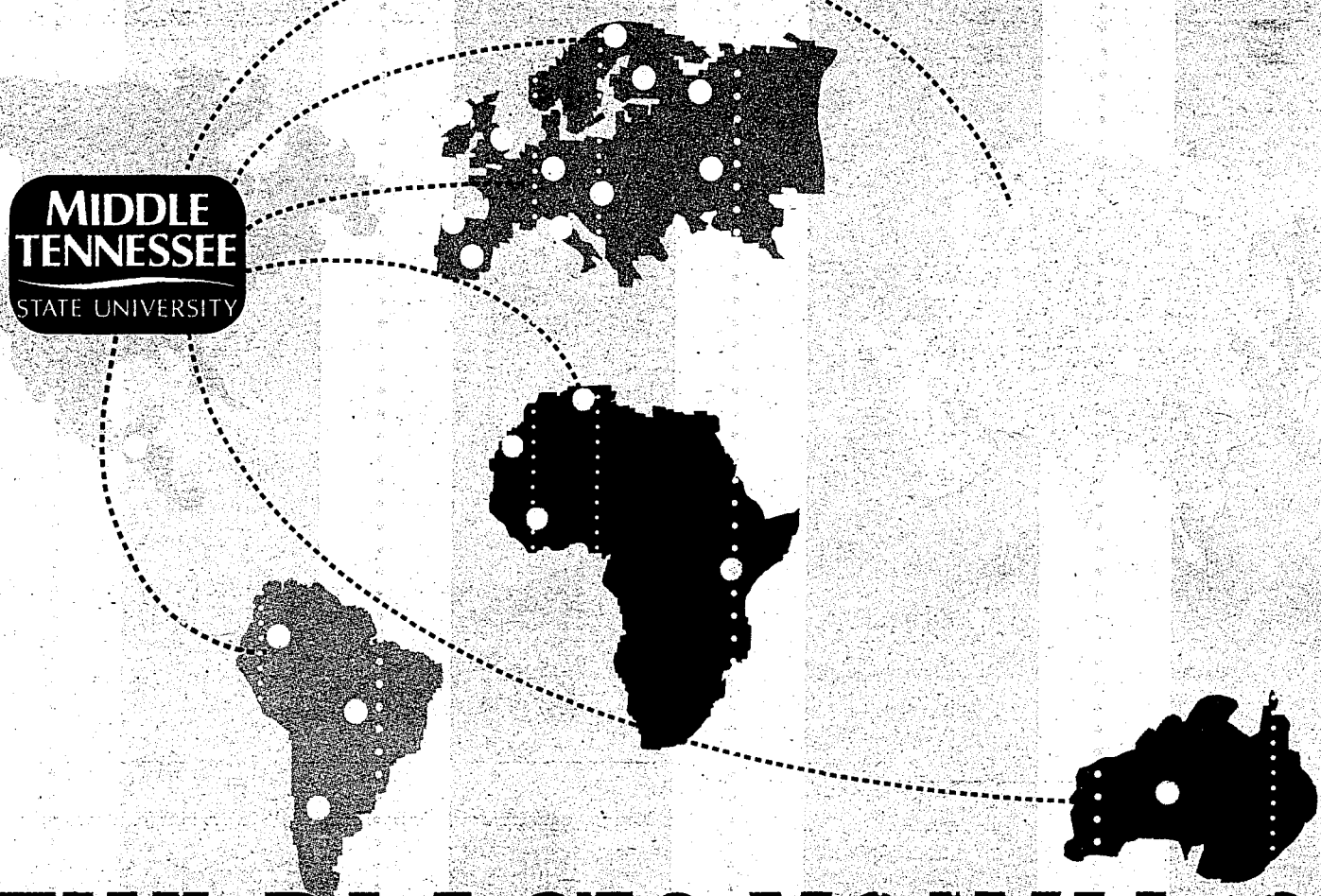


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SIDELINES

FEB. 22, 2012 | VOL. 39, NO. 20 | EDITORIALY INDEPENDENT



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At the MTSU After Dark event, junior Jordan Runions plays a game of inflatable Twister with friends Feb. 17 at the MTSU Rec Center. Up 'Til Dawn hosted the benefit in order to raise money for St. Jude's Children Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn. The event had several forms of entertainment featuring a magic show, live music, inflatables and free food. Up 'Til Dawn is a yearly event hosted on campus. Photo by Emily West.

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MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
SIDELINES

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MT Idol to showcase vocal talent

Staff Report

MTSU students will sing to showcase their talents before a panel of judges Feb. 29 in the James Union Building at 7 p.m.

Twenty-two different students auditioned in front of a panel of judges Jan. 20 for a spot to compete. Students registered in the Keathley University Center and were able to have a 30-second a cappella tryout.

"The competition is similar to the one on TV," said Deana Fredrick, student-programming clerk. "It gives students a chance to be seen and heard."

MT Idol is comprised of panel of three judges—MTSU alumni—who work with different performing and media agencies. The judges include Heath Baumhor, a 2005 alumni and agent for the Agency of Performing Arts in Nashville, and Josh Romero, who runs the new Vector Management group. The third judge for the competition has yet to be determined.

There are three rounds the contests will compete in. The top 10 contestants sing in the first round and receive a brief critiques from the judges. The singers are then cut down to the top six and finally to the top three before deciding who will be the 2012 MT Idol.

Prizes for this year's idol have not yet been determined, but the committee said it might choose gift cards similar to the Visa ones given away in previous MT Idol competitions.

MT Idol has been a program for over



Alexis Robertson, 2011 MT IDOL winner the past three years now, and concert committee chairman Spencer Green said the production of the show is primarily run by students.

"Everyone seems to really like this event that we put on, and students ask to keep doing it," Green said. "The students run everything from sound to the production of the event. As long as they continue to request it, we will keep putting on the show."

AES hosts recording workshop

Staff Report

The third annual Nashville Recording Workshop + Expo will feature blues artist Keb Mo' and singer-songwriter Beth Nielsen Chapman at Rocketown on March 2 and 3.

The event, which is being sponsored by the Audio Engineering Society, will feature a session following the creative process of a song from Chapman's 2007 album, *Prism*. Keb Mo' and his engineer, John Schirmer, will focus on the production of a tune solely in a personal production space, and on how to make the most of a personal recording environment.

Keb Mo' is a Grammy Award-winning blues guitarist and songwriter who has worked with artists such as Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne and Dr. John during his lustrous career spanning nearly 42 years.

Beth Nielsen Chapman has had her songs recorded by artists such as Elton John, Faith Hill, Waylon Jennings, Emmylou Harris, Neil Diamond and many more. She's also had a successful career of her own as an artist with numerous songs charting the Billboard Top Adult Contemporary Chart.

A number of university professors will be participating in the event, such as Michael Fleming and John Merchant—both in the department of recording industry.

This past year's workshop hosted Grammy Award-winning recording artist Ben Folds as the keynote speaker,

and was held at Belmont University's Curb Event Center.

Student members of AES can register for \$59 and student non-members can register for \$79 by going to www.nashvillerecordingworkshop.com.



Keb Mo', Grammy Award-winning blues artist.

Campus & Community Crime Briefs

Theft

Judd Hall

Feb. 10, 5:06 p.m.

A complainant reported that his bicycle had been stolen off the rack.

Theft

James E. Walker Library Lot

Feb. 11, 3:00 p.m.

A complainant reported that her cell phone had been stolen.

Fraud

Off campus

Feb. 12, 6:33 p.m.

A complainant's credit card information was stolen from the Recreation Center

room and was used at three local businesses to obtain purchases.

