

SIDELINES

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MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Murfreesboro, TN

Enrollment numbers expected to increase, funding future still unsure

Lawmakers could face income-tax question again

Robin Wallace
Staff Reporter

Estimates show that MTSU enrollment will steadily increase by the year 2004, according to a university report. But in the face of such good news lurks the tax reform issue and the uncertainty over state funding support.

MTSU may not be able to accommodate the projected growth if there is a lack of state funding, which makes up 60 percent of the school's funding, MTSU officials said.

"If in the event we were to receive state funding cuts, then the president would come with his senior staff, and they would meet with a game plan of how to deal with it," said Mike Gower, associate vice president of the Business Office.

More than likely, the immediate way to make up for lacking state funds will be through higher fees and a tuition hike, said Duane Stucky, MTSU vice president

for Finance and Administration. MTSU officials also say the university doesn't have adequate classroom space and that limiting enrollment would be the last option the university considers.

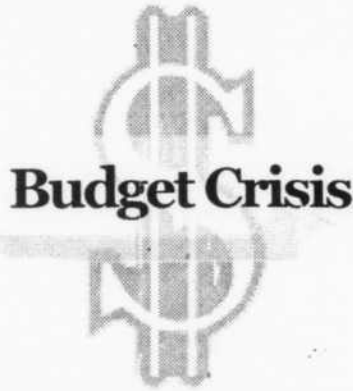
"It's not going to get better — it's going to get worse, because we're not going catch-up without there being some kind of reform," said Bob Glenn, vice president of Student Affairs.

The special legislative session on taxes ended Nov. 18, without a resolution to the state's budget crisis after three weeks of deliberation. Gov. Don Sundquist said he may call a third special session on tax reform when legislators return for their regular session next month.

Sundquist and legislative tax reform supporters feel that Tennessee's main source of revenue, the 6 percent sales tax, does not keep pace with economic changes and is unfair to the poor.

Legislative Republicans, many of whom are upset that Sundquist abandoned his long-held opposition to an income tax, have created a task force to investigate different ways to cut spending. They plan to present their recommendations next month.

There is another option to help with the budget crisis. Tennessee was among 46 states to benefit from a \$206 billion settlement with tobacco companies last



Budget Crisis

November, but the first 25 yearly payments, a total of \$214.5 million, will not come until three lawsuits are settled.

The lawsuits, which have been consolidated, are before the Court of Appeals, yet a date has not been set for the state's opening arguments.

Sundquist spokeswoman Beth Fortune said even if the tobacco money arrives soon, the governor does not want to use it to balance the budget.

Sundquist is instead thinking about using part of the settlement money to finance interest-free or low-interest school-building programs, but at this point, the governor has not made a final

See TAX, page 4

MTSU could hit 20,000 in five years

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. (AP)—Enrollment at one of Tennessee's fastest growing universities could top 20,000 by the year 2004, but the glowing forecast is clouded by uncertainty over state funding support, school officials say.

Middle Tennessee State University's enrollment for the current semester is 18,993, with estimates showing a continued climb to 20,663 in five years, according to a university report.

But officials say a lack of state funding, which accounts for 60 percent of the school's funding, would hamper efforts to accommodate the projected growth.

State appropriations are determined by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission's funding formula. The formula is driven by enrollment so that the more students, the more the funding.

In recent years, stagnant state funding levels for higher education have meant that MTSU and other state colleges have not received full funding based on the formula. Gov. Don Sundquist has cited higher education as one concern when presenting the Legislature with several tax reform packages, including an income tax, to

increase state revenues. The Legislature has turned them all down.

"Should we receive full funding, we would have adequate resources," said Duane Stucky, MTSU vice president for finance and administration.

"Without it, problems ensue. Keeping up with the number of faculty is most difficult," said Cliff Gillespie, associate vice president for enrollment management. "We are far behind in the number of faculty we need."

MTSU also is playing catch-up on classroom space. However, officials say capping enrollment is a last resort.

Stucky says increasing Tennessee college students and their families will face higher fees and tuition without more state funding.

"Without adequate funding, they (state lawmakers) may ultimately place the price out of reach for many people," Stucky told The (Murfreesboro) Daily News Journal.

The issue also would have a direct impact on the economies of Tennessee towns and cities where colleges are located.

But for now, MTSU's growth is good news for Murfreesboro. Students and school employees pump money into the local tax base and also fuel local businesses.

"The effect ripples throughout the whole economy," Stucky said. ■

Online classes offer chance to learn at home

Roberta A. Walls
Staff Reporter

Will MTSU classrooms be sitting empty in the future?

The Internet has connected the world and created alternative ways of teaching at MTSU and other universities.

It is now possible to take classes from a university located on the west coast while sitting in the comforts of home on the east coast. The cyber classroom has not replaced the traditional form of education yet, but as the technology of the Internet develops, the possibilities are seemingly endless.

MTSU has nine undergraduate and seven graduate online classes offered in the Spring 2000 catalog.

The Media Law class, taught by Larry Burriss, was the first online class offered at the university and one of the first in the country.

Media Law first went online three years ago. Before the inaugural semester, there was a lot of planning and a few problems to iron out. He spent a full spring and summer semester developing the online course, which meant also learning the software.

"Developing the course was my first attempt at HTML, so I had to learn how to write the script plus develop the course content," Burriss said. "The folks of OIT (Office of Information Technology) were very helpful."

There were a few minor technical glitches the first semester, Burriss said. The problems mostly involved formatting messages in a way that would make them accessible to everyone enrolled in the class.

However, there were concerns from administrators about the online class format.

Admissions officials were concerned with the enrollment count and the possibility of people not enrolled in the class accessing university resources and overloading the system, Burriss said.

Jerry Gentry, associate director of OIT, said the addition of online courses has not

created any known cases of system overload.

Officials in the Office of Distance Learning were concerned with testing security.

"Evaluation can be done many ways other than traditional testing," said Liz Johnson, coordinator of Continuing Studies. "Ultimately, any evaluation method must be comfortable to the teacher. It is the teacher who is responsible for the integrity of his/her course."

Testing online is no different than assigning a term paper or giving a take-home exam or a test to a class of 250 people. There is no guarantee that the student did the work, and there is no way to know otherwise, Burriss said.

The grades in the Media Law online class have not been much different than the grades in the traditional format. Burriss said he knows of little cheating.

One advantage of the online class is the expanded opportunity for discussion, Burriss said. He said there is often less discussion in a traditional classroom, because the class ends after 50 minutes, and only two or three people in the class regularly participate in discussion.

In Burriss' online class, each student is required to respond to a discussion topic.

Burriss said he sees the possibility of offering some degree programs online, but he said it would be difficult to incorporate everything in this format.

One disadvantage of taking online courses is the absence of face-to-face interaction.

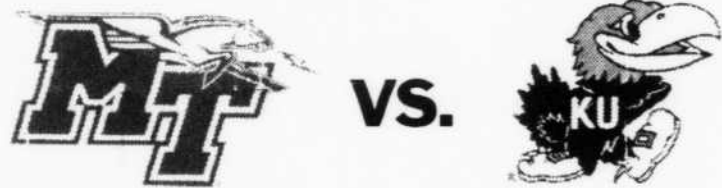
"It's not the same as being there; you would lose stuff," Burriss said. "It would be hard to teach a biology lab or bowling online."

The Internet also allows for other expanded education opportunities. Research is readily available and not limited to on-site resources, and it is possible to access publications from all over the world.

Burriss said it will take time to fully realize the impact the Internet will have.

