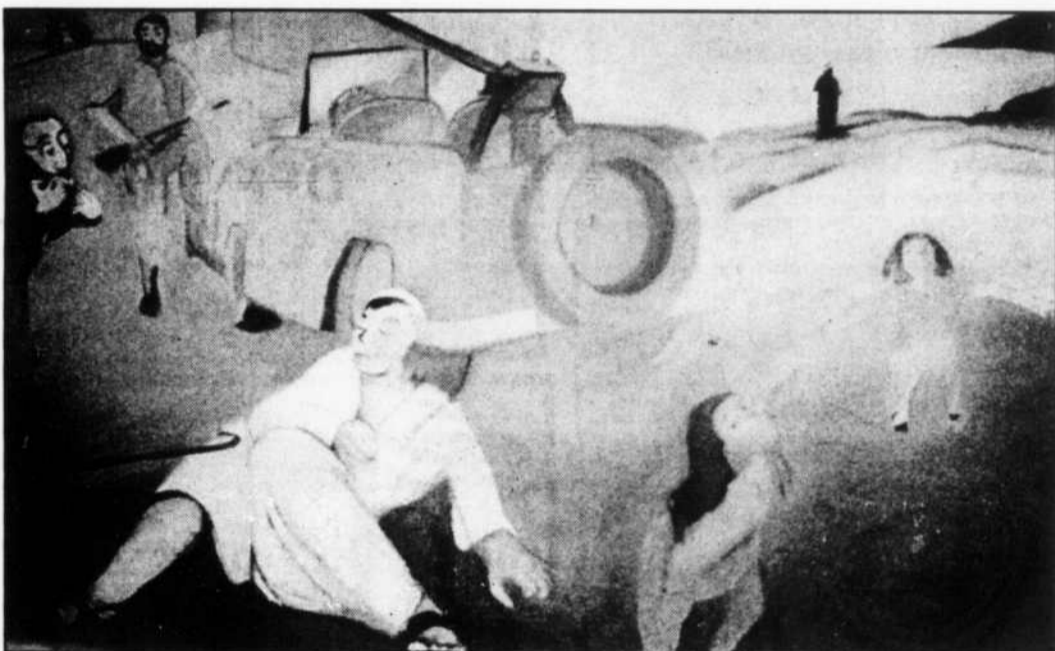
offers culture

By Jamie Strodtmann/ Staff Reporter



Furong Zhang "Ruins" Oil on Canvas, 1996.

Photo by Jamie Strodtmann



Nagib Nahas "Middle to Northeast" Oil on Linen, 1995

Photo by Jamie Strodtmann

Sometimes, in order to understand ourselves, we must experience abstractions of reality. An unique opportunity exists for students to feed their culture-starved souls on the MTSU campus. This opportunity resides at the Art Barn Gallery.

"Unlike some galleries, our gallery is not about selling anything; it's about educating our art students," said Rick Rishaw, preparator of the Art Barn Gallery.

The exhibits in the Art Barn Gallery parallel the art department's curriculum. To inspire new painting students this semester, the current exhibit titled "Figures, Frogs, and Landscapes" consists of oil paintings on canvas. The gallery enables art students to compare and contrast different techniques used by experienced artists. Exhibits are scheduled through the fall of 1999.

According to Carlyle Johnson, art department chair and gallery director, artists over the age of 18 who aspire to display their works in the Art Barn Gallery must submit resumes and slides of their works. A committee selects the artists whose works will most benefit the university's art students.

Sometimes, artists aid the students by sitting in on art classes and critiquing class work. This provides a unique opportunity for beginning art students.

The paintings presently on loan are from artists Furong Zhang and Nagib Nahas, both of whom have earned notoriety in the art community. Statements from each artist hang in the gallery to help viewers better understand their works.

Furong Zhang of Forest Hills, NY, earned his bachelor's degree in Shanghai, China, and his Master's of Fine Arts at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, China. In 1985, Zhang won second place in the National Fine Art of Youth competition in Beijing. He also received a Fellowship at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine in 1989.

"I am not attempting to tell a story or depict a modern dreamscape as the surrealists did," Zhang explained. "In my paintings, I switch the protagonist from human to animal, and represent a new relationship between humans and other living beings."

