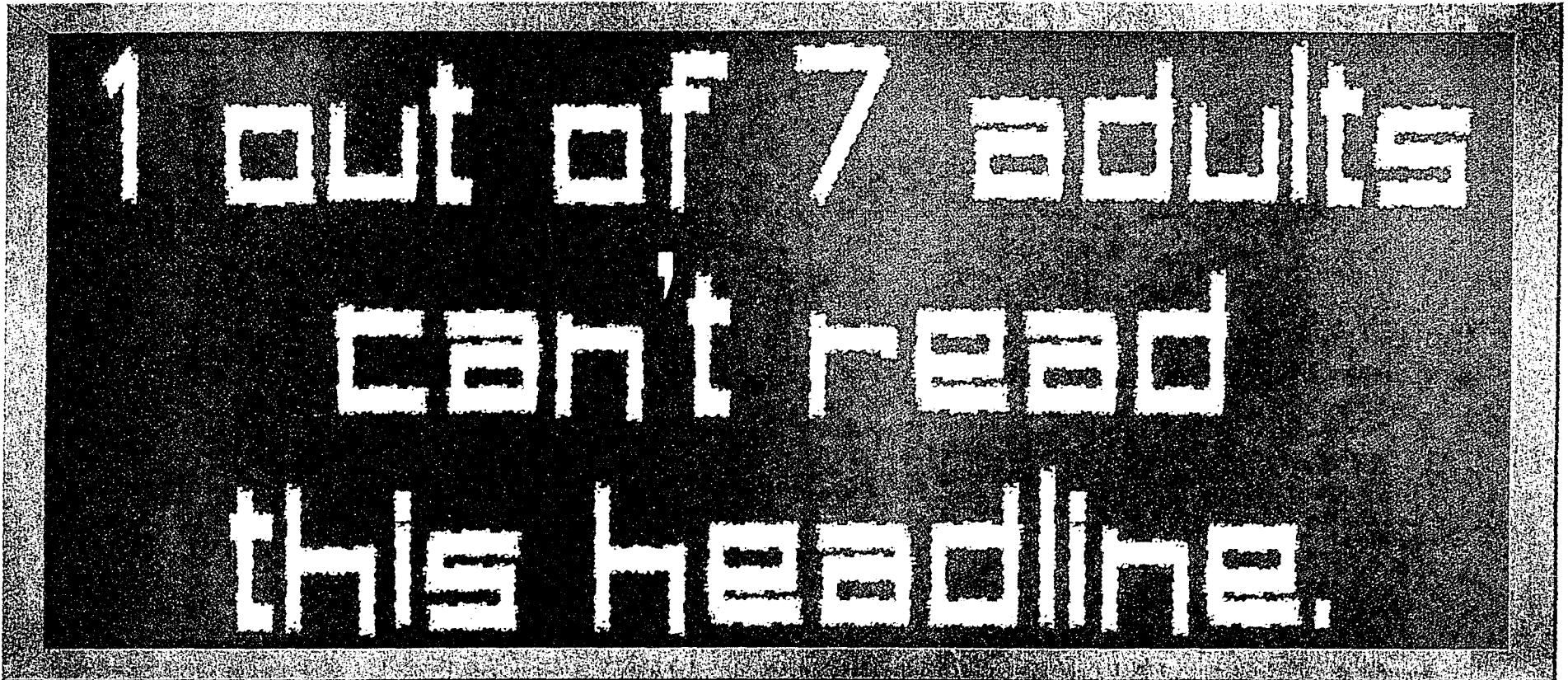


# MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

EDITORIALLY INDEPENDENT

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2010

VOL. 87 NO. 25



By BECCA ANDREWS  
Assistant News Editor

Joseph Quarles, a senior majoring in English, could not read until the age of 11. Even then, it was a long road he had to travel before he achieved a proficient level of reading and caught up to the standard of his age group.

Quarles, who spent much of his childhood going back and forth between North and South America, was basically passed through all of his classes while his teachers ignored the fact that he was illiterate.

"I just sort of slipped through the cracks," Quarles said, "I became so anxiety ridden, I was afraid to tell anyone and my teachers just kept looking the other way."

Quarles' story is one that is all too common in the American education system. According to the U.S. Department of Education, one in seven adults is still unable to read in the United States.

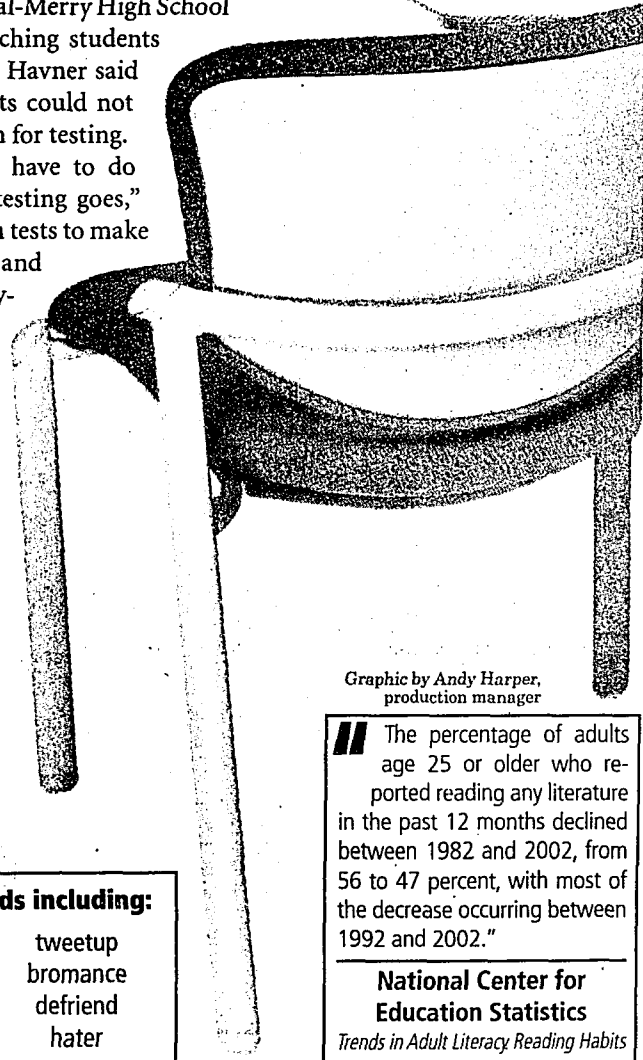
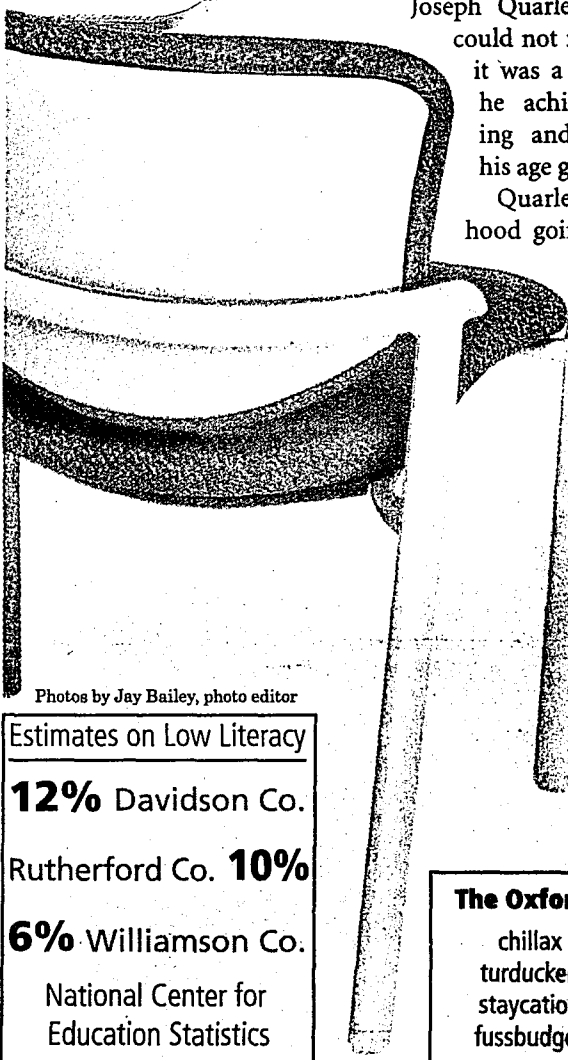
On a daily basis, Trista Havner, a U.S. History teacher for juniors

and seniors at Jackson Central-Merry High School in Jackson, Tenn., faces teaching students who struggle with illiteracy. Havner said five or six of her 40 students could not proficiently read well enough for testing.

"Once they get to me, I have to do whatever it takes as far as testing goes," Havner said. "I do discussion tests to make sure they know the material, and sometimes, I do a Pictionary-type exam or assignment."

Havner expressed her frustration with the education requirements that seem to hinder her students more than help them.

"In the third or fourth grade, they realize this child has a [learning disability,] but they just leave it at that," Havner said. "They don't take the time to delve into these disabilities enough to see how to fix it."



Photos by Jay Bailey, photo editor

**Estimates on Low Literacy**  
**12%** Davidson Co.  
 Rutherford Co. **10%**  
**6%** Williamson Co.  
 National Center for Education Statistics

Graphic by Andy Harper, production manager

The percentage of adults age 25 or older who reported reading any literature in the past 12 months declined between 1982 and 2002, from 56 to 47 percent, with most of the decrease occurring between 1992 and 2002."

