

SGA homecoming director dismissed

By TODD BARNES
Associate News Editor

The Student Government Association voted to remove Donald Abels from the position of homecoming director Thursday, citing the importance of the university's 100th anniversary fall celebrations as the reason for his removal.



Abels

SGA President Brandon Batts said the vote was in response to MTSU President Sidney McPhee's announcement that the 2011 homecoming date

has been set for Oct. 1 - almost one month earlier than usual.

"[President] McPhee has decided to go ahead and announce the homecoming date," Batts said. "This is the earliest [MTSU] has announced the homecoming date, and the reason for that is because [the university] wants as much time to plan for it as possible."

As of Sunday, no official announcement had been made regarding the official date of the 2011 homecoming festivities.

The homecoming director is traditionally appointed in August, but in order to better prepare for the university's centennial homecoming festivities, a new director must start working now, Batts said.

"Although I will no longer hold the title as homecoming director, I will still be around to help out in any way possible," Abels said.

SGA Vice President Samantha Cobb, who serves as speaker of the senate during the body's weekly meetings, said all of the proceedings were constitutional.

"In order to remove a member of the administrative cabinet, an appointed official can be removed by a majority vote by the senate," Cobb said, as she read from the Constitution of the Student Government Association during the meeting.

The senate prodded executives with questions about

SGA, PAGE 3

Diane Black to meet with constituents

By AMANDA HAGGARD
Associate News Editor

U.S. Rep. Diane Black is scheduled to meet with the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday during her first "Constituent Work Week," five days of events hosted by the newly elected congresswoman.

Black's week includes three town hall meetings spanning across Middle Tennessee. The meetings will focus on health care and the economy and will be held in Springfield, Livingston and Lewisburg.

Tomorrow's visit is slated to begin at 5:30

p.m. until 7:30 p.m.

Black's visits come a week after giving a sharp critique of President Barack Obama's State of the Union Address last week, saying Obama is not doing what she feels is in the American people's best interest in a statement issued the following day.

Obama said during his address that he hoped there would be a renewed effort toward reconciliation between the two parties, but he did not specify how that would occur in the coming months.

BLACK, PAGE 3

Faculty, staff e-mail system to be updated

By APRIL BAILEY
Staff Writer

The Information Technology Division is implementing Microsoft Exchange, a new e-mail system, for faculty and staff, and the changes should be completed by the end of this semester, according to an MTSU press release.

The Microsoft Exchange application is a popular e-mail system among businesses worldwide, and it includes e-mail, calendar, contacts lists and storage for tasks, all of which can be supported on mobile devices and personal computers, according to the press release.

Several faculty and staff members said they welcome the change because the older e-mail system does not work well.

"I hate how WebMail

works," said Christi Underdown-Dubois, a cataloging assistant for The Center for Popular Music. "It's not robust enough for what I need."

She said she would love to have a calendar that was more accessible and easier to manage.

"I know that the technicians are very busy, but WebMail is outdated," Underdown-Dubois said.

Tom Wallace, associate vice president for the Information Technology Division, said he has already considered the idea of creating a "more robust solution" for faculty and staff.

"They will be able to utilize a single, shared calendar instead of having to call around and check each others' availability," Wallace said.

E-MAIL, PAGE 2



Photo by Sarah Finchum, photo editor

Jennifer Kinser, a senior majoring in health education, sings acapella for MT IDOL judges Jan. 26, 2011, in the Keathley University Center Theater. The contestants will find out who will be able to sing during February's finale show some time this week.

MT IDOL finalists await results

By LIZA SATURDAY
Contributing Writer

Students auditioned all last week in hopes of becoming the next MT IDOL by competing for a chance to perform during the final competition hosted annually by Student Programming.

The final show will be held Feb. 23 at 7 p.m. in the James Union Building, and it is free and open to the public.

Jason Huber, concerts chair for Student Programming, said vocalists from all different backgrounds came out to sing. Huber served as a judge for the series of auditions

that were held Monday through Friday in the Keathley University Center Theater.

Huber said that contestants' experience levels ranged from "having performed in Nashville to those who have never been on a stage."

"I just want to judge where I'm at for now... and gain experience," said Greg Hanger, a sophomore majoring in recording industry management who competed for the chance to become the next MT Idol.

TRYOUTS, PAGE 3

Famed flutist shares talent with students

By RICHEL ALBRIGHT
Contributing Writer

World-renowned flutist Brad Garner was the guest artist Saturday at the School of Music's 11th annual Flute Festival, which drew more than 100 flutists from around the state to hone their musical skills.

The daylong festival gave middle school, high school and college students alike the chance for Garner to critique them. Those in attendance were also privy to a performance by Garner alongside John Steele Ritter, a famous pianist who has been playing for more than 40 years.

"It's nerve-wracking if you have to play in front of [Garner], but it's a great learning experience," said Shannon Moore, a freshman majoring in music performance.

Garner said he finds teaching rewarding and enjoys working with master classes.

"I love being able to work with younger kids, especially if I'm able to help them become better," Garner said. "If I'm not doing that, then what am I



Photo by Drew Gardonia, Staff photographer

Flutists from around the Southeast play their instruments Jan. 29, 2011, in the Hinton Hall auditorium located in the Wright Music Building. The musicians were rehearsing for a concert that was held later that day. Students competed for soloist positions, hoping for a chance to play with Brad Garner, a well-known musician.

FLUTE, PAGE 3

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Learn how MT's tennis team created a racquet at Belmont University.

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EXCLUSIVELY ONLINE



Watch our video coverage of students competing to be the next MT IDOL.

ONLINE SECTION

WEATHER



MONDAY
56/47

ITD to implement changes by the end of the semester

E-MAIL FROM PAGE 1

Brian Ratliff, a computer lab technician for the Information Technology Division, said the new e-mail system would be more beneficial for faculty and staff.

"There's more functionality with the new system...[and] less restrictions," Ratliff said.

According to the press release, the new e-mail system will allow additional features to be used in the future, such as instant messaging and access to voicemails from the user's Outlook inbox.

The updated e-mail system was intended for everyone, but the student e-mail system received top priority,

Wallace said.

"Since there are more students than faculty and staff, we wanted to get the students up and going first," Wallace said, adding the new e-mail system for faculty and staff will operate via Microsoft Outlook as well, but the system will be hosted by the university's servers, making it in-house only, whereas the student system can be accessed from any server.

Rebecca Zanolini, a Spanish professor in the College of Liberal Arts, said she is looking forward to being able to use the new e-mail system, but she understands that the job of managing the university's technology can be demanding.

"Technology can be difficult," Zanolini said, "but I think it improves our quality of life and education experiences."

CRIME BRIEFS

Theft
Jan. 26, 2:26 p.m.
Business and Aerospace Building
Victim reported that his wallet was stolen from the computer lab.

Theft
Jan. 26, 3:04 p.m.
Corral Lot
Student reported that her vehicle was stolen. She later called back and stated that she found the vehicle in the parking lot near the James E. Walker Library. She believed the theft was a prank.

Alcohol
Jan. 26, 10:29 p.m.

Greek Row
Esau Espinoza, 21, was arrested for driving on a suspended license, while under the influence of an intoxicant, and violation of implied consent.

Vandalism
Jan. 27, 1:29 p.m.
University Honors College
A complainant reported the building had been vandalized with spray paint.

Traffic
Jan. 27, 1:57 p.m.
Keathley University Center
A complainant reported that his vehicle had been struck outside

of the building.