Nagib Nahas earned his bachelor's degree in philosophy and art from Rutgers University in New Jersey and his MFA from Pratt Institute in New York. He received the Faculty Excellence in Art Award in June 1989 from Rutgers University. Presently, he resides in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Nahas' paintings on exhibit reveal his work in representational space. Art enthusiasts will want to evaluate the spatial relationships between figures in each of Nahas' individual works.

"Space is a metaphor of the mind," he said. "The more attuned we are to its nature, the better we dance with our own."

The exhibit opened on Aug. 24 and remains on display until Sept. 10. The gallery is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

New cheerleaders rally Raider spirit

Toni Bosi
Staff Reporter

The spirit of sports at MTSU lives in the blue and white squads of the Raiders cheerleaders.

On Aug. 23, 30 hopeful students competing for a position on the white squad, which is made up mostly of incoming freshmen, was reduced down to 19 enthusiastic finalists.

It takes more than enthusiasm to win a spot on the squad, according to cheering coach Julie Heavener. The young men and women who try out for cheerleader must have some tumbling ability and

maintain a 2.0 GPA. Several cheering clinics are held prior to the tryouts.

The white squad will cheer at all home football games as well as women's basketball games. Their first appearance will be at the Sept. 5 football game against TSU.

"It takes a lot of practice to become a cheerleader, but it is also a lot of fun," said Haley Hines, a sophomore on the white squad, who has been cheering since the age of 4. "The clinics are especially grueling," she said. "You work really hard."

Current blue squad member Kerry Lane, a sophomore, has been cheering for 12 years. "I love it," said Lane. "I

believe being a cheerleader teaches you to be a leader. Being able to be comfortable in front of people is not only fun, but an asset."

The blue squad is made up of upperclassmen. Besides the football games, they also make appearances at alumni events and pep rallies.

Victor Felts, faculty advisor, said he is proud of the Raider squads. "We hope to be able to compete at the national competition next year."

The national competition will be held in Orlando, Fla., in January. It will include squads from colleges nationwide.



Photo by Vickie Gibson

Blue squad members are Noelle Ball, Christi Keough, Kerry Lane, Wendi Long, Jennifer Stewart, Christie Sullins, Blake Alford, Mike Court, Brad Deas, Bill Metts, Aaron Pope, and Mark Warrick.



Photo by Vickie Gibson

Raiders' white squad members for 1998-99 are Autumn Bailey, Kim Coggins, Ryan Day, Haley Hines, Andi Jones, Stephanie Keith, Leah Walker, Steve Bray, Matt Hutton, Chris Minton, Angelo Giansanti and Jason Turner.

Symphony features concerts from around the world

Staff Reports

Middle Tennessee Symphony will feature artists from around the world in its 1998-99 season "Artists from Around the World."

Concerts scheduled in the series include "Artists from Argentina" on Sept. 14. The program will include music of Beethoven, Mahler and Rossini and special performances by mezzo-soprano Karina Ulla and guest conductor Jose Ulla.

The world premiere of music by Clement Moss will be presented Oct. 19. "Artist from France" will feature French bass baritone Ion Ursache. The concert includes the music of Copland, Enescu and Schuman.

"International Christmas" on Dec. 7 will highlight the Community Church Chorus and the traditional Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite."

"Artists from Switzerland" on March 1 includes Ellen Meking, oboist, and Alexandru Ianos, guest conductor. Music is by Dvorak, Grieg and Marcello.

The final concert, "Artists from America," on April 19 will feature guest pianist Norman Krieger and the music of Berlioz, Hindemith and Tchaikovsky.

The symphony, directed by Lawrence Harvin, performs all concerts at Tucker Theatre beginning at 7:30 p.m. Since 1982, the group has gathered more than 70 professional, community and apprentice musicians from Rutherford County and Middle Tennessee to present concerts for the community.

Season tickets range from \$43 to \$66 and are available at the symphony office by calling 898-1862.

Volunteers sought to help others through new First Call service

Vickie Gibson
Staff Reporter

Students wanting to volunteer some time to help others are needed at a new information and referral service in Murfreesboro.

First Call for Help assists those in need by providing a central source for information about agencies and programs in Rutherford County that offer help to families and individuals in need. This new information and referral service was organized by the United Way of Rutherford County and funded through a state grant as part of the Governor's Prevention Initiative.

Through the United Way, Tennessee Department of Health and Mid Cumberland Communities Services Agency, and many volunteers in the community and from MTSU, the referral service has gotten off to a good start, according to project director Keith Duke.