"It's a tool, and we're still trying to figure out how to use it," Burriss said. ■

How to get tickets to Kansas game



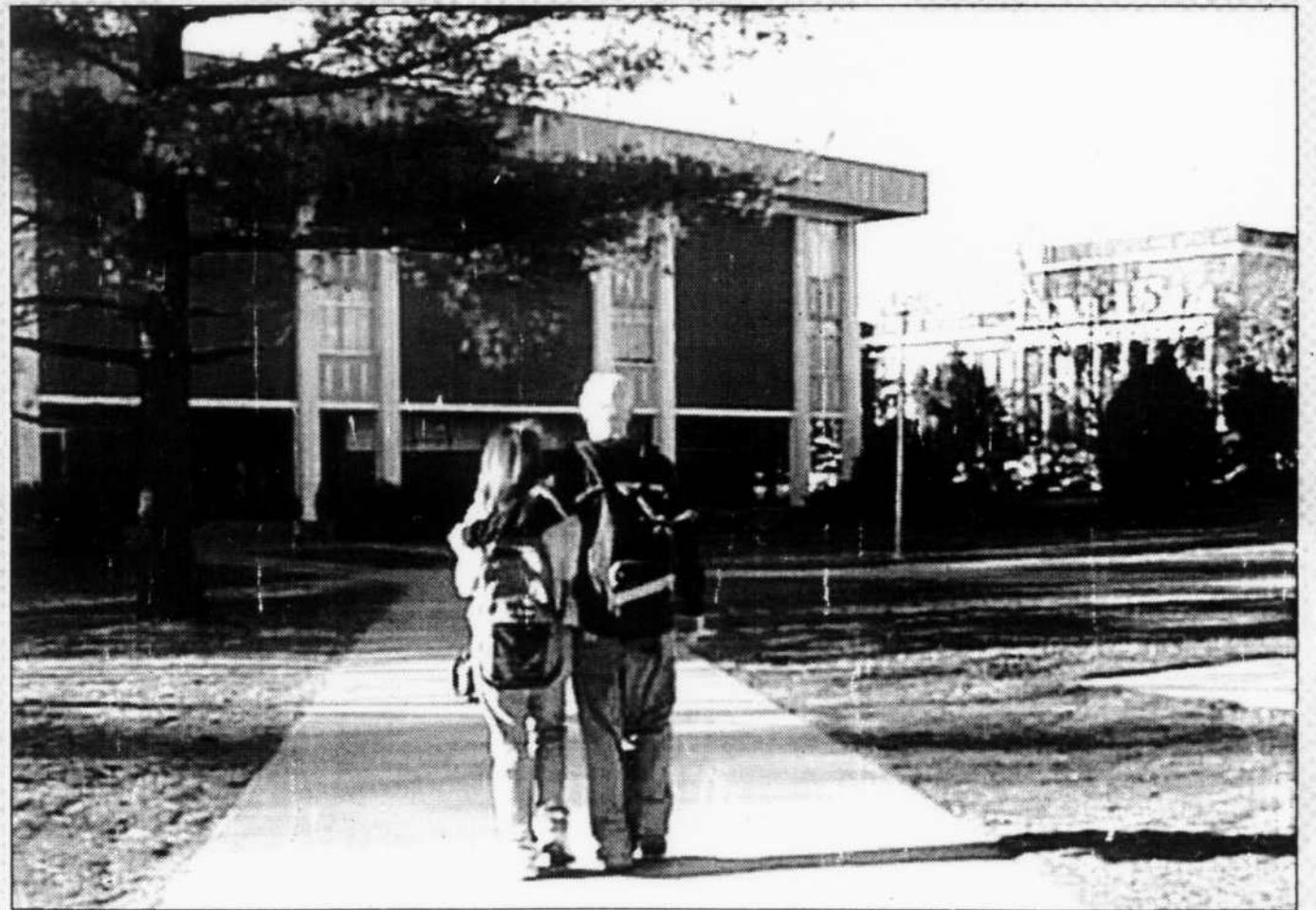
Student tickets for the Blue Raiders basketball game against Kansas are available at the Murphy Center ticket office.

For other games, MTSU students show their ID at the gate to be admitted to the game, but student tickets for higher games, MTSU students' 1 p.m. game, because of Kansas' number-six ranking in the Associated Press poll.

Tickets are still free with a valid MTSU student ID, but students must request tickets at the box office. They will be required to have a ticket and their student ID at the gate Sunday.

Students will only be allowed one ticket. Those wishing to purchase additional tickets for the game are encouraged to buy those at the Murphy Center ticket office.

Just trying to stay warm



Kimberly Farris and Blair Thompson, both MTSU students, head to class in Peck Hall Wednesday. Temperatures reached the 20s this week in Murfreesboro.

Photo by Amanda Virgillito

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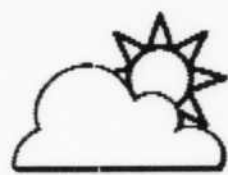
SPORTS

Track team prepares for season opener. See page 10.

FEATURES

MTSU alum devoted to helping disadvantaged. See page 8.

WEATHER FORECAST



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HI 63/LO 31



FRIDAY
SHOWERS
HI 69/LO 40



SATURDAY
MOSTLY
CLOUDY
HI 64/LO 49

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World News

Relics found at Rome landfill

ROME (AP) — Fragments of ancient statues, frescoes and other archaeological relics turned up Wednesday at a dump outside Rome, sparking a furor when police traced them to the site of a parking garage being built for the 2000 Holy Year.

Citizens' groups and Italy's Green Party demanded an immediate stop to work on the garage, a government- and Vatican-funded project for the buses that will bring pilgrims and tourists to St. Peter's Square.

"If this is true, it would confirm all our fears on what's going on with the work in that area," said Gaia Pallottino of Italia Nostra (Our Italy).

Mexico, U.S. dig for 100 missing bodies

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (AP) — Working on tips from informants, Mexican and U.S. officials armed with sophisticated technology apparently located the remains of three more bodies south of the Texas border Wednesday, bringing to five the number found in a slow search for some of 100 people missing in the region.

"At this moment we have indications that we have the remains of five persons," Jose Larrieta Carrasco, head of the organized crime unit for Mexico's attorney general's office, told reporters at the Rancho de la Campana, some 10 miles southwest of Ciudad Juarez, across the border from El Paso, Texas.

FBI forensic experts worked with Mexican soldiers and ski-masked police searching four desert ranches near the border, concentrating on two near Ciudad Juarez, the home base for the Juarez drug cartel, Mexico's largest and most violent drug-smuggling outfit of the mid-1990s.

While U.S. officials say an informant told them as many as 100 bodies might be buried at the ranches, officials now say they don't know how many bodies could be buried.

National News

FDA approves new epilepsy drug

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government approved a new epilepsy drug Wednesday that may prove easier for some patients to take because it does not seem to cause dangerous interactions with other medications.

The Food and Drug Administration approved Kepra, made by UCB Pharma of Smyrna, Ga., for use to control partial onset seizures when used with other anti-epilepsy drugs.

About 2 million Americans have some form of epilepsy, in which abnormal electrical activity in the brain causes seizures. Partial onset seizures occur when that electrical activity occurs in only one region of the brain.

Kepra, known chemically as levetiracetam, is different than most other epilepsy medicines, primarily because it is not metabolized through the liver. That means it is unlikely to cause dangerous interactions with other medications, the FDA said.

Toys R Us fined for child labor violations

WASHINGTON (AP) — Toys R Us will pay a \$200,000 fine and institute new safeguards in all its stores after inspections turned up some violations of child labor laws, the Department of Labor said Wednesday.

"We found more than 300 young Toys R Us employees working more hours and later into the night than allowed by law," said Labor Secretary Alexis Herman.

The violations involved 14- and 15-year-olds who stock shelves, operate cash registers and clean at 19 New England Toys R Us stores, most of them in Massachusetts.

A spokeswoman for the national toy store chain, based in Paramus, N.J., said it has already taken steps to correct the problems, which she said were the result of misunderstandings of the law by some managers.

Federal child labor laws restrict the employment of 14- and 15-year-olds, limiting the kinds of jobs they can do and the number of hours and time of day they can work.

State News

Protestors gather at Gore campaign office

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — About 30 protesters gathered in front of Al Gore's presidential campaign to protest the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle, but there was no violence. At one point Tuesday night, protesters entered the reception area and serenaded some bemused members of Gore's campaign staff with "No, no, no WTC ..." before returning to the cold.

In Seattle, the opening of the WTO's global meeting was delayed by protests that turned violent, trapping delegates in their hotels and requiring police to use tear gas to disperse the crowd.

The organizer of the Nashville protest, Jane Hussain of the Mid-East Peace Coalition, told The Tennessean the activists were "mostly people who voted for the Clinton-Gore ticket in the past. But if he wants us to support him again, he's going to have to change his stance."

Nashville police testing translator device

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Nashville police are testing a new device that translates their English words into phrases in Spanish and several other languages.

The machine, called a Voice Response Translator, is a small box — with a microphone, computer chip and speaker — that attaches to an officer's belt.

