

Students support interfaith initiatives

By ALEX HARRIS
Staff Writer

The White House Office of Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships launched a challenge to institutions of higher learning across the nation last month to participate in interfaith community service projects.

"As a Christian who became committed to the church while serving my community, I know that an act of service can unite people of all faiths, or even no faith, around a common purpose of helping those in need," said President Barack Obama in a video message about the initiative.

The initiative, which is

also supported by the U.S. Department of Education, is meant to be a way for different communities to build understanding and make contributions to the common good, he said.

Schools have already begun to embrace this initiative. According to the White House website, religiously diverse student

groups at Vanderbilt University are working together this spring to build a home for Habitat for Humanity.

"While we may not all believe the same things, and we don't have to, we can certainly agree that together, we can make a difference," Obama said.

The White House will

recognize the best examples of interfaith service during the upcoming academic year in the summer of 2012, and the deadline to indicate intention to participate in the challenge is April 22.

Latavius Mulzac, a junior majoring in public relations, said as a Christian, she would not have any problem with an interfaith

community service project, adding that she does not discriminate because "people are people."

"I think it's a great idea because America is made up of many cultures, and I don't think it should be a problem to do something productive as a whole,"

INTERFAITH, PAGE 3



Photo by Justin Bingham, staff photographer
More than 200 students show up at the Murphy Center on April 2 to volunteer for The BIG Event, co-sponsored by the Student Government Association and United Way.

Hundreds lend hand to schools

By TODD BARNES
News Editor

More than 200 students gave back to the community Saturday by helping local schools through the nation's largest service project, The BIG Event.

There were 14 projects and each project consisted of a group of five to 15 volunteers, who met in the Murphy Center parking lot at 8:30 a.m.

"The volunteers included service organizations, Greek organizations, student organizations and also individuals who wanted to give back to the community in general," said Erika Maclin, philanthropic coordinator for the Student Government Association.

United Way Worldwide, a national organization with a mission to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities to advance the common good, partnered with the SGA to hold the service project.

Maclin organized the third annual community service project for the university and said the event is designed to help those in need like the elderly, disabled and children.

This year, SGA members expanded

their focus to include all of Rutherford County, Murfreesboro City Schools, MTSU and local daycares, Macklin said, adding that previously the SGA mostly focused on residents.

SGA President-elect Jeremy Poynter led a team of 15 volunteers to pick up trash at Mitchell-Nielson Elementary School.

"The reason they wanted us to clean up [was] because we were Part I of a plan they have to tear down the woods behind [the school] and make a path [for] benches," Poynter said.

Poynter's team, like most, was done by noon, due to the overwhelming abundance of volunteers assigned to each project. But, he said that in the short time, he gained more friends in the community.

"The experience, as every year, was a great one," Poynter said. "I met a ton of new people. Out of the 15 [team volunteers], I knew maybe three people before The BIG Event. So, it was a great way to meet people, and I was glad to see people cared for MTSU and the community as much as I do."

He said he plans to participate next year as well.

"I believe Erika did a fantastic job,"

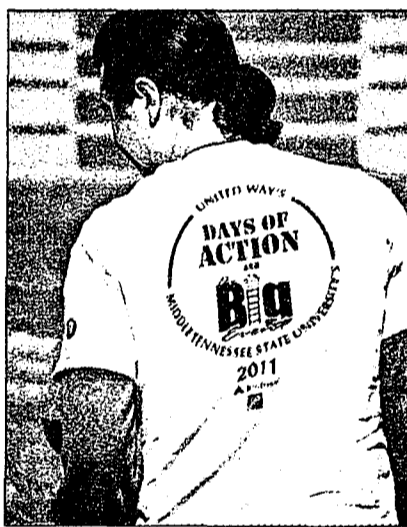


Photo by Justin Bingham, staff photographer
A student leaves the Murphy Center to go clean up at an area school April 2, as part of The BIG Event service project.

Poynter said. "There really is not anything I would change."

At-Large Sen. Katie Bogle led six volunteers as team captain in cleaning out an area of brush on the Miller Academy Primary School campus. The school plans to build an outdoor

EVENT, PAGE 3

SGA discusses election changes for new officers

By TODD BARNES
News Editor

Members of the Student Government Association proposed new legislation Thursday that would place stipulations upon electing executive officers and inserting a code of ethics in the organization's constitution.

SGA Vice President Samantha Cobb and five senators co-sponsored the legislation that would require those who run for executive office to have had prior experience as an SGA senator at any "accredited university or community colleges" for one semester.

"This isn't about being elitist," Cobb said, during the meeting. "This is about having quality people. Senate experience is crucial to being an executive officer."

At-Large Sen. Gavin Mosley, a co-sponsor of the bill, said that without this legislation, the SGA might be put into a vulnerable situation "compared to other institutions."

"Our qualifications for running for executive office are very open - they're very broad," Mosley said. "I just don't want to get put into a situation, where we could possibly have someone that is definitely not the candidate."

Undeclared Sen. Moriah Rosser, a co-sponsor of the bill, called for amending the words "any accredited university or community college" to "MTSU," but Cobb said SGA President Brandon

Batts would likely veto the amendment.

"Sondra Wilson, [the] SGA president two years ago, went to a community college and then she came here with zero experience, and she was SGA president," Cobb said to the senate.

The amendment was voted on by the senate and failed overwhelmingly.

Sen. Alex Lewis of the College of Liberal Arts said in an interview Friday that he is opposed to the legislation.

"I would just not feel comfortable doing that," Lewis said. "That's not a qualification they put on the president of the United States. That's not a qualification put on senators, on congressmen."

The senate passed new stipulations for electing executive officers with a vote of 45 to 5. The legislation will be voted on again Thursday during a formal senate meeting.

The legislation regarding inserting a code of ethics into senate bylaws was received well within the senate, despite the SGA's protective nature, Cobb said.

"I think the senate took it very well," Cobb said. "I think initially some of them were wondering if a specific instance was being referenced, but Sen. Lewis, who wrote the legislation, made it very clear that it was not."

The Code of Ethics has 10 sections, which would become the 10 commandments of the

SGA, PAGE 3

Obama receives mixed scores on energy solutions

By AMANDA HAGGARD
Associate News Editor

In an attempt to combat rising gas prices, President Barack Obama revealed his plan of reducing the country's dependence on foreign oil by one-third throughout the next 14 years, during a speech at Georgetown University.

"We will increase responsible domestic oil and gas development in the short term, while also increasing efficiency and harnessing new

technologies including biofuels, natural gas and advanced batteries," Obama said in a speech during the speech.

During a speech in Maryland, Obama called for the implementation of the Clean Fleets Partnership, in which large companies, such as UPS, FedEx, AT&T, Verizon and PepsiCo, would aid in improving the market for clean fuels by changing their fleets over to alternative and electric vehicles.

In return, these companies would get

purchasing assistance and the leading run on new technology through the U.S. Department of Energy, according to WhiteHouse.gov.

Obama said his plan would restore conventional gasoline and diesel vehicles with advanced technology vehicles or ones that use alternative fuels, such as electricity, natural gas, biodiesel, ethanol, hydrogen or propane.

"I think that it's a great idea to try using these companies to try new

technology," said Becky Christopher, an undeclared sophomore. "It's just a matter of seeing it followed through. I don't know if it can be done."

Gas prices are up 76.8 cents per gallon in Tennessee since last year, according to GasBuddy.com, and national gas prices are 76.5 cents per gallon higher than last year.

"Rising prices at the pump affect everybody - workers and farmers, truck



Official White House Photo by Pete Souza
President Barack Obama looks over an AT&T all-electric vehicle that he was allowed to test drive April 1, during a tour of the UPS facility in Landover, Md.

ENERGY, PAGE 3

INDEX

FEATURES
PAGE 4

SPORTS
PAGE 5, 6

OPINIONS
PAGE 7

IN TODAY'S ISSUE



Find out how one sophomore athlete is impressing fans with her ability to master the court.
PAGE 5

EXCLUSIVELY ONLINE



Browse the latest looks and read what locals had to say about the first annual Nashville Fashion Week.
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

WEATHER



MONDAY
74 / 36

NATIONAL AP NEWS

Child welfare workers argue jail time should not be option

NEW YORK – Child welfare workers and their advocates say they should not go to jail for falling down on the job.

They say their work is low in pay and high in stress from hostile families, tight budgets and overburdened court systems. But prosecutors say workers who are dangerously negligent in their jobs should be held criminally responsible.