National Center for Education Statistics  
Trends in Adult Literacy Reading Habits

**The Oxford English Dictionary recently added a plethora of new words including:**

- |            |                   |                 |             |          |
|------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------|
| chillax    | buzzkill          | catastrophizing | cheeseball  | tweetup  |
| turducken  | dictionary attack | soft skills     | cool hunter | bromance |
| staycation | freemium          | matchy-matchy   | hikikomori  | defriend |
| fussbudget | automagically     | frenemy         | steampunk   | hater    |

LITERACY, PAGE 2

## SGA set to rally for Blue Raider victory

STAFF REPORT

The Student Government Association is slated to hold another Road Rally of the season when the MTSU Blue Raider football team heads to the Godaddy.com Bowl in Mobile, Ala., to play against the Miami University of Ohio.

"Road Rally to Mobile: Bowl Edition," will take place Jan. 5 through Jan. 7 to cheer on the Blue Raiders at the Lad-Peebles Stadium. The cost for students is \$125, which covers round-trip transportation, a two-night hotel stay, a game ticket and a T-shirt.

"This is MTSU's third bowl game in five years," said Sarah Ayache, the SGA vice president of administration and public affairs. "SGA is excited to give students an opportunity to attend the game to show how proud we are of our football team."

As a part of the festivities for the 12th Annual Godaddy.com Bowl Game, there will be a Mardi Gras parade Jan. 5 at 6:30 p.m., followed by a Spectronics fireworks display. According to godaddybowl.com, the party will then move to Water Street and South Plaza for team pep rallies. After the rallies, there will be live music and refreshments to continue the celebration.

This is the second year in a row MTSU's

bowl celebration has included a Mardi Gras parade in honor of the football teams that are competing.

Mobile is known for the first and longest-running Mardi Gras celebration in the United States, going all the way back to 1703, according to the city's website.

MTSU's victory against Florida International University Saturday secured the Raiders' spot in the Godaddy.com bowl. The team holds a 6-6 record for the season, and Miami (Ohio) holds a 9-4 record.

Ladd Peebles Stadium is planning to sponsor a Southern-style shrimp boil to welcome the coaches, players and administration of the representing teams. The welcoming reception will be limited to 500 guests and will be invitation only.

Students will be given first priority for the rally, and Ayache said the SGA would create a wait list if necessary. The deadline to sign up is Dec. 18, and students can do so by going by the SGA office in Room 208 of the Keathley University Center or online through the website. The tentative itinerary can also be found on the SGA website.

For anyone not participating in the Road Rally, tickets for the game will cost between \$15 to \$45 each.

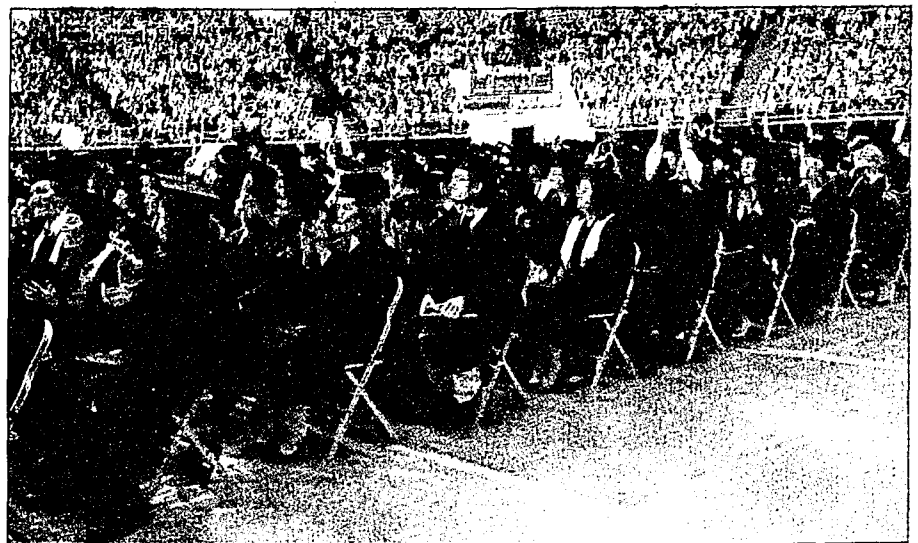


Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photographer

Graduates sit on the floor of the Murphy Center on May 8, 2010, enjoying the commencement ceremonies. More than 2,000 students graduated from MTSU in the spring of 2010.

## Graduation rate surpasses university enrollment

By KRIS SAGE  
Staff Writer

More than 1,700 students will march down the aisle to receive their degrees Dec. 18, an increase of more than 6 percent since the 2004-2005 academic year, according to data from the Office of Institutional Research.

The university's enrollment rate for the 2010 fall semester is currently 26,430, a 0.9 percent increase since the 2004-2005 academic year, of which 22,554 students were enrolled.

The graduation rate has significantly surpassed the increase in enrollment fig-

ures, rising 6.3 percent since the 2004-2005 academic year.

"The MTSU graduation rate is an estimated 51.8 percent," said Teresa Thomas, the director of Enrollment Technical Services.

GRADUATION, PAGE 3

### INDEX

- FEATURES pages 4, 5
- OPINIONS page 7
- A&E page 8



### Features:

Four years ago, heroin brought one man to his knees. Find out how he recovered.  
Page 4

### IN TODAY'S ISSUE



Student finds lasting relationship with her furry companion, Gus. Read the full story.

ONLINE @  
MTSUSIDELINES.COM

### THURSDAY FORECAST

MOSTLY SUNNY  
NO THREAT OF RAIN  
HIGH 43, LOW 26

# Silent struggle to read can remain hidden until adulthood

## LITERACY FROM PAGE 1

She went on to say that the state requires so many modifications to be made within the school system, but because of the No Child Left Behind laws, she and her co-workers are required to pass almost every kid.

Second grade teacher Melissa Ainsworth agrees with Havner about the origination of the problem.

"If a student is not on level at third grade, he will never get caught up," said Ainsworth, who teaches at Verona Elementary School in

Verona, Miss. Ainsworth also said she feels pressured to pass every student that comes through her classroom simply because of state requirements.

Havner said that serving for a failing school makes the stress of passing her students "so much worse."

"We can get put on probation for failure to comply with what we are asked to do, even if it means we do something we think is wrong," she said.

Quarles said there were a variety of factors that he thinks played a part in his illiteracy. He attributes most of the issue to the environment he was raised in. His mother was a schizophrenic who could not follow up on making sure that him and his sister, Christie, were doing their homework and understanding their assignments.

"I had Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder during my teen years, and I didn't have enough to eat," Quarles said. "That obviously took away from the learning process."

Quarles has come a long way since his days of not knowing how to read. He said his biology teacher, Karen Robinson, helped him to solidify his reading skills during his freshman year of high school.

"She saved me," he said. "I had been demoralized emotionally by the stress of trying to catch up and she was the first person to tell me, 'You are not stupid.'"

Quarles said from that point on, he read everything he could get his hands on and discovered a love of writing he never knew was possible before. Writing became an art form that made getting everything that had happened to him out on paper a way of dealing with his traumatic childhood



Photo courtesy of Joseph Quarles

Joseph Quarles, a senior majoring in English, is struck with inspiration in a local bar as he attempts to think of unique ways to express himself in literary form. Now literate, the 35-year-old student writes as much as he can.

and adolescence. However, he said never thought that he would get anywhere by writing.

"I never had dreams," he said. "I never had the chance. I was too busy trying to survive."

Havner said she sees students just like Quarles in her classroom who are struggling to do something as basic as string together sentences, a skill that is taken for granted by most high school students.

"The child [that cannot read]

gets so frustrated," Havner said. "Some of these kids were never even given a chance."

Teachers like Havner, Ainsworth and the teacher Quarles describes as his "savior" are the type of people that give illiterate students hope and a chance to achieve their dreams.

"I still keep in touch with Karen Robinson," Quarles said. "Every time I have a piece published, I take it to her office and drop it

off for her to read."

Quarles has gone on to have many of his written works published since graduating high school, and he is currently working on his first full-length novel that will be a modern take on the Grimm's fairy tale "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves."

"I know I won't be a famous novelist," Quarles said, "but if I have some effect on people, that's all I want."

## CRIME BRIEFS

### Burglary

Dec. 3, 2:01 p.m.

Felder Hall

A complainant reported that her camera was stolen out of her room.

### Alcohol

Dec. 4, 12:16 a.m.

Middle Tennessee Boulevard  
Gregory Douglas Harris, 26, was arrested for driving under the influence.

### Alcohol

Dec. 5, 12:02 a.m.

Off Campus  
Bradley Merritt Poplin, 19, was arrested for underage consumption of alcohol, driving under the influence, and violating implied consent.

### Weapon

Dec. 5, 12:51 a.m.

Greek Row  
Ryan Allen Roe, 18, was arrested for possession of a weapon on school property, possession of a firearm while intoxicated, underage consumption of alcohol, an open container violation and his first offense of driving under the influence. Calvin Horan Lake III, 18, Lorian Christopher Dotson, 19, and Dwayne Jordan Hylick, 18, were also arrested for underage consumption of alcohol.

### Traffic

Dec. 6, 12:13 a.m.

Alumni Drive  
Ryan Lee Hausladen, 23, was issued a state citation for failing to obey a traffic control device, a registration violation and failing to provide financial responsibility.