Nashville will be the second test city for the translator, which already is being used in Oakland, Calif.

It is being developed by Integrated Wave Technologies in Fremont, Calif., and is funded by the National Institute of Justice. The company plans to be producing a commercial model within three years.

Officials hope the device will replace the hand signals and hand-drawn pictures now used to communicate with non-English speaking crime victims and suspects. It is designed to help officers ask specific questions or give simple commands.

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LAUNDRY DAY WILL NEVER BE THE SAME

Hiring for the holidays: customers often become target of job offers

Jennifer Bott
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

DETROIT — Jeanne Buchanan worried that a part-time job coupled with college classes might be too much to juggle this holiday season.

But Crate & Barrel's offer of \$7.50 an hour, a 30 percent discount on merchandise and flexible scheduling was too good for the 19-year-old Troy, Mich., student to turn down.

Besides, how could Buchanan say no when a good friend — already a Crate & Barrel part-timer — had a \$75 gift certificate riding on her being hired?

For those considering temporary holiday employment, this could be the year to cash in on perks and pay.

Faced with low unemployment rates, some retailers have resorted to offering deep in-store discounts, higher pay, flexible scheduling and recruiting bonuses to secure workers this holiday season.

The situation is so rough that some local stores already are struggling with no-shows from temporary workers.

"I don't know if they found something better or what," said Jim Sutherland, assistant manager of the Crate & Barrel in Troy's Somerset Collection. "If this turns out not to be the place for you, that's fine, and I wish you well. Just call and tell me."

Such retailers increase sales staffs by 9 percent to 15 percent in November and December, when 25 percent to 30 percent of their annual sales roll in, experts say.

But holiday hiring has been troublesome nationwide this year, said Mel Kleiman, managing director of the Houston-based Hire Tough Group, a recruitment and retention consulting company specializing in hourly workers.

"The problem that we're seeing is that the labor market has been tight all year, actually the past two years," he said.

Making matters worse, employers in such industries as financial services, computers and telemarketing have snagged typical holiday hires — students, retirees, parents and professionals looking for extra cash — as part- or full-time workers.

"Suddenly, the bright, young kid you would have loved to have seen in a grocery store is making \$20 an hour somewhere else," Kleiman said.

Retailers who hope to attract the best job candidates this holiday season need to step up their offerings, he said.

"Employers talk about the pain, but are they willing to do something about it?" Kleiman asked.

If a store hasn't started serious hiring by now, it could be in big trouble, Kleiman said. Those on the ball lined up 1999 seasonal help before it left last year, he said. Others started well before November, the traditional kickoff month for hiring temporary help.

Some retailers are looking to current employees for recruiting suggestions.

"Who better to recommend someone than someone already in the company?" asked Michelle Shulman, a Hudson's spokeswoman. Hudson's, a Dayton Hudson Corp. subsidiary, and many other retailers offer gift certificates of various amounts to employees who recommend holiday hires.

Kleiman said, "You've really got to focus on present employees as being recruiters for you."

Retailers also are hiring among those who know their merchandise best — their top shoppers. While in-store help-wanted signs were considered unsightly in the past, today they're a necessity.

At the limited stores throughout metro Detroit, consumers can't walk in the door without spotting signs seeking holiday help.

Other stores are marketing jobs as social opportunities. A sign at Restoration Hardware at the Somerset Collection suggests potential workers don't want to miss the chance to attend the store's holiday bash.

At clothier Banana Republic, sales associates are encouraged to drop job hints to their best customers on the assumption they might be attracted to the deep employee discounts.

Just like full-time employees, holiday help at Banana Republic enjoys 30 percent off anything in the store as well as special discount cards for savings beyond 50 percent on selected merchandise.

Bruce Van Kleeck, vice president of member services with the National Retail Federation, reminds potential holiday workers that employee discounts are generally on top of in-store sales and that they usually get the first crack at clearance merchandise.

Kleiman suggested retailers consider extending employee discounts to family members in much the same way auto companies extend savings plans to workers' relatives.

The odds are that workers already are using their discounts to make purchases for family and friends, so why not make it legitimate? he asked.

Once upon a time, store discounts of up to 20 percent and minimum-wage pay were enough to attract holiday help.

But with so many jobs available retailers have learned they must do more.

Most holiday pay starts at \$1.50 to \$2 an hour above the minimum wage of \$5.15 hour and workers' discounts can be 30 percent or higher, Van Kleeck said.

Employees — even part-timers — also can negotiate more flexible scheduling. "Retailers are much more flexible in scheduling than they used to be," Van Kleeck said.

Some people want to work only a few days during the season. If a retailer can get someone to commit to the day after Thanksgiving and a few busy weekends, it's worth the effort, Kleiman said.

"It makes it much more difficult to schedule, but at least you've got someone to schedule," he said.

Merchants also have been forced to make applying easier.

Many malls, including Great Lakes Crossing in Auburn Hills, Mich., held job fairs this fall with stores setting up interview tables just outside their doors.

Such large chains as Best Buy and Sears Roebuck & Co. have introduced computerized hot lines to speed the application process and weed out weak candidates. Potential employees call and answer questions. Their names are entered into a database and if a good fit appears they could be called in to a local store for an interview.

Limited stores also are recruiting on the Internet. Potential employees who fill out and print an application from the www.limited.com site and return it to a store receive a 10-percent-off coupon good for any purchase made by Dec. 24, whether they get the job or not.

Target stores — another Dayton Hudson subsidiary — installed application kiosks at local stores between May and August. Customers can submit key information at the kiosk. Then the store's management office is alerted that someone is applying, and an in-store interview can be arranged on the spot.

Banana Republic tried to take some of the pressure out of applying by holding an after-hours open house at the company's Somerset Collection store in mid-October.

Instead of intense interviews, candidates got a chance to chat casually with managers. The store completed 50 percent of its holiday hiring through the event, said Marla McDonald, a human resources officer for the company.

Kleiman suggests retailers offer other incentives to get people to apply, such as scholarship drawings or donations to charities of an employee's choice.

Retailers also should consider advertising seasonal openings where potential workers are most likely to be, he said. Contact a high school about setting up a table near the football field on a Friday night or advertise at movie theaters, Kleiman said.

"You don't have to hire from the bottom of the barrel if you do aggressive advertising," he said. ■

Experts warn of damaging e-mail virus

Molly Wood
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Experts scrambled to warn thousands of computer users that a familiar and damaging virus has struck scores of companies and could be slumbering in their e-mail inboxes.

The Mini-Zip virus tore through computers Tuesday, devouring files and crippling e-mail systems, anti-virus analysts said. It was expected to renew its assault Wednesday as unsuspecting users logged on.

Dan Schrader, vice president of new technology at Trend Micro in Cupertino, Calif., said he fielded complaints of significant problems from four Fortune 500 companies and scores of smaller companies.

Sal Viveros, a marketing manager for Santa Clara-based Network Associates, which makes anti-virus software, said 20 large corporations had been affected by Tuesday evening.

"The last time this virus came along it affected tens of thousands of computers and caused millions of dollars in damage."

- Dan Schrader

The experts refused to release the names of affected companies. Mini-Zip's parent bug, Worm.Explore.Zip, struck last summer. It was considered the most destructive virus since the Melissa outbreak in the spring.

"The last time this virus came along it affected tens of thousands — maybe hundreds of thousands of computers — and caused millions of dollars in damage," Schrader said.

"It's malicious and fast-spreading. We consider this to be high-risk."

It wasn't clear whether the problem had been reported to the government-chartered CERT Coordination Center — formerly the Computer Emergency Response Team — at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. There were no warnings on its Web site early Wednesday.

Anti-virus experts said the bug gets loose from an infected system as a seemingly friendly reply to a clean e-mail sent via the Microsoft Outlook, Outlook Express or Exchange browsers.

The virus intercepts the original message and automatically sends itself as a response — even changing the subject line from, for example, "Work Meeting" to "Re: Work Meeting."

The body of the message reads: "Hi (recipient's name)! I received your e-mail and I shall send you an e-mail ASAP. Till then, take a look at the attached zipped docs. bye."

The e-mail contains an attachment called "zipped-files.exe." If a user double-clicks on the attachment, the virus is set loose in the new victim's system. It then destroys a series of files in a computer's hard drive by replacing them with empty files. ■

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TAX
continued from page 1

decision, Forune said.