First Call for Help has already aided more than 150 individuals

and families in finding the services they needed since it began July 1. The office is located at 2552 S. Church Street. Walk-ins are accepted, although the system is set up primarily for phone call referrals.

Dr. Martha Jo Edwards, chairperson of the Adams Chair of Excellence in Health Care Services at MTSU, provided First Call with information from the Rutherford County Community Resource Directory, which was published through the university's health services and human resource services departments.

"This community was without a central source of community resources," said Dr. Edwards, who explained how the directory originated. MTSU social work students were among the first to use them until others in the community saw them and wanted copies.

The First Call program will provide information directly to

those in need by phone and via the Internet in addition to a written directory of services, she said.

The service currently has 212 agencies in its database, which Duke says is not the majority. "We're still waiting on information to get here for a number of organizations," he said. "We have a long way to go."

Constant updating on services and agencies that provide those services will be needed, Duke said. "It will always be an ongoing process."

Some of the agencies already listed with the service include the American Red Cross, Community Helpers, St. Mark's United Methodist Church's furniture program, Crisis Intervention Center, YMCA, St. Clair Senior Citizen Center and the Rutherford County Food Bank.

The service needs volunteers to help man the phones and to enter data into the database about services available as that information is received. Followups

are also done on all referrals. Volunteers also attend community service meetings of various organizations to provide information about the new service.

Duke said the United Way committee, which oversees the service, is hoping to add an MTSU student and local high school student to its membership. Currently the committee includes Karen Hudson, chair; Melanie Alexander, Mike Collins, Barbara Haskew of MTSU, Cheryl Mathis, Marilyn Mathis, Murray Mathis, Nancy McGill, Sue O'Brien, Larry Seeman, Margrey Thompson and Hulon Watson.

John Sanborn of the sociology department and John Lynch of public affairs department are assisting in recruiting volunteers for the service and for other community organizations.

Internships are also available through MTSU's social work department. For more information call Leah Bickel, BSW-Volunteer Coordinator, at 907-1114.

CELEBRITY PROFILE

Williamson reveals history behind Dawson characters

Hugh Hart
TV Quest

He's the hottest scriptwriter in Hollywood, and Kevin Williamson got that way by writing about what he knows best: teenagers, sex and mayhem. The author of "Scream," "Scream 2" and "I Know What You Did Last Summer," Williamson canned the gore but cranked up the hormone count for "Dawson's Creek," which returns to anchor The WB's lineup Wednesdays this fall.

Looking somewhat shell-shocked in the posh Ritz Carlton Hotel in Pasadena, Williamson, who only a few months earlier was broke and house-sitting when he penned "Scream" in two days,

showed up for a press junket to talk about the story behind his hit TV show. "Dawson's Creek" is very autobiographical," he says. "It's a real place that exists right near my hometown." The show is set in a one coastal town much like the one Williamson where grew up in North Carolina.

Williamson admits his memories are embellished with a dose of wish fulfillment. "There are little pieces of me and what I went through where I wish it had gone somewhere, or where it didn't go. You know, it's all part of my imagination."

Like the characters in his crafty "Scream" and "...Summer" movies, the residents of "Dawson's Creek" — Dawson, Jen, Pacey and Joey —

seem more sophisticated than the typical primetime teen. Says Williamson "I think this is 1998 and we've lived through the whole self-help psycho-babble of the 80's and I sort of think these kids reflect the growing up during that time, or the parents of that time. And they're very self-aware. I think we truly don't want to underestimate the 15-year old mind."