Alcohol

Beta Theta Pi House—Greek Row

Feb. 12, 3:18 a.m.

Authorities issued Dimitre Avila, 19, a citation for underage consumption.

Drugs

Beasley Hall

Feb. 12, 11:17 a.m.

Authorities issued Dakota Battle, 19, a citation for possession of drug paraphernalia, simple possession of marijuana and possession of stolen property.

Trespassing

Forest Hall

Feb. 13, 1:06 p.m.

Authorities issued trespass warnings to two individuals that were Forest Hall without permission.

Neither individual has affiliation with campus.

Harassment

Womack Lane Apartment D

Feb. 14, 5:43 p.m.

A complainant reported that she was harassed via text message by another student at the university.

Drugs

Scarlett Commons Apartment 4

Feb. 14, 9:29 p.m.

Authorities arrested Brittany Jenkins, 19, for simple possession of marijuana, drug paraphernalia and underage possession of alcohol.

Theft

James E. Walker Library

Feb. 15, 8:12 p.m.

A complainant reported his backpack and all the contents in it were stolen from Walker Library. The complainant said he is unsure if the library was the location he was in possession of all items.

COVER STORY

Education Abroad creates opportunities for students

by Richel Albright
News Editor



I

n the past year, the Office of Education Abroad has made many changes to its program, bringing in a Vice Provost for International Affairs- changing the program name and adding new program affiliates.

In April 2011, what was formally known as the Office of Study Abroad and Student Exchange became the Office of Education Abroad, and brought on new leadership in the form of Vice Provost of International Affairs David Schmidt.

"I've traveled a lot, maybe too much," Schmidt said. "I was born and raised overseas, so I traveled a lot as a kid. But I think the reason I really enjoy doing this is, it is so very rewarding."

Schmidt came to MTSU from the University of the Pacific in California, where he was part of the International Programs and Services. Working alongside Schmidt is the new interim director, Tiffany Huskey.

"My background is actually social work and social services, but I've always had an interest in international education, and I really like working with students to see them do something positive with their life," Huskey said.

Over the previous school year, 250 to 300 students participated in an education abroad or exchange program.

The university is affiliated with eight major education abroad programs, all of which have numerous programs. The university also offers MTSU faculty-led programs and exchange programs.

This June, Schmidt and Doug Heffington, director of Global Studies, are doing a faculty-led program at the Fukushima University in Japan. The 10-day trip is a service-learning program, which students will be participating in disaster recovery and rebuilding after last year's devastating earthquake and tsunami.

"If you look at why students decided to go abroad and you throw in three components, cost, location or faculty, and faculty are really what drive it," Schmidt said. "You can have an expensive program, an affordable program, but it's really the faculty member that can get students to go, despite all those other factors."

The Office of Education Abroad is working on making signature faculty-led programs, which will repeat every year. The university currently has anywhere from 10 to 20 faculty-led programs per year. Some of these are Cuba, Japan, Argentina and Honduras.

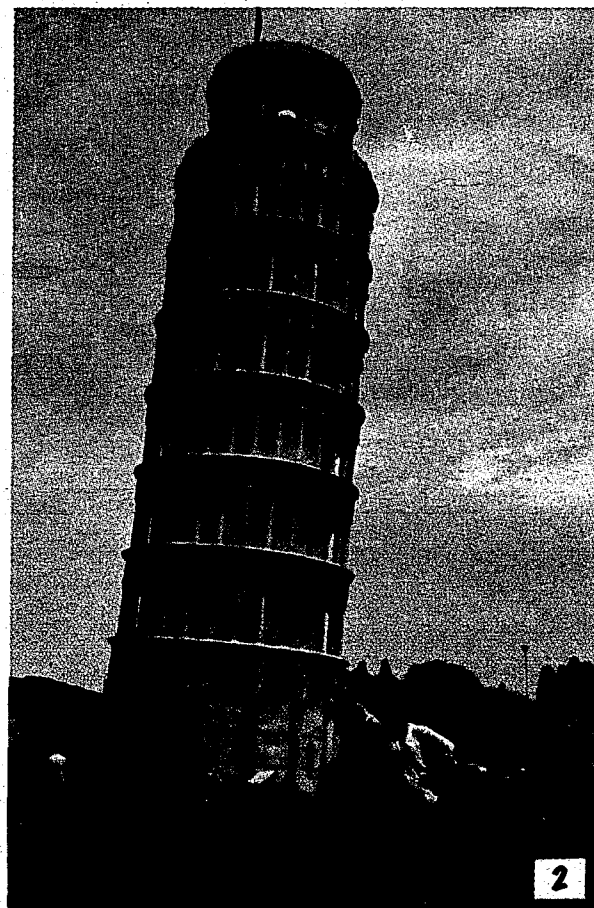
"A lot of students think that summer programs are cheaper than semester programs," Huskey said. "Actually, students that are able to find an exchange program- not necessarily in the UK or Australia- that look around and

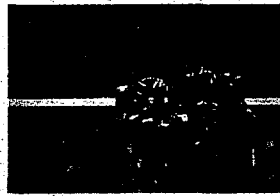
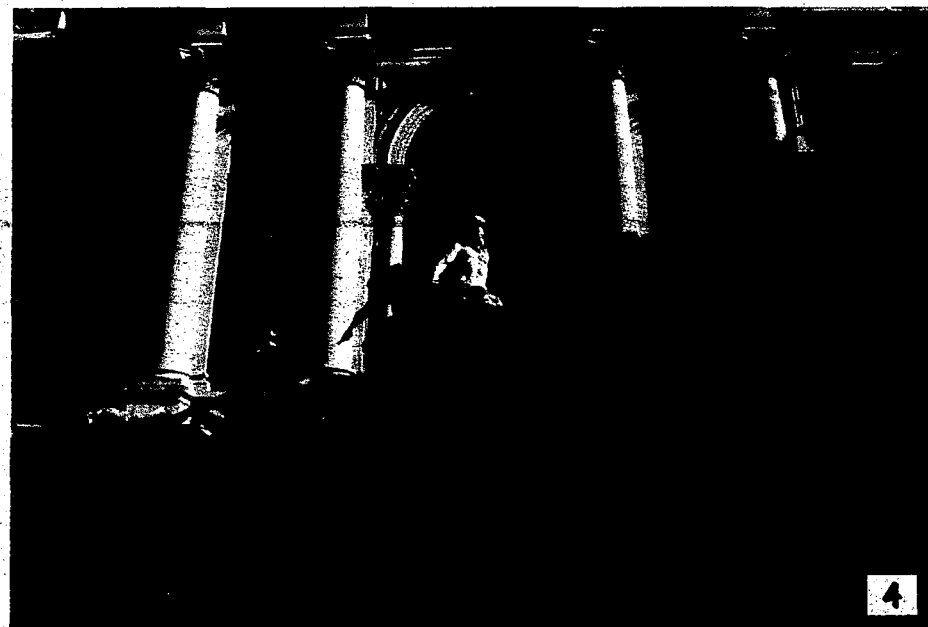
find programs in Scandinavia or various parts of Asia, where you pay MTSU fees for tuition, room and board, then go abroad, the cost of an exchange is actually less."

The university has an education abroad scholarship that comes from student fees and is available to students wishing to study abroad with at least a 2.8 GPA. The program affiliates also have their own scholarships that students can apply for. The deadline for summer scholarships ended in January, while the deadline for yearlong or fall programs is Feb. 23. Those interested in winter programs have until September, and the spring program deadline is in October.