### Theft

Dec. 6, 3:37 p.m.

MTSU Campus  
A complainant reported that his textbooks were stolen from his vehicle parked in the maintenance parking lot.

### Theft

Dec. 6, 7:49 p.m.

Health, Wellness, and Recreation Center  
A complainant reported that his backpack and its contents were stolen near the climbing wall. The backpack was recovered, but his phone and cash were stolen.

# Party

at "The Pig"

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Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photographer  
MTSU graduates, faculty, staff and the local community participate in one of the 2010 commencement ceremonies on May 8, 2010, in the Murphy Center.

## More students earn degrees

### GRADUATION FROM PAGE 1

The Tennessee Board of Regents measures graduation rates in six-year increments, so this statistic begins in 2003 and ends in 2009. Students who began their academic career at MTSU and then graduated at another Tennessee school or Tennessee Board of Regents institution are included in the THEC data, according to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

But, for students, this time is about celebrating their accomplishments — not numbers.

As soon-to-be graduates prepare to say goodbye to MTSU, some are taking the time to reflect upon what they have learned, the friendships they have formed throughout the years, but most importantly, how they will transition from student to professional.

"My future plans are to find a job," said Mesa Owens, who will graduate next week with a degree in public relations from the College of Mass Communication. "I also want to continue teaching dance and possibly get certified to teach yoga. I have a minor in dance and those have been two passions of mine. If I can't find a good job, I might look into graduate school.

Owens said she also wants to enjoy other aspects of her personal life, which for some may not be a priority or even a possibility financially, for the average college student.

"I also want to travel a lot," Owens said. "I'm getting married in October, so lots of exciting things in my future."

The other 1,744 students who are expected to graduate will most likely face some of the same objectives, opportunities and obstacles.

"Seeing things in a different way and really caring about news, equality, and health — all the things that I've learned in my various courses," said Jacob Underwood, an electronic media communication major, who is also graduating from the College of Mass Communication. "Sure, a part of that comes from aging, but I don't think I would be as ready for the real world if I hadn't taken this path."

One dilemma that graduates face is trying to find employment in their respective majors.

"I'm very, very fortunate to have been involved with Citadel Broadcasting since the summer before my sophomore year," Underwood said. "I've learned a ton in my time there and will be transitioning into a more full-time role later this month."

Allison Segel, a public relations major, said she is also looking for career opportunities.

"My plans are desperately trying to find a job in public relations," Segel said. "I have applied to over 200 jobs and have not heard back from a single one!"

Thomas said out of the 1,745 graduating stu-

dents, 1,470 will earn undergraduate degrees. The remaining 275 students will earn a graduate diploma, including 213 master's degrees, 12 education specialist degrees, and five doctorate of philosophy degrees.

The number of students graduating as a class has increased within the past year, Thomas said. In December 2009, 1,516 MTSU students graduated, with 1,284 receiving undergraduate degrees, and 232 graduate students earned doctorate degrees, she said.

In the spring of 2010, results presented a higher number of MTSU students graduating compared to the 2010 fall semester, with a total of 2,044 obtaining their diplomas. The undergraduate degrees tallied 1,689, while 355 students received their doctorate degrees, Thomas said.

There will be two ceremonies for graduation, both of which will be located in the Murphy Center. The first ceremony will be held at 9 a.m. and will honor graduates in the fields of graduate studies, and the College of Business, College of Education and College of Mass Communication.

J. Stanley Rodgers will give the commencement address. Rodgers is a senior partner with the Rodgers & Duncan Law Firm, located in Manchester, Tenn., and he received his Bachelor of Science degree from MTSU. He has also served on the Tennessee Board of Regents since 1994, according to the TBR website.

The second ceremony starts at 1 p.m. and will honor graduates in the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, College of Behavioral and Health Sciences, College of Liberal Arts and the University College. State Sen. Randy McNally of the 5th District will address the graduates.

Everyone has their own views on what college means to them. College teaches important concepts, but it is the ability to process the information and use it to become a better person.

"My favorite part of college was the teachers and learning from them," Owens said. "I had some really great teachers that I wish I could always have a class with."

MTSU has provided much more than just education for most of its attendants, according to reflective soon-to-be graduates.

"Meeting all the interesting people I have met and the great friendships that will last a lifetime," Segel said, referring to what he will remember most.

Some expressed that the experience of attending college is a difficult challenge that prepares individuals for life, so graduates should be proud of their recent accomplishment.

"College has been an extremely rewarding experience," Underwood said. "When I first enrolled it felt like a necessary evil, but now that I'm finishing, I look back on the wonderful things I've learned and how much I've grown as a person."

# City of Murfreesboro updates its website

By KRIS SAGE  
Staff Writer

The City of Murfreesboro is organizing and enhancing its website to help its residents further understand its financial documents and city meetings.

"We designed a new page on the website to make it easier for people to find financial documents, so that people would have to stop hunting around the website trying to find budgets, policies and other information," said Chris Shofner, public information officer and Webmaster for the City of Murfreesboro.

City governments are increasingly making financial transparency a priority, opting to make many records freely accessible, rather than leave the public waiting for information requests, Shofner said.

"At our annual city management meetings, we had education sessions that promoted transparency in local government," said Rob Lyons, city manager. "With advancement in technology, new improvements can be made in city development."

Shofner said the new website gives its viewers access on information regarding budgets for regional financial policies, refunding of bond structures, and how to apply for licenses. The site also has financial report

figures that date as far back as five years, Shofner said.

There is a proposed 2010-2014 Capital Improvement Plan on the web page that is designed to plan out how to improve conditions of public facilities, infrastructure requirements, and acquisition of property and equipment.

The new web page has some useful tools for off-campus students as well, Shofner said.

"Students can go to the page to find local jobs in the Murfreesboro area, learn how to pay taxes, and find out about upcoming meetings and public notices by clicking either the 'residents' or 'business' tabs on the website," he said.

Lyons said there is helpful information for students living in rented houses in Murfreesboro, such as parking, guest and maintenance information.

"MTSU is an amazing asset to the City of Murfreesboro, and we have a great partnership with [Sidney] McPhee when we are discussing new projects," Lyons said.

Shofner said the site gets an average of 45,000 hits per month, which is just under half of Murfreesboro's population.

The new information can be viewed at [www.murfreesborotn.gov](http://www.murfreesborotn.gov)

## Professor, alumni receive Grammy nominations

STAFF REPORT

An MTSU professor and two alumni are all nominees for the 53rd annual Grammy Awards that will be presented on Feb. 13 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

Professor John Hill, who teaches Critical Listening, Advanced Audio Recording and Production Seminar II in the Recording Industry program, received two nominations for his audio engineering work in classical music. The first nomination is "Best Engineered Album, Classical" for Daugh-

erty: Metropolis Symphony and the second nomination is "Best Classical Album" for Deus Ex Machina. Both works were performed by Giancarlo Guerrero and the Nashville Symphony Orchestra.

Michael Latterell, who graduated from MTSU in 2003, has been nominated for two Grammys for his work as lead engineer on Rhonda Vincent's "All American Bluegrass Girl." Latterell is this year's MTSU Young Alumnus Achievement Award honoree. Latterell has already received five

Grammy nominations during his career and has won one. He is the assistant to the regional manager at Music City Audio Machines and works as an independent producer and engineer.

Clarke Schleicher, who graduated from MTSU in 2008, has also been nominated for two Grammys for his work as an engineer and mixer on Lady Antebellum's "Need You Now." Schleicher owns and operates L. Clarke Schleicher Engineering, which is located in Nashville.

## LOCAL EVENTS

### On Campus

- Performing Arts:** FREE  
Arunesh Nadgir  
Dec. 9, 2 p.m.  
Hinton Hall  
Wright Music Building  
FREE
- String Studio Recital**  
Dec. 9, 7 p.m.  
Hinton Hall  
Wright Music Building  
FREE
- MPAC's "Born from a Boom Box"**  
Dec. 10 & 11, 7 p.m.  
Tucker Theatre  
FREE
- Sports:**  
**Women's Basketball v. Xavier**  
Dec. 9, 7 p.m.  
Murphy Center  
FREE
- Women's Basketball v. James Madison**  
Dec. 12, 12:30 p.m.  
Murphy Center
- Men's Basketball v. Furman**  
Dec. 12, 3 p.m.  
Murphy Center  
FREE
- Student Life:**  
**The Nightmare Before Christmas**  
Dec. 9-10, 7 p.m.  
Keathley University Center  
Tickets: \$2
- Fall Commencement**  
Dec. 18, 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.  
Murphy Center  
FREE
- Workshop: Mic to Master**  
Dec. 10-11  
John Bragg Mass  
Communication Building  
Lab B, Comm. 101,  
Studio B  
FREE

### Off Campus

- Concerts:** Johnson Theater  
A Fireside  
Tickets: \$42.50
- Christmas**  
Dec. 9, 7:30 p.m.  
First United  
Methodist Church  
Tickets: \$40
- Point of Grace with Chris August**  
Dec. 10, 7 p.m.  
World Outreach Church  
Tickets: \$13
- Trans-Siberian Orchestra**  
Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m.  
Bridgestone Arena  
Tickets: \$27.50-\$59
- Dave Barnes and Drew Holcomb**  
Dec. 18, 8 p.m.  
James K. Polk Theater  
Tickets: \$17-\$32
- Performing Arts:**  
**A Christmas Story**  
Dec. 9-18, 6:30 p.m.
- Scrooge**  
Dec. 11, 7:30  
The Center for the Arts  
Tickets: \$10-\$14
- Nashville's Nutcracker**  
Dec. 10, 7 p.m.  
Tennessee Performing Arts Center  
Tickets: \$82