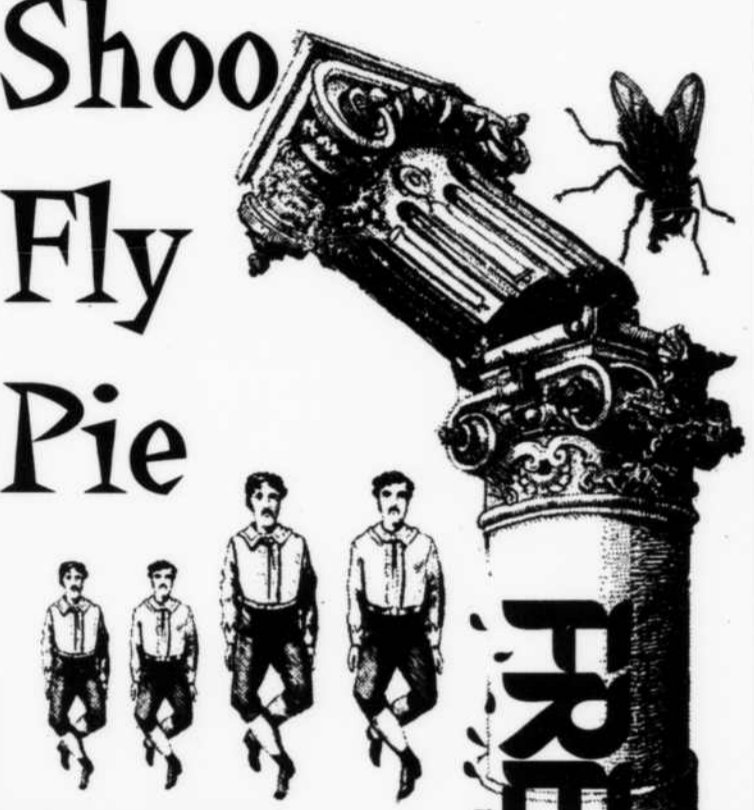
Williamson's characters spew lots of snappy comebacks rife with pop culture references. But do

people really talk that way?

If they only had a little more time to come up with cool responses, maybe they would, Williamson says. "My favorite show when I was a kid was 'James at 15,' and he talked the way I wish I had talked, said the things I'd think of when I was lying in bed at midnight as opposed to when I was really in that situation. And so you know, I just want to create interesting relationships, interesting conversations."