"I think one of the problems students have is when you package a program for a semester or year, they see a lump sum," said Schmidt. "Whereas they're used to living month by month, but when Tiffany will challenge them and say 'OK, why don't you add up the five months, and they realize it's about the same, if not less.'"

Justin Wright, a senior double majoring in digital animation and global studies, headed over to Sweden with a just a friend's computer, a camera and a duffle bag's worth of clothes to spend a semester studying at Karlstad University. Fortunately for Wright, there wasn't much





of a language barrier, since many Swedish people know English.

"I went over only knowing how to say, 'Talar du engelska,' which means 'do you speak English?'" Wright said.

Wright went through the ISEP (International Student Exchange Program)

, and was able to pay the amount he would normally pay for a semester at MTSU. This summer he said he plans to continue his studies abroad in Italy, and in spring of 2013 in Germany.

"In five years I will have graduated with two separate degrees, as well as spent a total of a year abroad,"

Wright said. "It's a lot of organization stuff, but I tell people it's very, very doable. Even if it sets you back a semester it's totally worth it...it's so eye-opening."

In fall 2011, the Global Learning Community opened up a house on Greek Row. It currently houses 35 students, roughly 66 percent of which are international students, while the rest are interested in global affairs, and some have spent time abroad. The community

will also sponsor a three-lecture series throughout the semester, the first of which was done on Feb. 13 by Moses Tesi of the political science department called "The Rise of China: Is it a source of good or is it a threat?"

"It's in its freshman year for it,"

Schmidt said. "It's been quite successful as far as people having interest in it, but as far as getting their own identity, I think they're still wrestling with what they are going to focus on, and how to define themselves."

For more information on education abroad, students can stop by the offices in Peck Hall 207, to talk with

Huskey and pick up any literature about the programs, or visit the website: www.mtsu.edu/~mtabroad.

"It may sound a little cheesy or tacky, but if I were to count- in the many years I've been doing this- the number of students that have gone overseas, and every one of them have come back and in some form or another said that is the best thing I've ever done for myself."

Photo 1: The coastal village of Manarola, Italy.

Photo 2: A student traveling with InCIS poses against the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

Photo 3: Side view of the Coliseum in Rome.

Photo 4: The Trevi fountain at dawn.

Photo Credit: Richel Albright

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Thursday, Feb. 23

"The Dream Share Project"

BAS S324, 4:30 p.m.

Admission: FREE

As children, people would often ask, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Typical responses were probably astronaut, teacher, ballerina or firefighter. As we grow into adulthood, the question is no longer what do we want to be, rather, how do we get there? Most professors, parents and even friends simply suggest we follow our dreams—to always aim high and never settle for less.

The documentary "The Dream Share Project" follows two recent college graduates as they embark on a journey across the United States in search for people who have followed their dreams and are now successful because of doing so.

Space is limited for this event—some 50 seats are available—so arrive early. This film is especially a must see for you seniors who may be struggling to find the inspiration to chase your dreams, or for those who are simply trying to find that dream. (Nataly Morales)

The Art of Yazoo Brewery

TPAC War Memorial Auditorium, 6 p.m.

301 6th Ave. North, Nashville

Admission: \$30, \$75 (Artful Taster ticket for all 3 events)

TPAC is hosting a three-part tasting series that any whiskey, beer or spirits connoisseur will appreciate.

The second installment in the "The Art of." series consists of a special look into the making of Nashville-based Yazoo beer and its history. The beer tasting will give you insight into the inspiration behind the colorful taste of each selection, and the best part is you'll have a chance to taste a variation of the brewery's beers. Yazoo's masterful creator, Linus Hall, will lead the tasting.

Don't expect this to be like a house or frat party, my 21 and older friends—instead go and learn how to appreciate the craft of beer making. And if you're a lightweight, don't worry—a tasting is the perfect place to have just a sip of alcohol and not be judged. Go, have fun, discover yet another reason why Nashville is an awesome, unique city, and please make sure to have a DD. Remember: you booze, you lose! (Nataly Morales)



"Immortals"

KUC Theatre, 7 and 10 p.m.

Admission: \$2

Muscles, lightly bronzed skin and gladiator outfits—no, no, I'm not talking about Madonna's Super Bowl halftime performance, sorry to get your hopes up.

This action-packed film includes everything from mythical Greek gods to super-powered weapons that have the ability to destroy all existence. With Hollywood stars like



Mickey Rourke ("The Wrestler"), Henry Cavill ("The Tudors"), Freida Pinto ("Slumdog Millionaire") and Kellan Lutz ("Twilight"), you would think the film would be somewhat entertaining—if nothing else, the men... I mean, the special effects would certainly be nice to see. However, unless you just can't wait to see yet another disappointing attempt at recreating "300," I suggest you maybe lower your expectations going into the movie—that way you can be pleasantly surprised walking

out of the theatre.

Don't get me wrong, the film wasn't all that bad—it just simply didn't go anywhere that "Gladiator" and "300" hadn't already covered, but for \$2, why not get out of the house and kill some time before the weekend really starts? (Nataly Morales)

Friday, Feb. 24

Video Game Night

KUC Lounge, 4 p.m.

Admission: FREE

Calling all gamers! The KUC Lounge will be the place to be Friday for a blissful three hours full of video gaming and good times.

The event is free, so why not save the money you would normally spend buying your own copy and head down to the KUC for a few hours? Bring a friend, make sure to put on your best game face, and get ready to crush your competition. Happy gaming! (Nataly Morales)



Kanye Twitty and The Corbitt Brothers

Wall Street Bar, 7 p.m.

121 N Maple St., Murfreesboro

Admission: FREE

What do you get when you take some country twang and throw in electric guitar and hip-hop infused beats? A disaster you say? Oh, but that's where you're wrong. You instead get the musical stylings of Kanye Twitty.

Regardless of whether you're a country music fan, Kanye Twitty is known for putting on an energetic show that makes all the girls in denim skirts and cowboy boots go wild—they just have that thing. The show will honestly be what you make of it. After a few beers and a couple of shots of

whiskey, bands like Kanye Twitty can be fun to watch; actually, anything after that point is fun to watch, but the cover band has actually started to create a name for itself and gain the sort of recognition that requires them to deliver.

The band, which is probably best known for covering songs like Jason Aldean's "She's Country," has been known to play a spur-of-the-moment rendition of Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg's "Nuthin' But A G Thang." I don't know about you, but having a contemporary country band perform a legendary song like that one is enough to draw me to a free show. (Nataly Morales)

Needtobreathe with Ben Rector

The Ryman Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

116 5th Ave. North, Nashville

Admission: \$29.50

Needtobreathe's reputation of being a contemporary Christian rock band has earned them the fan base many bands desire and the opportunity to perform two headlining shows at Nashville's legendary Ryman Auditorium.

This band doesn't play your typical sweet and mellow kind of Christian music—they instead display lead vocalist Bear Rhinehart's voice to give their music that edge. Long gone are the days when Christian music groups frosted the tips of their hair and sang songs explicitly to one sort of audience in a tenor range. Rhinehart's voice is both powerful and soulful, and the group's musical talent will surely inspire you to play their songs on your way home from the show.

If you already have plans for Friday, they will also play Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m.—but hurry and buy your tickets, because from the reviews I've read, their tickets aren't available for long. (Nataly Morales)



Saturday, Feb. 25



Lewis Black
Ryman Auditorium, 8 p.m.
116 5th Ave. North, Nashville
Admission: \$32.50 - \$65

Lewis Black is no stranger to comedy. In fact, if you keep up with comedians and their careers at all, you know that Black has been around for a while now as an actor and stand up comedian. He, like any other worthwhile comedian, has that that unique ability to make someone laugh while making a point about today's society.