New York is struggling with the issue as Brooklyn prosecutors make a case against two workers in the death of 4-year-old Marchella Pierce, who was beaten, drugged and starved to 18 pounds. Her mother has been charged with murder and her grandmother with manslaughter.

Government appeals ruling on healthcare overhaul bill

ATLANTA – The Obama administration has appealed a judge's ruling that found the federal overhaul of the healthcare system unconstitutional.

The Justice Department filed a 62-page motion Friday to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta arguing there's clear and well-established precedent that Congress acted within its authority in adopting the overhaul.

U.S. District Judge Roger Vinson in January ruled against the administration's healthcare overhaul. He ruled Congress exceeded its authority by requiring nearly all Americans to carry health insurance. He ordered states to continue implementing the law while the case works through the courts.

The ruling came in a challenge to the law by 26 of the 50 states.

Toyota wins New York case over unintended acceleration

CENTRAL ISLIP, N.Y. – A federal jury in New York has found that Toyota Motor Corp. isn't responsible for a 2005 crash that the driver said was caused by a floor mat.

The jury decided Friday that the automaker is not liable for the Scion's floor mat or for the absence of a brake override system.

The driver, Amir Sitafalwala, had said the crash was caused by defects in the electronic throttle system or the floor mats.

In a written statement, Toyota called the verdict an "early indicator of the strength of the legal theories behind unintended acceleration claims" against it.

Sitafalwala's 2008 lawsuit was the first to go to trial since Toyota recalled millions of vehicles beginning in 2009.

LOCAL AP NEWS

State faces increasing need for more nursing teachers

NASHVILLE – Tennessee needs more nurses, but there aren't enough teachers to train even the ones who are currently applying to nursing school.

Across the country, demand for care is expected to increase greatly as the baby boomers age and as millions of people receive health insurance under the national healthcare reform law.

Nonprofit health groups have suggested that training more nurses could help.

But in Tennessee, 3,000 potential nursing students were turned away last year because there was no place for them, according to *The Tennessean*.

To try to help, the state's nursing community raised \$1.4 million for a fund that forgives the student loans of nurses with advanced degrees who agree to teach.

Since fall 2007, the program has helped educate 245 nurses, 52 of whom are already teaching.

East Tennessee nuclear plant vulnerable to earthquakes

OAK RIDGE – The 60-year-old production hub at Oak Ridge's Y-12 nuclear weapons plant could be severely damaged or disabled by a major earthquake.

The National Nuclear Security Administration initially declined to answer questions from the *Knoxville News Sentinel* about the structural integrity of the complex, where bomb-grade uranium is processed.

Later, spokesman Steven Wyatt said in an e-mailed statement that, "Safety analyses show that a major earthquake could result in significant structural damage and process failure."

The spokesman said that an earthquake could potentially compromise the safety measures in place to prevent an uncontrolled nuclear chain reaction and release of radiation. But, he said a careful analysis has found there would be no impact beyond a few meters from the facility.

Man convicted in girlfriend's death likely to get out early

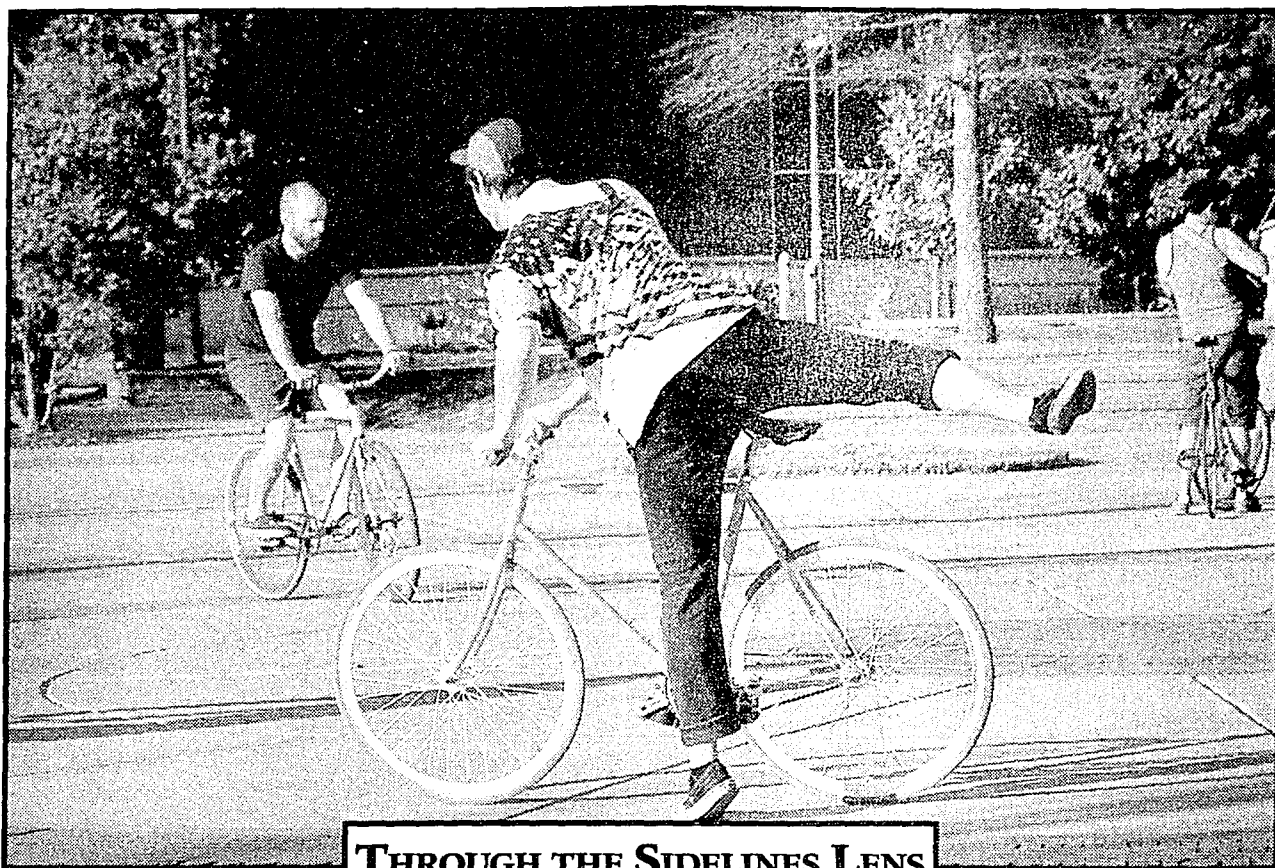
MEMPHIS (AP) – An attorney for a Memphis man who claimed self-defense in the shooting death of his girlfriend says his client will be eligible for parole "very soon."

Tuscon Biggs, 35, was convicted of voluntary manslaughter Saturday in the 2007 shooting death of Angela Baker. Biggs told police after the shooting that Baker had arrived at his apartment with two armed men and Biggs fired at them.

The *Memphis Commercial-Appeal* reports that Biggs could be sentenced to six to 10 years in prison. But since he has already spent more than three years in jail, his defense attorney Claiborne Ferguson says he will soon be eligible for parole.

Prosecutors were seeking the death penalty for Biggs, who was facing a first-degree murder charge.

Biggs is scheduled to be sentenced on May 2.



THROUGH THE SIDELINES LENS

Photo by Justin Bingham, staff writer

Josh Bemis, a freshman majoring in psychology, rides his bike April 3 in front of the John Bragg Mass Communication Building in preparation for a game of "bike polo." Eight students show up a couple of times a week and set up makeshift goals out of cones before engaging in a couple hours of play, Bemis said.

Daycare center shows parents appreciation

By APRIL BAILEY
Staff Writer

Parents expressed love for The Child Development Center as it hosted its biannual appreciation event at the Fairview Building on Thursday.

The center has two programs consisting of infant-toddler and preschool. The infant-toddler group is made up of children 12 months to 36 months and the preschool group consists of children ages 3 to 5, according to the center's website.

Early childhood education students organized the event, which comprised games, snacks and arts and crafts. The students designed games for the children and each game had an objective.

One of the games, called the "hula-hoop swoop," involved toddlers throwing beanbags through three different hula hoops to win a prize and practice their hand-eye coordination.

Students smiled at their work stations while playing with the children and assisting them when needed. Melina Gonzalez, a junior majoring in early childhood education, said she was thrilled with the turnout.