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SPORTS

Raiders attempt to tame Tigers

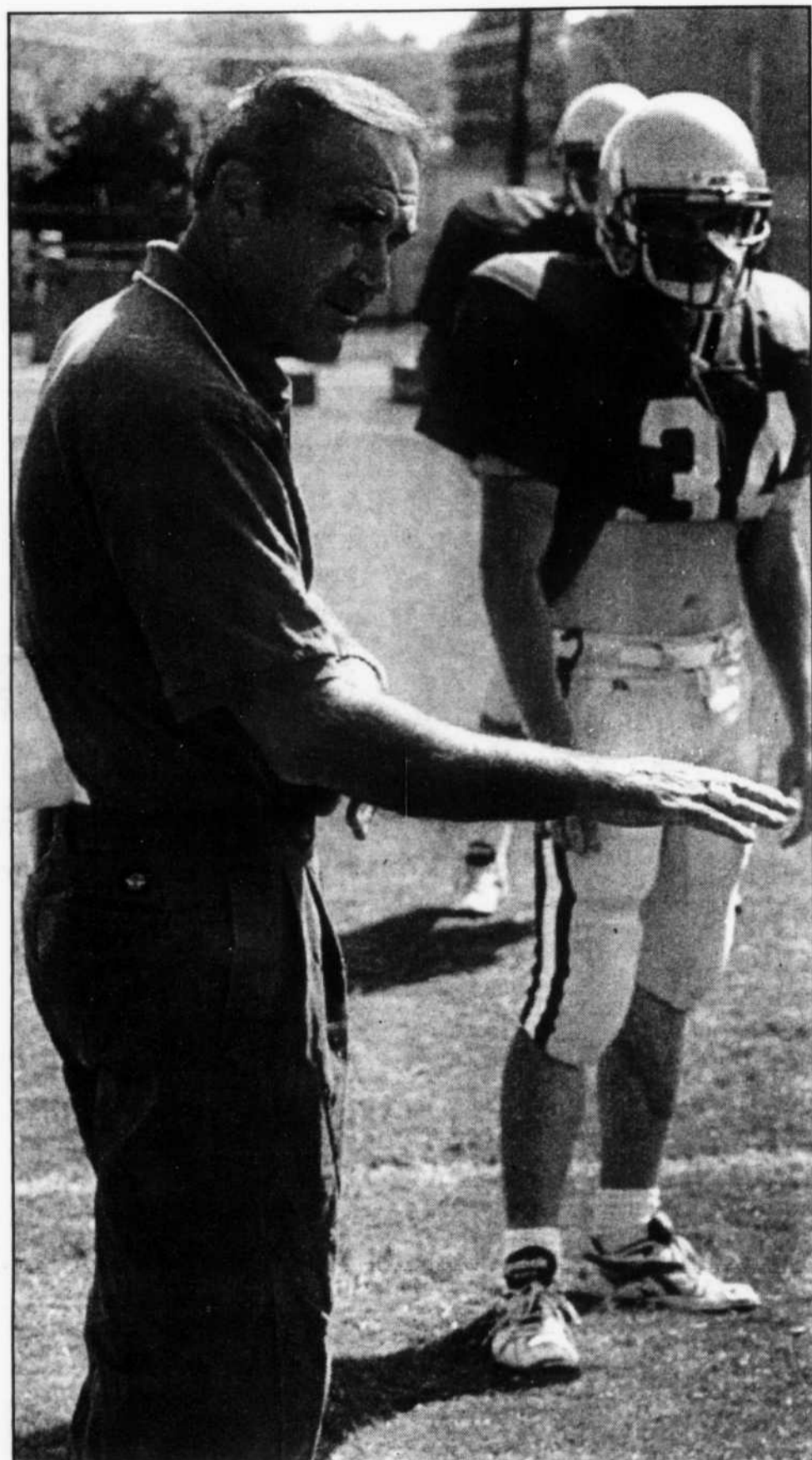


Photo by Derrick Wilson

While players try to keep cool, Boots Donnelly gives the Blue Raiders a few final words for preparation for the first season game.

R. Colin Fly
Staff Reporter

Fall means football. Fall means football even when it is still 90 degrees outside and the grass is scorched.

The Blue Raiders have been waiting for the Sept. 5 kickoff against the Tennessee State Tigers in the newly-renovated Floyd Stadium.

Now the Blue Raiders have a chance to shine. Playing an opponent they know all too well, the Blue and Gray must control the ball with a balanced attack and a stifling defense.

The Tigers, beginning their third season under Coach L.C. Cole, have many new weapons and hope to use the game on Saturday as a springboard to a winning record. One of the keys to victory for TSU is their quarterback, junior Leon Murray. He has excellent foot speed and a strong arm, throwing for over 2,200 yards last season.

Another key to the offense is the running game. Senior Calvin Davenport led the team last season with 793 yards on the ground.

On the defensive side of the ball, the Tigers have holes. An unproven secondary and a small defensive line should show their inexperience. The fact that the Tigers have not won their first game of the season in ten years should give MTSU fans confidence in their team.

Middle Tennessee is buzzing over the prospect of a new Division I-A school with a better reputation than Vanderbilt.

As the Raiders end their tenure in the Ohio Valley Conference, they look to improve upon last season's dismal 4-6 mark. Improving the offense and defense as well as finding leadership in a quarterback are important to make the final season in Division I-AA successful.

The strengths of the Blue Raiders consist of depth at tailback, the offensive line and improving in the secondary.

Tailbacks Kolverick Green and Torin Kirtsey, a transfer from Georgia who is eligible this season, will both gain significant yardage for MTSU. Green has been nursing a sprained ankle and is questionable for Saturday.

Kirtsey should pick up the pace. He ran for over 100 yards and two touchdowns in the

secondary. Unfortunately, Walker will be sidelined for at least three more weeks with a torn ACL.

If his treatment fails, he will have to undergo surgery, thus ending his 1998 campaign.

Quarterbacks Judd Moore and Jimbo Rozar will have to assume the leadership roles with the departure of Jonathan Quinn, who was the third round pick of the Jacksonville Jaguars.

Moore—a 6-foot-2-inch, 185-pound junior—hails from Leeds, Ala. Unproven so far in his collegiate career, this will be his year to shine. Last season he completed 10 of 12 passes for 169 yards in limited action. Rozar—a six-foot, 190 pound junior from Crawfordville, Fla.—also has seen limited action and will continue to make the quarterback position a hotly contested one. Coach Boots Donnelly has not named either player as the starter.

"If the quarterback can successfully get the ball to the right person and get it to him with accuracy, then I think we will be fine."

-Coach Donnelly

Photos by Derrick Wilson

Raiders final preseason scrimmage.

Defense could be the Achilles' heel of the team. Last year's unit gave up over 400 yards a contest.

Significant improvement must come for the Raiders to have a chance to win an OVC crown.

"You can only shuffle the players so many different ways. Athletic ability-wise, certain players dictate certain positions," said Coach Boots Donnelly. "The biggest adjustment that we have to make on our football team is a confident attitude, both individually and also collectively as a defensive football team."