His shows are definitely not for the faint of heart or for those who are easily offended, but perhaps that's why his monologues are so enjoyable—he's not afraid to push anyone's buttons, ruffle some feathers or speak the truth; sometimes it's easier to that when you mask it with comedy.

Whatever your opinions may be about Black, one thing is for sure: he's a veteran comedian

who has a knack for making people think while making them cry from laughing so hard. I truly suggest you not pass up the opportunity to see his stand up material live, I doubt you'll regret it. (Nataly Morales)

"Urban Chic": A Wedding and Event Showcase

The Garden Brunch Café, 6 p.m.

924 Jefferson St., Nashville

Admission: \$10 advance, \$15 doors

It seems as if everyone I know is either planning a wedding or preparing to introduce a new bundle of joy to this world. Well, I can't help out in the baby department, but I can suggest an event for those of you who are newly engaged and have no clue where to start.

The Garden Brunch Café will host an event that is perfect for all brides to be. It will be the ideal opportunity for you ladies and gents to ask those probing questions to some of Nashville's finest and experienced wedding and event planners. While you sweet fiancés wait on your future Mrs. to ask her questions, enjoy the appetizers and entertainment that will be provided.

Even if your wedding seems like it's in the very distant future, those months eventually turn into weeks, and those weeks turn into a few days—trust me ladies, you don't want to procrastinate in planning your wedding! Take this opportunity and at least get an idea, if you don't have one already. (Nataly Morales)

Star Party at Shelby Bottoms Nature Center

Shelby Bottoms Nature Center, 7:30 p.m.

1900 Davidson St., Nashville

Admission: FREE

Unless you live in the remote areas of Nashville or Murfreesboro, chances are you rarely get to see the night sky in all its glory. For those of you who have only learned about stars and our galaxies through reading, this is the chance for you to see what exactly your books talk about.

The event is free, and Shelby Bottoms Nature Center will provide everything you'll need to reacquaint yourself with nature's majestic light show in the night sky.

So whether you're an experienced stargazer or a new astrological enthusiast, grab your jacket and mittens (you might want to bring some hot chocolate or coffee too) and head over to the nature center. If inclement weather seems to be a problem, the event will be canceled, so call the Astroline (615) 401-5092, just to check on the event's status. (Nataly Morales)



Sunday, Feb. 26

Musical Performance: MTSU Symphony Orchestra

Hinton Music Hall, 4 p.m.

Admission: FREE

A few years ago I was volunteered to accompany a friend to an MTSU Symphony Orchestra performance. Admittedly, I wasn't as excited to go to the show as much as I was to get the drinks he promised me afterward. However, I walked out of that performance a newly converted MTSU symphony lover.

MTSU's orchestra is beyond anything you could expect from a collegiate instrumental ensemble. Each player's ability to perfect their craft is commendable enough, but to hear them work so well together and bring such a powerful sound is truly incredible.

I really recommend you see this orchestra at least once before you leave campus, and since this event is free, why not make it happen now? (Nataly Morales)

84th Oscar Academy Awards ABC, 6 p.m.

Admission: FREE

"The Artist," "The Descendants" and "Midnight in Paris" are just a few of the nominees for Best Motion Picture at this year's Academy Awards. Leonardo DiCaprio, Rooney Mara, Jean Dujardin and Michelle Williams are just a few of the big Hollywood names that will be in attendance.

Every year there is one night in Hollywood when it is expected and not frowned upon to spend a minimum of five hours preparing to walk down the red carpet. This is the one night where it's OK for actors and actresses to brag about themselves because, chances are, they've earned those bragging rights.

The 84th Annual Academy Awards will surely have some great moments, surprises and disappointments as the awards are handed out. Sunday will be the epitome of all things Hollywood, so if you're a big movie buff or a celebrity or fashion guru, this is the event you do not want to miss.

(Nataly Morales)

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A SYRIAN PERSPECTIVE: Understanding the Conflict in Syria

By Emily Kubis
Features Editor

Lema Sbenaty is a 21-year-old Middle Tennessee State University student double-majoring in biochemistry and international relations. She is a junior in the Honors College, active in the university's Model United Nations program and embarking this spring on her undergraduate thesis. For the past 20 years of her life, Murfreesboro, Tenn., has been home.

Though Lema has lived in the United States her whole life, she is Syrian-American, and her father Saleh immigrated to the United States in 1982 to attend college.

The year he came to America was also the year of the Hama massacre in Syria. "It was when Hafez, who's Bashar (al-Assad)'s dad, killed 40,000 people in a matter of days in this little city, Hama," Lema said. "And that's a big part of what's happening in Syria now because they're saying it's what happened then."

Saleh Sbenaty attended school in the United States with the intention of returning home to Syria. He married Lema's mother in 1986, and they planned to stay in America for three years. But when confronted with the choice between the freedom in this country and the unrest in the Middle East, they decided to stay. Dr. Sbenaty is a professor of engineering at MTSU.

"Dad actually got a job offer to go to Saudi Arabia that same year he got a job offer to come to MTSU, and he chose MTSU over twice the pay because of freedom. He literally came here to be free," Lema said.

What is happening in Syria now is reminiscent of the Hama massacre in 1982. For months, the Syrian people have been revolting against Bashar al-Assad, the oppressive president of Syria. The president has been brutal in his crackdown on protestors and rebels, and the death toll has continued to mount.

"The people who pretty much run Syria- they're called an Alawit sect, and Bashar and his father are both part of the Alawit sect, and they comprise about 10 percent of the citizenry of Syria. The rest of them are something like 70 percent Sunni Muslim and the rest are Shia. What you have is a minority controlling the majority," explained Lema.

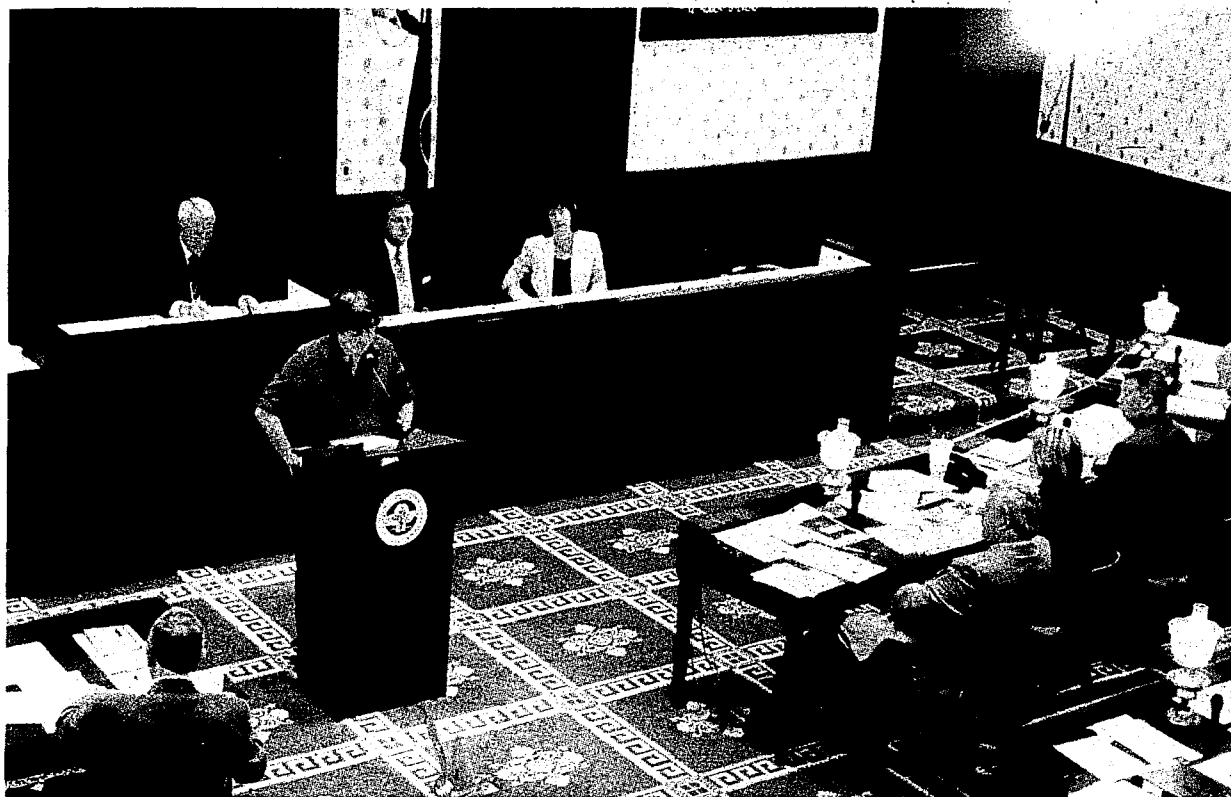
The Syrian conflict comes in the wake of the Arab Spring, the wave of revolutions that swept Tunisia, Egypt and Libya in 2011, and ousted dictators throughout the Middle East. However, Assad has yet to step down from power, which happened relatively quickly in the other states. Assad has held firmly to his presidency, and the bloodshed continues to this day.