"This was my first event, and I didn't expect this many of the kids and their families to show up, but I'm glad they all came and are



Photo by Justin Bingham, staff photographer

Practicum students help children decorate cookies during Spring Fling on March 31 in the Fairview Building.

having fun," Gonzalez said.

Another game, "the lucky duck pond," involved toddlers picking a rubber duck out of a small tub and matching the color on the bottom of the duck with the color of the bucket to place the duck in; this game's objective was to allow toddlers to practice color recognition.

The students said they love the program.

Ashley Chilton, senior majoring in early childhood education, said she loves that she is getting real world experience.

"It's a really great program because it's hands-on and we have a lot of resources available for us to use in our teaching – the kids are adorable," Chilton said.

Two toddler girls did not mind sharing a chair as they painted their paper butterfly

wings at one station, while at another station a boy and girl toddler applauded one another at the hula-hoop swoop.

The parents talked casually among themselves while observing their children. Many parents said they were satisfied with the event, as well as with the overall program.

Tim and Staci Holder have two daughters enrolled in the center and said they noticed how their children have developed since starting at the center last fall.

"They've done a good job with the girls," Tim Holder said. "I would highly recommend the program to anyone."

Staci Holder said that notices how her daughters have gotten better at arts and crafts and she has noticed the improvement

in her youngest daughter's sensory issues.

Elaine Palmore, the director of the center, said everyone at the center gets along well and is like family. She said the parents come from all "walks of life" and are always involved and dependable.

"I have never called up any parent and asked them to do something that they didn't do willingly," Palmore said.

Palmore added that the center rarely has children leave the program and that some parents even apply to have their unborn children admitted into the center for the future.

Katrina Workman, an MTSU alumna, was enrolled in the program when she was a child and decided to enroll both her sons after her mother reminded her what a difference it made with her when she was a child.

"This is up and beyond any other program because the kids get a lot more one on one attention," Workman said, adding that her eldest child, who is now 6 years old and in kindergarten, started at other schools before she enrolled him in the center.

"No matter what kind of kid comes here, they will make them thrive," Workman said. "I just can't say enough about this fabulous program."

LOCAL EVENTS CRIME BRIEFS

ON CAMPUS

"Poetry and Prose"
April 4, 3 p.m.
University Honors College
Room 106
Tickets: FREE

Student Film Festival
April 4 - April 8, 7 p.m.
KUC Theatre
Tickets: FREE

"An Evening with Meghan McCain"
April 6, 7 p.m.
Learning Resources Center
Room 221
Tickets: FREE

MTSU Health Fair
April 7, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Keathley University Center
Tickets: FREE

"Building Bridges"
April 8, 12:30 p.m.
James Union Building
Tennessee Room
Tickets: FREE

Paul C. Taylor: "What Is a Black Artist?"
April 8, 3:30 p.m.
James Union Building
Room 304
Tickets: FREE

OFF CAMPUS

Jeff Coffin and the Mu'tet
April 4, 8 p.m.
The Exit/In
Tickets: \$15

International Lens Film Series: "Opium War"
April 5, 7 p.m.
Vanderbilt University
Sarratt Cinema
Tickets: FREE

Warpaint with PVT and Family Band
April 5, 9 p.m.
Mercy Lounge
Tickets: \$10, \$12

World Inferno Friendship Society and Stuck Lucky
April 6, 7 p.m.
The Muse
Tickets: \$8, \$10

"Oklahoma"
April 8 – 9, 7:30 p.m.
Murfreesboro Center
for the Arts
Tickets: \$12 for students

10th Birthday Celebration
April 9, 10 a.m.
Frist Center for the Visual Arts
Tickets: FREE

Traffic
March 29, 4:30 p.m.
Judd/Sims Hall

A complainant reported that his vehicle had been struck while parked in the parking lot.

Traffic
March 29, 11:38 p.m.
Greenland Drive

A complainant reported that her vehicle had been struck while parked in the parking lot.

Theft
March 30, 3:26 p.m.

James E. Walker Library
A complainant reported that her backpack was stolen from the library.

Traffic
March 30, 3:38 p.m.

Greenland Drive
John Hitchcock, 21, was issued a state citation for leaving the scene of an accident.

Harassment
March 30, 4:47 p.m.

Kirksey Old Main
A complainant reported that several males had been "cat calling" at her in the parking lot.

Drugs
March 30, 8 p.m.

Sims Hall
James Washington, 20, was arrested for felony possession of marijuana possession of drug paraphernalia.

Alcohol
March 31, 3:17 a.m.

Jim Cummings Hall
Tucker Marsit, 19, Derek Hopper, 19, Corey Carmichael, 19, and Steven Baird, 18, were issued state citations for underage consumption.

Alcohol
March 31, 1:58 p.m.

Rutledge Hall
Timothy Obrochta, 44, was arrested for public intoxication and simple possession of the synthetic cannabinoid "Vampire Blood."

EVENTS POLICY

Sidelines welcomes current campus and community events submitted by all readers. Please e-mail events@snews@mtsu.edu. Include the name, date, time and location of the event, as well as your name and contact information. We reserve the right to refuse events at our discretion as our space is limited.

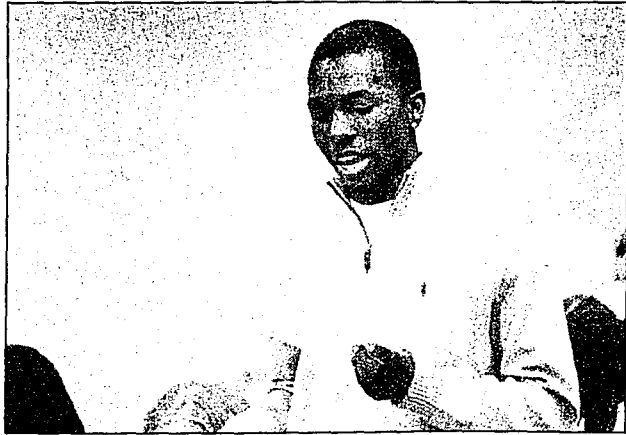


Photo by Drew Gardonia, staff photographer
Sen. Jeremy Poynter the College of Business, addresses legislation March 31 during the Student Government Association meeting.

Ethics policies reviewed

SGA FROM PAGE 1

SGA, some of which are exposing corruption wherever discovered, making no promises binding upon duties of office and "putting loyalty to the highest moral principles."

Lewis said that the code would be a great defense for the SGA and is tired of misconceptions involving the senate.

"My intention for proposing this was really the only defense that the senate has now is 'take our word for it,'" Lewis said. "It's 'We're good people I promise,' but [a code of ethics] would be something

we could point to and say 'This is the standard we set for ourselves, and there are means of being held accountable to that.'"

The SGA constitution does outline how a senator should act in a section titled a "Statement of Governing Principles." It says "in all matters, members of the Student Government Association shall conduct themselves in a manner deserving of the high level of trust that the student body places in their leadership."

Honesty, academic integrity and recognition of basic human rights are at the forefront of the governing principles.

The senate will vote on the bill during the next formal caucus.

Multiple religions to join forces

INTERFAITH FROM PAGE 1

Mulzac said.

Hadil Numan, a senior in the College of Liberal Arts, said she thinks it's a great way to encourage cooperation among the different religions.

"It would definitely help build bridges of understanding, and in the process students will feel more comfortable in participating in interfaith dialogues," said Numan, who serves as the event coordinator for Muslim Student Association.

Not all students share this optimism for the program.

Jon Faust, a senior majoring in electronic media communication, said he thinks that this could be good for the

community and the school - with one exception.

"I also think too many MTSU students are too apathetic and that this program won't completely take off," Faust said.

Others students said they feel that the university's religious student groups are not diverse enough, and that although this might be good for the community, there is no group to represent the secular students.

"I think it's important to incorporate secular organizations for diversity and balance because it's important to recognize the beliefs of other religions, as well as those of no religion," said Lauren Campbell, a senior majoring in philosophy.

Rob Lunn, a junior majoring in social work,

said that he feels that this would be good not only for the community and school, but also for its image, given recent negative press.

"There was that recent CNN special about the issues with the mosque last summer and fall, and the recent campus-related violence, so I think it could be really nice if MTSU groups could get together to do something good for the community and get recognized," Lunn said.

However, there is already evidence that community service is a big deal to students, such as the recent efforts to raise money for those affected by the earthquake and tsunami in Japan. Also, interfaith community service

programs already seem to be underway with campus religious groups.

"Participation in interfaith makes way for more community service," Numan said. "In fact, one Christian campus organization has invited the Muslim Student Association to go on a weeklong trip to the Appalachians to help build homes for the needy."