The states are free to use the money as they want, out the settlement money is intended to be designated for health-care and education programs.

Rep. Matt Kiser, D-Jackson and chairman of the House Finance Committee, said it would be foolhardy to rely on tobacco money to fund education, health care, public

safety and other state programs.

"If we could use some of the money to support our visibly low education funding, then we could have some long-term benefits from the money," Kiser said.

Some tax-reform critics argue the state should focus on the state's spending issues.

"It might be a spending problem," Kiser said. "It might be a revenue problem. But the bottom line is there is a problem." ■

Court says it will rehear KSU First Amendment case

Staff Reports

An appeals court in Cincinnati voted Tuesday to rehear a case involving a student yearbook and newspaper at Kentucky State University.

A three-judge panel was divided in a September ruling on Kincaid v. Gibson that KSU officials did not violate the First Amendment when they confiscated the 1993-94 student yearbook. All copies of the yearbook are being held in a KSU storage room.

Officials also demoted the yearbook's adviser to a clerical position after she refused to censor material critical of the university from the student newspaper.

School officials objected to the yearbook, in part because the yearbook's cover was purple and not the official school colors.

In granting the rehearing motion, the court vacated the ruling and selected a panel of 13 judges to reconsider the case.

The original ruling cited a high school-based standard of censorship, based on a 1988 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier. The ruling was the first to apply the Hazelwood decision to the legal protection for expression at public colleges and universities.

Previous rulings over the past 30 years had provided strong legal protection to college student media.

A coalition of civil rights associations, media organizations and journalism education groups had urged the court to strike down KSU's actions as unconstitutional. These groups include every accredited journalism program in Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee, the states covered by the Sixth Circuit, where the ruling had been handed down.

No date has been set yet for oral arguments in the case. ■

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Ex-Rutgers students threatening to file suit over naked sprints

Knight-Ridder Newspapers

Three former Rutgers students will file a lawsuit Tuesday against the university and its men's basketball coach, charging their civil rights were violated during a drill that involved sprinting naked, according to a source involved in the case.

The December 1997 practice was in good fun, coach Kevin Bannon said earlier this year, when some of the players told their story to The Record.

But two ex-players and a former team-manager for the team will claim they were improperly forced to strip and run wind sprints in the gymnasium as retribution for missing free throws in practice.

Information about the lawsuit came from the family of one of the players and associates for the Newark law firm of Ginarte, O'Dwyer, Winograd, and Laracunte. The firm will detail the charges at a news conference today when the court papers are filed.

The lawsuit will name as plaintiffs Josh Sankes and Earl Johnson Jr., who were scholarship athletes on the team, and Juan Pla, a former student-manager. Bannon doesn't deny what took place that day in

Louis Brown Athletic Center in Piscataway. The players and the student-managers were told to form two teams for a free-throw shooting match. For every shot missed, everyone on the teams had to remove a piece of clothing. In the end, four team members ran wind sprints in the nude while the rest of the team and staff watched.

"It was well-timed — to provide some levity and fun for the guys during a difficult period," Bannon told The Record earlier this year. "Absolutely no one was forced to remove his clothes or to run. The only people in the gym were my team, my coaches, trainer, and manager."

Sankes and Johnson since have transferred to other schools. Sankes is currently playing for Holy Cross. Johnson is a student at Iona, sitting out a transfer year under NCAA regulations. Pla stayed at Rutgers and became a graduate assistant in athletic sports marketing.

On Monday, Gary Sankes, father of Josh Sankes, said the lawsuit wouldn't exist had the players "ever received so much as acknowledgement or an apology from the university that 'the strip practice' happened."

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Try-outs for Real World leave hollow feeling

Alex Ross
Tulane University

They say the American dream is alive and well somewhere in this nation.

Maybe it's brooding in the New Orleans projects, twinkling in a little boy's eyes, or in the hills of West Virginia, falling with the factory-blackened snow.

Maybe it's alive somewhere where it needs to be alive. But for the kids of the MTV generation, there's no twinkling eye or falling snow. For us, the American dream's dead. So very, very dead.

Honestly, I didn't want to believe. After all, I, at 19 years old, fall under that vast umbrella known as the MTV generation. But after trying out for MTV's "The Real World" recently, I had to believe.

There was no choice — I saw no dream. Walking to the try-outs, I was in high spirits. So, I'll drop the John Wayne, I'll-eat-my-mother's-ashes-excrete-them-and-eat-them-again-before-I-crack-a-smile facade, and admit it: I was giddy.

Giddy to see this spectacle up-close, to brush hands, if just for a moment, with the gaudiness and excess of MTV's Hollywood.

After filling out a one-page application with such thought-provoking, soul-purging, religion-inspiring questions as "What's your most embarrassing moment?", "What do you look for in a partrier?", and "What's the best advice anyone has ever given you?", I was ushered into The Real World tent where I was given an opportunity to sell "me" — in approximately 60 seconds.

Based on answers given on my application, student volunteers asked me questions about my affiliation with the Hu.labaloo, my theories on tabloid journalism and my breakfast-eating habits.

I'm not sure whether or not The Real World

was in the market for a 6'5" white guy from Colorado that day. A friend of mine manning one of the cameras informed me after the fact that I'd turned an ear or two with one particularly witty line. But, as you well know, it's a buyers market.

Witty lines fall like leaves, and 6'5" white guys from Colorado are 50 percent off in their own glossy 80-page Eddie Bauer catalog — basically, they're all over the place. So, needless to say, I wasn't holding my breath about my interview.

Or thinking about it.

Or even hoping.

And that's where the problem began.

Listening to the general hullabaloo surrounding The Real World tent before and after my interview, I heard time and time again, "I have no shot whatsoever."

"Why am I even trying?" one girl said. "It's ridiculous."

A Loyola student shook his head. "Maybe when the show first started I would've had a shot — but now, not a chance. There's no hope."

No hope.

Now that, my friends, is un-American.

Granted, approximately 35,000 kids tried out for the half-dozer spots on The Real World IX. Statistically, I think I have a better chance of spontaneously combusting than I do of becoming the next Real World celebrity.

But since when did sheer odds bite so hard? Since when did Generation X-inherited cynicism, sarcasm and pessimism kill the fire?

And when did our little version of the American dream die?

There was a time when a cliff was no matter. For a young man named Fred Smith, the cliff was in the form of a Yale management professor who laughed in his face after he turned in an assignment proposing reliable overnight delivery service.

"The concept is interesting and well-formed."

the professor wrote on Fred's paper, "but in order to earn better than a 'C', the idea must be feasible."

After receiving the professor's expert opinion, Fred didn't shake his head and say, "Why am I even trying? There's no hope." Instead, he ignored the cliff, hugged his little ball of American dream deep in his stomach, and moved on.

Fred Smith took his 'C' and founded Federal Express.

I'm not encouraging everyone to try to fight his or her way onto MTV The Real World, unlike Fred Smith and his story, is external of the individual. That is, regardless of your determination, grit or hope, MTV has the last say.

Fred could and did fight his way to the top, but fighting your way onto The Real World will only land you 500 hours of community service and a \$5,000 fine.

But I am asking for a little hope. I am asking that someone within our generation of steel-eyed cynics step up and say, "You know, I do have a shot. It may not be a great one, but there is hope."

All I'm asking for is the dream — the American dream. That's all.

As I was walking back to my room from the try-outs, I overheard two freshmen on their way to the MTV tents.

"There's no way I won't make The Real World," one said.

"Why's that?"

"Just look at me. I'm a king amongst scum."

The kid came up to my knees. His uncombed hair tickled towards the sky, his thick glasses had trouble keeping their place and his South Park T-shirt was two sizes too big. No doubt he was a computer science student, too.

He wasn't Real World material — not even close. And he knew it. But his pace quickened as he approached the tents just the same. ■

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FEATURES

8 ■ SIDELINES

Murfreesboro, TN

Changing their part of the world



Photo by Randall Ford
Mark Bell watches while his home-care companion, Shannon Martin, is tackled by her seven-year-old son Ryan in the home Martin and her three children share with Bell and Raymond Hill. Bell and Hill are mentally retarded.

Randall Ford
Staff Reporter

It's a 57-hour workweek focused on serving one or two customers.