"He is funded by Sunni Muslims, so that's kind of the twist you have the Arab Spring, because generally in all other parts of the Middle East you've had all the citizens united against one leader, but you don't have that in Syria ... these Sunni Muslims, who are getting the short end of the stick to begin with, are saying 'No, we're pro-Bashar,' because they don't think this is a real revolution," Lema said.

Lema explained that despite the varying opinions on the veracity of the revolution, the people of Syria have been

A PROTEST WILL BE HELD AS A DEMONSTRATION FOR SOLIDARITY WITH THE VICTIMS OF THE SYRIAN MASSACRE ON FEB. 26 IN NASHVILLE AT CENTENNIAL PARK FROM NOON TO 3 P.M.

Lema Sbenaty, a Syrian-American honors student, is an advocate for the victims of Syrian warfare.



Jase Short, a local activist, speaks out in front of a panel of officials during a session of the Tennessee legislature.

"My mom voted in the last election, and she said there was a man standing over her watching who she voted for. Voting is a formality because you know already who's going to win. So, that's kind of what those people live in. My parents know people who have just disappeared, who have spoken out against the government and then just not been there anymore," she said.

According to Lema, Syria is a police state with absolutely no freedom of speech. She explained that her parents instruct her and her siblings to never speak extensively about being from America, and to never tell strangers at all.

"We can't even speak about the government in our houses because they're afraid of wiretapping."

Though Lema, her mother and her siblings typically visit Syria every summer, her father has not been back in 30 years.

"There's compulsory military service that he would have to oblige if he goes back. If he goes back, he gets jailed instantly, even though he's a citizen here," she said.

After watching what happened in the Arab Spring, the oppressed citizens of Syria have attempted similar protests and revolutions. However, Assad's attempts to curb the protests have been ruthless.

"I think the death toll- the United Nations stopped counting because the death toll got so high- but I think they're estimating around 15,000 have been killed since last March," Lema said.

Assad's regime originally claimed that the attacks on protestors were from al-Qaeda, which Lema disputes.

"Syria has never had a problem with al-Qaeda, ever. And then if it did, the military could stomp it out easily

because it's a compulsory military ... Now they're saying it's the Muslim Brotherhood who's coming in and killing people," she said.

The biased media is a crucial aspect of retaining supporters for Assad.

"Obviously most people still realize it's (Assad), but if they don't have any other form of media, they don't know what to believe," Lema said.

The attacks on protestors have been remarkably bloody and aggressive.

"The brutality of the regime is insane," Lema said. "They're torturing kids ... because they want their parents, obviously, who are anti-regime. They're not just killing these people, they are brutally torturing them."

Lema went on to grimly describe the deadly situation.

"My family in Syria, most of them are OK. My aunt doesn't have a house anymore and one of my uncles doesn't have a house anymore. But I think they are all alive," Lema said slowly, as she sadly knocked on wood, a subtle testament to the uncertainty and fear that permeates the region and its citizens.

The United Nations drafted a bill to, according to its website, urge immediate action to end the violence in Syria. However, Russia and China both vetoed the bill.

A Reuters article explained that Russia's veto of the bill, which would have endorsed an Arab League plan for Assad to transfer power and prepare for free elections, goes beyond the protection of their ally and arms buyer. The double veto by China and Russia represents their

continued on page 16



Locals cite equal rights and the First Amendment in the Murfreesboro courthouse in support of the Islamic Center construction, of which Sbenaty and her family have also been advocates for. Photos by Kelsey Klingemeyer, photography editor.

'The Joy of Painting' brings live energy to the studio

By Daniel Kreipe
Arts & Entertainment Editor



Nashville-based quintet The Joy of Painting released its debut album *Asterisk* on Feb. 16, and depending on your musical taste it might be right up your alley. *Asterisk* sports a jazz-infused indie sound that smacks of something Airborne Toxic Event would have released in recent memory. Harmonic open chords, quirky keyboards, and soulful vocals permeate the new release.

What The Joy of Painting does well, they do very well. The lead single "Try Try Try" features an infectious keyboard hook, and catchy melodies that won't soon escape your head. The album also displays a certain level of quirkiness that is endearing. "My Personality" gives vocalist Garreth Spinn the opportunity to bemoan the fact that he's "never getting laid again, women just won't have it," and he is perpetually locked in the friend zone.

This quirkiness shows its toothy grin again on the "The Instrumental Track," which has lyrics four paragraphs long. The song appears to be inspired by instrumental tracks on older albums, but it is not instrumental, as its title would suggest.

The most impressive thing about the record is that, according to their Facebook page, it was recorded completely live on to 2-inch tape. This method accounts for both the vintage feel of the album, the energy it contains, and the fun studio noise you can hear at the beginning and end of tracks. It also shows how tight this group really is, and seems to point to the fact that they would be a worthwhile live act.

However, the record lacks in length. Clocking in at 25 minutes and 18 seconds after eight tracks makes it feel like you just sat through a NASCAR race of creativity. There is no one track that stands out as particularly needing to be longer, and it's more than adequate for the \$5 price tag. It seems if the boys in The Joy of Painting had slowed down a little bit, they would have been able to explore their content to a greater extent and yield less two-minute tracks.

There are also a few moments on *Asterisk* where the lyrics could have been thought through to a greater extent. Lines like "no peace on earth, no hippie shit, it's best if you just get over it" on "The Instrumental Track" feel rushed. As with the runtime, there is no offense so glaring that you wouldn't want to finish the album. These musicians have the potential to go from good to great, and delving further into their songs could help that come to fruition.

Overall, *Asterisk* is an enjoyable listen. It is not without blemish, but The Joy of Painting plays with enough conviction to make you keep listening. These young musicians will be worth keeping an eye on. ■



AMC series brings back the dead in second season

By Amanda Haggard
Editor-in-Chief



While much of Sunday's episode of *The Walking Dead* focused on Shane and why he is hated by just about everyone on Earth besides Andrea, the most notable part of the episode was that it actually featured zombies.