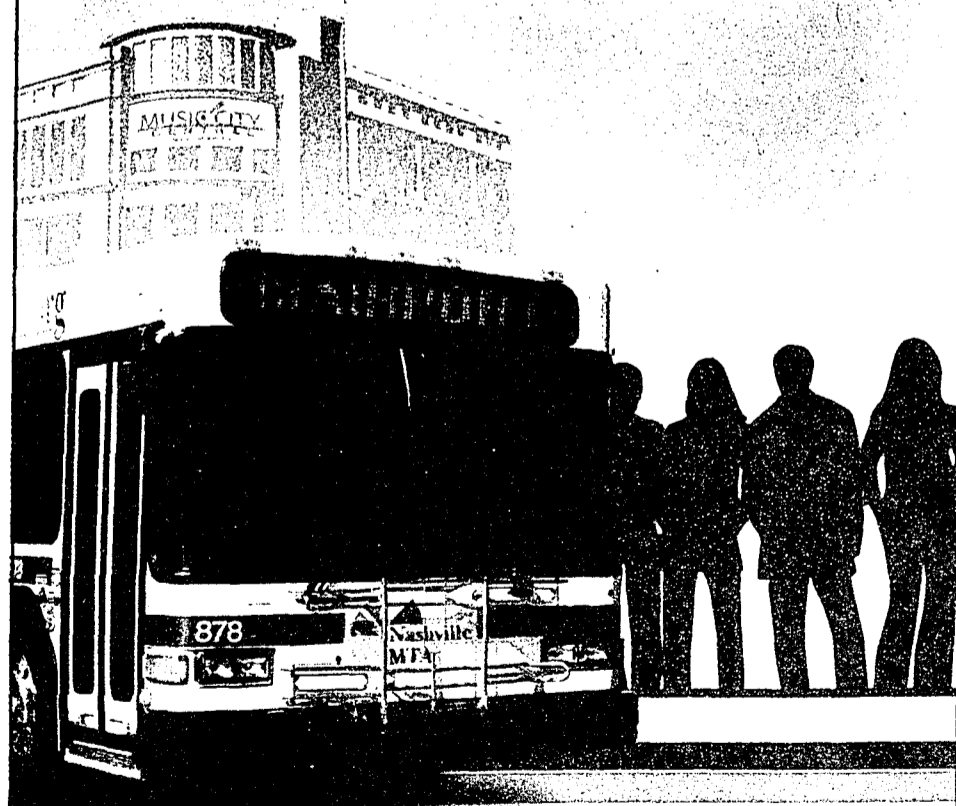
**Events Policy**  
Sidelines welcomes current campus and community events submitted by all readers. Please e-mail events to [slcampus@mtsu.edu](mailto:slcampus@mtsu.edu) or [slnews@mtsu.edu](mailto:slnews@mtsu.edu), and include the name, date, time and location of the event, as well as your name and a phone number for verification. We reserve the right to refuse events at our discretion as our space is limited.

Sidelines is the editorially independent, nonprofit student-produced newspaper of Middle Tennessee State University. Sidelines publishes Monday and Thursday during the fall and spring semesters and online during June and July. The events listed are not necessarily associated with Sidelines or MTSU.

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# FEATURES



DO YOU THINK  
THE STONES RIVER  
BATTLEFIELD IS  
HAUNTED?

BASED ON VOTES FROM  
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# 'FUCK IT!'

## I'm not a wuss.



By ALEX MOORMAN  
Editor-in-Chief

The sun beats down hot on his face as he makes his way once again down that old familiar street, his robust cheeks splotchy from the scorching Nashville air. He's been walking down that same street now for more than four years – the street hasn't changed, but he has.

Every crack and fold in the pavement reminds him of his struggle, his anguish, and his eventual clarity. As his feet push against the warm pavement, he can finally see the path he should have been on all along – the path to freedom.

"I'm never really cured, I'm going to have to keep working at it. I don't know if there was ever a point when I thought I was free; I have to keep myself from going back into the old way of thinking," says Justin Gill, a Nashville native, his staunch smile neutralizing his incredulous eyes. "It gets easier after a while – I don't have to make a conscious effort all day long. I don't think about using. I'm at the point where I think I'm normal. I just have a disease – it's always an option, but it's not a pressing need. It's just my nature to do what I do."

Four years ago, Justin held true to his convictions as he entered the doors to a meeting place he never thought he'd be in – a room filled with people he never thought he'd know. Justin, now 22, has been a recovering addict for longer than most people his age have even known what drugs were. And he isn't alone: He has a community of people struggling with the same yearning he has for drugs. But, unlike others in his Narcotics Anonymous support group, Justin was only 17 when he found himself humbled by life, his knees buried in the floor of the room he now calls "safe."

"I didn't like them at first," Justin reveals. "I didn't know anyone. And honestly, I didn't think I had the same kind of problems that they did. I thought I was different, that I was less addicted."

Justin grew up in Music City with what most people would call a normal life. He went to high school, dropped out, and began the daily grind of an average adult. Well, perhaps not average. Justin, at the ripe age of 16, adorned with a morion helmet of excitement and intrigue, set out on a Spanish expedition of sorts, and the search for gold, glory and dope began.

"I'd probably be dead or in prison," he says. "The drugs I was doing, the lifestyle I was living – obviously, drugs are illegal, so that would have ended me in some institution. But, the kind of shit I was doing wasn't very safe. Being in the places I was, dealing with the people I was dealing with, it was a pretty scary situation all the time."

Justin's parents separated when he was 10 years old: His mother drank, his father didn't. As Justin tried to separate despair from rejection, his own life fell apart. At 11 years old, Justin experienced drugs for the first time.

"I first tried it with a buddy of mine," Justin explains. "He got it from his stepmother. I was 11, he was a year older, and I guess he'd seen them smoke it before because he knew how to use it."

Justin had known his friend for a while, and while he wasn't sure if he wanted to smoke marijuana, he said they rode the bus

together, attended Hillsboro High School together, and eventually he figured, "What could it hurt?"

"You're a wuss if you don't do it, so I was like, 'Fuck it – I'm not a wuss,'" he said, his voice trailing off. A look of disappointment crosses his face. "Ya' know, it was fun, great, something to do. I'm not proud, but I was young."

Dressed in tie-dye and hosting easily accessible marijuana Jordan's, a middle school friend, stepmother, Mary, gave the boys an easy passage into the world of drugs. Huddled in a dark bedroom, breath bated, the boys found what they were looking for: an experience. Mary may have been unaware, but she was more than just the mother of the boy who provided him with his first high, she was the first mother he met who felt like a mother should – kind, interested and, above all, there.

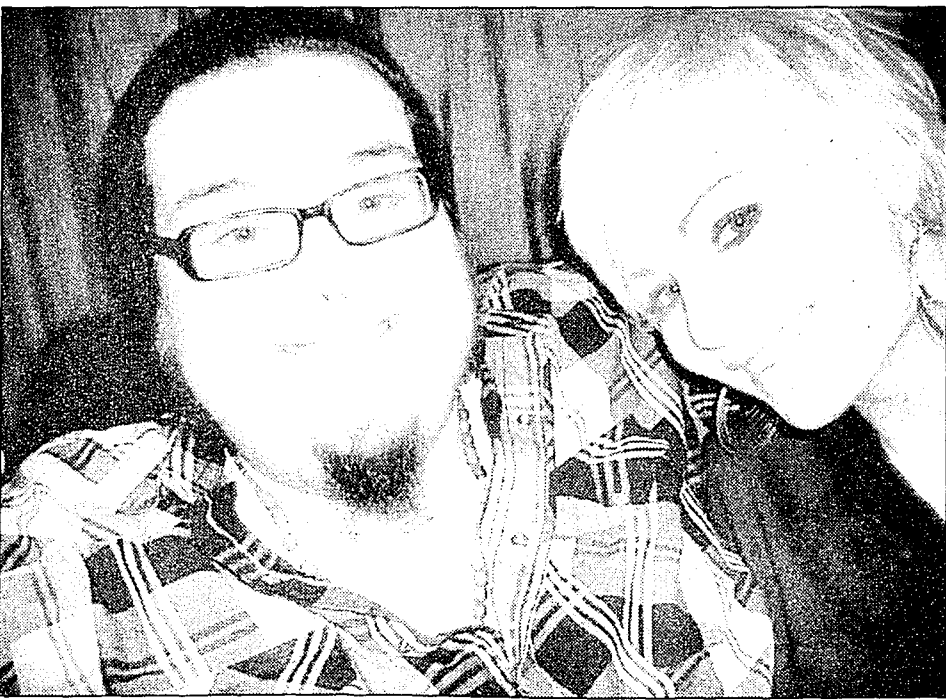


Photo courtesy of Justin Gill

Justin Gill (Left) with friend Mitzi Dawn (Right) smile for a picture. Justin says that while recovery is difficult, he still tries to enjoy the things in life that keep him going: his friends.

"She was really nice. I liked her more than I liked my own mother," Justin says hesitantly. "She just kind of let us do whatever, but she was more there than my mother ever was, and she seemed to care about our well-being, but not in an overbearing way – you know, loving."