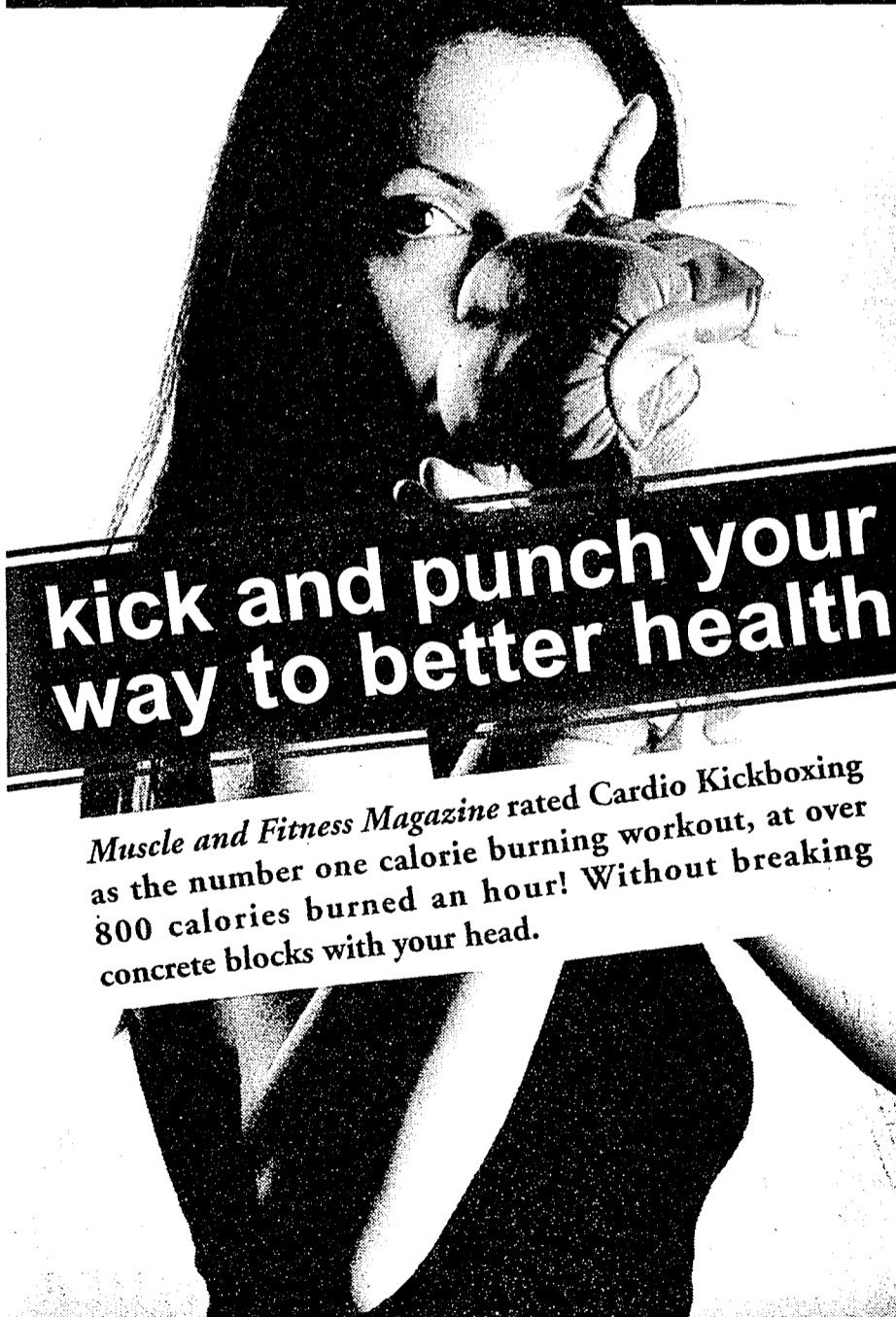
Traffic
Jan. 27, 8:03 p.m.
Alumni Drive
Bekah Wilson, 26, was issued a state citation for driving on a suspended license.

Use of False ID
Jan. 28, 1:27 a.m.
Peck Hall
Faulkinberry Drive
Heather Corbo, 18, was issued a state citation for possession of false identification.

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CORRECTIONS
In the Jan. 24 issue of *Sidelines*, we mistakenly forgot to mention that due to the length of the story, "For love of the game," was condensed for print. The full version is available online on our website.
In the Jan. 24 issue, *Sidelines* mistakenly published the article "AKA 'recaptures the dream'" with an incorrect attribute. Todd Barnes, associate news editor, should have received credit for this article. The photos associated with "AKA 'recaptures the dream'" were incorrectly attributed to Bailey Ingram. Todd Barnes should have received media credit for the photos.
Sidelines regrets these errors.

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LOCAL EVENTS

On Campus

Off Campus

Lectures:
The Mother-Goddess Figurine Problem of the European Paleolithic
Jan. 31, 3 p.m.
University Honors College
Room 106
Tickets: FREE

Debunking Apocalypse 2012
Feb. 4, 6:30 p.m.
Wiser-Patton Science Building
Room 102
Tickets: FREE

Experimental Vehicles: Innovation and Creativity in Engineering
Feb. 7, 3 p.m.
University Honors College
Room 106
Tickets: FREE

Concerts:
"Happy Anniversary 2011!"
Jan. 31, 7:30 p.m.
Wright Music Building
Tickets: FREE

MTSU Wind Ensemble
Feb. 4, 8 p.m.
Wright Music Building
Tickets: FREE

African-American History Month Events:
Campus Sing
Feb. 1, 12 p.m.
KUC Theater
Tickets: FREE

QUES Day
Feb. 1, 11 a.m.
KUC 2nd Floor
FREE

Keith Craig Musical Medley
Feb. 1, 5 p.m.
Wright Music Building
Tickets: FREE

Unity Luncheon Keynote Speaker: Gloria Ladson-Billings
Feb. 3, 11 a.m.
JUB Tennessee Room
Tickets: Students \$10

Campus & Community Collaboration-Keynote: Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings
Feb. 3, 6 p.m.
JUB Tennessee Room
Tickets: FREE

Arts: Collage submission deadline
Feb. 4
University Honors Building
Room 224
FREE

Concerts:
Tina Dico
Feb. 2, 7 p.m.
Wildhorse Saloon
Tickets: \$20-\$85

Cobra Skulls
Feb. 2, 7 p.m.
The Muse
Tickets: \$6 advance/\$8 door

The Civil Wars
Feb. 2, 8 p.m.
Belcourt Theater
Tickets: \$15

Monotonix
Feb. 2, 9 p.m.
The End
Tickets: \$10

Kurt Elling
Feb. 4, 8 p.m.
Schermerhorn Symphony Center
Tickets: \$44-\$104

Joshua Radin featuring Anya Marina & Andrew Allen
Feb. 4, 9 p.m.
Mercy Lounge
Tickets: \$17

The Oxford Circus
Feb. 4, 8 p.m.
Rocketown
Tickets: \$6

Tokyo Police Club
Feb. 5, 9 p.m.
Exit In
Tickets: \$15

Robert Plant with Band of Joy
Feb. 8, 8 p.m.
Tennessee Performing Arts Center
Tickets: \$85-\$135

Performing Arts: You can't take it with you!
Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m.
The Swan Performing Arts Center
Tickets: \$10

Murder Mystery Excursion Train:
Feb. 5, 8:30 a.m.
220 Willow Street
Tickets: \$52

Film: Marwencol
Feb. 1, 6:10 p.m. & 8:20 p.m.
Belcourt Theater
Tickets: \$7.25

Events Policy
Sidelines welcomes current campus and community events submitted by all readers. Please e-mail events to slcampus@mtsu.edu or 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.

HOUSING REAPPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR FALL 2011 / SPRING 2012

The Housing and Residential Life Office is now accepting housing reapplication forms from returning students for the Fall 2011/Spring 2012 academic year. Students are encouraged to reapply for housing as early as possible, particularly if they are requesting to move to a different location on campus next year, as new assignments are made by application due date.

Students requesting to remain in the same location on campus next year will be given first priority to do so as long as their reapplication and \$300 prepaid rent deposit are received by the deadline. The reapplication deadline with priority for the 2011/2012 academic year is **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2011 AT 4:00 P.M.**

Students may reapply by completing a reapplication form and paying the \$300.00 prepaid rent in the Housing and Residential Life Office in the Keathley University Center, room 300, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Students also have the option of reapplying for housing with priority online at www.mtsu.edu. The \$300 prepaid rent is paid by using a credit card, MasterCard or Visa, or by completing an online check. There is an additional \$18 nonrefundable service fee charged by the third party for processing the payment online.

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

**Summer '11 Housing Applications are also available in the Housing Office. Reserve your summer space now by completing the housing application and submitting it with the \$175.00 prepaid rent deposit. It is not too early!!

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

Officers cite anniversary for removal

SGA
FROM PAGE 1

how a new homecoming director would be selected.

"Just to clarify—the incoming homecoming director—will that be the same homecoming director that assumes responsibilities in the fall?" At-Large Sen. Gavin Mosley asked.

Batts said his plan is to appoint a committee consisting of senators, students and community members to select a new homecoming director.

"As you all know, the president has the final say in who picks the new homecoming director," Batts said. "I'm not trying to step on any toes in selecting whoever I want. So, I'm giving up that [right]."

The senate's next question was the fate of Abels, and if he was to hold a different role within the organization.

"What will happen to Donald Abels?" asked Sen. Laura Bosi of the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences.

Abels said the bulk of his work is in the fall, and he was not personally offended that



Photo by Todd Barnes, associate news editor
(From left) Erica Eisner, secretary, and Sarah Ayache, vice president of administration and public affairs, prepare for the Student Government Association meeting Jan. 27, 2011, in the Cason-Kennedy Nursing Building.

the senate voted him out of office.

"I will not be homecoming director—that's all," Abels said. "I'm not technically working this semester."

Abels is no longer part of the SGA, but he said his presence within the organization would not diminish.

Homecoming director is a rewarding endeavor and observing how the position works, as well as taking the time to enjoy the experience, is all part of the job, Abels said.