Not family members trapped in barns. Not a fat guy trapped in a well. Like real, flesh-eating deadheads. And they get shot, stabbed and impaled through the forehead in true zombie slaughter fashion—just the kind of blood and guts veteran zombie fans have been waiting for in the second season.

Without a doubt, this show's element of thrill can sometimes be lost in the drama, but this was a rare chapter that delivered more goods than expected. A shootout, car wreck and a zombie pushing its face through glass somehow validates the many long pieces of dialogue that emerge near the end of the episode.

When a young man named Randall—who is involved in the shootout—jumps off the roof into a pick-up truck and impales his leg on an iron post, the group is again forced to make a choice.

As walkers close in, Rick says the young man “is just a boy” and decides to take him back to camp rather than let him become a feast. It's a strange world when you shoot at someone 5 minutes before, and then offer to save them in a separate situation—one of the many dilemmas that surfaces to ask the audience questions about how they would react in similar situations.

During the shootout, Rick says, “It's not like that now, I'm sure we've all done things we didn't want to do.”

Back at the farm, the group is settling in for dinner when a few notice that

Lori has been gone since earlier in the afternoon.

Of course, Shane attempts to find the car and Lori, which is not unexpected, but a little surprising considering that their relationship feels like the plot point that just won't stop. The Shane and Lori excitement comes to a climax, in this episode at least, when Shane publicly announces Lori's pregnancy, prompting questions from Carl and adding new level of tension to the show.

Carl proposes naming the baby Sophia. No offense, Carl, but that is a terrible idea. Beyond his awful suggestion, Carl's childlike qualities are showing in this episode—something that feels forced and unlike the first half of the second season.

To further prove that Shane is a complete turd, this episode reminds the audience of his unreciprocated love for Lori and that he still thinks her baby belongs to him—as if his antics with the barn and clash with Herschel weren't convincing the audience of his appalling nature.

Hershel surgically repairs Randall's calf muscle in

the shed and announces that Randall won't be able to stand for a week. After that, Rick says he plans to send him on his way, but others have doubts about whether that's possible—a tight spot that will surely have Rick and Shane arguing to death.

At least, we can all hope.

Andrea, gaining a little madness from Shane, has major fears that a war could erupt if Randall's crew comes looking for him. She's a standout in this episode as well, as her interaction with Shane severely conflicts with his feelings for Lori. While their bond has been represented more in the context of lust, it seems Andrea looks to Shane far more than Rick for safety—telling Dale she trusted Shane to keep the group safe over Rick.

In an intimate moment in their tent, Rick and Lori undress each other as she explains that Shane is still in love with her. Building pressure for the next episode, Lori speaks softly in Rick's ear and says that Shane indicated that Rick could not protect the group, or his family.

“He's dangerous, Rick,” she says, whispering and rubbing her hands through his hair, “and he won't stop.” ■



Ex-hardcore drummer mellows with worship tour



By Becca Andrews
Managing Editor

Aron Gillespie is a weirdo. Drowning in tattoos and proudly sporting wavy red hair, he looks the part of internationally-known rock star.

He does not, however, act it.

Gillespie is perpetually in motion, stopping only when he is speaking about something he is intensely passionate about. His boyish grin and clear blue eyes reflect a young

soul, as does his camaraderie with the group of men he travels with.

"No, no, no!" he crows at them, looking expectantly for their reaction to the inside joke. The group erupts into laughter, as he hoped.

Gillespie was at MTSU a week ago to perform and share his testimony with students. He was brought here by the Christian Music Society as an event to promote the organization. He performed, preached and answered questions via text for two hours that evening.

Gillespie's unique personality and winning— if off-

beat— sense of humor made him the perfect artist to speak to college students about his faith.

"I think that music is such a powerful vehicle for whatever you're portraying," Gillespie said. "But for me, I really want people to find hope and see the fact that I believe that Jesus is God, and he fixes things, he fixes your broken life."

Gillespie began his career at 15 as the drummer for the Christian hardcore band Underoath. After internal controversy about the band and his own motives, he left Underoath to pursue God as a way he said he felt was

purser.

"There's something about just saying 'yes' to God," Gillespie said. "God asked us to check 'yes' or 'no,' You're either all in or you're all out, there's no straddling the fence... Underoath is a Christian band, and does great things, just for me it had become not about ministry, it had become about the industry, songs and singles, and all the stuff that comes with being a musician, but I realized everything has to be about the person of Christ."

He has since taken on the roles of frontman for alternative rock band The Almost and is now touring as a solo act leading worship at churches and universities.

"More people turn away from God at this stage of life than any other life," Gillespie said, leaning in and folding his hands. "There's this resurgence that has to happen where college students get back into Jesus."

Gillespie said he sees college students gaining a bit of knowledge and writing off their relationships with God, even admitting to pride in his own past putting a strain on his relationship with Jesus.

"You get some knowledge, and you think you're smarter than everything you've ever learned, but the reality of it is you're just haughty and full of yourself," he said. "[Apostle] Paul says, 'Don't argue over things you don't know or understand,' and I think we argue so much about the gray that we miss the black and white."

Gillespie, who hails from Clearwater, Fla., is a family

man with a wife, Jamie, and their infant boy, Joel. He said he finds inspiration with them, and has been spending time writing with his son beside him.

"Being a father is the most prideful, massively wonderful, I can't explain it," he said, grinning widely. "You hear fathers say, 'oh, it's the best thing ever,' and it's absolutely true, you can't explain it."

It is through

Gillespie explains his spiritual journey and how he has changed since touring with Underoath and The Almost.

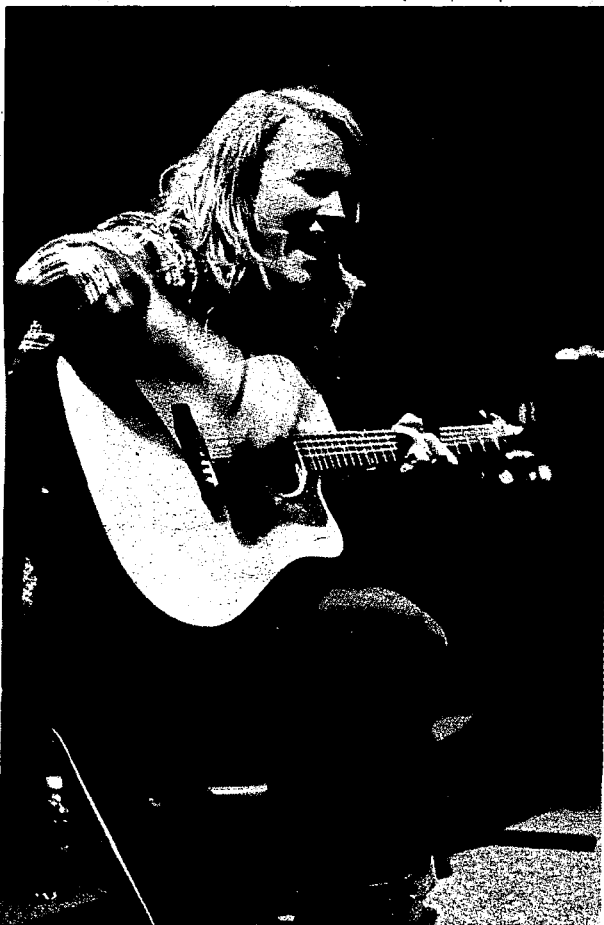
life as a husband and father Gillespie said God has taught him the most.