Sitting together on the floor of Jordan's room, the boys nervously began the process.

"I remember thinking [Jordan's] parents were going to walk in, and we were such chickens about it," Justin says. "It was really late, so they were asleep, but still we sat there on the floor as quiet as we could be. He pulled a pipe of sorts out, and I guess he just did what he'd seen Mary do," Justin continues, "After we smoked, we just laid on the floor."

"I remember listening to Rage Against the Machine, and I'm sure we talked, but I don't know what

we talked about," he laughs.

A wuss was definitely not what Justin was. He continued using long after his first encounter with marijuana, but the problems and the substances changed.

"Drugs did exactly what they were supposed to do – get me high," Justin proclaims. "I remember thinking, 'This is kind of what I want to do, I want to do this for the rest of my life.' I don't remember a specific moment, but it was kind of like all of the moments. I remember saying, 'This is fucking great – I want to do this forever.' I loved cocaine, I loved heroine, I loved it all – that was pretty clear."

Justin's lack of stability in friendships didn't help his yearning to try more and experience more. Drugs seemed to topple into his lap, and when they didn't, he found them.

"I kind of floated around to find people that were doing drugs so I could do it with them," Justin remembers. "I never really had stable friendships, just more people I did drugs with."

The smell of lost dreams, shattered youth, and an inability to cope with the rejection by his mother wafts from the end of his Camel Light cigarettes. Smoke fills the air around his strapping beard. Most stories like these end in triumph over one's addictions and in the clarity to realize one's faults.

This is not that type of story.

Justin, who is currently unemployed, has yet to reach the point in his life where he can see the long road he's been on as worth the journey.

"My life isn't terrible, and honestly,

Justin's mother wasn't always this way. At one point, he considered them quite close, but she worked a lot, both his parents did. However, if you were to ask him where his parents worked or what they did for a living, he couldn't tell you.

"I don't take that much of an interest," Justin admits. "I don't talk to my mom about stuff like that. I mean, we talk every couple of days, but we don't really say anything," Justin declares with a sense of normalcy, but then a tinge of shame. "I live with my mom, but we don't have the best relationship, so it's not like we talk. Yeah, we don't talk at all."

Justin, a self-proclaimed mat-key kid, says his family was never really a family.

"I was the kid that comes home from school on the bus and the key is under the mat," Justin admits. "You just let yourself in because no one is home – they never were. We never did anything as a family. Plus, my parents fought all the time. I'm not sure really what they fought about, but I know they did – we heard it, saw it, sometimes we were part of it."

Justin says now his mother's drinking affects their relationship more, and that because she neglects to see her problem, it causes tension at home.

"She doesn't go to meetings or even admit she has a problem, but she is an alcoholic. She's been like that since five or six years ago," Justin says sternly. "I don't think anyone on my parents' sides are alcoholics. It starts with her."

Justin says he doesn't think her alcoholism affected him at first because his mother started drinking when he was at the height of his addiction.

"I've tried to talk to her, and she isn't perceptive of the idea of getting clean," Justin says. "She doesn't think she has a problem. I'm sure her addiction has negatively affected me but not the fact that she isn't getting clean, but rather, the fact that she doesn't care."

Justin begins to shuffle his feet and returns to his original jocular self. He brushes off the serious turn the conversation has taken and continues, "She is supportive of me, but she just doesn't think she has a problem, which makes it hard to connect with her."

While her unresponsiveness aggravates him, it is hard for Justin to forget the moment when he needed his mother most.

"She picked me up from jail. Yeah, I went to jail. It was in October of 2006," Justin jokes, but it is clear this wasn't the first time he had to remember his experience, and the real impact became muddled with the pressure he felt to move on. "I was picked up for being in possession of a controlled substance, obviously, and you know, it sucks. I don't think anyone likes to be put in that situation."

Justin and his mom had their differences, but on that day in particular, he saw his old mom, the old Mary he'd always missed.

"We just sat in the car and she cried. We never talked about it again. Hell, we didn't talk about it then, she just cried. We aren't really like that, though. No one likes to talk about those kinds of things, but I could tell it had hurt her. I knew she'd care, but yeah, that day I really knew."

"Jesus Christ!" Justin screams. "Bunch of damn dogs." Barks cascade through the phone, and it is obvious his mother's Catholic guilt hadn't altered his speech. "Anyway, where were we? Right, jail."

"It sucks. It's really scary. I was in jail for a weekend," Justin asserts, but that isn't where we are. His avoidance is evident. "I got kicked out of my mom's house," he continues, "and a buddy of mine had just moved to Florida, so I thought, 'Hey, that's a great idea. I'll do it too.' Yeah, I ended up being homeless in Florida."

"So I moved back to Nashville and was staying at this hotel on Trinity Lane – it's pretty shady there, if you didn't already know that – and I had this room at a hotel there."



Photo courtesy of Justin Gill

**"Drugs did exactly what they were supposed to do – get me high."**

JUSTIN GILL  
NASHVILLE NATIVE

"My mom is super Christian, so I was automatically going to hell if I did drugs," he blurts out. "My mom was around me more as a child than my dad, but now she drinks a lot. My parents kind of raised me with guilt. They tried to make me feel bad, so I wouldn't do certain things. Yeah, that didn't work."

Justin chuckles, sways in his seat and changes topics, the fear of sounding overly critical is apparent. You see,

# From raves to recovery

## ADDICTION FROM PAGE 4

"I was selling drugs to the guy in the front office. He would let me and a buddy of mine stay in the room for free, sort of. I was there for two months when the cops did a random-operations search, and they busted my door in, and got me with a bunch of cocaine and alcohol. I was 18."

Justin continues, but this time, he doesn't sound like the carefree soul he began the story as.

"I got arrested, got my mug shot taken, and then there I was, in jail. The food was terrible, and I remember they gave me a bologna-and-cheese sandwich, a cookie and a carton of grape juice. They put me in the cell, and this dude looked me up and down and turned to the guy next to him and said, 'He's going to eat his food,' probably because I'm a big dude, you know," Justin laughs grabbing his belly. "So, I gave them the sandwich, but I kept the cookie and juice. That's really all I wanted anyway."

After his run-in with Metro, Justin attempted to straighten up his life, and getting clean was first on his list. But, regardless of what was first on his list, he still needed somewhere to stay.

"I moved in with my mom so I could save some money and try to get a place. My little brother and sister live there, as well as my grandmother. We never had the kind of family that spent time together. Everybody is kind of isolated and does their own thing."

At age 18, Justin says he realized he needed a change. A big change. He was ready to get clean, which to most people may seem like a pretty regular reaction to going to jail. However, in Justin's case, it wasn't.

"I loved doing drugs. I didn't want to quit—I just knew I had to. I pretty much realized it on my own. I was 17 years old, and I had burned all my bridges," Justin says with a look of defeat. "I knew I couldn't stop using, even if I wanted to. I tried a couple of times, and I couldn't stop. I had to keep using."

Justin settles himself in his chair and continues, the pause in conversation leaving a pungent smell of sadness in the air.

"I was by myself in the end. I had no one there, and no one wanted to mess with me too much. That's when I knew I had a problem," he said. "I don't talk to those people. No one contacts me, I don't go out of my way to talk to anyone, and honestly, it isn't the best idea. I don't have anything in common with them anymore. I'm trying to get better. I hang out with people that drink and smoke, and it's not a big deal."

"The way I see it is that junkies aren't social people. I didn't meet another heroin junkie at a party—it was usually just me."

Lost, with no real direction, Justin realized if he was going to change, he needed help, and Narcotics Anonymous in Nashville was his light.

"My home group used to be on 8th Street in Nashville. Now, it is in Brentwood, but either way, it changed my life," Justin admits. "I have a key tag for three and a half years, so it is like another milestone. I just take it one day at a time. That is kind of my motto: 'just today.'"

Justin grabs his beard, gives it a tug and releases it, his mammoth hands consuming the entirety of his chin.

The future was what Justin wanted to look to and he had plans up his sleeve.

"I didn't graduate high school. I'm working on my GED right now, but I never felt like going to school, ya' know. I would like to do something with art, and I am working on starting up an art studio, where we rent out space and have shows for artists. Maybe have art classes for kids," Justin says excitedly.

Justin says he has an extensive background in spray paint, and he's done graffiti for the past 10 years but hasn't actively done illegal graffiti in the past couple of years.

"I'm working with a lot of different mediums right now, and I was an apprentice for a couple of months at a tattoo parlor. I never got to tattoo someone, but I want to learn how to do it."

Justin says his dad is the reason he loves art. As a child he remembers watching him and trying to learn.

"My dad never taught me, or really worked with me and art but that's probably where I got it from," Justin reflects.

Will Justin fall off the wagon? Today he seems confident that he won't.