Abel then offered some advice for the future homecoming director.

"I could literally write a book with all of the advice I have," Abels said. "But, if I could only tell them one thing, I would tell them to not be overwhelmed by all that will be expected out of them, make as many memories as they can, learn as much as they can and enjoy every minute because there is no better role to play at the best university in Tennessee."

Applications for homecoming director are expected to be available today inside of the SGA office, located in Room 208 of the Keathley University Center, and the committee will start interviewing possible

candidates as soon as it is formed.

Members of the SGA also discussed the status of Resolution 08-10-F, which passed in October, during Thursday's meeting. The resolution opened discussions on changing the name of the MTSU to the University of Middle Tennessee, and subsequently, its passage resulted in several heated debates during meetings last semester.

In November, Debra Sells, vice president of Student Affairs, rejected the resolution on the premise that more research was needed.

As a result, Mosley formed a research committee for the resolution. The committee is charged with gathering research, of which the committee's findings will be presented during the last SGA meeting of the spring semester.

"The first order of business that will be looked at by [the committee] are the pros and definite cons that can come along with changing the school's name," Mosley said. "This will take place over the next four months."

Mosley said that he must listen to what students want, which means putting "on the brakes" before proceeding to change the university's name.

"The time for discussion is not now," Mosley said. "Research will lead to a report, and that report will lead to a discussion. But, as of right now, I must willfully and strategically say, we must stand down and listen to the will and desires of those who voted us into office."

Opening ceremony slated for Saturday

BLACK
FROM PAGE 1

forward together, or not at all," Obama said. "For the challenges we face are bigger than party and bigger than politics."

While Obama insisted in his address that party should not get in the way of legislative choices, the solution of government "investing" in the economy was not received well by some in the Republican Party, including Black.

"The American people want us to stop the spending and stop the waste," Black said. "After two years of the federal government trying to create jobs, unemployment is [almost] 10 percent in Tennessee and across the country."

Other events include speeches to the community, a school ribbon-cutting ceremony, and various county meet-and-greets with local officials.

One of Black's speeches will be to the Tennessee Credit Union League, a nonprofit trade association for state-based credit unions.



Black

"The people of Tennessee want this Congress to follow a more responsible path than what we have seen the past two years," Black said. "I will work with my Republican colleagues to cut the spending, reduce the debt, and get government out of the way of business."

This new Congress can do better and must do better for the American people, Black said.

Black defeated Brett Carter, the Democratic Party's nominee in the 6th Congressional District race, by more than a 30-percent margin in November.

Black said she believes government cannot directly support job growth, but it should work to reform regulations and cut mandates in an effort to promote businesses to invest more capital and resources, which in turn would reduce unemployment.

"After two years, we know that government doesn't create jobs," Black said. "Businesses create jobs."

Musicians attend flute festival to enjoy classical good time

FLUTE
FROM PAGE 1

doing with my time?"

Several student competitions, performances and master classes went on throughout the day.

"Master classes can be lectures on any topic or performers can play in front of the guest and he'll critique you," said Jessy Fine, a senior majoring in music education.

The MTSU Flute Choir, as well as students from all over the Southeast, participated in the festival.

"We have anywhere from 100 to 150 participants each year," said Deanna Little, an associate professor in the School of Music. "While none of the competitors are from MTSU, we have a diverse group of students ranging from the sixth grade to seniors."

The festival gave young performers a chance to use the university's state-of-the-art music facilities, meet some of the program's professors, and receive advice from Garner.

"I would love for these students to become part of our music program," Little said.

Garner gave an hourlong performance in the middle of the day exclusively for the participants of the festival.

"[The concert] was a nice mix of contemporary and classical pieces," Garner said. "I think it's nice to have a

mix of pieces with 'tension' and 'release' within the program because within any aspect of life, and in [the] arts, there are these moments."

The festival ended with a final concert featuring a high school soloist, a junior soloist and the Festival Flute Choir, hailing from MTSU. The soloists were students who competed earlier in the day for the spot.

Garner said he was impressed with talent displayed by local musicians.

"Middle Tennessee has a great appreciation for flute and music," Garner said. "There is immense talent in this area. Even this hall, which has amazing acoustics, has been great to perform in. While it's different from other venues I've played in, it's still great, and I'm so excited to be here."

Garner currently teaches at the University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music. He holds degrees from West Texas State University and The Julliard School. He is the main flutist with Atlantic Sinfonietta, New York Virtuosi and Virtuosi Quintet. Garner holds a position at The Julliard School's Pre-College Division in addition to his work at the conservatory. Between his teaching duties, he remains an active artist in the New York area and is a frequently participates in studio productions.

Becca Andrews, news editor, contributed to this report.

Winners to perform in February

TRYOUTS
FROM PAGE 1

Hanger said his goal is to achieve a career in music, either through a solo career or performing in a band. He said he is optimistic and hopes he will have a successful career much like the artists he admires.

Students' performances included popular audition pieces like, "And I Am Telling You," performed by Jennifer Hudson, "Firework," performed by Katy Perry and "Stranger In My House," performed by Tamia.

Contestants were required to fill out an application packet and sing for 30 seconds acappella.

Fewer than 20 soloists showed up for each audition date. During the auditions, the judges jotted down their immediate reactions while a recording of the performance was made so the judges could "go back and make the right decisions," Huber said.

The auditions ran smoothly, Huber said, without any of the antics that have made "American Idol" more entertainment than talent over the past 10 seasons.

Huber said that the results of the auditions would be announced sometime this week.



Photo courtesy of MTSU News & Public Affairs
Shawn Williams, a sophomore in the College of Mass Communication, sings for MT IDOL judges on Jan. 27, 2011, in the Keathley University Theater.

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FEATURES

FROM ROCKY BEGINNINGS TO SMOOTH SAILING

PLUCKED FROM TENNESSEE, ONE STUDENT LEARNS THE ISLAND OF OAHU IS MORE THAN SUN AND SAND - IT CAN ALSO BE HOME.

By EMMA EGLI
Features Editor

It's every kid's worst nightmare. Being the new kid. As if being a teenager weren't hard enough, let's add to the mixture a completely unfamiliar realm of hormonal, self-conscious, and socially awkward moments. Sounds like a cocktail for adolescent disaster.

I didn't anticipate just how strong my dose would be stepping into homeroom that first day of freshman year. I had finally located the correct room and was proud of myself for not having to look at the map, having memorized it the night prior. I made sure to avoid eye contact with any human being as I made a beeline for a desk in the back.

While staring at the etched graffiti on my desk - "Bloodz Rule," and "Haoles go home" - it was then that I got a weird feeling. The feeling you get when someone's staring at you. I looked up to see 19 pairs of Hawaiian, Samoan, Japanese and Korean eyes on me. My face flushed red, a common reaction whenever attention was drawn to me. I could feel my heart beating in my throat. They were just blatantly staring - and they were staring because I was the only white person in the room.

My parents had broken the news to my sister and I the summer before my ninth grade year of high school while we were living in Tennessee. I remember that day vividly. I was sitting in my room, annoyed because I was trying to watch "Total Request Live" and my mother kept interrupting. She stood in the doorway as Carson Daly droned on about the next Britney Spears album and dropped the nuclear bomb on my fragile teenage existence.

"Dad got a job offer," she announced. "We're moving to Hawaii."

I sat there, staring blankly

at the TV as she waited for a reaction. When I didn't give one, she walked away, leaving me in a surreal state of confusion.

Where would we live? Where would I go to school? What about all my friends? The panicked questions ran through my head as the tears ran down my face.

I was leaving the place I had spent my childhood - the place I had made all my friends and memories. Sure, I was leaving it all for a tropical paradise, but the thought of starting high school - a milestone in my teenage career - on the other side of the country by myself was absolutely terrifying.

I had a lot to think about during that 10-hour flight. My mind raced through the memories of the last time we had vacationed on the small island, straining to remember any key facts. All I could recall were luaus, beaches, sunburns and tourists.

Come to think of it, I hadn't really paid any attention to the actual people there, especially the kids my age. I was so enthralled with the fact that I was on vacation in Hawaii; it had never really occurred to me that people actually live there.

My friends were just as close-minded and naive as I was.

"Are you gonna' live in a grass hut?" my best friend asked. "Do they even have schools? I thought they just surfed all day."

I convinced myself that surely, that wasn't the case. I tried to picture what my new life would be like in this new environment, but my mind could only draw blanks. The future ahead was as dark and baleful as the turbulent Pacific Ocean I was flying over.

For some reason, the Island of Oahu just didn't hold that illustrious paradisiacal feeling I had initially felt when stepping off the plane a year prior. Then again, I was still in my ignorant teen angst phase and was too stubborn to embrace the situation.