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DISC VER

Students volunteer

EVENT FROM PAGE 1

classroom and wildlife habitat in that area.

"In the outdoor classroom they will be able to sit and read while enjoying the outdoors," Bogle said. "The principal of the school and her family were there helping us, and they were very appreciative."

She said the experience was rewarding.

"My team was very

energetic," Bogle said. "Most of them did not know each other beforehand, so it was a great way to meet other people on campus."

Maclin said SGA members hope that next year they will team up with more organizations to blow the event up even bigger.

"With this being the third year going strong," Poynter said. "I feel as if it's really important to the university because it actually shows the city of Murfreesboro [that] MTSU cares."

President releases plan to reduce oil dependence

ENERGY FROM PAGE 1

drivers and restaurant owners," Obama said. "For Americans already struggling to get by, it makes life that much harder."

Maria Dean, a junior in the College of Business, said she has been filling the "pinch" at the gas pump.

"All I can really say is that I hope all this talk will affect gas prices," Dean said. "I can't take anymore filling up twice a week."

U.S. oil production last year reached its highest level since 2003, Obama said.

He also pointed out that the economy added 230,000 private sector jobs last month.

Obama said that the addition of private sector jobs is a "good sign" for the economy.

But, U.S. Rep. Diane Black said in a letter to constituents that she feels that the country is headed in the wrong direction.

"These policies are making energy more expensive at a time when families and businesses can least afford it," Black said. "It is time for a new direction."

Obama said he understands the countries "tight fiscal situation," but that "as we debate our national priorities and our budget in Congress, we're going to have to make some tough choices."

He said the government is going to have to cut what "we don't need and invest in what we do need."

Dean said she thinks it is the wrong time to be spending large sums of taxpayer dollars.

"We are in debt, big time," Dean said. "I'm

not saying it doesn't need to be done, but now just seems like the wrong time."

However, she said she agrees with the main idea of Obama's plan - a reduction in U.S. dependence on foreign oil.

Black said the Obama administration is limiting energy options and driving up prices of oil.

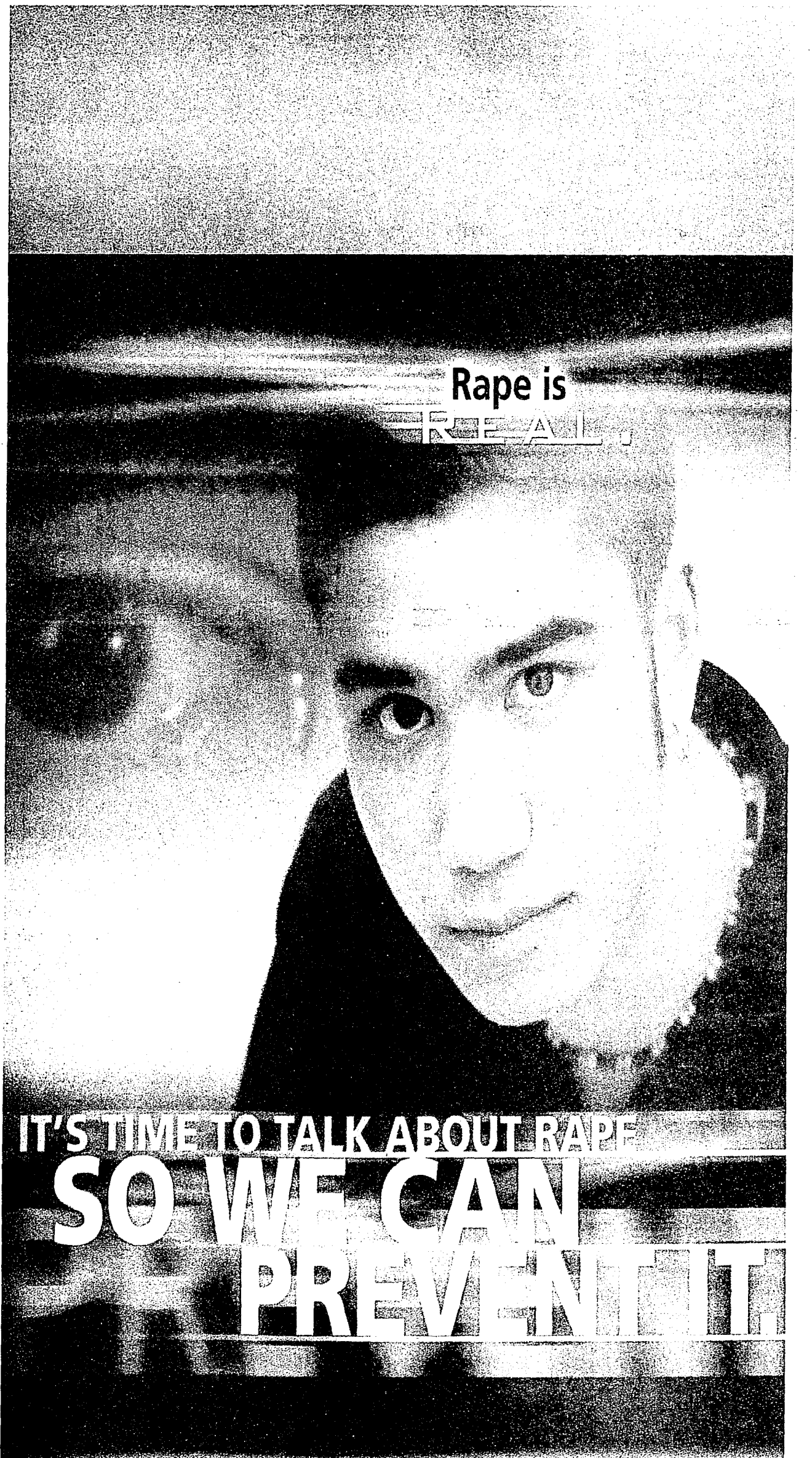
"For too long, the U.S. has lacked a coherent energy strategy that reduces our dependence on foreign oil, lowers costs and creates American jobs," Black said. "The president's 2012 budget includes [more than] \$60 billion in tax increases on American energy production."

Black said that in the long term, she supports an "all-of-the-above" approach to energy that includes domestic resources and alternative methods like wind and solar power.

"Domestic oil exploration can be a big part of our energy future, but it's not the only plan we should consider," Black said. "We must use all of America's resources - as well as [renewable resources] where we could see a return on investment - to reduce costs, create American jobs and stop sending our money to countries who don't like us very much."

Christopher said she agreed with using an "umbrella theory" to help bolster domestic resources.

"I don't know that our country can really reduce [foreign oil] by one-third," Christopher said. "One thing I do know is that it's not going to take care of itself, and we've got to start somewhere."



Rape is REAL

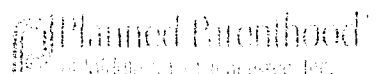
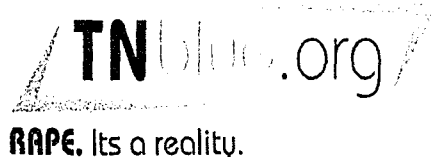
IT'S TIME TO TALK ABOUT RAPE

SO WE CAN PREVENT IT



TENNESSEE coalition AGAINST DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE www.tcadsv.org

Educate yourself. Log on.