"Well, I got clean when I was 18, so it

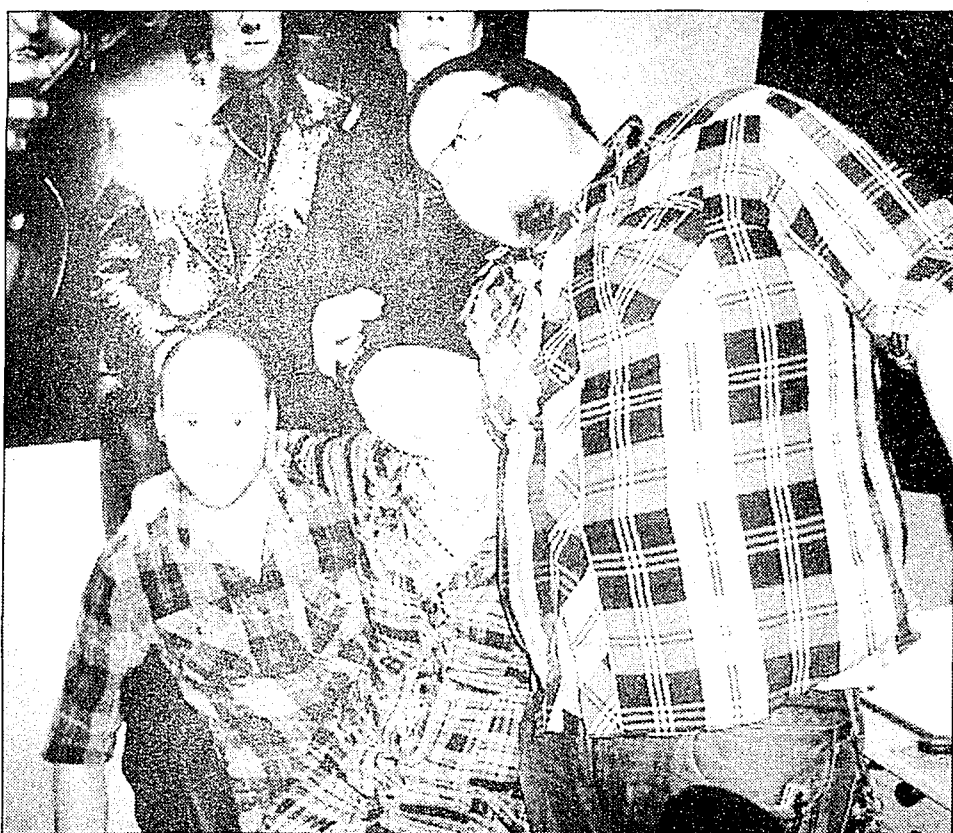


Photo courtesy of Justin Gill

(Left to right) Andrew Chapman, Mitzi Dawn and Justin Gill pose for a picture at a friend's house in Nashville. Justin says his friends helped him get through his addiction.

wasn't too bad. I have never had a legal drink in my life. And it has just become natural, but it was hard at first because I wanted to do drugs and get high."

"I used people to help me not fall apart. I needed support, and then I'd go to a meeting and follow the 12 steps. That is pretty much where I am now. I've

never fallen off the wagon, but I don't know if I ever will fall off."

Justin pushes back on the legs of his chair, and a sense of accomplishment crosses his face.

"Just for today," he mutters under his breath. "I'm not thinking about it, the future. I'm just doing it for right now."

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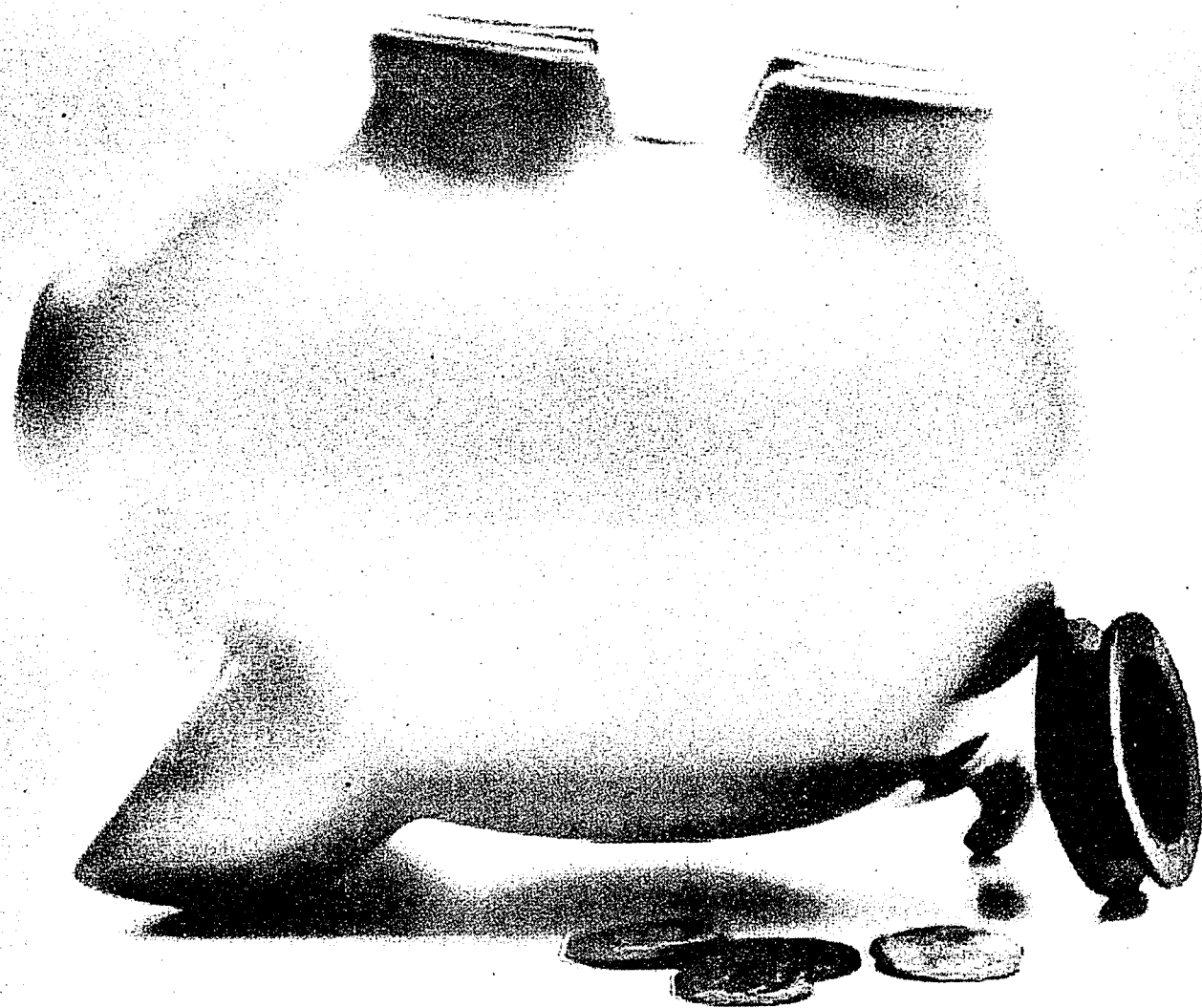
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# OPINIONS

Sidelines is the editorially independent, nonprofit, student-produced newspaper of Middle Tennessee State University. Sidelines publishes Monday and Thursday during the fall and spring semesters and online during June and July. The opinions expressed herein are those of individual writers and not necessarily Sidelines or MTSU.

# When I was a little girl

When I was a little girl, I dreamed of becoming someone my father would be proud of – someone I could be proud of. Working at *Sidelines* has given me the opportunity to grow and develop as a writer and manager, but mostly as a person.

I think most people leave college and think the university molded them into the person that they are. While I have had a few teachers who have changed me, I would have to say that it was this newspaper that made me into the person I am now.

When I first walked into *Sidelines*, I thought it was Collage. I had always been a good writer, but when I realized what a terrible journalist I was, I decided to stick around and figure out what all of these people seemed to already know.

I never left.

Now, on the cusp of my graduation and after a one-year stint as the editor-in-chief of *Sidelines*, I can finally say that

I figured it out. I figured out the reason why they were all here, why they stayed, and why they cared. They cared because this newspaper is about more than getting experience for the future, its more than clips for a portfolio, more than a paycheck – it's a chance to make a difference, to inform the world, to protect the people. Now, it may seem a little exaggerated to say that we as editors, writers and photographers of *Sidelines* change the world, but we kind of do. I won't try and convince you, I know what this paper does. But, I will say that after working here, this paper has changed me, informed me and protected me.

For that I am grateful.

I won't bore you with all of the reasons for why you should get involved on campus, but I will say that without this paper, I would not be ready to enter the job market.

If you aren't involved on campus, and you aren't graduating, then get to it.



**Alex Moorman**  
Editor-in-Chief

Your college experience is what you make of it, and I promise that just going to class will not reap the best experience. Pick up a hula hoop and join in the fun, sell cookies, build a moon buggy, and raise money for something, anything – anything will do, just get involved.

When I was in high school, my mom always told me, "The friends you make

in college will be the friends you have for the rest of your life." You know, she was right. If I hadn't gotten involved, I wouldn't have met 90 percent of the people who have and will remain to be the best friends I've ever had.

How do you meet these people you ask? Get involved.

I'm not your mother, and if you don't get involved then fine, but you will be making a mistake. Our university has a lot to offer its students, but if you never take them up on those offers, they will pass you by.

I didn't become the best writer in the world because of *Sidelines*, and when I leave, no one will hang a picture of me up as a representation of the best journalism student the university has ever taught.

Actually, what I did get, what I will get, is much better than those things: pride.

I've gained pride in the amazing

people who work with me, pride in the paper's improvement, pride that I actually managed to produce a paper for an entire year, but mostly, pride in myself.