We stayed with family friends while tackling the arduous task of locating a house. We quickly

discovered the ins and outs of Hawaii real estate, being that it wasn't out of the ordinary to find a dilapidated shack on the market for millions of dollars, simply because it was near a beach. We finally found a brand new house near the mountainous region of the island and settled into a cookie cutter neighborhood in a not so conventional part of the U.S.

My sister was set to start at a private elementary school on a military base, a fact that she was indifferent to, so long as "they have to have a good playground and no mean teachers." My parents did their research and saw that most military kids like me went to an expensive private high school that was way out of their budget, so public school it was.

Moanalua High School is

"I wasn't used to the incredibly laid back vibes that echoed throughout the open breezeways."

EMMA EGLI
JUNIOR JOURNALISM MAJOR

made up of 72 percent Native Hawaiians, a fact made astonishingly clear to me that first day. I came home in tears, angry with my parents for making me move to such a foreign place.

My mom told me to suck it up. "You're too overly dramatic," she said, "it's not that bad."

I was furious.

She didn't know what it was like to be an outsider.

I successfully went three days with minimal interaction with other students, going straight to my classes after each bell and taking a seat in the back. I wasn't used to the incredibly laid back vibes that echoed throughout the open breezeways. There was no enforced dress code, and teachers hardly acknowledged the handful of students that would arrive to class late.

Slowly, but surely, I began to talk to people, usually out of common courtesy or because we were placed in small groups in class. But still, I remained shy.

All my classmates had names that were three or more syllables long and impossible to pronounce. They spoke in "pidgin slang" that I didn't understand. In most of my classes, I was usually only one of two or three white people.

Even though people were becoming much more sociable with me, I still felt incredibly out of place. I tried my best to blend in, minding my own business

teacher. She was old. She was evil incarnate.

Perhaps, she had experienced something awful in her lifetime to make her such an unpleasant person. Whatever it was, she was dutifully taking it out on any student that crossed her path. And on that particular day, that student was me.

She came in a whirlwind of graded papers and textbooks, her sour scent wafting in with her. As old and strict as she was, her desk resembled that of a bomb-stricken battlefield. The chalkboard behind her was a mirror image of her desk.

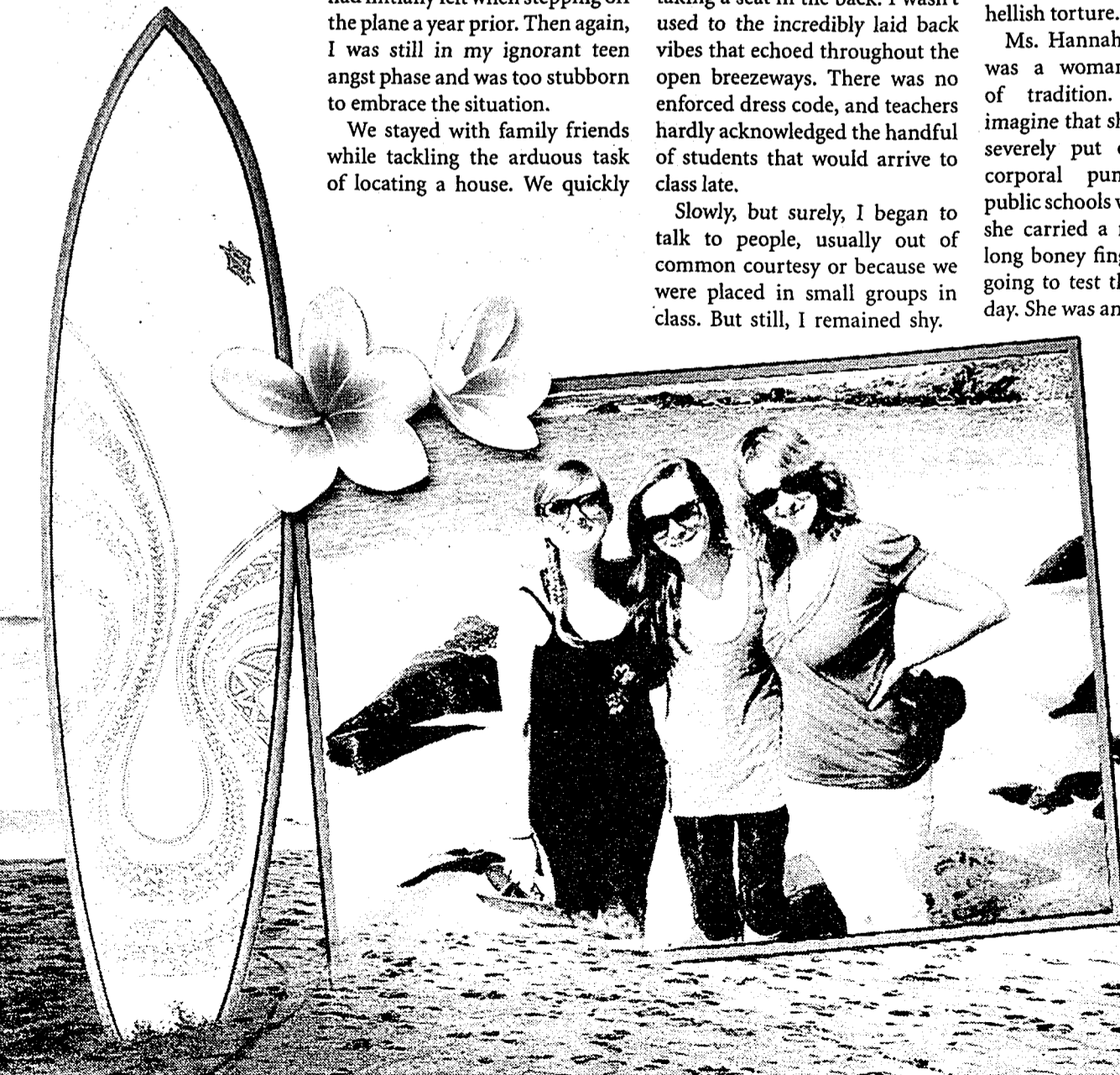
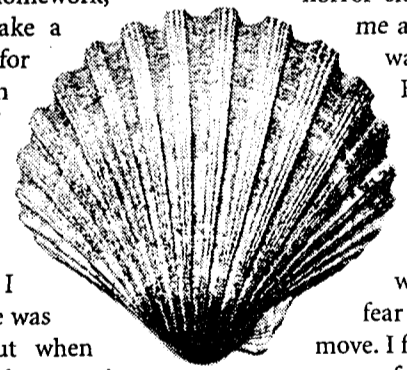
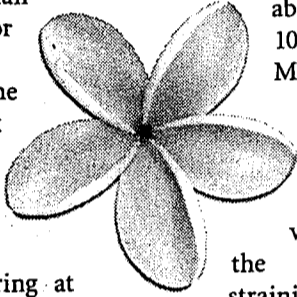
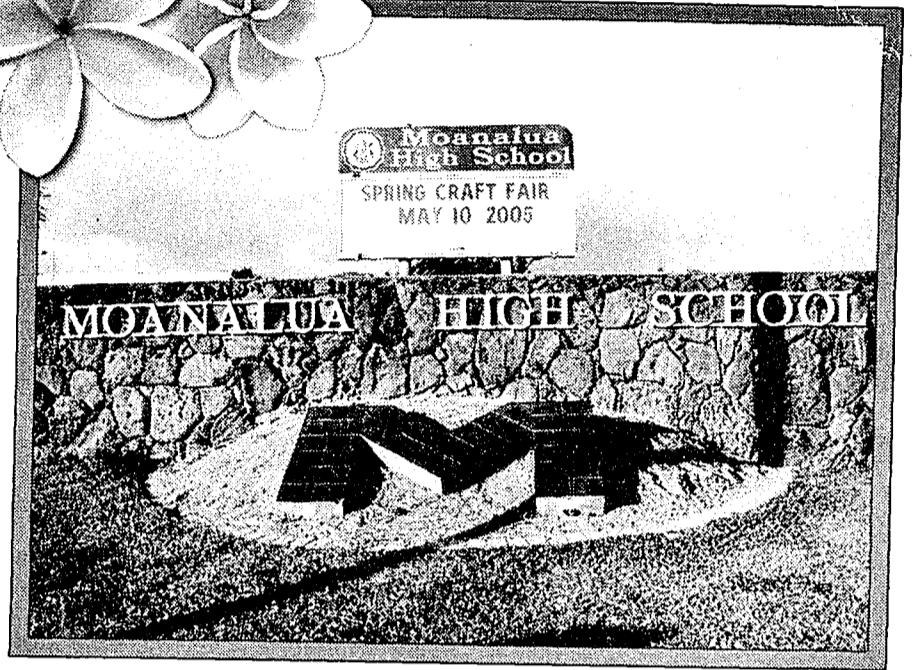
Looking back on it now, I should have known better than to take out the piece of gum and put it in my mouth. For an old woman, her sense of smell was as keen as a hound dog's.