"We have to play due to the lack of overall depth," he continued. "Outside linebacker is going to be a major player [as well as] our secondary. We have been picked on [in the secondary] for the last couple of years and we need to start recognizing that."

Defensive backs Cedric Stegall and Charlie Walker are important players in the

"Our offense is going to be predicated basically two ways," Donnelly said. "If the quarterback can successfully get the ball to the right person and get it to him with accuracy, then I think we will be fine. If we come up short on being able to throw and catch and to be able to get people out of the box, then it is going to be just as tough on us to run as it would be to throw."

Newly-renovated Floyd Stadium, complete with 30,000 seats, is predicted to be full Saturday at 6 p.m.

The game represents a change in the attitude of Blue Raider athletics. It is only fitting that arch rival Tennessee State will open up play in the new stadium, in a game that means much more to the future of football in the mid-state than the meetings of the past.

Hopefully for fans, a win Saturday will be sign of a promising season and transition to Division I-A.

ESPN/USA Today preseason Top 25 poll I-AA

Team (1st place votes)	1997 Record	Pts
1. McNeese State (17)	13-2	1,020
2. Youngstown State (16)	3-2	974
3. Montana (7)	8-4	930
4. Delaware (1)	12-2	903
5. Georgia Southern (1)	10-3	852
6. Villanova (1)	12-1	831
7. Western Illinois	11-2	723
8. Western Kentucky	10-2	704
9. Eastern Kentucky	8-4	655
10. Northern Iowa	7-4	634
11. Southern	10-1	500
12. Hampton	10-2	476
13. William & Henry	7-4	461
14. Hofstra	9-3	441
15. Eastern Washington	12-2	407
16. (t) East Tennessee State	7-4	402
16. (t) Northwestern State	8-4	402
18. Florida A&M	9-3	317
19. Jackson State	9-3	231
20. Stephen F. Austin	8-3	229
21. Appalachian State	7-4	226
22. Murray State	7-4	219
23. Northern Arizona	6-5	200
24. (t) Liberty (1)	9-2	190
25. (t) Troy State	5-6	190

Others receiving votes: Connecticut 133, Eastern Illinois 130, Cal Poly-SLO 112, Richmond 109, Weber State 88, Furman 55, Northeastern 53, Middle Tennessee State 48, Montana State 48, Colgate 44, New Hampshire 43, South Carolina State 39, Chattanooga 28, Harvard 27, James Madison 26, South Florida 26, Southwest Missouri State 21, Morgan State 20, Nicholls State 14, Portland State 14, Bucknell 11, Arkansas-Pine Bluff 10, Lehigh 10, Buffalo 9, Maine 9, Holy Cross 8, Howard 8, Samford 8, Southeast Missouri State 7, Sam Houston State 3, CS-Northridge 3, North Carolina A&T 2, Texas Southern 2, Western Carolina 2, St. Mary's CA 1, Tennessee Tech 1.

Heart Walk benefits everyone.



Kelley Dodd

Now that it's September, we can anticipate the American Heart Association's Heart Walk '98 to be a big success.

What better way to improve your health as well as contribute to a great cause than to join in?

Walking is perhaps the most comfortable and versatile form of exercise, and at the same time is a very effective way to shape up. This year's Heart Walk is the perfect opportunity to take a stand against heart disease as well as strengthen your own heart.

The event is scheduled for Sept. 27 at 1 p.m. on campus. More than 500 people

participated last year. To get energized about this event, there will be a MTSU student kickoff today between noon and 2 p.m. on the Knoll beside the Keathley University Center.

This will give you the chance to learn more about the Heart Walk, visit vendor booths and register for prizes. This should be incentive enough to take the time on Sunday, Sept. 27, to help out by walking for a good cause.

Prior to the event, you might want to walk at least three times per week for at least thirty minutes at a time to gear yourself up for the event.

This way you'll make a good showing and be able to walk longer, thus earning more money for the Heart Association.

Since walking is classified as low-impact aerobics, you can pair up with another participant to prepare for the

walk, and while you're trotting along, you can chat about whatever ails you and keep yourself entertained.

It's easy to get bored while walking, so having someone else to walk with you will help speed up the time and perhaps allow you to even walk longer than if by yourself.

I have now given you plenty of good reasons to join the many other walkers for the 1998 Heart Walk. Not only will it benefit a good cause and help others, but also it will help yourself get into shape.