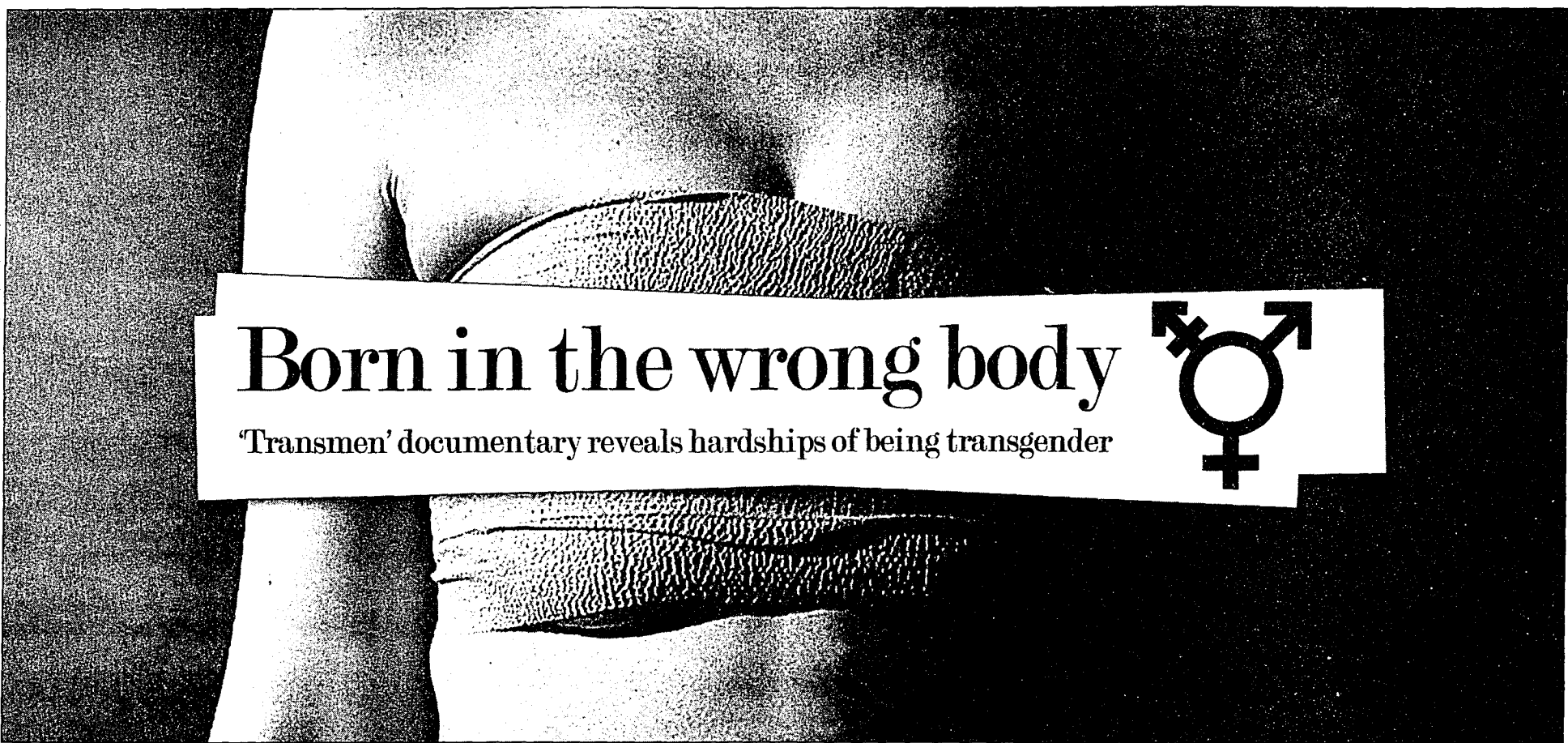


This project is funded under an agreement with the State of Tennessee.

For immediate help,

call the Sexual Assault Crisis Line at 615-494-9262.

FEATURES



Born in the wrong body

'Transmen' documentary reveals hardships of being transgender



Photo courtesy of Tiffany Gibson

By EMMA EGLI
Features Editor

Imagine going through life being told that you should act, dress and think a certain way, even though it never felt right. That the way you look on the outside should match how you feel on the inside, even though that really isn't the case.

Picture looking at yourself in the mirror every day only to see a stranger staring back.

For most of us, this is hard to imagine. But for some people, it's a nightmare.

Gender identity disorder is the medical diagnosis of the conflict between a person's birth gender and the one they identify as.

A person with gender identity disorder experiences significant discomfort with the biological sex he or she was born with. Often times, people who have this disorder feel as if they were born in the wrong body.

Considered a taboo subject, being transgender – a person who does not want to be defined by their birth gender – has been an issue that is often swept under the rug, due to the general population's inability to understand it.

Tiffany Gibson, a senior majoring in journalism, wanted to capture the harsh realities that transgender people face, especially those living in Tennessee.

Currently, Tennessee is the only state with a law that bans gender changes on birth certificates. Even though a person may legally change their name and physically change their appearance, they cannot change their gender to match their new identity.

Tiffany set out on the daunting task to make a documentary that would follow the lives of three young people during their transition from females to males, but more importantly, inform viewers of the lack of legislation that exists to protect transgender people. She never anticipated how much it would impact not only her life, but their lives as well.

"Transmen" follows James Huff, Anthony Grider and Kelsey Page as they encounter the hardships that so many transgender people have to deal with, such as discrimination in school and the workplace or coming out to friends and family.

The film also touches on sensitive subjects like chest binding, reassignment surgeries, hormone injections and the strain these things can put on relationships.

"I barely understood what it meant to be transgender when I started this project," Tiffany admits. "I had no idea what the process would entail, and I felt that it's important to show other people that."

James, a junior majoring in social work, was born female and didn't know what "transgender" was until he was about 16 years old.

Having spent his entire life feeling very different and disconnected from those around him, James knew that the female body he was born with did not match the person he felt that he was inside.

"It's easier to tell you what I'm not than what I am," James says point-blank when asked the question of how he identifies himself.

During James' journey, we see not only the emotional strain it puts on himself, but the toll it takes on his relationship with his family as well.

"They have been very distant in my life," James says, breaking down. "I wish they could see all of the great things I've been doing for the community. But they don't even know what I do."

Like many documentary

filmmakers, Tiffany was often faced with the decision of whether or not to put the camera down when things became too sensitive, or to continue rolling despite the emotional moments she witnessed.

"This was so different than doing a written story because they realize they will be seen on screen, so it's something that people can be very guarded about," she says. "And at that point, I didn't know whether to keep filming or not. I just felt that it was deep, and it was something people needed to see in order to understand what he was going through."



Photo courtesy of Tiffany Gibson

Anthony Grider is a phlebotomist at Cookeville Regional Medical Center. Like many transgender people, Grider has had to worry about losing his job, simply because of his identity.

Since the premier of Tiffany's film, James says that he's finally more comfortable with the person he has become and realizes that for those close to him, it takes longer to accept.



Photo courtesy of Tiffany Gibson

James Huff is junior majoring in social work. Huff says he spent his entire life feeling uncomfortable with his identity but has since become more confident with the person he has become.

"It's definitely a hard process," James says. "Some people are still confused about who I am. My family hasn't come around just yet, but we're working on it."

Anthony Grider was born Amanda. Like James, he spent his childhood feeling uncomfortable with the body he was given. Anthony often stole his brother's clothes and felt wrong when his mother tried to make

"It's definitely a hard process. Some people are still confused about who I am. My family hasn't come around just yet, but we're working on it."

JAMES HUFF
JUNIOR SOCIAL WORK MAJOR



Photo courtesy of Tiffany Gibson

Kelsey Page takes his testosterone shot during his transition from female to male. Page says it was difficult to come out to his friends and family because he has kept his true feelings about his identity to himself most of his life.

him wear dresses.

"It's been hard on my family because I was the only girl," he says. "But the fact of the matter is, I was never supposed to be born a girl. My whole life, I've felt so awkward. And nobody really understands that until they have to live that way."

Like most transgender people,

"At that point, I didn't know whether to keep filming or not. I just felt that it was deep, and it was something people needed to see in order to understand what he was going through."

TIFFANY GIBSON
SENIOR JOURNALISM MAJOR

Anthony has had to deal with the risk of losing his job. Tennessee's nondiscrimination law does not explicitly address sexual orientation or gender identity discrimination. In other words, those like Anthony can be fired simply because of their identities.

Thankfully, Cookeville Regional Medical Center, where Anthony works as a phlebotomist, was very tolerant of his transition from a female to a male.

Anthony will be enrolling in the



Photo by Emma Egli, features editor

(From left) James Huff, Tiffany Gibson, Anthony Grider and Kelsey Page pose for a picture March 25, following the premiere of "Transmen." Gibson made the documentary in hopes of informing people about the difficulties that transgender people face.

nursing program at Tennessee Tech University in August and hopes to eventually get his medical degree so he can be the first transgender doctor at the hospital.

"I'm tired of seeing, day in and day out, how people don't understand anything about the transgender community," he says. "We are just like everyone else. But people seem to be instantly ignorant to it or

worse – they want to lash out and hurt us all because it's something they don't understand."

Violence is undoubtedly another serious hardship that transgender people sometimes face. Tennessee's hate crimes law includes sexual orientation but not gender identity.

"Every time I walk into a men's bathroom and see someone behind me, I do get worried," Anthony admits. "I don't know how they would react if they somehow figure it out. They could even want to kill me."

Anthony's fiancée, Elizabeth Clack, fully supports his decision to become male and always researches new surgical procedures or the current status of legislation that could affect him.