"You really learn selflessness being a husband," he said, tugging at his locks. "My wife's beautiful and incredible and easy to get along with. She's the best, but you really realize when you're a husband and a father that it's not about you anymore, you're No. 3 on your list."

Gillespie said he balances life on the road and family by saying "no" to a lot in order to spend more time with Jamie and Joel.

The Gillespie family is made complete by four dogs—Sadie, Stuart, Dakota and Mr. Bojangles. Stuart, a liver Dalmatian, is Aaron's dog. They run three miles a day together and sleep in the same bed. Jamie sleeps sideways, Stuart sleeps curled up in a "doughnut" and Aaron takes claim on whatever is left of his California king bed.

Because there is no rest for the redheaded. ■

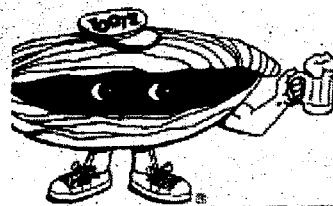


Photos by Elijah Longwell.

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I am True Blue: I am honest in word and deed

By Laura Sosh-Lihtsy
Contributing Columnist

Mahatma Gandhi said, "Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony." As an educator, both professionally and personally, I have always felt compelled to assist young people on their journey to personal achievement, ethical and moral development, and responsible citizenship, as these concepts are the foundation of success and self-worth.

Our world has changed significantly during my lifetime – social expectations and norms have shifted, technology has created new capability and responsibility, and increased demands on the family unit and exposure to social media have altered the way our children learn core values.

As a result, students are arriving at college with a confused sense of their own value-system. It is now more important than ever to remind our young people that our collective future lies squarely on their shoulders, and that we are here to teach them how to bear that burden.

MTSU's True Blue Pledge is a tangible effort to provide a concrete road map to our college students to guide them to adulthood and responsible citizenship. One of the most profound life lessons is the lesson of matching what you say and what you do to truth.

This journey to harmony and happiness begins internally with thoughts. I am constantly reminding students that words are the vehicle of thought, and action is the vehicle for words, and the three operate on the same highway.

I use the following rudimentary examples to demonstrate how straying away from our values in words and deeds can have a cumulative detrimental effect:

Thought: I want to help people. Words: "I am going to help at a local school." Deed: I volunteer at an elementary school. Result:

I feel good about what I have done, and I feel fulfilled that I did something I was interested in and value. Happiness!

Thought: I feel like I want to help people. Words: "I am going to help at a local school." Deed: I sit on my couch and watch documentaries about other people helping others. Result: I feel that others are more valuable, helpful and committed. I lower my expectations of self. Unhappiness!

As we all know, life is not this simple, but these simple examples set the stage for progressive learning, and practice makes perfect. Our young people need to think about their words and their actions and how these two things resonate with their own sense of truth and where their sense of truth lies within the community construct. All of us bear the responsibility to assist them in this journey.

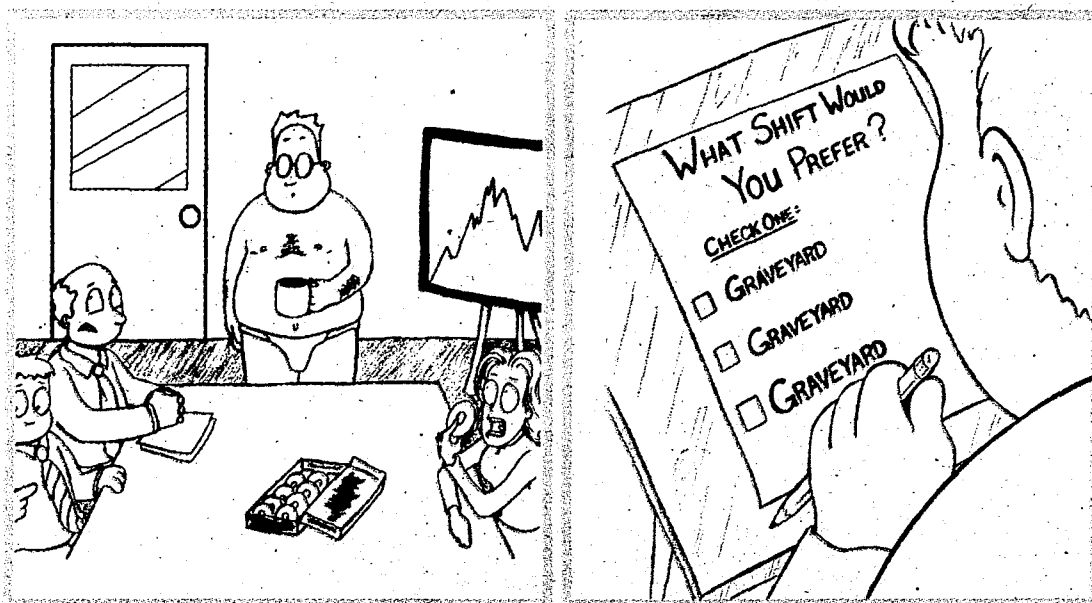
I am proud to work at a university that has chosen to make a public statement about returning to core values and citizenship. The True Blue Pledge is a way to harness focus on the bigger picture of life and responsibility. We owe it to ourselves and to our future to hold young people accountable to the alignment of word and deed, and to teach them this life strategy.

The most influential way to be a steward of this accountability is to live the example ourselves. I am honest in word and deed – are you? Won't you join us and be True Blue?

Laura Sosh-Lightsy is the Assistant Dean of Judicial Affairs and Mediation Services. She can be reached at Laura.Lightsy@mtsu.edu



1. THE WALKING DEAD- AMC
2. PARKS AND RECREATION- NBC
3. EASTBOUND & DOWN- HBO
4. 30 ROCK- NBC
5. MADMEN- AMC
6. COMIC BOOK MEN- AMC
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9. AMERICAN IDOL- FOX
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11. THE BACHELOR- ABC
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13. SHAMELESS- SHOWTIME
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15. DANCE MOMS- LIFETIME
16. ONE TREE HILL- THE CW
17. PYSCHÉ- USA
18. AWAKE- NBC
19. THE RIVER- ABC
20. SMASH- NBC
21. GLEE- FOX
22. UP ALL NIGHT- NBC
23. DANCING WITH THE STARS- ABC
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25. PRETTY LITTLE LIARS- ABC



Stanley suddenly realized he wasn't dreaming.

Cemetery job applications.

THE FINER THINGS

Jeremy Ball is a senior in the College of Mass Communication. He can be reached at thefinerthingscomics@gmail.com

MT men will defend indoor title

by Alex Hubbard
Sports Editor

When the Blue Raiders men's and women's track teams begin competition this weekend in the Sun Belt Conference indoor track and field championship, Coach Dean Hayes would rather see jumps for victory rather than joy.

The championship will be hosted Feb. 25-26 at Murphy Center, in effect standing as MT's fifth home meet in the 2012 indoor season.

"Both the men and the women have a chance to win the title," Hayes said. "We have a number of outstanding athletes on both sides, and people who are high in the rankings in the Sun Belt."

Jumping is where both teams have racked up successful finishes this season, and no one has had more success than Ann Dudley.

The junior from Jacksonville posted victories in at least one event in all but one competition while setting personal bests in the high jump and 55-meter hurdles. Her personal-best leap of six feet in the high jump to begin the season ranks among the nation's best and earned her the first of two recognitions as Sun Belt female field athlete of the week.

Dudley said although consistently performing at a high level is important, saving her best for the best occasions is also important.

"I want to continue to keep the same energy every time I jump," Dudley said. "But at the same time, when I'm at a bigger meet, like at the Sun Belt Conference or at nationals, I want to make sure that I am consistent, but I want to make sure that I am at the highest level of my competition."