Joining this walk will make you feel much better about yourself, and since that is what fitness is all about anyway, what have you got to lose?

Make a point of showing up for the Heart Walk and contribute yourself to the betterment of the community as well as the betterment of your own health.

Former quarterback proves successful

Former MTSU preseason, he has the advantage.

Jonathan Quinn played the entire third quarter in Jacksonville's 42-20 victory against the Cowboys. The third round pick of the Jaguars, Quinn completed five of eight passes for 82 yards.

Battling Quinn for the back-up quarterback position is Jamie Martin. So far in the

Tailgate Information

This Saturday there will be two tailgate events on campus.

The first is the pre-game kickoff party on the President's lawn. It is open only to MTSU faculty, staff and their families and not to students of the university.

All tickets for the tailgate party on the President's lawn are sold out. If it rains, the festivities will be moved into the west concourse of the Murphy Center.

The tailgate for students will be

held in the Greenland Drive parking lot beginning at 3 p.m., sponsored by the Blue Raider Athletic Association.

A free concert will begin at 3:45 p.m., sponsored by MTSU Athletics and Student Programming.

In case of rain, the activities will be moved inside the Alumni Memorial Gym.

The MTSU-TSU game will begin at 6:00 p.m. Tickets are \$12 per person.

Record-setting home run ball causes debate

Rick Hurd

Knight-Ridder Newspapers

It doesn't look spectacular. It has a cork center and tightly wrapped layers of rubber and woolen yarn. Two strips of white cowhide stitched together by thick, red thread form the outer case. It's between 9 and 9 1/4 (set in circumference and weighs 5 ounces).

But sometime in the next five weeks, it could become more sought-after than a Beanie Baby.

The object in question: a baseball. More specifically, the baseball that either St. Louis' Mark McGwire or the Chicago Cubs' Sammy Sosa might send soaring for home run No. 62. That blast would surpass Roger Maris' single-season record of 61 (set in 1961) and break one of sports' most cherished marks.

No wonder demand for the famous sphere figures to soar like a McGwire homer.

"There are people out there who will offer hundreds of thousands of dollars for it," said Ken Brison, who manages 'Talkin' Baseball, a memorabilia store in Danville, IL. "Minimum."

Thus, the impact from No. 62 figures to be far-reaching. The questions of who will get the ball, and who should get the ball, have sparked a debate almost as heated as any discussion over who actually will break the mark.

McGwire has said the National Baseball Hall of Fame

Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y., is the rightful place for the record-setting ball. Sosa hasn't decided what he'd like to do with it. Both have said they won't shell out one penny in order to obtain the ball, and their clubs have echoed their thoughts.

"We'd trade with a fan, maybe a bat or something," a Cardinals spokesman said. "But if a fan wants money, he can keep it."

The Hall of Fame possesses the bat and ball from Maris' 61st homer and from Babe Ruth's 60th homer in 1927. But it won't pay for similar items should a record be set this year.

"Basically, we just ask the player," said John Ralph, the Director of Communications at the Hall of Fame. "We're hoping to have artifacts representing any records that may occur, and both Mr. McGwire and Mr. Sosa have been generous to us in the past. But as a not-for-profit entity, we are not in a position to buy artifacts."

But the collectibles industry can shell out large sums of cash, and business is booming these days. According to the Beckett Price Guide, McGwire's rookie baseball card has gone from \$40 to \$135 in the past three months. Sosa's has soared from \$8 to \$25 in the past month.

Still, not everybody believes that others have the right to profit from another's success.

"That ball is so special that it'd be nice to think whoever gets it will just give it to the

player and let the player decide (what to do with it)," Ralph said.

On Sunday, a fan in Miami received \$5,000 for giving Barry Bonds the ball that the Giants left fielder hit to become baseball's first major-league player with 400 home runs and 400 stolen bases. In that case, the money was a gesture of goodwill by teammate Orel Hersher.

But what if the fan who catches McGwire's ball isn't so accommodating?

"I'm not sure there's a right or wrong answer," University of San Francisco ethics professor Raymond Dennehy said. "You could argue that it was immoral. Still, does the fan have a right to it? That's the issue. He does have a right."

"There is a general principle that a person has the right to the fruits of his labor, and (McGwire or Sosa) could argue that the reason this ball will have value in the first place came as a result of (their) labor."

Perhaps. Or ...