Not a minute later, we all started as she shrieked, "Emily, spit that gum out. Write your name on my board and report for detention after school."

I looked around, wondering who Emily was and how she could be so stupid as to think gum chewing was OK in here. The horror slowly crept over me as I realized she was talking to me.

Everyone in the class turned to look at my appalled face, which rapidly turned red. I was struck with fear and couldn't move. I finally stood up, unsure of what to do. If I stayed after school for detention, I would miss the bus, my only way of getting home. It's not like I had a friend who could drive me. While I stood there contemplating my dilemma, the entire class jumped again as another voice rang out, this time, the Hawaiian girl who sat in front of me.

HAWAII, PAGE 5



Photos courtesy of Emma Egli and stock.xch.jp

(Top) Emma Egli attended Moanalua High School on the Island of Oahu her freshmen year of high school. (Bottom) Egli and her family enjoy the beach on the North Shore in December 2010.

ISLAND LIFE ISN'T ALWAYS A BREEZE



HAWAII FROM PAGE 4

"Ms. Hannah, she didn't know," my classmate protested. "You don't have that rule posted anywhere."

A collective gasp ran through the room. Everyone's mouth, including Ms. Hannah's hung open in shock. This girl didn't even know me, yet she was standing up for me. It was at that moment I realized that no matter how different I looked from the rest of these students, I was still a person. I looked down at the girl who quickly glanced at me and smiled.

Needless to say, her attempt to save me was in vain. We were both sent to the board, me for my gum chewing, and her for talking back. But, as we chalked our names in what little space we could find, she whispered, "That old bat doesn't remember anything. She'll forget about this by lunch."

Sure enough, I looked on the cluttered board and saw numerous names, haphazardly circled and smudged, evidence

of Ms. Hannah's attempt at punishment. I didn't stay after school to endure Ms. Hannah's wrath that day. I did, however, catch the bus with my new friend who happened to live along the same route.

As the rest of the school year progressed, I settled into my new life on the small island. I began making friends, joining clubs, going to football games; things I would have done had we not moved. Only this time, I was sharing these experiences and making memories with brand new people in a brand new place.

It was as if I had opened my eyes for the first time and was finally experiencing the beauty of the island - the people as well as the terrain. Time spent there seemed surreal.

I hardly kept in touch with friends back home.

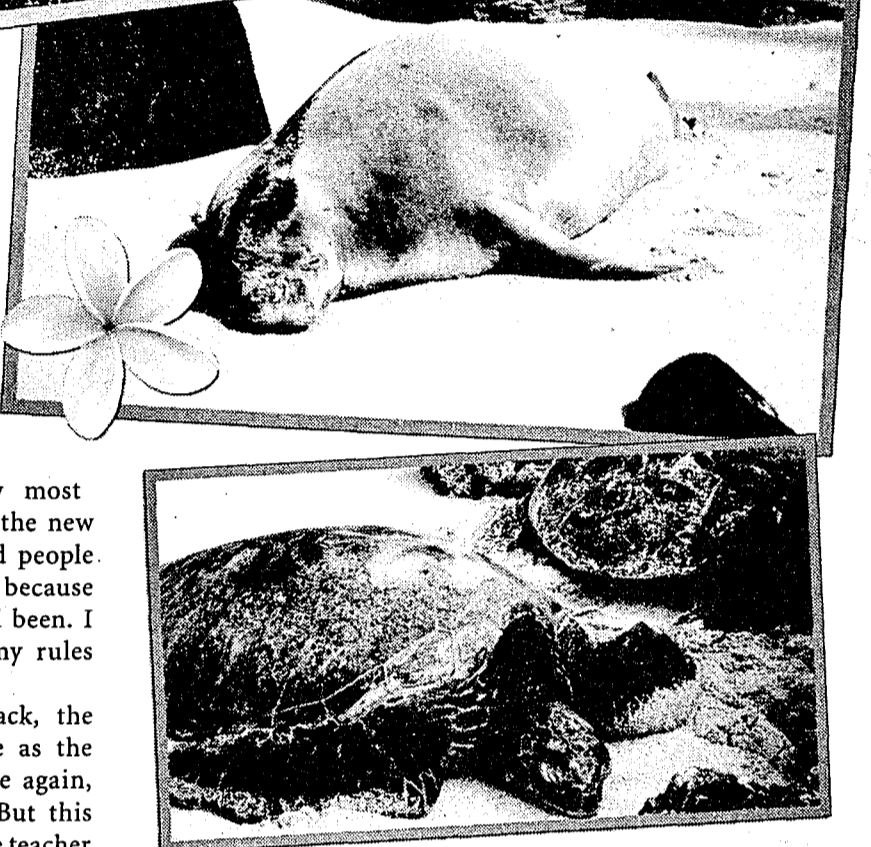
They seemed a world away.

A year went by, and my dad broke the news to us one night at dinner. We were moving back to the mainland. It was too expensive to live here, the commute to and from work was taking its toll, and I wasn't

getting the education my parents wanted. I interjected to explain that his last statement wasn't entirely true, then abruptly stopped when I realized I couldn't remember the last time I had actually had homework.

Moving back to Tennessee felt odd and uncomfortable. Even though I knew most of the students, I was the new kid all over again, and people looked at me funny because they knew where I had been. I wasn't used to so many rules and structure.

On my first day back, the teacher introduced me as the girl from Hawaii. Once again, all eyes were on me. But this time, I didn't blush. The teacher asked me to tell the class about my experience. I paused for a minute, contemplating what to say. No matter how I tried to sum it all up, there was no way they could fully understand what it's like to live a year on an island.



Photos courtesy of Emma Egli and Stock xchng (Top left) One of Egli's friends from in Hawaii Alex DeVaux smiles during a candid moment in 2005 (Top Right) A monk seal lays in the sun on a beach in North Shore. (Bottom Right) A Sea turtle checks out the beach on the North Shore.

So why even bother? "Everyone walked around barefoot, and we just surfed all day," I said with a smirk.



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OPINIONS

Sidelines is the editorially independent, student-produced newspaper affiliated with Middle Tennessee State University and the College of Mass Communication. *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 the university.

Denial runs through more than Egypt

The protests over the plight of government corruption in Egypt this past week have sent chills up the spines of many leaders surrounding the Arabian peninsula, but the full culmination of uprisings may not end there.

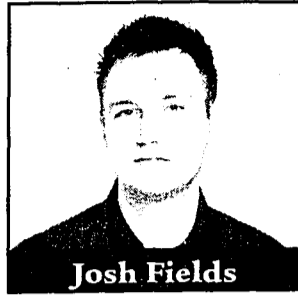
It was reported by *The Daily Telegraph* that despite the front that the United States has put on in support of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, there are assorted U.S. diplomatic dispatches that show evidence to the contrary.

According to Wikileaks cables, the American Embassy in Cairo helped a young Egyptian dissident obtain passage to the U.S. for a summit on activism, all the while hiding his identity from Egyptian state police. Upon his return to Egypt in December 2008, he told U.S. diplomats that an alliance had been formed between anti-government groups to overthrow Mubarak and install a democratic

government in 2011.

This domino effect, which may stand to rock the globe over the next few years, didn't begin with Egypt. It was following the reelection in 2009 of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad that it appeared a new government would be forged, but the protests abated and fell on deaf ears. The Obama administration took a lot of flack for not becoming more actively engaged in pushing the movement over the edge.

Yet, since that time the momentum from those events may have merely shifted to other countries. Tunisia's government was toppled just two weeks ago, and now at the foot of the Sphinx we watch as the government of Egypt deteriorates. More reports have come in of other countries seeing similar uprisings, and the question many critics are asking is if the U.S. is involved enough.



Josh Fields

Columnist

The sophisticated, oft corrupt foreign policy of the U.S. generally plays on two sides of the field. It appears to have been quite engaged in toppling the abusive governments across the globe. It may be that instead of bullets and diplomacy, the tactics of the Cold War are still long standing in the U.S. playbook.

I don't believe that the U.S. set these events into motion, but the nudge over the edge certainly

didn't hurt. Likewise, I don't foresee this being the end. I see similar corruption abound in the world, specifically in China. The economic climate that the world currently faces has lifted the veil of political promises and shown a glimpse of reality.

Many hedge funds are now betting big on a Chinese collapse, not because of its political machine, but because of the engine for Chinese growth being fueled by false economic data.

Last year a report ran on Al Jazeera on a Chinese city known as Ordos Shi, the city had enough capacity to house one million people, yet the city laid almost completely empty.

That's not the worst of it. According to Corriente Advisors, a firm that made millions by betting on the sub-prime bust, it estimates that China merely consumes 65 percent of the cement it produces

after exports.