Shannon Martin and Greg Kelly are both live-in companions to clients of the Rutherford County Adult Activity Center.

Martin, a 1997 graduate of MTSU, and Kelly, who plans to graduate this semester, are paid to live with the center's patients, mentally retarded adults.

"It's like babysitting for a very special population," Kelly said.

Companions are responsible for the day-to-day care of the patients, including cooking, cleaning and even helping in the bathroom.

"It's a very humbling experience — wiping somebody's ass," Kelly said. "I go to class sometimes with a bunch of whiny people, and I'm thinking, 'Hey, I wiped somebody's ass this morning.'"

Kelly, 26, has worked with the center since his first semester at MTSU four and a half years ago and now lives with a man named Bobby.

"He's just like a child, except that he's a grown man with autism and severe mental retardation," Kelly said.

Kelly said being a companion means every day will be exciting.

"There's always something different," Kelly said. "I think that's what gets me out of bed each day — that I get to deal with that.

It might suck, but I know it's going to be interesting."

Kelly said he and Bobby are open to each other's needs, and Bobby is even willing to accompany him on errands after they are at home in the evening.

"Bobby knows everybody," Kelly said. "He goes with me to the MTSU library, to the computer labs. He's been to the Rec Center with me."

Jerry, another of Kelly's clients, had to be moved out of his home four months ago after a choking accident left him in a coma, a situation that is tough for Kelly to talk about.

Jerry is "not doing really well now," Kelly said.

"Jerry was my best friend," Kelly said. "Jerry still is my best friend. I never felt more of a connection with a human being. It was like having a really cool kid, but he was an adult."

The connection was apparent even in the musical tastes the men eventually shared.

"I taught him to like Bob Marley, and he taught me to like Willie Nelson," Kelly said. "I even took him to Chattanooga to a Willie Nelson concert on Valentine's Day."

Martin, 31, lives with Mark and Raymond, both of whom are older than she is. She is also a full-time teacher at Bellwood Christian Academy and the mother of three children, ages five, seven and nine.

Martin's day, like Kelly's, starts at 5 a.m., when she wakes Mark

and Raymond and makes breakfast. Then she gets them ready to meet the van that takes the men to the Adult Activity Center, where they perform odd jobs for money.

Martin said that work resumes after she returns home from school. In the evening, she makes dinner for the clients and her family and often takes the men on outings, such as shopping or a trip to the park.

The day ends at 8 p.m., which is bedtime for Mark, Raymond and Martin's children.

"Not everybody could do it. It takes a lot of patience," said Martin, who has had the job for five years.

She said it can be tough when she is leaving her teaching job and knows she is coming home to another job.

"I think I am starting to feel a little burned out," she said. "It has its ups and downs. They're part of the family now, so it comes naturally, but it can be tiring."

Martin said there has never been a conflict between her children and Mark or Raymond.

"I've never had any problems," she said. "People ask, 'Aren't you afraid they're going to hit the kids?' But I'm not. They're really good guys."

That doesn't mean, however, that the job always goes smoothly.

"You see that closet there?" she said, pointing to the corner of the living room. "Sometimes I have to

go in there and scream."

Kelly mentioned he has also become frustrated from time to time, especially because companions cannot have guests after 10 p.m.

The center hires substitutes to fill in when companions want time off on evenings or weekends. Kelly said that still does not relieve all the stress.

"It sucks for your social life," he said. "When I do get to go out on a date, I spend most of the evening thinking things like, 'Did they make sure Bobby had clean underwear before bed?'"

Rachel Birch, the center's personnel and administrative assistant, said the center has sub positions open now. She said people interested should have flexible schedules and a willingness to work weekend hours.

"It takes a lot of patience and a strong desire to help others," Birch said.

Birch can be reached by calling the center at 890-4389.

Kelly said the desire to help others is what made him want to work with the center in the first place.

"You have to want to change some part of the world," Kelly said. "You don't have to change the whole damn thing, but you have to want to make a difference. I've made a difference in the lives of the people I've worked with, and I've changed, too." ■

Photography student focuses on winning

Erika Pryor
Special to Sidelines

"Alicia Moore won a photography award," is how photography professor Jim Norton started his class.

As the words came out of his mouth, the 21-year-old junior blushed.

Alicia Moore, a photography major, was given the Tamron/Bronica "Tell us who you are" Photo Contest award by "Popular Photography" magazine.

"We are very proud of her," said Norton.

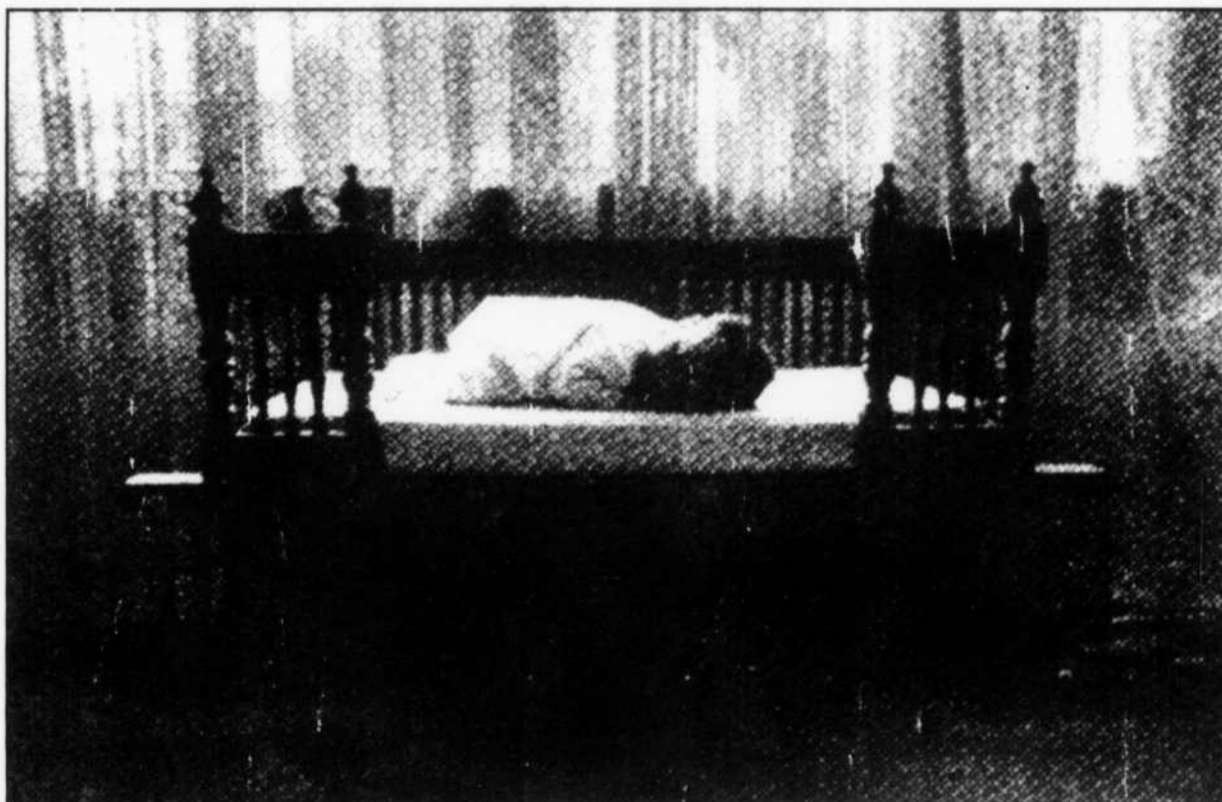
Moore entered eight prints, which were only a grain in the sea of prints that were entered in the competition.

"There was a very wide variety [of subjects covered in the entries], from kids to different stuff," said Moore.

When asked what inspired her to enter was for entering the contest, Moore said, "I was flipping through the magazine, 'Popular Photography,' and saw the ad for the contest. The contest was sponsored by Tamron, a company that deals in making camera lenses. A section in the rules of the contest required that the contestants use a Tamron camera lens. I said to myself, 'I have a Tamron lens.' The rest is history."

Moore was one of six finalists in the Tamron contest. She received a \$100 gift certificate toward a Bronica camera, as well as national recognition.

"My mom told me that I had received a letter that looked like I had won a contest," Moore



This photograph was recently published in "Popular Photography" magazine.