"It has worth, because fans have considered home runs important, and (players) get paid a hefty sum to hit the ball out of the park," said Barry Stenger, a professor at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University. "If the fan wants to play the game the way the player does, as in a business as in name your value, then he's perfectly entitled to get whatever he can."

University of Florida suspends five

Associated Press

Gainesville, FL—Steve Spurrier has suspended five players, four defensive players and one offensive player, for the season opener against The Citadel.

The fourth-ranked Gators will be without the services of

starting safety Teako Brown, reserve safety Rod Graddy and back-up defensive end Anthony Mitchell.

Freshman cornerback Mike Gipson has also been suspended from the team indefinitely.

The lone offensive player suspended was junior running back Eugene McCaslin, who started a number of games last

season. McCaslin was hit with a three game ban.

All five Gator players were suspended for violating university and team rules. Spurrier and the school gave no further details.


Florida finished 10-2 last season and received one first place vote in last week's top 25 poll.

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Kight-Ridder Newspaper

In Hyden, Ky., the fork in the road is known as The Spur. Right off the Daniel Boone Parkway exit ramp is where you'll get the first clue about who the most famous man from this town is.

In Kentucky blue and white, the sign at The Spur reads: "Home of No.2 Tim Couch."

Couch is an icon in this town (pop. 355). No professional athletes, movie stars or politicians have ever lived here. The closest thing they've got is Couch, the best

quarterback the University of Kentucky has ever had and a preseason candidate for the Heisman Trophy. That constitutes for a whole lot, no matter where you're from.

"The older he gets, his legend won't diminish. It will get bigger. We won't forget him for quite some time," said Ron Stidham, athletic director at Leslie County High School, Couch's alma mater.

Couch has come to mean a lot to his home town, high school, college, team and, in some ways, the Southeastern Conference.

The SEC certainly has had its share of star quarterbacks. Couch has played in the shadows of Florida's Danny Wuerffel and Tennessee's Peyton Manning. Some believe he could be better than both.

One thing's for sure - his numbers will probably be more impressive. Last season, Couch passed more than any other quarterback in the nation. He completed 363 of 547 attempts for 3,884 yards and 37 touchdowns as the Wildcats finished 5-6 (2-6 in the SEC).

That kind of output makes him and the Wildcats the butt of jokes.

"We probably won't be ranked the No. 1 offense in the conference," Florida coach Steve Spurrier said. "Kentucky's going to throw the ball 75 times a game. Their objective is to gain more yards than everybody else and they're probably going to do that. We want to win more games than everybody. That's our objective." (For the record, the most attempts Couch had was 66 on Oct. 17 against Louisiana State - a 63-28 loss).

If you want to get Couch stirred up, taking shots like that is a good way to start.

"I want to go out there and be a leader," Couch said. "We've set two main goals, and that's to win the SEC and go to a bowl game. They are both very realistic."

Focusing on the season is a difficult task, though, with the Heisman hype circling. At 6-5 and 216 pounds, he has NFL scouts eager.

In 1995, Couch was considered the most prolific quarterback in the history of high school football. He went to Kentucky and ended up watching from the sidelines for a year - a coach's decision still quite puzzling.

Last season brought the arrival of coach Hal Mumme and his pass-crazed offense. Couch became the starter and his stock has soared. He completed 66.4 percent of his

passes and had his biggest performance against Manning's Volunteers, completing 35 of 50 passes for 476 yards, two touchdowns and three interceptions in a 59-31 loss.

"I've always had my best games in pressure situations," said Couch, 21. "Last year, between me and Peyton, was an example of that."

It was the kind of game that got all of this Heisman talk going, even though Couch himself does not care to discuss it. If he doesn't want to participate in the Heisman hoopla, his friends and teammates will do it for him.

"He's just an athlete," wide receiver Craig Yeast said. "He has a great arm and beautiful footwork. He's just a warrior. I've seen him get demolished, destroyed. He got right back up and threw a touchdown."

The scariest thing? Despite the great numbers, Couch's confidence didn't truly develop until the end of the season. He enters this year with that to lean on, as well as a spring and summer spent working out harder than ever.


"I've been putting a lot of time in," he said. "I can tell the difference. We're all real excited."

So are the folks in Hyden. "He's as big a legend as there is in the Commonwealth," Stidham said. "You poll a lot of people and you'll find he's more renowned than anyone."



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