A recent study by Fitch, an international ratings agency, estimated that if China's growth were to slow by merely 5 percent, world commodity prices would plunge by more than 20 percent.

Given the Middle East's heavy reliance on oil exports, if China's bust comes to fruition it may well cause the collapse of various governments across the region. It may possibly even cause the collapse of the Chinese government itself.

Yet many leaders across the world are in denial that their political weaponry could be overthrown by economic realities. Even as I type this Egyptian President Mubarak still believes his power will be maintained.

Josh Fields is a senior majoring in economics. He can be reached at josh@virtualblend.com.

FACES IN THE CROWD

What do you think of Jeff Fisher's departure from the Titans?



Zimmerman

"[Jeff Fisher] has been with the Titans from the beginning. It's sad to see him leave, because he is the face of the Titans. He's represented them well."

Sarah Zimmerman, undecided, freshman



Carter

"Looks like they are trying to start on a new page, a new start. They got rid of [Fisher] and Vince Young. I hate to see [Fisher] leave."

Dillon Carter, criminal justice, freshman



Watkins

"It will cause a lot more changes in their teams defense style, offensive style. I will still support the Titans, it's more about the team for me."

Kenneth Watkins, recording industry, freshman

Titans right to part with Fisher

Thank you, Jeff Fisher. Thank you for coaching the Tennessee Titans for 16 years and displaying the kind of class I can tell my children about, and let us not forget about all of the successes you have had over the years.

Who am I kidding? Not even I can play "field goal" Fisher up as a legendary coach. Fisher's record is above .500, which is saying something until you realize that considering the talent that he was provided with the record should have gone much higher than that.

When you talk about great coaches, what do you judge them by? You judge them by how they control issues of the off field, keep problems with players in-house, expect players to behave on the field, and finally, address penalties.

Has Fisher really done any of these things?

The Titans have been voted as one of the league's dirtiest playing teams and were one of the top three highest penalized teams this year. Take Ben Roethlisberger for example, the man is accused of inappropriate touching, and Head Coach Mike Tomlin of the Pittsburgh Steelers kept the media at bay. Quarterback Tom Brady of the New England Patriots gets hurt, and Head Coach Bill Belichick explains, "This is a matter that the organization



Spencer Douglas

Columnist

will take care of."

There are many other examples, but my point is this: When quarterback Vince Young did silly things, Fisher did not take care of the problem. This is a coach that saw Young, in his final game keep his helmet on, try to warm up, and return to the game, only to tell the media later that "Vince never told me he wanted to return."

When Vince threw two interceptions in the Steelers game, Fisher pulled Vince. No quarterback should have to look at his head coach every time he has a bad play to see if he is going to be pulled from the game.

Do you really think Tomlin would let a story of one of his players cursing in his locker room ever go out into the public? Belichick benched wide receiver Wes Welker for speaking negatively

about the New York Jets.

I will not put the entire blame of the Titans' collapse on any one person, but I also must acknowledge that coaches should take the lemons they have and make lemonade. However, it never felt like Fisher had control of the locker room completely. Stories were leaked all the time and quarterback controversies occurred every season.

Let us also not forget defense tackle Albert Haynesworth, who played for the Titans from 2002 to 2008, stomping on a Dallas Cowboy's head in 2007 at the end of a play. Ladies and gentlemen, remember a certain person drafted by Fisher named Adam "Pac Man" Jones? For those that aren't familiar with Jones let me tell you just a few of his problems: He had issues with strip clubs and night clubs before being drafted, and he threw money at a woman on the stage in a strip club before attempting to take his money back - all while shouting obscenities.

As ashamed as I have been to call myself a Titans fan some years, I truly feel that with a new coach and less of a circus next season, we might finally turn into a legitimate football team.

Spencer Douglas is a senior majoring in political science. He can be reached at spencerlee23@aol.com.

On-campus groups make a difference

Next semester marks the beginning of the end for me. I will be a senior and will be pressured by the inevitable clock to make sure I leave this campus on time and with no regrets.

My education hasn't just been academic, I feel I have learned a lot, especially about myself.

I was a part of several organizations that in return allotted me various insights on how to lead, be patient, and challenge myself.

It's these insights I hope freshman students will be able to experience for themselves.

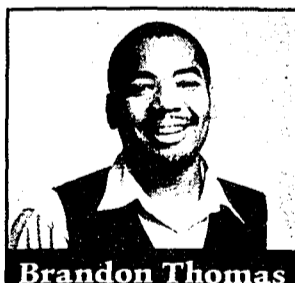
There's a mantra that freshmen will hear from various organizations on campus: "get involved." Although this may seem like a glorified "welcome to campus," it holds some truth.

Students who get involved with on-campus organizations are more likely to stay in school, have a decent G.P.A., and feel invested in school. Additionally, there will be great friendships made along the way.

As a freshman, I can remember trying to figure out the purpose of the Student Government Association, as well as trying to find the LGBT organization on campus, which I would later know as MT Lambda. If that wasn't enough to compete with my attention, I eventually started to read *Sidelines*.

For a student that wasn't connected into the interworkings of campus this was very important. *Sidelines*' coverage of the "All Access Improvement Plan" referendum on Feb. 19, 2009, which included the infamous parking garage, as well as the reporting of the budget cuts rally held on President Sidney McPhee's lawn that same month did a number of things for me.

It actually made me buy into that mantra I used to mock. There



Brandon Thomas

Opinions Editor

holds the institution accountable is a scary thing. From the president of the university to the president of the SGA, accountability is a necessity to keep this university from absolute corruption.

Sidelines also made me want to voice my opinion in its pages.

Additionally, my experience in the SGA helped me better understand what some opinion columnists of the past were talking about when they criticized it. I had the pleasure to serve the college of liberal arts in the 2009-2010

academic school year. I am grateful for this experience. Regardless of what opinion columnists write, if you can experience certain aspects of campus yourself, do it. Don't rely on a few opinions to shape your whole academic career.

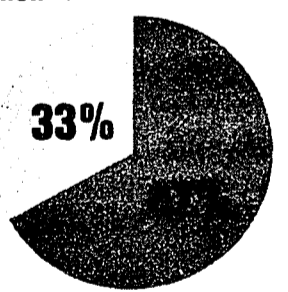
So, here I am now, the opinions editor of *Sidelines*. Through all my various experiences, I have found my niche.

The very organization that delivered news to me when I was a clueless freshman has allowed me to experience what it's like to pass my learned knowledge to new clueless freshmen.

I can only hope that those freshmen will strive to make a positive impact on campus and involve themselves in organizations they can truly stand behind without any regrets.

Brandon Thomas is a junior majoring in political science and can be contacted at muckrakerthomas@gmail.com

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SPORTS

MT fills coordinator positions

By ALEX HUBBARD
Staff Writer

The search for offensive and defensive coordinators ended for Blue Raiders football coach Rick Stockstill last Monday, and he didn't have to look far. In both cases, he reached out to current members of his staff, looking to promote rather than bring in new faces.

Steve Ellis, who served the past two seasons as cornerback and special teams coach, will assume the desk of the defensive coordinator, while Willie Simmons, for four years the coach of MT's running backs, will take up the mantle of offensive coordinator.

Both men are unique in one characteristic alone: age.

They are both 30 years old and will be two of the youngest coordinators in college football.

"Both Steve and Willie have everything I am looking for in the coordinator positions," Stockstill said. "They possess great knowledge of what we want to run at Middle Tennessee, are highly organized and coach with unmatched passion."

Ellis will take over a defense that performed well enough in 2010 and was often not at the top of the list of reasons pertaining to why MT began the year 3-6. The Blue Raider defense led the Sunbelt Conference in pass defense, and Ellis's own student at cornerback, Rod Issac, received all-conference honors.

This does not mean that Ellis is without significant challenges, however. The defense he will inherit will look much different than the veteran-anchored squad that took the field in 2010.

Familiar names like Isaac and defensive



Photos courtesy of GoBlueRaiders.com

(From left to right) Willie Simmons has been promoted from running back coach to offensive coordinator, and Steve Ellis has been promoted to defensive coordinator from cornerback and special teams coach.

end Jamari Lattimore will be gone, lost to graduation, while 2010 starter at cornerback Arness Ikner will be counted on to provide leadership as a senior.

"We will play with a lot of confidence and a sense of urgency," Ellis said. "We lost a lot of guys on defense but that will not be an excuse. We will get guys ready to play, go fast and swarm to the football."

Despite his youthful age, this will not be Ellis's first job as a coordinator. From 2006-08, he coached the defense at Nicholls State, producing a defense that ranked in the top 20

nationally in 2006.

Though he will no longer coach special teams, Ellis will remain cornerbacks coach in addition to his coordinator duties.