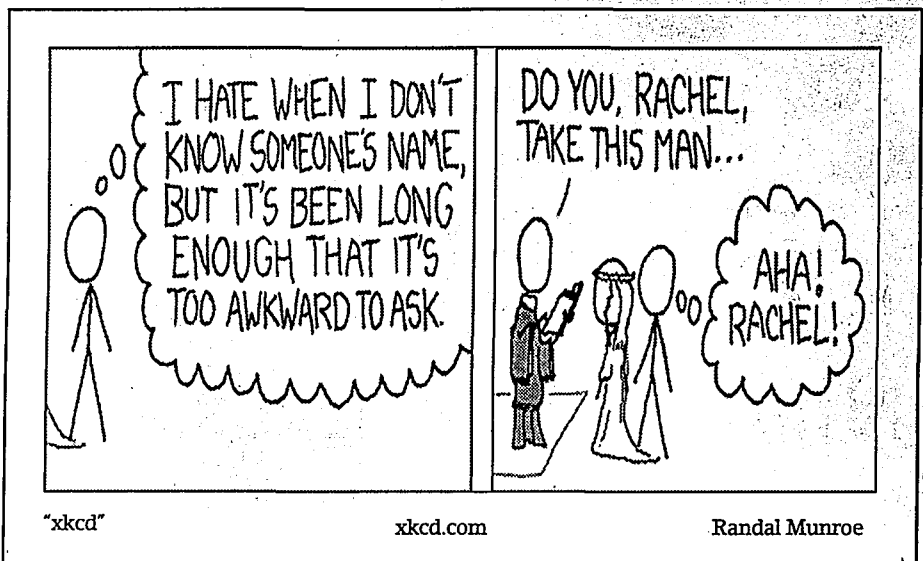
I've never really felt like I was naturally good at anything, and *Sidelines* let me see that I was wrong.

I had a wonderful time serving the MTSU community for the past three years, and I couldn't be more proud of how much the paper has grown. I've always been a little nerdy about good-byes, but I will say that if you follow your dreams, you work with conviction, and challenge the people who try and bring you down, you will usually succeed.

Good luck in all you that you do. Now, I'm going to graduate.

*Alex Moorman is the 2010 editor-in-chief of Sidelines and a senior majoring in journalism. She can be reached at sleditor@mtsu.edu.*

## COMICS



## Music lovers unite.

When I pulled out of the Soldier Field parking lot in Chicago on a crisp, clear night, July 9, 1995, I had no idea the life that I was leading was about to come to an abrupt halt. I was tired, hungry and ready to get back to the South.

One month later, while making coffee in my Alabama apartment, I heard the news on the radio that Jerry Garcia was dead. The horrible sense of despair surrounding the loss of a truly magical performer was bad enough, but the simple fact for me, and many others as well, was that I was out of a job.

For better or worse, the Grateful Dead was much more than a band. The Grateful Dead was a culture.

From city to city, as the band toured, an entire self-supporting community followed – community full of musicians, misfits, poets, painters, prophets, drummers, sculptors, chefs, jugglers, firewalkers and freaks. A community I loved!

Many of us didn't have any real type of steady employment. We just came up with a business that we could run out of a VW microbus and hit the road. I dropped out of Auburn University to make hemp jewelry, veggie burritos, bumper stickers, tempeh, tofu, tacos and tie-dyed tube tops, and we always made just enough money to get to the next show. And we always made a lot of music.



**Lee Miller**  
Local Color

Those Grateful Dead tours were where I first realized how many talented artists were walking among us unnoticed. The music in the parking lots and campgrounds around those concerts was often better – no offense Jerry, but you have to admit sometimes you were a little shaky towards the end – than the music happening on the big stage.

Since then, I have had a variety of "real" jobs, but I have always worked to promote community arts. This evolving project is something I call "Local Color."

This spring, I'm bringing Local Color to MTSU. This will be a spotlight on MTSU students and their many forms of artistic expression. This will be a weekly radio and television program in addition to a bi-monthly column in *Sidelines*.

Murfreesboro will be the 10th major market area I've introduced to Local Color. To celebrate this, I'm throwing a kick-off party Jan. 22 that will be videotaped for

an MTV feature. Several nationally touring acts have been booked to play, as well as many of your fellow students.

If you don't support local music, the invitation is for you too. I'm not going to preach about the evils of Clear Channel... yet! But, the reality is, passionate music lovers working hard to produce and promote new works of art, not merely product, will be unable to continue to do so without the support of an audience.

If you love music, there are many opportunities to get involved with Local Color, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Projected Performers: Rollin' in the Hay; Members of Granola Funk Express; The Last Straw (MTSU alumni), The Corbit Brothers and MTSU students Moonshine Matinee, Day Kids and the debut of the Local Color House Band

Keep up with us on Facebook and Twitter @LocalColorMTSU for more details, and keep your eyes peeled around campus for information about auditions for the talent and crew.

To find out how to display your artwork or have your music aired on the show, e-mail [jl2bi@mtmail.mtsu.edu](mailto:jl2bi@mtmail.mtsu.edu).

## Make a move.

Reclaim your strength by standing up for your beliefs, convictions

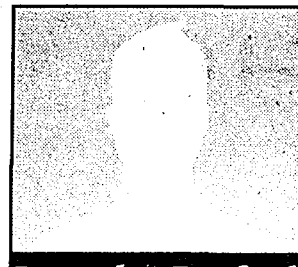
Woman: counterpart, jewel and comforter. She is mother of Earth, daughter of Eve, and the sister of sunlight. Descendant of Aphrodite, she landed here from Venus and graces the landscapes of Earth with her feet, the rivers with her tears, and the atmosphere with her song. Woman, clad with a womb full of birthdays and a heart bearing everyone else's burdens along with her own. If only women in this era were given as much credit for existing.

Scenario One: Mike cheats. He's been frequenting a forbidden garden beyond the walls of his four-year relationship out of boredom, and he seems to be enjoying himself quite a bit. Mike is enjoying himself so much that he doesn't cover is tracks very well. His lies are getting lazy and sloppy. It is not long before the holes in his stories are gaping open, and he is found out. His girlfriend goes into a depression. Her family and friends rename him "scum of the Earth." People talk about this for a while, but eventually, the situation is old news. Life goes on, and Mike's reputation is not all that affected by this. Mike's friends are too busy admiring the exotic beauty of his mistress to make him feel guilty. They congratulate him.

Scenario Two: Same situation as scenario one, only, when Victoria is found out, she becomes the embodiment of every corrupt label known to the English language. She is a "whore" that "makes it hard for faithful and respectable women." A scarlet letter is branded on her forehead. Victoria's reputation fell through to the center of the Earth and melted.

This is a common double standard. Why do these situations turn out so dramatically different in the end? From the perspective of a 19-year-old newly proclaimed feminist, I think it's almost physically painful to live or witness these subtleties in society that plague women of all races and all ages.

The double standards, like the one mentioned above, are one thing, but when we speak about the social aspects of women's issues, we have to consider pop culture and the types of images it likes to spit out. This is a problem that has been beat to death with soapboxes, seminars, term papers, articles, classes, books, and lectures,



**Jacquelyn Benford**  
Just Words

yet still it stays in its status quo and continues to get worse as time progresses; therefore maintaining the limelight of controversial discussion. The way some parts of the media – music videos, ads from companies that sex up their campaigns, the lyrical dark side of hip-hop – portray and address women are noticeably unscrupulous to say the least. It's almost as if it's

a big inside joke between the media and his money. The consumers are outside of the loop but blindly buy into it because it's shiny.

Economically, this oppression continues at a systematic level. According to the Gender Gap Ratio from the Institute for Women's Policy Research, women's wages continued to climb relative to men's in the 1990s, although much more slowly. By 2004, women earned 77 percent as much as men doing similar work on an annual basis. In 2004, median annual earnings were almost \$10,000 more for men than for women.

This entire spiel is for me to speak to women reading this article and let you know, sisters, you are not powerless. This war is not over. Right now, it looks like fighting issues like these means talking about them, and saying "what a shame" with a "that's just the way things are" attitude. It takes more than that for a movement to arise.

Revolution is not talking about change, or demanding a change. It is physically changing the situation. Generally, women don't like to call themselves "feminists" for fear of being stereotyped as bra-burning man-haters. The term "feminism" means the social, economic and political equality of women. Though, it means something a little different for everyone. The basis of it, however, always goes back to the empowerment of one's own gender, not to be taken as hatred for the opposite.

Reclaim your strength, become a feminist if it suits you, write an article and publish it, raise a fist, and scream if that's what it takes. Just don't sit still and watch. That's how movements die.

*Jacquelyn Benford is a freshman majoring in English in the College of Liberal Arts. She can be reached at [jcb6c@mtmail.mtsu.edu](mailto:jcb6c@mtmail.mtsu.edu).*

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## Grown-up Mickey spars with dark side

By DIETRICH STOGNER  
Contributing Writer

There are few characters so beloved in American cinema as Mickey Mouse. Even the silhouette of his ears is recognizable the world over and can induce peals of glee from any child under the age of 12.

Mickey has made the leap from the silver screen to video games before, most notably with the role-playing game franchise "Kingdom Hearts," but in "Epic Mickey" the iconic mouse steps back into video games with a much deeper and darker role.

"Epic Mickey" tells the story of Mickey Mouse stumbling back into the world of Yen Sid, the sorcerer best known for his appearance in "Fantasia." While there, Mickey discovers Yen Sid's model of the world of Wasteland and the paintbrush used to create it.