Kelsey Page, a massage therapist living in Brentwood, was not as initially open about his identity as James and Anthony were. He says that dealing with the moral dilemma of whether or not to come out and tell people is a hard fact of life that transgender people like him must face.

"When you think about it, my entire life, I've lied about who I was to my family and friends," he explains. "I have a huge conscience, so I've felt guilty now that I've transitioned, and I don't want to lie or hide it anymore. But at the same time, it's not something I feel comfortable telling people when I first meet them."

Unlike James and Anthony, Kelsey has undergone bilateral mastectomy, or top surgery, in order to feel more like the male gender he identified with.

"Wearing a binder every day was torture," he says. "I was so relieved when I got them removed."

Kelsey just recently married his fiancée, Heather, who has been his biggest supporter during Kelsey's transition from a female to a male. Kelsey is hoping to get female to male genital reassignment surgery in the next few years.

James, Anthony and Kelsey all agree that they did the right thing by agreeing to be part of Tiffany's filming process.

"I wanted to get out and help the transgender community and the LGBT community as a whole," Kelsey says. "Was I really thinking how this would affect my life when I volunteered for the movie? No. But I knew deep down that this was something I needed to do, so I did it."

James shares a similar sentiment and wants people to realize that it's important to him that people recognize his gender preference.

"I'm all for education and advocacy for transgender people," he says. "I feel that my story is something other people who are dealing with the same issues can relate to."

Anthony says living in the Bible Belt has been difficult during his transition process, but that he hopes Tiffany's film will help people become more aware transgender issues.

"I wasn't afraid to let people know who I was," Anthony explains. "Because, you know what? There are transgender, gay and lesbian people all around you. And we aren't different from anyone else."

The next screening of "Transmen" will Thursday at 6 p.m. in Room 150 of the John Bragg Mass Communication Building.

SPORTS

Japanese star leading Blue Raider tennis

Nomoto shining in sophomore campaign



**"Right now, I'm living the dream."
- Yui Nomoto**

Photo by Erica Springer, staff photographer

By **KYLIE KOLZ**
Contributing Writer

Before stepping onto the tennis court for a match Yui Nomoto, a sophomore in the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences, makes sure to have her headphones on and her blue towel close by.

Nomoto said that she always listens to music before her matches. She listens to rap, and likes Nelly, T.I., and Eminem. And the blue towel?

"I always play good matches with it," she said.

Nomoto is one of seven players on the MT women's tennis team, and one of five from another country. However, she is the only player who is from Japan. She was born in Tokyo and also lived in Brisbane, Australia, where she lived for nine years and went to high school before coming here.

Nomoto is the No. 1 singles player on the team and knocked off Vanderbilt University's nationally ranked player, Jackie Wu, last month. She has won half of her singles matches on the season to lead the Blue Raiders.

She recently sat down with *Sidelines* to discuss her move from Japan, her thoughts on the recent tragedy there, and her team's season to date.

Blue Raider Spotlight:

Hometown:

Tokyo, Japan

Year: Sophomore

Role Model: Kim Clijsters

Favorite Food: Italian

Favorite Movie: "The Proposal"

Favorite Singer: Nelly, T.I. and Eminem

Pre-game ritual: I always listen to music before my matches, and I have my blue towel on the court.



Photo by Erica Springer, staff photographer

SL: You're originally from Japan. What is tennis like in Japan?

YN: Tennis is very competitive in Japan. However, many good players don't have enough opportunities to pursue a professional career. Once they finish high school, most players stop playing tennis because they have to start thinking about getting into college and concentrate on studies. Unlike the U.S., they don't have college athletics, so even if they had a successful junior career, if they are not ready to go to the pros by the time they finish high school, then they have to move on from tennis and start a new life. I feel extremely lucky, and I am very thankful for this school for giving me this great opportunity. It is certainly going to be a great experience for me and the best part of my life.

SL: When did you move to the U.S.? Did you move here for tennis?

YN: I came here after I finished high school in Australia. Since I started playing competitively in juniors, playing college tennis on a scholarship has always been my dream.

Right now, I'm living the dream.

SL: What has everything been like with the recent tragedy in Japan?

YN: It has been awful to see something like that happen to my home country. I hear terrible stories from my parents all the time. They told me the other day that many young people my age aren't able to go to college because they have lost everything. That makes me appreciate the situation I'm in right now and how fortunate I am to be here in the states. But most of all, I'm truly thankful that my family wasn't involved in the event.

SL: How do you feel about where the team is at this point in the year?

YN: We've had losses to the teams that we can beat, and it has been extremely hard on all of us, especially when we have been putting a lot of work in our training. But I think we have been learning a lot from our losses and with only

SPOTLIGHT, PAGE 6

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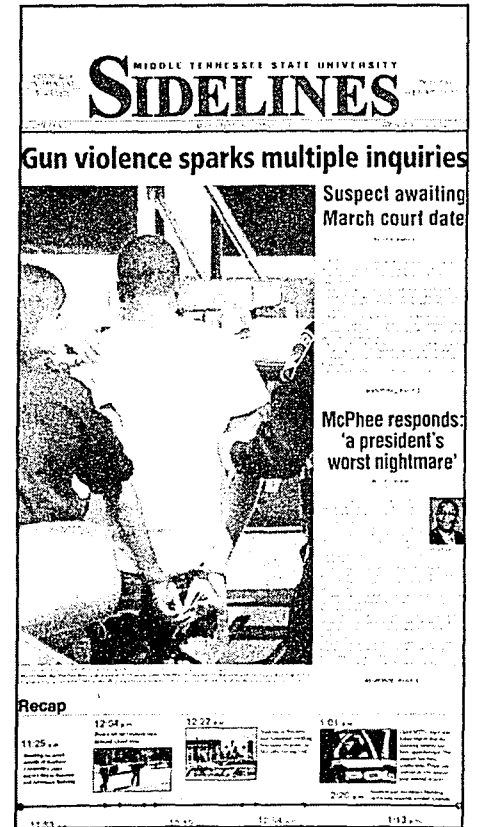
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Photo by Erica Springer, staff photographer
Yurii Nomoto is used to bringing focus and intensity to the tennis court every match as Middle Tennessee's No. 1 player.

Top tennis player reflects on game, life

SPOTLIGHT FROM PAGE 5

a few more games left, hopefully we will be at our best by the conference tournament. My team has improved a lot since last year. We have been working hard, and we are definitely ready and capable of winning the conference this year. We just have to believe in ourselves.

SL: How does it feel to be here at MTSU and to be the No. 1 player for the women's tennis team?

YN: I really enjoy being here at MTSU. My teammates are awesome and our coaches are nice. Playing at the No. 1 spot is definitely not easy. It is a tough position, but I love it because you are always up against a challenge and you have to compete hard to win. I love competing, and when you get a win, it's the greatest feeling because you know you just beat their best player.

SL: How has your experience been playing for MT?

YN: I definitely gained a ton of experience during my freshman year, and it's part of the reason why I am doing much better this year. My teammates helped me get through the hard times when I was struggling as a freshman. I think every year you get to learn something new. Being here has definitely helped me mature on the court, and I am only going to get better everyday.

SL: What is one of your most memorable moments playing for MTSU?

YN: I am only a sophomore so I'm sure there will be a lot more memorable

moments to come, but my recent one is when I won my singles match against No.14 Vanderbilt. I felt like all my hard work had finally paid off.

SL: Are you and the other girls on the team close?

YN: I am very close to my team. We are a great team, and we all care about each other like sisters. Even though tennis is an individual sport, it is a team sport in college. It is definitely encouraging when your teammates are competing as well beside you. You start thinking about how you want to win for them, and you can't give up. We all compete as one and share a same goal.

SL: What do you like to do outside of tennis?

YN: I love going to the movies, but unfortunately, there is no time during the season. You are either on the court, in the weight room or in your room studying.

SL: Are you going to try out the pro circuit after graduation?

YN: It will depend on how well I finish my college career with tennis. I feel that I still have a lot of potential and can improve on a lot of things. I still have time and a long way to go. Hopefully, I will continue to improve everyday. I am ready to put in the work.

SL: If not the pro circuit, what are your plans for after graduation?

YN: I love sports, and I want to be an athletic trainer and this is perfect because I will always be able to stay close to tennis. If not, I may try to be a grad assistant tennis coach.