Simmons takes over an offense which is certainly not lacking in intrigue. The most obvious questions surround the quarterback and running back positions, which both saw the departure of high-profile seniors Dwight Dasher and Philip Tanner, respectively.

Simmons would seem well positioned to care for the running game. As running backs coach in 2009, he endured a season without

Tanner, who was injured. He used the year to bring about the emergence of D.D. Kyles, who along with Benjamin Cunningham will be counted on to anchor the running game in 2011.

The battle at quarterback, which focuses around Jeff Murphy and Logan Kilgore, remains the question of note surrounding what the offense will look like, but Simmons isn't ready to look that deeply yet.

"We have a lot of guys coming back who are eager to take another step in the development of this program," Simmons said. "We have a veteran offensive line, two good quarterbacks and productive skill players so the pieces are in place. The job now is to work on our fundamentals and limit the turnovers."

Working within an offensive scheme that appears to be set to take much the same style and shape as in previous Stockstill seasons, Simmons's biggest challenge would indeed seem to be turnovers.

The offense's propensity to turn the ball over featured prominently in many of the team's early-season losses, a shining example of which occurred at Memphis in the third game of the season.

In a 24-17 loss, all of Memphis's points came off drives set up by an MT turnover. Simmons will continue to oversee the running game along with his greater coordinating responsibilities.

Stockstill filled in the final vacancies on his staff on Thursday with the additions of Joe Cauthen as linebackers and special teams coach and Buster Faulkner as quarterbacks coach and passing-game coordinator.

How the NFL punishes honesty: Jay Cutler

Football is a bloodthirsty sport.

To paraphrase the folk singer Arlo Guthrie, the game demands "blood, gore, guts and veins in [its] teeth" before it can accept a player's injury as valid.

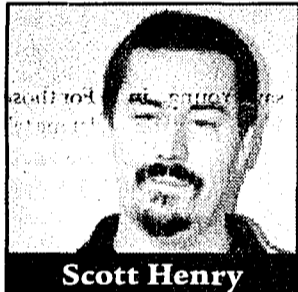
This may be the only possible reason for vilifying the Chicago Bears quarterback Jay Cutler, following his premature departure from last week's NFC Championship Game. Doctors diagnosed Cutler with a Grade II MCL tear Monday, but many armchair physicians pronounced different organs his primary weakness.

Articles, interviews and tweets questioning Cutler's toughness and drive are as plentiful as January snowflakes. Cutler's been compared to other players, both hypothetically, "Brett Favre, Steve McNair, Dick Butkus would have had to be dragged off the field," and real-life situations, "Philip Rivers played two games with a torn ACL."

Despite the claims of Chicago's third-string, signal-caller Caleb Hanie that Cutler was a help to him as he tried to lead the team's comeback, shots of those helpful moments were ignored by Fox. Instead, the transmitted pictures were of a sullen man sporting iPod ear buds, usually reclined on the team's bench, staring straight ahead.

Chicago is a place where a lack of toughness is an unforgivable sin. The Bears are the team of legendary tough guys like Butkus, Gale Sayers, Brian Piccolo, Mike Singletary and Walter Payton. Leaving a game with any injury less obvious than an amputation is akin to treason at Soldier Field, and now, Cutler is Benedict Arnold.

The problem with questioning Cutler's toughness lies in the places he's been. The threat of the "next man up" becoming the permanent starter



Scott Henry
Overtime

is an ever-present fear. Dislocated thumbs and shoulders are popped back into place, sometimes in the huddle between plays. Players refuse to disclose concussion-like symptoms because they fear that a "soft" reputation will be held against them.

Unfortunately for Cutler, he already has a reputation. Arrogant, aloof, selfish and disconnected are among the nicer things that have been said and written about him. Leaving a game with a nebulous injury sets him up as an easy target for those who already have little use for him.

Players, reporters and broadcasters have all taken their shots, even current players who often criticize the media for their lack of understanding about the game's physical toll.

Of course, angry Bears fans have even less mercy. The already surly Cutler has driven fans to exasperation with his inconsistent play, making them unwilling to give him the benefit of any doubt. Whether or not the fans have any knowledge of what it takes to compete in the NFL, everyone has an opinion, and most have been unflattering.

Jay Cutler is taking a beating in the court of public opinion that rivals any that he's absorbed on the field, all because he was honest about his condition. In a culture like the NFL's, where a player's expected to work as long as he's breathing, perhaps it takes more toughness to be able to admit something's wrong.

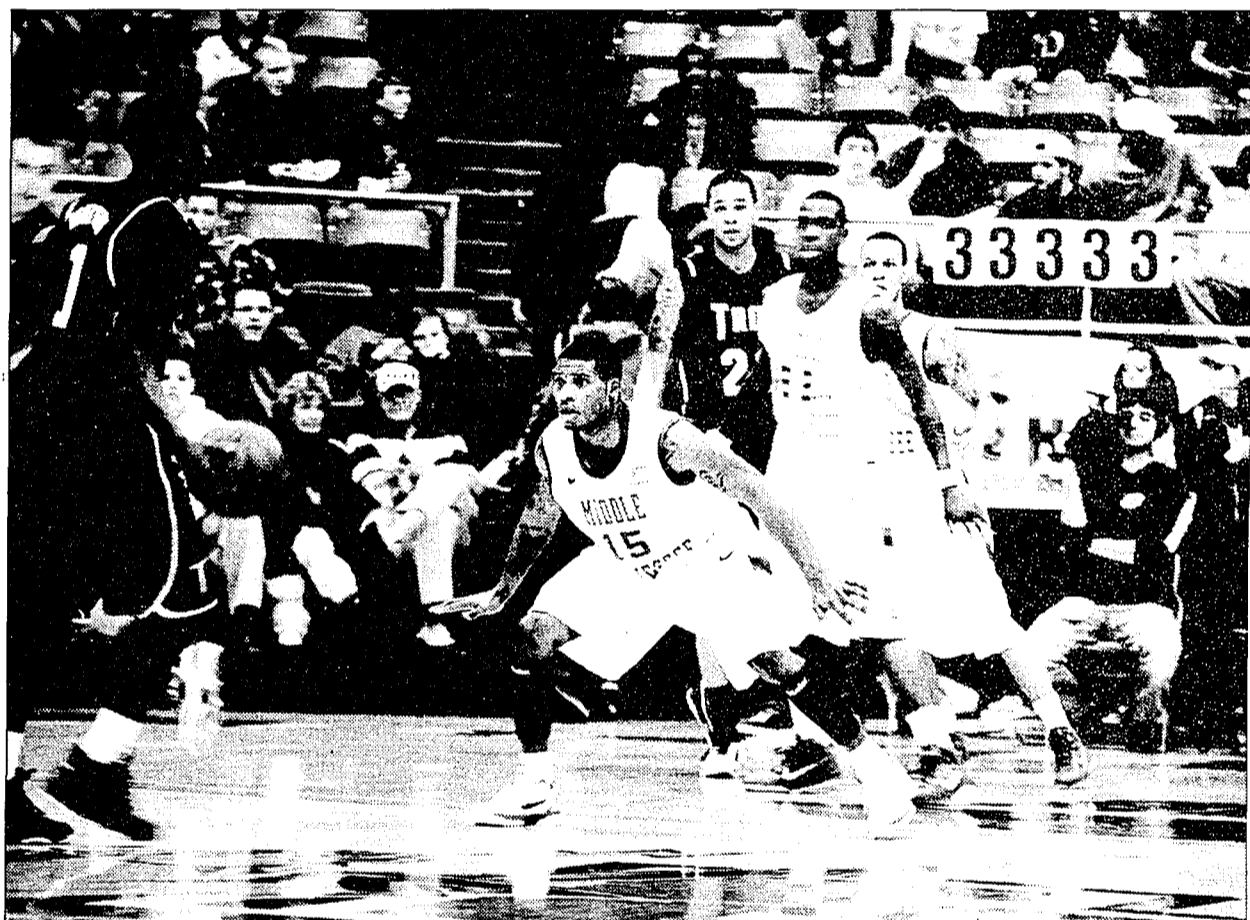


Photo by Drew Gardonia, staff photographer

Senior point guard James Washington's (15) looks to block an opponent Jan. 19, 2011, during a game against Troy, which was held at the Murphy Center on campus.

Blue Raiders basketball looks to gain momentum

Two-game split in Florida highlights season struggles

By WILL TRUSLER
Sports Editor

As we enter the month of February and the hysteria of March Madness draws near, the MT hoops squad is looking to push through the finish line and end its season on a high note.

A weekend road trip to Florida showed the same inconsistency that has plagued the Blue Raiders throughout their season as well as highlighted the main areas that need improvement if they hope to retain a share of the conference title.

Their two games against Florida Atlantic University and Florida International University revealed a microcosm of their season as a whole.