Photo Provided by Alicia Moore

explained. "Frantically, I asked who the letter was from. When she said Tamron, I rushed right over. I think the most exciting part was the recognition."

Norton said one of the most important things a photographer can do is "get your name out there."

"Ninety-nine percent of the time photographers produce what would be called a bad print. The reason why they continue their work is that one percent, that one good print," Norton told his basic black and white photography class.

"I encourage everyone to do

things like this," Moore explained. "It gets your name out there if nothing else."

Moore used wet processing for the contest. When asked about digital processing, she said that she will start to do more of it in order to become a more well-rounded photographer.

"She is a great architectural and interior design photographer," said Grant Fletcher, a former classmate.

Of the print that won the contest, Moore said, "the picture is unique. It is a 3-month-old baby

sitting in an elephant chair that looks like a crib."

Moore came to MTSU on a track scholarship. Not only is she a hurdler, a student photo gallery exhibitor, a photography major and a business and art minor, she is also making her mark in the photographic world.

The proceeds of the contest totaled approximately \$30,000. The money went toward The Breast Cancer Research Foundation.

The article is featured in the December issue of "Popular Photography." ■

Just for the Health of It

Prepare your skin for winter

Kelley Dodd
Staff Reporter

Now that winter is upon us, it is a good time to ensure the health of one of your most valued possessions: your skin.

According to dermatologists, skin usually becomes dry and chapped when the skin is exposed to the harsh elements of colder weather.

To keep your skin from becoming damaged during the approaching months of chilly air, apply a moisturizer to parts of the body, such as your face, hands, knees and elbows, which are commonly drier areas. After taking a shower, while the skin still has a small amount of moisture, apply body lotion. This will keep your skin well-moisturized and healthy.

Wash your face with a gentle, non-soap cleanser, such as the dermatologist-praised Cetaphil, to keep your face from over-drying. Follow with an alcohol-free toner and an oil-free moisturizer.

Modify the use of acne treatments, such as Retin-A or benzoyl peroxide, which have a tendency to dry the skin. Use less of a typical application during the morning to prevent your face from flaking.

Although you will most likely be spending the majority of your time indoors during the season, be aware of possible skin damage when outdoors or even while in the car. The sun's bright rays can cause damage to the skin during the winter, especially when there is reflective snow on the ground (ever see a pale snow-skiier?).

Wear a moisturizer with an SPF of 15 or higher to protect your skin from becoming damaged by sunlight.

When possible, keep your face covered from cold gusts with scarves and gloves.

Remember to take extra care of your skin this winter; you'll thank yourself later. ■

Drama auditions seek African American actors

The Murfreesboro Ensemble Theatre is looking for an all African American cast for its production of "The Piano Lesson." The theatre will hold auditions for "The Piano Lesson" at 2 p.m. on Dec. 4 and at 7 p.m. Dec. 6. Auditions will be held in Room 105 of St. Mark's United Methodist Church on East Main Street. For more information, call 895-0755.

Tis the season for Christmas shopping online

Phat X. Chiem
Chicago Tribune

Sam Mix bought Christmas gifts for eight people, birthday presents for five more and some furniture for her own home, all in an hour and a half.

Thank cyberspace for e-commerce.

After years of schlepping through packed malls, Mix has

turned to the Internet to avoid unruly crowds, frazzled clerks and heavy traffic.

"It's changing my life," declares Mix, 32, a secretary in a Chicago Loop office. "E-commerce is the biggest, greatest thing."

Millions of traditionalists and mainline retailers might disagree. Old-fashioned stores — those with front doors, aisles and human clerks — have been crowded all year, thanks to the booming

economy.

And they will be packed even tighter Friday as retailers herald the start of the holiday shopping season. Across the country, stores are opening early, some well before dawn, to accommodate the expected throngs.

Still, the embrace of on-line shopping by Mix and others is creating a challenge for brick-and-mortar stores as they vie for consumer dollars.

Mall merchants and department stores are beefing up customer service, offering free gift wrapping and giving out deep discounts in an attempt to keep shoppers off-line and in line at the cash registers.

Those are smart strategies in light of the fact that Internet analysts say this holiday season will be the biggest for e-commerce sales. Estimates for on-line

See ONLINE, page 9

Librarians could write a book about odd items left between pages

Donna McGuire
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Pssst! Is your name Pete? Did you lose a name tag recently? The one you wore for work?

Check the Kansas City Public Library. Honest. You left it in a book. Even though the name tag was thick enough to give the book a bulge, you left it there.

But, hey, that's nothing compared with what some other folks have left in library books. Important things, such as driver's licenses, credit cards, uncashed

paychecks, money, unred mail and airline tickets. Weird stuff, such as a Barbie hat, guitar strings and drink coasters.

And food. Lots of food. One chicken bone, stripped clean. A french fry. An unused package of cinnamon spice tea. A strip of cooked bacon, oozing grease. A slice of American cheese, still wrapped.

Today that cheese is as rigid as a ruler and as warped as a walnut. It is displayed at the Plaza library checkout counter along with other items discovered in books. A sign below the display says, "When is a bookmark not a bookmark?"

"It would have been fun if we had kept track of what books we found them in," said Nan Jehle, the library's circulation chief. "I don't think we necessarily found airline tickets in travel books."

Readers also have left postcards, napkins, refrigerator magnets, Monopoly money, automobile air fresheners, photographs, clothing tags, gum wrappers, doctor appointment notices, a proportional scale for sizing Taylor NFL trading card.

Some items are understandable. They are flat, like typical bookmarks, and thin enough to be

forgotten in a book. But hotel room keys? A cigarette? A Gummi Bear stuck on the end of a wooden skewer?

Jehle returns valuables to owners when possible, and once in a while an item disappears from the display, apparently reclaimed by its owner.

There is no shortage of replacements, however.

Recently a set of homemade flashcards was shown. So did that "Pete" name tag, a house key and a plastic star slightly larger than a drink coaster.

Have you lost anything lately? Check the library. ■

ONLINE
continued from page 8

shopping between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day range from \$4 billion to \$16 billion.

"It's going to be the coming-out year," said Mark Speaker, co-author of the "Complete Idiot's Guide to E-Commerce" and president of Learnlots.com, an Internet service that educates companies about electronic retailing.

Speaker, who estimates holiday on-line sales will reach \$12 billion, said Web retailers are winning over consumers for three chief reasons: price, convenience and selection. Unlike last year, Speaker said, "e-tailers" have recognized that they need to address such concerns as timely delivery, return policies and security.

For instance, many on-line stores now guarantee gift delivery by Christmas.

"Trust has been built on the Web," he said. "I believe next year

people are going to think about shopping on-line first instead of comparing the two experiences."

Not so fast, say brick-and-mortar retailers, who point out that, even with the most optimistic projections, Internet sales will account for only a fraction of the estimated \$185 billion that will be spent in November and December.

According to a consumer survey by Deloitte & Touche and the National Retail Federation, Americans are expected to spend an average of \$849 at traditional stores this season, a 4.3 percent increase over 1998.

In other words, expect the usual mobs to swarm North Michigan Avenue, Woodfield Shopping Center and the other malls in and around Chicago on "Black Friday" — the term retailers have given to the traditional start of the shopping season on the day after Thanksgiving.

The term comes from the fact that it often was the day retailers put their bottom lines in the black for the year.

"No question, shoppers will be out in force," said Kurt Barnard, president of Barnard's Retail Trend Report in Upper Montclair, N.J.

Barnard said shopping isn't purely a chore for most people but a form of entertainment. Internet sites can't replicate the sights and sounds of Christmas shopping.

Consider the attitude of Alvin Isacowitz, a tourist from Brooklyn who was visiting Chicago's Magnificent Mile on Wednesday with his wife and young daughters. Isacowitz said he despises shopping but refuses to go on-line to pick out holiday gifts.

"I like to see it, feel it, mutilate it and spin it," said the bag-laden Isacowitz. "The Internet is all flash and no substance. Plus, it's very difficult to take your children shopping on the Internet."

George Whalin, president of Retail Management Consultants in San Marcos, Calif., scoffs at the threat of e-commerce.

"We're not losing sleep over it," Whalin said. "Retailers are

focusing on how to maximize their sales on people coming through the doors in the next five weeks."