Dudley is backed up by fellow juniors France Makabu and Euphemia Edem. Makabu, a former French high school national champion in the triple jump, began the season with a victory in that event before going on to set personal bests in both the triple and high jump. Edem consistently posts top-five finishes, including victory in the high jump.



Lucy Kapkia (left) and Justus David (right). Photo courtesy of MT Athletic Communications

Kiara Henry, a jumper and sprinter, also earned SBC recognition with victories in the 200 and 55 meter events.

In distance competition, Freshman Lucy Kapkia brings a record-setting threat. The Kenya native set a school record this season in the 3,000 meters, demolishing the previous record by over five seconds.

Fellow distance runner Amber Jackson ranks among the conference leaders in the 800 meters, and Hayes said her experience will prove useful.

"She's a junior, and she has a lot of experience, and she always scores well for



us in the Sun Belt," Hayes said.

Western Kentucky enters competition as six-time SBC defending champs, and Hayes also expects stiff competition from Florida International and Arkansas State.

The men's squad is led by sophomore jumper Cordairo Golden.

The Memphis native has endured nothing of a sophomore slump, posting two victories in both the triple jump and long jump. His top marks in both events set personal highs and earned him three conference recognitions.

For Golden, who showed moments of potential in his freshman campaign,

but could not find victory, it is an improvement that Golden attributes to confidence.

"My confidence has gone up compared to my freshman year," Golden said. "I have faith, confidence and courage in myself to do better than what I think I can."

MT's men are defending SBC champions, and Hayes said several runners who helped collect last year's title will be counted on to repeat.

Noah Akwu ran to two victories in the 2011 conference championship in the 200 and 400 meters, while Steven Palmer finished second to Akwu in the 400.

A major key for MT may come in distance running, Hayes said.

Last year's title came with large thanks to Justus David. The senior from Kenya collected top finishes in the 3,000 and 5,000 meters, as well as in the mile run, and went on to be named indoor trackman of the year.

"When you can score 35 points for us, that's a big one," Hayes said. "There isn't any two ways about that."

Two sprinters who have displayed good showings may be familiar to Blue Raiders football fans. Fresh from the football field, Kenny Gilstrap and Drayton Calhoun joined the track squad, and in their first competition finished first and second, respectively, in the 55 meters.

Having two team-oriented people competing in an individualist sport is something Hayes said is a positive.

"They have that team mentality, and that's the thing that I like about it," Hayes said. "That's the thing that they bring to our team so that our individuals now feel like, 'we have to do something for the team.'"

A final key may be the location of the meet. With the success of this season coming on the back of four home meets, the teams are familiar with the facility and what it takes to ring out a victory.

"We're used to it," Dudley said. "We practice on it... We know how to use it to our advantage... I know that our opponents are not used to it like we are." ■

continued

Understanding the conflict in Syria: continued from page 8

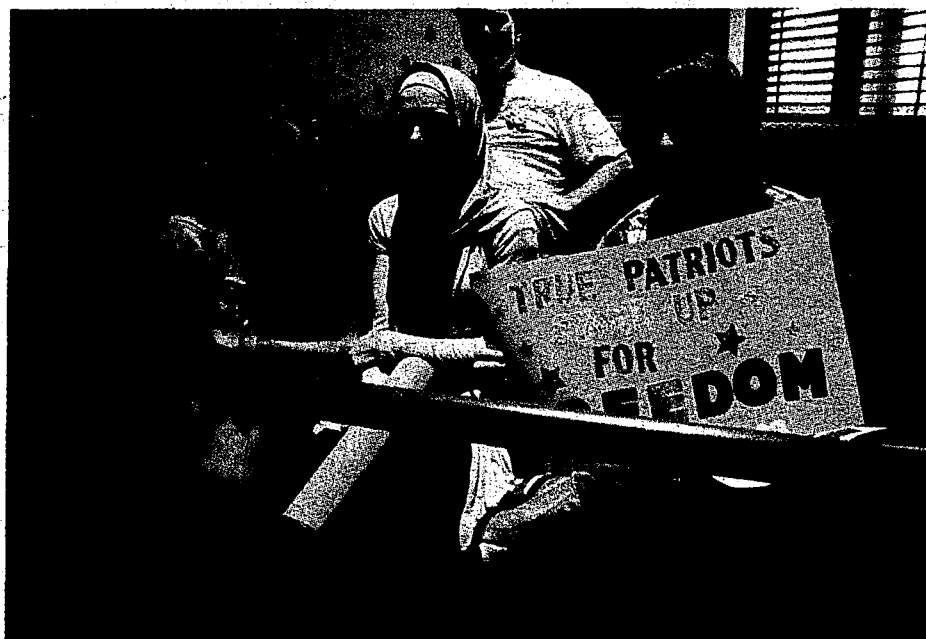
disdain for what they see as the U.N. violating Syria's sovereignty.

However, in Lema's opinion, a U.N. bill condemning the attacks is crucial to ending the violence in Syria. She also said it would be necessary to get rid of Syria's biggest allies, which are Russia, China and Iran.

"Living in the U.S., we understand our freedom ... and often take it for granted," she said. "But it's sad, because I'm not even going to be able to visit my family for so long, and the fact that ... I've taken a stand against Bashar ... it's unsafe; we can't go back until his regime topples."

Lema has taken a stand against Assad through the website she works for, which advocates for the Syrian revolution.

Though she uses an alias on the site, she requested its name not be printed so she cannot be traced back to it.



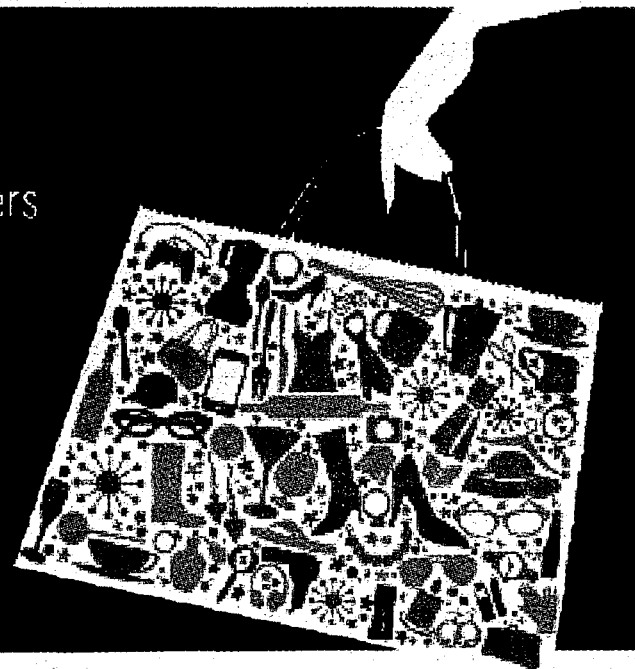
Members of the community protest the delays in the Islamic Center construction.

"We use codenames in case we get hacked. It's comprised of 18 kids. Many of them are Libyan, and they did the same kind of activism in Libya, and they've helped us a lot," she said. "The rest of us are just Syrian kids who have never actually lived in Syria, but have the belief that what we have here can be attained somewhere else, no matter how imperfect what we have is."

Lema's pride in her generation's role against the revolt is evident.

"The people who are conducting these protests and in the Arab Spring- these are conducted by kids, people our age. These are people who are not older than us, they are not more amazing than us, have not accomplished more than we have, and they're the one's who are changing the platform of an entire region," Lema said definitively. ■

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