In a 62-51 loss to Florida Atlantic on Thursday, MT was outrebounded 41-28 and shot only 38 percent from the floor.

For the season, MT is 0-9 when they lose the battle on the boards and 2-6 when they shoot below 40 percent.

Likewise, the Blue Raiders were outscored from the free-throw line and had only six assists compared to 17 turnovers.

In their wins this season, MT is averaging nearly three more free throw attempts than their opponents. Meanwhile, in their losses, they are sending opposing teams to the charity stripe eight more times a game on average.

The loss also underlined the value of senior point guard and preseason All-Sun Belt honoree, James Washington. MT stood little chance with its leading scorer and floor general having a subpar game.

In 32 minutes of play, Washington managed only six points, one assist and one rebound. Combined with three turnovers, the game was far from what Blue Raider fans have come to expect of their go-to player.

To put the game in perspective, Washington is averaging a team-best 14.2 points per game to go along with 2.5 assists and 2.2 rebounds per game.

When Washington is hitting threes and forcing defenses to adjust to his ability to drive the lane, the influx of young talent on MT's roster have been able to aid their senior leader in collecting wins.

Such is the case in their victory

over FIU on Saturday.

Washington hit five 3-pointers and went 7 of 8 from the free-throw line en route to leading five Blue Raiders in double figures to a 79-70 win over the Panthers.

His 22 points were a game-high, and he contributed four of MT's 20 assists on 26 made baskets.

The leadership and ball movement are exactly what head coach Kermit Davis will need from Washington if he hopes to make a deep run in the postseason.

MT's 30-23 edge in the rebounding column is also encouraging. The Blue Raiders boast one of their biggest frontlines in recent history with five players 6-foot-8 or taller but have still struggled at times to control the boards.

With the win over FIU, Middle Tennessee is now above .500 in conference play and will bring its 5-4 conference slate [10-12 overall] back to the friendly confines of the Murphy Center where they are 6-4 on the year.

They play host to the University of Louisiana-Monroe on Thursday before leading off a double-header with the women against South Alabama on Saturday.

Women's tennis opens season with a victory

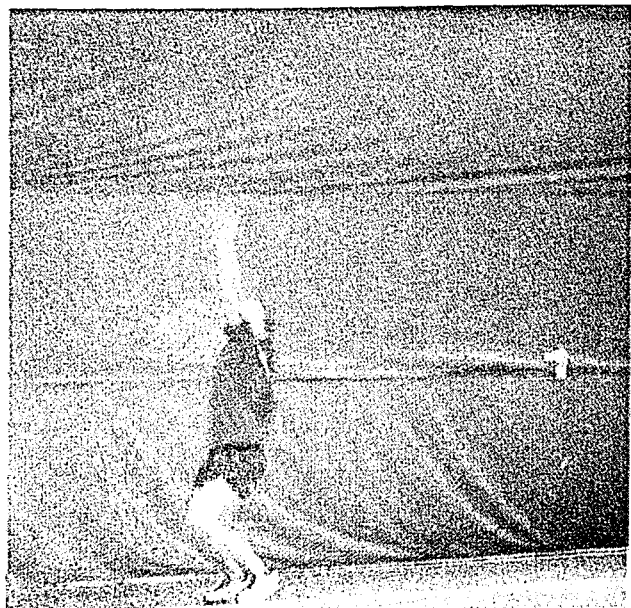


Photo by Kylie Kolz, Contributing photographer
Sophomore Yui Nomoto serves en route to 6-1, 6-0 victory over Belmont at the Wildwood Tennis Club in Brentwood on Jan 18, 2011.

By KYLIE KOLZ
Contributing Writer

The MT women's tennis team won four singles matches and two of three doubles matches to defeat Belmont University 5-2 in their season opener at the Wildwood Tennis Club in Brentwood, Tenn., on Friday night.

"It was a great, all-around, team win," head coach Melissa Schaub said. "What we have been emphasizing on the practice courts was carried over into the match and it was reflected with a solid result. We still have a long way to go, but this was a good start."

There was a great crowd that showed up to cheer on the Lady Raiders and the Bruins, and MT was able to maintain a high level of support and enthusiasm among themselves.

This year's roster includes four juniors, two sophomores and one freshman. Of the seven girls, only two are from the United States.

Schaub isn't too surprised about the diversity on the team.

"Tennis is a very big sport internationally and not as big here in the U.S.," she said.

MT was led by their number one player, Yui Nomoto, a sophomore from Tokyo, Japan. Nomoto dominated her singles match 6-1, 6-0, and paired up with Carla Nava to win their doubles match 8-1 as well.

Nava, a junior from Mexico City, Mexico, also won her singles match 6-1, 6-3.

Playing in the number two spot, junior Marietta Bigus, or "Bigs" as her teammates like to call her, defeated her opponent 6-3, 6-3. The

Polish native was paired with Lexi Brand, a sophomore from Bradford, Ontario, and the duo won their doubles match 9-7.

Brand was forced to retire in her singles match, conceding the point to Belmont.

Alex Dachos, a junior from Florence, Mass., was the fifth player to take a victory for the Lady Raiders and won her match 6-4, 6-2.

This is the third consecutive year in which the MTSU girls have started off their season with a win.

"We started off a little rocky, but the girls have worked hard," Schaub said. "The goal is to still be playing our best tennis come April."

The MTSU women's tennis team's next match is against Chattanooga in Chattanooga, on Feb. 4, at 4:00 pm.

Fisher's departure leaves Titans, fans bewildered

Events in Jeff Fisher's career with the Titans

<p>1994</p> <p>Jeff Fisher took over as coach of the Houston Oilers during the season after owner Bud Adams fired Jack Pardee. The team finished 1-5 under Fisher.</p>	<p>1999</p> <p>A high point in Fisher's career, the team received the official name "Titans" and went on to retain a 13-3 season and a Superbowl appearance after the "Music City Miracle" ran them out of the wildcard.</p>	<p>2002</p> <p>The Titans rebound from a 7-9 record to recover and end with a 11-5 season record and a playoff spot.</p>	<p>2006-07</p> <p>Vince Young is drafted and is later named the AFC Offensive Rookie of the Year.</p>	<p>2007-09</p> <p>Young is injured, sparking a long set of events that end in controversy on and off the field.</p>
<p>1996</p> <p>Adams announced Oilers were moving the team to Nashville.</p>	<p>2000</p> <p>Fisher once again leads the Titans to a 13-3 record and an AFC South title, only to fall in the playoffs.</p>	<p>2003</p> <p>The Titans end the season with a 12-4 record.</p>	<p>2004</p> <p>Steve McNair leaves the Titans for the Baltimore Ravens.</p>	<p>2011</p> <p>The Titans announce they would either trade or release Vince Young. However merely weeks later Jeff Fisher suffers the same fate and is released from the Titans.</p>

By BLAIZE PENNINGTON
Contributing Writer

Last week, the Tennessee Titans released a statement saying that Jeff Fisher and the Titans would mutually go their separate ways.

The sentiment sent shocks across the football world after many felt that Vince Young's earlier dismissal meant Fisher would be there for another year.

The Titans held a press conference with their former coach of 16 seasons; Mike Reinfeldt, the general manager; and Steve Underwood, the senior executive vice president, Friday to try and answer some questions for both the media and the Titans' fan base.

Unfortunately, many left the press

conference with more questions than answers.

Fisher, Reinfeldt and Underwood all seemed to be in an agreement that no one would talk about why Fisher was leaving — only that he was.

When anybody brought up rumors about why Fisher was gone, whoever was talking would respond, "I am not going to go into those specifics."

At this time, no one outside of Titans' management has any definite knowledge as to why Fisher will not be the head coach next year, but there remains a lot of speculation.

One of the main issues brought up in the past week is Fisher allegedly giving Chuck Cecil a contract extension

before he had to fire him. This forced the Titans to pay a man who no longer works for them, something no employer likes to do.

Another rumor circulating is that Fisher wanted to bring his son Brandon Fisher aboard the coaching staff; however, the Titans have a policy that states that no child of anyone in a management position can work for the Titans.

It is also being speculated that Fisher realized that with no quarterback, defensive coordinator, or a real idea of if there would be an offseason this year, he had almost no chance to win.

The only idea anyone at the press conference actually confirmed is that Fisher is tired.

"I've been coaching for 24 years, and it's time," Fisher said. "I need a break."

According to the Titans, the head coach search could be finished before the Super Bowl.

It would seem as if current offensive line coach Mike Munchak seems to be the early favorite, but with the recent Rooney Rule, the Titans have to interview at least one minority candidate for the job.

After the head coach position is filled, defensive coordinator, defensive line coach, running backs coach and quarterback are the next jobs to be filled.

The Titans' management refused to admit the team was in chaos.



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