Fiddling around, Mickey inadvertently destroys the model and creates the Shadow Blot, a ravenous black monster that promptly seizes control of the now ruined world. Months later, Mickey is dragged into Wasteland and has to rebuild the destroyed world.

The visuals of "Epic Mickey" grab attention quickly. The game was designed by legendary designer Warren Spector, the creator of "Deus Ex" and "System Shock" — two titles noted as revolutions in game design.

Not the kind of world that fans of The Walt Disney Co. become accustomed to, "Epic Mickey" shifts between an open-world 3D game to 2D transition stages that are designed around older classics of the Disney empire, such as "Steamboat Willie."

While the main 3D levels are beautifully designed, the transition pieces have a number of

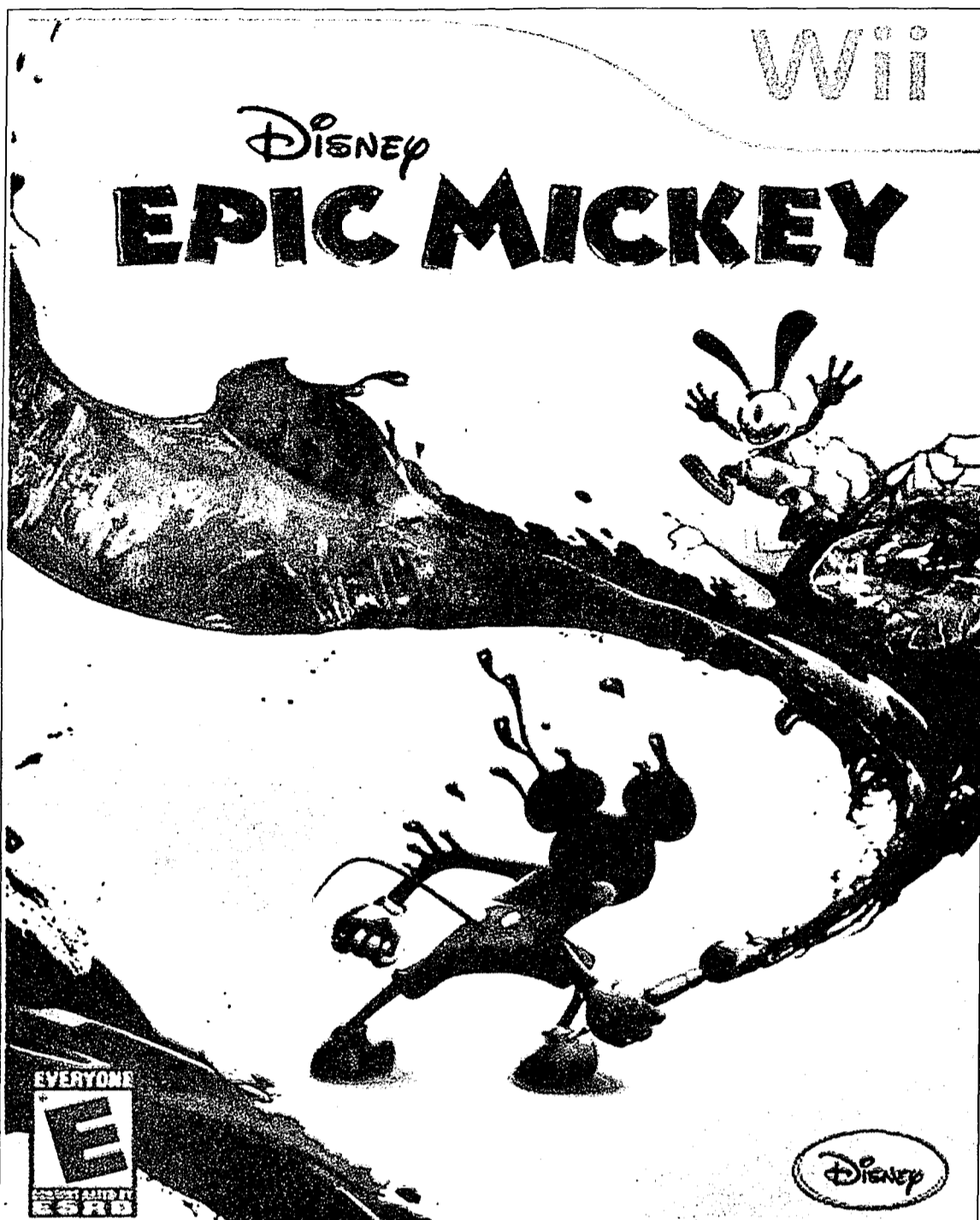


Photo courtesy of The Walt Disney Co.

varied art styles that worked very well. The entire game flows seamlessly between visual styles, ranging from more modern computer imagery to some sections that almost look hand animated.

The story is outstanding, following Mickey on an adventure through a dark and ruined world and touches on a few themes not often seen in children's stories. Mickey is confronted with the destruc-

tion he caused, and he must come to terms with this responsibility.

The Shadow Blot serves as a very effective villain and helps tie the story together with a satisfying ending. While the story may

not be as dark as some gamers were hoping, it makes up an intelligent story that keeps a slightly more adult tone than often seen from Disney.

Unfortunately, the gameplay and controls don't live up to the same standards.

Finicky cameras and clumsy controls make the game frustrating at times. While the camera is usually adequate for the game, there are many moments that it blocks a critical view, leaving the player unable to see the obstacle in his or her path.

In addition, the entire game feels as if it needs a few more months of polishing. Texture issues and unrefined sections make the experience frustrating at times and distract from the storyline.

The primary gameplay mechanic involves using Yen Sid's paintbrush to alter the world of Wasteland. By using paint, you can alter the nature of enemies, converting them into allies. Alternately, you can use paint thinner to erase objects and enemies completely. While initially intriguing, the novelty quickly wears off. Also, the changes made are for the most part temporary. When re-entering a painted-over area, the entire area is reset, which makes the thrill of the paintbrush seem somewhat hollow.

"Epic Mickey" is a work of visual art. The brilliant design and unique story are one of the best seen this year, which will hopefully inspire other franchises to take chances with well-established characters.

Unfortunately, weak gameplay, a clumsy camera and repetitive actions quickly overtake the novelty of the world. While a remarkable achievement, "Epic Mickey" falls short of being a remarkable game.

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## David Ball, band entices with Americana music

By ABBY DONEGAN  
Contributing Writer

The Grammy award-winning artist David Ball rocked the house Dec. 2, giving more than 75 fans an intimate peek at his new record, "Sparkle City."

Members of the MTSU chapter of Public Relations Student Society of America partnered with Ball's management team, Progressive Music Group, to reintroduce the South Carolina native to a younger audience.

Well known for his 2002 chart-topping hit, "Riding with Private Malone," Ball's new album segues into Americana from his original country roots, and last week's performance highlighted both his old and new style of music.

"I have always liked him," revealed Fitchett, a devoted fan who drove all the way from Champagne, Ill., to see Ball perform.

She said she has seen Ball play in seven states and eight towns in the course of the last six months.

"He's really nice and always remembers you," Fitchett bragged.

In response to having such a dedicated fan for more than 19 years, Ball said the industry is becoming much more focused on targeting key demographics, and artists have found a new appreciation for devoted fans.

"The music right now is a niche, and we are trying to find people that like it," Ball explained. "I've been doing this a long time, but music is changing. The goal is to get back to music and hit songs — I like

a hit record."

Tiffany and David Yoder, both of who are Murfreesboro residents, said they had never heard of Ball before until that night's performance but said they enjoyed the show.

"He's really good," Tiffany proclaimed. "We really liked him. We will definitely come see him again."

During past shows, Ball has dedicated songs to Fitchett. She said she always makes sure to keep two of every CDs he records — one for the road and one at home.

Throughout the night, the intensity of the crowd was inevitable. The band played Johnny Cash and The Beatles, in addition to Ball's own music.

A dance contest was even formed, changing the pace of the night. Contestant Ron Bell won first place in the contest.

"This was my big break, and I'm so excited," Bell jokingly quipped.

As the night was about to come to a close, Ball's daughter, Audrey, sang two songs making it apparent that musical talent runs in the family. She sings in her own band called, The Mercy Birds, best known for its hit song, "Can I Have This One?"

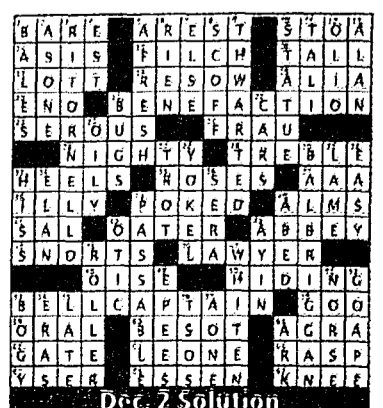
The night ended on an upbeat note where lingering fans got a chance to talk with Ball and his band members.

"I have turned more into a singer — that's what I really love to do," Ball revealed. "It's very rewarding. Music has just always been a part of me, and I have always been in love with music."

## SIDEWORDS

Thank you for enjoying "Sidewords" this semester. There is no puzzle for this issue because it is our last for the semester. However, we have provided the solution for last week's "Sidewords" for anyone interested in checking their answers.

We hope you look for us next semester in the Arts & Entertainment section. Have a great winter break. See you next year!



Dec. 2 Solution