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Frozen Four to heat up ice

By ALEX HUBBARD
Staff Writer

The tournament to decide the best team in college basketball had its Final Four this weekend. For all the attention that tournament has received in the last three weeks, there is another NCAA tournament marching toward a championship. It is the NCAA hockey tournament, which will begin its own Final Four, popularly known as the Frozen Four, on Thursday.

Held this year in St. Paul, Minn., the Frozen Four will pit storied programs Michigan and North Dakota along with Minnesota-Duluth and Notre Dame.

While there is not a "Cinderella" story in the classic sense this year,

there is still plenty of startling news.

Boston College was the top seed in its region and expected by many to repeat as national champions, giving three rings in four years to the senior class. Instead, the team never won a game this year in the tournament, losing spectacularly, 8-4 to Colorado College.

The early exit of BC ensured that, for the first time in three years, the NCAA champion would not be from the Boston area, with BC winning in 2008 and 2010 and Boston University bringing home the trophy in 2009. The Eagles crash also cleared the way for North Dakota, which has remained the favorite for many observers.

The historic program from the coldest extreme of the contiguous United States is thirsty for its first championship since 2000, and they have the players to back it up.

Aaron Dell is the nation's best goaltender statistically with 1.81 goals against average and a .924 save percentage. Forward Matt Frattin leads the second-ranked offense with 36 goals and 24 assists in 43 games, as the nation's second-leading scorer.

"The only team on a long leash coming in is North Dakota because they are the only one in the Frozen Four who won their conference tournament as well," said Adam Wodon, the editor-in-chief of collegehockeynews.com. "North Dakota is definitely playing the best of the four teams. It has been that way for a month now."

North Dakota isn't the only team with a legendary reputation in the hunt, however. Michigan coach Red Berenson, the hard-bitten former NHL star, has two national championships under his belt, but he hasn't gotten a ring since 1998. UMD's program has seemingly slipped in recent years, but this team's defense, ranked sixth nationally, would appear to be as good as any when playing up to its potential. Starting net minder Shawn Hunwick has delivered above respectable numbers with a 2.26 GAA and a save percentage of .922. "This year they didn't

really have that high-powered offense like they've had in the past," Wodon said of Michigan. "They were winning games in pretty scrappy ways, good defense, a lot of tight games. They have their hands full with North Dakota, just like everybody else does, but if they play well, especially defensively, they'll be fine."

Notre Dame represents perhaps the most unexpected story of the teams still remaining. Coach Jeff Jackson has taken a roster filled with 12 freshmen, and over the course of a difficult season, molded them into a team very much in the championship discussion.


Freshmen T.J. Tynan and Anders Lee have combined for 97 points, including 22 and 24 goals, respectively. With the 2008 championship-game loss to BC not even a memory for these youngsters, the Fighting Irish will look to ride this wave to history.

Meanwhile, Minnesota-Duluth will seek to capitalize on some home-state magic in a run that they hope will end in their first national championship. Duluth boasts perhaps the country's most prolific scoring line.

Centered by Jack Connolly, the nation's third leading point getter, the line also boasts wingers, Justin Fontaine and Mike Connolly, who rank sixth and eighth, respectively. Lest anyone want to overlook Duluth in favor of the bigger names in the pool, UMD would point to its 5-3 victory over Yale, a team that scored the most goals and gave up the fewest of any team in the land, to reach the Frozen Four. With an undoubtedly high number of North Dakota and Michigan fans in the building, any game UMD will play in the Frozen Four is a guaranteed spectacle.

UMD and Notre Dame will square off first on Thursday at 4 p.m. and will be followed by North Dakota and Michigan.

Both games will air on ESPN2. The championship will be decided on Saturday with the game to start at 6 p.m. That game will be shown on ESPN.



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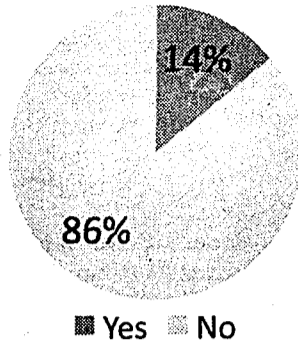
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"I'm Visiting MTSU today is really making me think about transferring there...I saw a lot of people I knew...it felt good to see familiar faces." – Whitney Shardae

"The Kurdish Student Association of MTSU did a fantastic job! SO proud! It was an amazing party for Newroz!" – Kahin Mohammad

We are all 'One'

"So, being at the front row of the fashion show turning your head in disgusts, closing your eyes, and making outlandish faces is a miscommunication? He should've just apologized, said he wasn't homophobic, and promised to be more aware of his position as a representative of this college." – Anonymus

"That's not even an apology. Own up for what you did." – Randi Wright

American attitudes should change on illegal immigration

It seems so simple, and yet no one can seem to agree on the simplest principle. Immigrants come to this country to have a better life. Some would suggest keeping them from coming into the United States, because they are a burden.

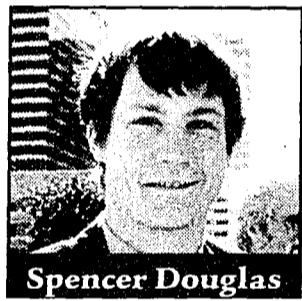
I would agree to a point. To say that illegal immigrants pay no taxes is not a true statement. If they own property, they pay tax on it. If they buy beer, tobacco or gas they also pay tax. How do illegal immigrants avoid paying income tax?

Oh yeah, the companies they work for do not have them on record so they go without having to pay taxes. The simplest way to stop illegal immigration is to stop companies from hiring illegal immigrants.

If the government enforced this law thoroughly, it would not have to kick people out or worry with other civil rights issues, such as profiling individuals based on looks, because individuals would simply leave once the work was gone.

Do people really think creating an expensive barrier that is more expensive to maintain than to build will really stop people from coming here? Have these people ever heard of boats?

People, we have two huge oceans on either side of our country and the Gulf of Mexico. Then, of course, there is the coming to build the wall? I am also



Spencer Douglas

Columnist

tired of individuals getting angry at businesses for having Spanish options for languages such as a self-checkout station in a grocery store.

The way I see things, if I want to open a restaurant that has Greek servers and my entire menu is written in Greek, that is my prerogative. Christopher Columbus' journey to the Americas in 1492 was funded by Spain and his crew was Spanish.

My question would be to "English-only" advocates: What was the first European language spoken in the Americas?

In closing, so-called "illegal immigrants" fueled the Industrial Revolution, and I don't know you, but chances are your family probably immigrated to this country as well.

There is a reason that the Statue of Liberty has a poem etched in its base that reads "Give us your tired, your poor, your wretched refuse yearning to breathe free."

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

Housing discrimination needs to end

In January, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development proposed new rules banning discrimination against members of the LGBT community. Equality activists rejoiced. This is a huge step in the right direction.

The joy wore off a little, though, when we remembered that all rules proposed by government agencies usually have a period where they are open to public comment, in which an agency will consider whether to adopt the rule.

Not surprisingly, Victoria Barnes, the executive director of the Sweetwater Housing Authority in Tennessee, sent HUD a letter full of straw man arguments, lamenting the widening of the definition of "family" and comparing LGBT Americans to "drug users and sellers, gang members, prostitutes, cults and murderers."

She said that people from all of the aforementioned groups, including LGBT citizens, make a "personal and moral lifestyle choice," and therefore should not be considered a cohesive group that can be discriminated against.

Barnes' comments display a willful ignorance of the history of anti-LGBT harassment and violence and actually perpetuate the stereotypes that cause such incidents.

Twenty minutes away from Sweetwater is the town of Vonore, where a dedicated lesbian couple, together for 16 years, had their new house burnt down with the word "queers" painted on it.

This happened less than seven months ago. If Barnes has been able to forget so quickly, or perhaps never even knew about the incident in the first place, this perfectly demonstrates the position of privilege she is in, and why



Michael Finch

Columnist

she is in no place to determine whether some Americans are in need of protection from discrimination.

Incidents like the one in Vonore and Sweetwater are horrifying to those in the LGBT community, as well as to those who support them, but we cannot assume that only the awful incidents deserve our attention. Subtle discrimination can be just as damaging, just in different ways.

In studies from all across the United States, anywhere from 1-in-10 to 1-in-3 LGBT renters or prospective renters have reported unequal treatment from landlords, real estate agents or lenders.

This ranged from being denied housing or lease renewal to being quoted higher rent prices than their heterosexual counterparts. This may not be outright violence or blatant harm, but it sets a dangerous precedent.