But many retailers are pumping up sales by plunging in cyberspace with their own sites. In the past year, major companies such as Toys "R" Us, Footlocker, Target and Abercrombie & Fitch have started on-line stores.

And they're attracting loads of customers, said Diane Swonk, chief economist for Chicago's Bank One Corp.

"Brick-and-mortar shops are effectively competing against their cyberspace counterparts by leveraging their well-known names and putting dot-com behind them," she said.

With so many companies catering to the Web-savvy customer, Sam Mix said she hardly steps into a traditional store anymore. She even orders her groceries on-line via Skokie-based Peapod Inc.

"My gifts are coming in a big brown sleigh that is the UPS truck," she said. ■



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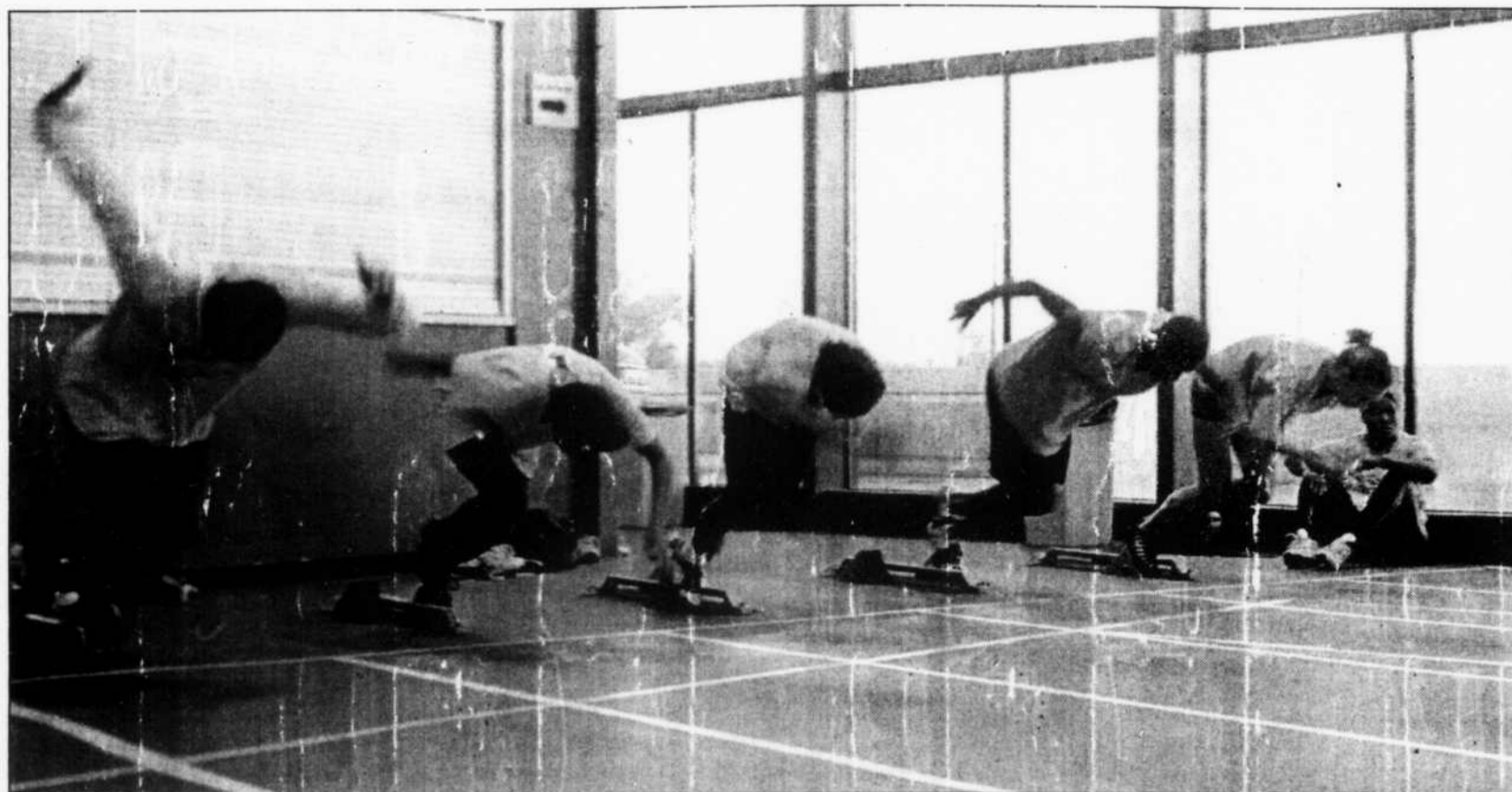


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SPORTS



Members of the track team practice in the Murphy Center in preparation for the upcoming season opener.

Photo by Robin Wallace

Track teams primed for title run

Josh Ezzell
Staff Reporter

WOMEN'S TRACK

With the move to the Sun Belt Conference in 2000, this year is the last chance for the women's track team to win the Ohio Valley Conference championship.

Last year the Lady Raiders had their worst season since head coach Dean Hayes took over in 1987. For the Lady Raiders to rebound, they need to score big in events.

Sprints and jumps should be the strong points for the Lady Raiders this season, as they return many performers from last season.

Defending OVC triple jump champion Andreja Ribic returns for her senior year.

Kim Freeman, who jumped 40-11 in the Junior Olympics, Stephany Reid, a transfer from the University of Nebraska, Jameka Collins, Tiffany Purdin and Lashon Kennedy will also participate in the triple jump for the Lady Raiders.

The same performers will participate in the long jump. Each performer can participate in other events.

"Stephany Reid long jumped 40-10 3/4 in high school, which was fourth in the nation," assistant coach Roger Kerr said. "She is very, very good and is a great jumper."

Jameka Collins long jumped

19-4 in high school; she also runs the 400 and the mile relay," Kerr said. "She is very talented. We will use her in several things."

High jumps should also be strong for the Lady Raiders. Freshman Amanda Forrester was the two-time Tennessee high jump champion in high school.

"Amanda Forrester could definitely place, if not win, the OVC in the high jump," Kerr said.

Sprints will also be strong for the Lady Raiders. Senior Bethany Brent returns for the Lady Raiders. She will be joined by freshman Wilisa Heintz, a native of Richardson, Texas, and Doreisha Davis, a transfer from Arizona State. Naomi Anshah and Lashon Kennedy will also sprint for the Lady Raiders.

Heintz, who placed in the Junior Olympics in the 100-meter sprint, has a chance to be one of the greatest sprinters in MTSU history.

"Heintz was a high school All-American," Kerr said. "She was recruited by every major school in the country."

Kerr believes that Davis will also be a major contributor.

"She battled shin splints her first month here, but she will still challenge Heintz," Kerr said.

While the sprinters and jumpers are strong, Kerr does not feel as strongly about the distance runners.

"The distance isn't very good. I just don't know a better way to say it," Kerr said.

Kelley Smith, Alicia Moore, Jerkita McClonn and Tori Blander are the Lady Raider hurdlers, while Shauntel Jennings is the shot putter.

Coach Kerr believes that this year's recruiting class is great, which could help the Lady Raiders leave the OVC with a championship.

MEN'S TRACK

The Blue Raider track team has finished second in the Ohio Valley Conference the last four years, and it would like nothing more than to win the conference title before moving to the Sun Belt in the fall of 2000.

Sprints, hurdles and jumps will be the strength of the Raiders.

Rob Jordan, last year's track athlete of the year, will lead the Raiders this year. Jordan holds the school record in the 400 meter sprint with a time of 45.80 seconds.

"Robert Jordan was an All-American last year," assistant coach Roger Kerr said. "He is definitely one of our big leaders."

Haneef Sharif, 1998 OVC Champion, will return to lead the hurdlers. Jasper Demps, a transfer from Troy State, will add depth to the hurdles.

"Jasper Demps will push Sharif," Kerr said. "They'll really have some battles. I expect Demps to get better."

Boniface Amizu, the 1998 OVC long jump champion, returns this

year. Steve Reid returns in the triple and long jumps; he is also capable of participating in the hurdles. Football player Kareem Bland and DeJun Spann will perform in the triple jump, while Sharif will participate in the high jump.

Sprints could be the strongest area for the Raiders. Albert Agyemang, last year's OVC champion in both the 100 and 200, returns for the Blue Raiders. He expects big things from the team this year.