By fostering an environment in which LGBT renters are seen as less worthy, or even likely to damage the community in the same way that gangs and drugs would, discrimination against them is encouraged.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is making sure everyone recognizes anti-LGBT discrimination when they see it. It is often not enough for the members of the oppressed group to advocate for themselves. They need members of the majority to speak for them as well.

Whatever people like Barnes might say, anti-LGBT discrimination is real, and it is everywhere. It's time for everyone, LGBT or not, to begin doing their part in eliminating it.

Michael Finch is a junior majoring in political science and can be reached at mfinch13@gmail.com.

First Amendment a two-way street

It's a sad state of affairs of late as various incidences have called into question just how far free speech extends.

On CBS's "Face The Nation," Sen. Lindsay Graham of South Carolina said, "I wish we could find a way to hold people accountable. Free speech is a great idea, but we're in a war."

This statement was in regards to the Koran burning held by Tennessee pastor Terry Jones, which may or may not have indirectly led to the deaths of approximately ten civilians.

Graham wasn't alone in his calls to rein in free speech. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid on the same program chimed in, saying that the incident needed to be investigated.

It doesn't take long to realize just how dangerous these ideas of censorship are to our relatively free society.

It's obvious that the Westboro Baptist Church or the Tennessee pastor aren't going to persuade anyone, but now it seems their danger lies in the externalities that are beyond the control of the individuals expressing their beliefs.

So, it is now seemingly within our right as a collective to revoke the speech of those for which are not agreeable.



Josh Fields

Columnist

It's relatively easy to stand up for speech that you believe has no value of persuasion. What is significantly harder is to stand up for speech that is persuasive and may actually cause people to adopt beliefs or enact policies that you disagree with.

Now the dialogue has shifted and added the variable of human lives being at stake in the instances of unpersuasive speech. Are you willing to risk your loved one's life just so your neighbor can express their opinions of hate and vulgarity?

While people often pat themselves on the back for their compassion to give their neighbors the benefit of the doubt and grant them their First Amendment rights, that right is only extended if we sense no threat ideologically or physically.

This is in local events such as the construction of the Islamic Center of Murfreesboro.

The very same people who shout down people or vandalize the Islamic Center are the same people who don't want the Federal Communications Commission to enact the "Fairness Doctrine."

Yet both are in conflict with one another, it's the classic case of give to me, and take from them. It occurs in all rights, from property to speech and it's on a dangerous path on both ends of the spectrum.

Property rights and the right to free speech, or even the right to assemble may have been paid for in blood by American soldiers, but even the act of war itself appears to have, in past and in present, given the ability for the government to limit our access to those very things that blood was shed for.

Some assume that free speech is selfish in its ability to allow individuals to express themselves unabated, but I find it far more selfish to not allow that expression for the mere fact that it disagrees with or threatens your worldview.

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

GOP-backed bills fuel Southern stereotype

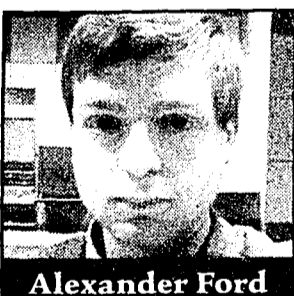
The College Democrats are now officially backed on campus. We are fighting the good fight, but we need you.

There have been misinformation campaigns launched by the Republicans recently to fool you into supporting bills such as House Bill 0598, 1379 and 1380.

This track of legislation is not good for Tennessee. H.B. 0598, better known as Equal Access to Intrastate Commerce Act, may have a pleasant sounding name, but in reality it eliminates: any local minimum wage laws that are higher than the federally mandated \$7.25, local requirements for employers to provide health insurance, and local laws for employers that grant employees extended periods of time away from work due to pregnancy or illness.

The bill also seeks to destroy anti-discrimination laws for individuals of color, sexual orientation and women. This act makes it harder for individuals in these categories to find fair paying jobs with benefits.

The other bills are not any better, H.B. 1379, or Eligibility Verification for Entitlements Act, seeks to dehumanize any immigrant using government aid. The act claims that illegal immigrants are not paying taxes yet using services.



Alexander Ford

Guest Columnist

There is little evidence to support this claim fairly however many seem to have embraced this xenophobia. In Tennessee, it is practically impossible to avoid paying state tax since everyone has to pay in one way or another the regressive 9.75 percent sales tax whether it is for food or clothing or just about any other item covered under the sales tax.

There are also the special sales taxes like the beer, gas or liquor tax. Illegal immigrants are people too and many of them consider themselves American. I don't see anyone complaining about Canadians or European illegal immigrants. Many individuals from Canada or Europe don't even want to become citizens.

The Lawful Immigration Enforcement Act is Arizona's immigration bill being brought to Tennessee. Do we have to join Arizona as being a state unwelcoming to everyone who isn't white?

Let's not let this happen to Tennessee and give the world another reason to stereotype the great state of Tennessee.

Alexander Ford is a sophomore majoring in political science and can be reached at ajf3n@mtmail.mtsu.edu.

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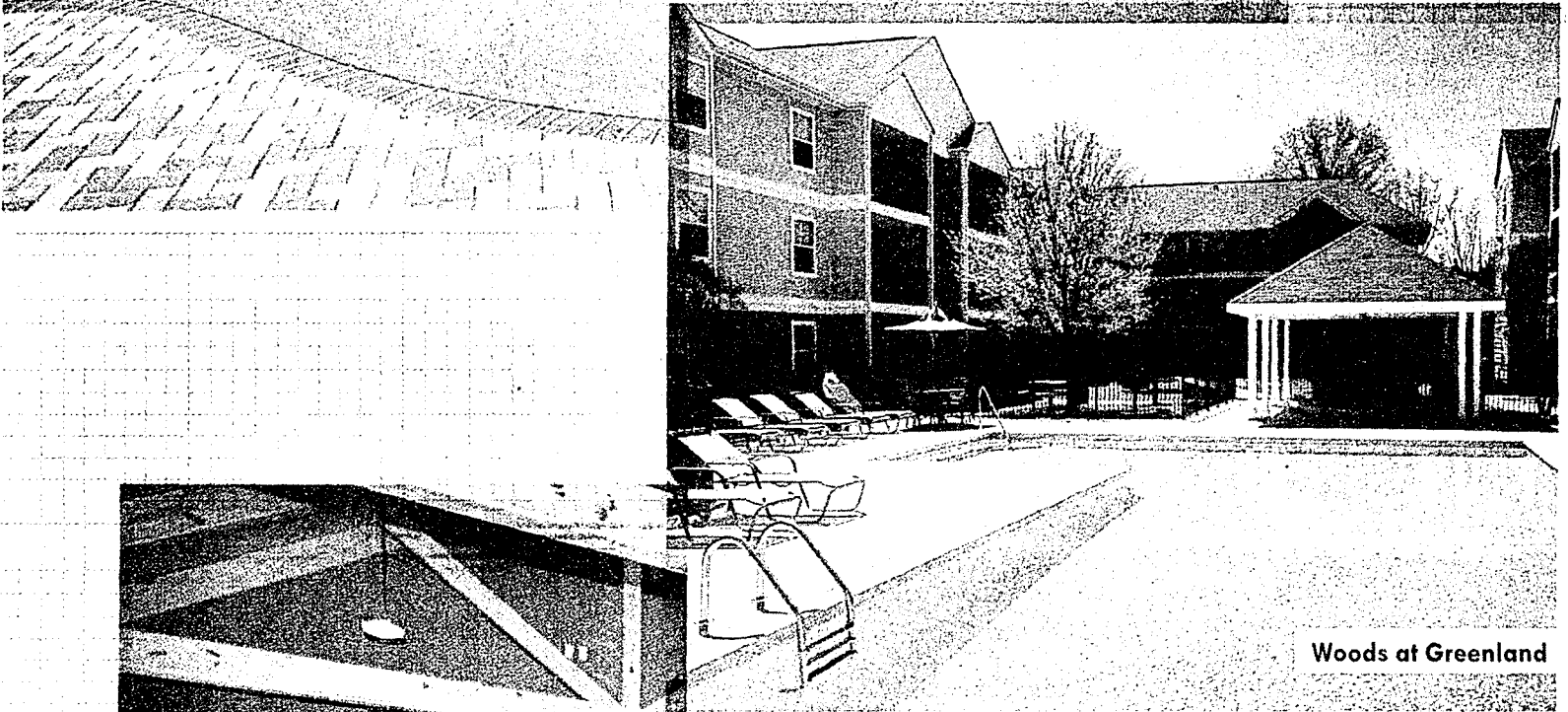
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