"We are going to have a great year," Agyemang said. "We have a bunch of talent; everybody is fired up. I feel very good; I expect to do better than last year."

The addition of Tanko Braimah will make the sprints even stronger. He can also run a good relay.

"Tanko will challenge Albert at every meet," Kerr said. "He's a physical horse."

Godfrey Herring, the school record holder in the 400, also returns. He can compete in anything from the 100 to the 800.

John Cheek and Murfreesboro native Josh Carroll will lead the distance. Cheek improved last year and ended up placing in the 1,500.

"The hurdles, sprints and jumps are strong," Kerr said. "The distance will be better, but it will not be as good as we need it to be. Our goal is to win the conference indoors and outdoors. We have a good shot at it."

Blue Raiders make move a year early

Josh Ezzell
Staff Reporter

The Ohio Valley Conference Board of Presidents voted recently to let MTSU leave the conference at the end of the 1999-2000 academic year.

All sports except football will join the Sun Belt Conference in 2000. The football program will join the Sun Belt in 2001.

"The OVC has a clause which says that you have to give them a years notice before you leave, or else pay a \$100,000 fine," athletic director Lee Fowler said. "It's the right move to go. All of the coaches are excited; psychologically it's a good to leave now."

"The football team will be moving to the Sun Belt in 2001, because the football schedule has already been made out."

MTSU has been a member of the OVC since 1952. It recently announced its intentions to join the Sun Belt Conference in 2001. The OVC presidents decided at its biannual meeting that it was in the best interest of both parties for MTSU to leave the OVC at the end of the 1999-2000 academic year.

"Middle Tennessee's departure from the Ohio Valley

Conference is without acrimony," OVC Commissioner Dan Beebe said. "The OVC Board of Presidents expressed appreciation for Middle Tennessee's 47 years of membership and wished the institution success in the future."

Beebe will meet with a subcommittee of athletic directors to establish conference goals for the future.

"The conference feels it continues to be in a strong position with nine members," Beebe said. "We look forward to an exciting future and building on the success we have achieved over the past 52 years. While the conference is looking for ways to enhance its stature, there are no immediate plans for the future."

Sun Belt Conference Commissioner Wright Waters believes the edition of MTSU will benefit the Sun Belt.

"It's important for us," Waters said. "MTSU is a quality university; I'm delighted with the personnel. Geographically it fits. It is close to Western Kentucky, which makes it a natural rivalry."

Fowler will meet with Sun Belt Conference athletic directors on Dec 7 and 8 to discuss divisional format and scheduling for the 2000-2001 season.



The track team will open its season at 11 a.m. Saturday in the Murphy Center.

Where the fans aren't: MTSU Athletics

Michael Edwards
Staff Reporter

Student support for MTSU athletics is dead, despite the recent move to I-A football.

All season Raider fans came to the games hoping for a Raider win. However, as the amount of games remaining decreased so did the fan support.

The numbers are about the same. One reason the students don't come to football games is because they don't win. Well, in basketball, the MTSU men and women did well in the regular season.

Not winning can't be an excuse for missing a basketball game. Even with football games, yes MTSU was 3-8 this year, but they won three of five at home, which is better than the Commodores.

The athletic department is concerned about the student apathy of the athletic teams on this campus. They also don't understand why students that will graduate from MTSU, and get a degree from this university, will go and support other major universities after college.

"I would like to pose a question to them," Athletic Director Lee

Fowler said. "Why don't they come?"

Some students said they worked on the day of the games and could not get off work for games. While others, such as Alpha Omicron Pi member Tina Tomlinson said, "I'm just not interested."

"Some people don't know when the games are," Tomlinson added. "More publicity on when the game is going to be, and who they are playing would help."

"They know what band is playing at Mainstreet on Thursday night," Fowler said. "So if you care about it, then you'll know when it is. So that's not really an excuse."

Other people commented that MTSU doesn't play teams that are exciting to watch. However, the Raiders do play Kansas in basketball on Sunday. For the most part, the schedule is against teams that are within the Ohio Valley Conference. Those teams are not nationally known.

"It almost seems to me that they are not supporting Middle Tennessee teams. They are supporting other big names," Fowler said. "For us to be a big name, we've got to have students and fans to show up. We can't do it in empty places. Hey, it's fun; we had 11 dunks in the first game."

"We are in the highest level of competition you can play in. No, we are not in the SEC, and won't ever be, because they won't take us."

Even more than football, the basketball team is lacking in support. To some university officials it is embarrassing to see the lack of interest on MTSU men's basketball, even less students come to the women's game.

"We have 20,000 students and have 20 at a basketball game," Fowler said.

Graduates of MTSU have even gone as far as supporting other schools such as Vanderbilt and Tennessee when they have a degree from MTSU.

"Most of our kids graduate and start giving to Vanderbilt and Tennessee and start supporting those schools when they don't have a degree from there," Fowler said. "That's like turning against your family. It's like, well I'm a Fowler, but the Kennedy's have a better name so I'm going to change my name to Kennedy, because they have a better name than Fowler."

While students haven't been attending games so far, there is a way that they could start. Here are five ways MTSU could get students to attend, according to students.

The first is for teachers to give

incentives, such as an extra point or two on tests. The second is having more crowd participation.

"Maybe have the crowd come down and interact during halftime," student Brian Paxton said.

Another idea is for the university to loosen up on the "no alcohol on campus" rule and allow it during Saturday's and tailgating parties.

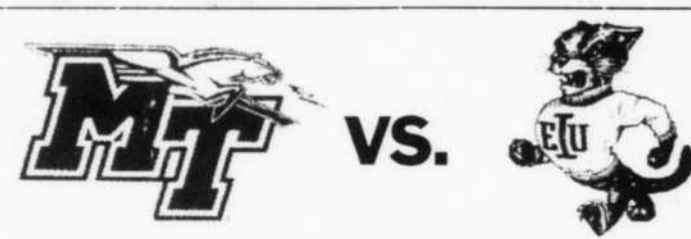
"I've been to UT, and they have big parties before and big parties afterwards; here it's just a game," Chad Richardson said.

Along the same lines, MTSU could have judges on tailgate parties. They could send a few people around to check out what people are doing and more importantly, what they are eating. Judge the food, the atmosphere and the beverages. Give prizes, such as trophies for this particular tailgating group to display proudly as the best tailgaters around. Bring the Greeks into the action also. They are huge part of the campus, and their support could be tremendous. Spark competition between the fraternities and sororities for the best party, and award the winner with money.

See FANS, page 11

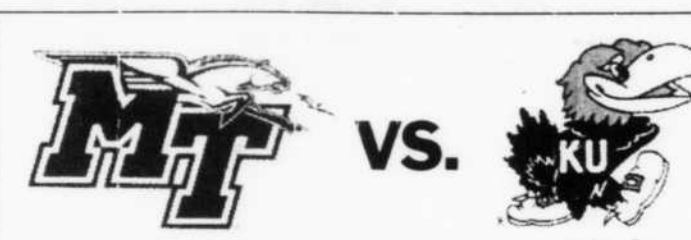
Upcoming Raider Basketball Games

MTSU vs. E. Illinois



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MTSU vs. Kansas



Sunday at the Murphy Center. Men tip off at 1 p.m.

FANS
continued from page 10

At basketball games, award the most abundant and loudest group of Greeks with money. The presidents of the groups would court their members and tell an official their numbers.

"I would like somebody to tell me what's the button I need to push or what do I need to do," Fowler said. "We have given \$500. We had a coach back in the old days that would give them kegs of

beer. Now I can't give kegs of beer, but I can have a contest and give them money to do what ever they want with."

"Oh yeah, that would work," Tomlinson said.

With the tailgating idea, MTSU could award a large sum of money, maybe like \$2,000 or more to the Greek group with the best tailgating party every week. The idea is to make the football games an event and an experience, instead of "just a game."

Finally, to inform the Greeks of

their deals, MTSU officials need to go to their level and talk to them, instead of being outsiders looking in. They need to go to the Intrafraternity council meetings and talk to them about what would bring their support to the games.

"We don't have any tradition," student Michael Barrett said. "Anything to get the Greeks involved would help."

Please e-mail any suggestions to the athletic department at mrowens@mtsu.edu.

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