

# MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

EDITORIALLY INDEPENDENT

THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2009

VOL. 85, NO. 20

## Family loses home from disastrous ash spill



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

A popular fishing cove was overrun with coal fly ash slurry when a retention pond at TVA's Kingston Steam Plant broke and sent 1.1 billion of the debris into the surrounding land and watershed.



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

18-month old Eryn Davis was diagnosed with a lung irritation after breathing in his Swan Pond home.

By ALEX BLACKWELDER  
Photography Editor

Swan Pond used to be known for its great fishing and mountainous views. Since Dec. 22, 2008, it has been known for the 1.1 billion gallon pile of coal fly ash that violently covered over 400 acres of land and waterways. The spill destroyed three and damaged 42 homes.

Fortunately, no one was injured but the disaster left hundreds of residents concerned about the air and water quality of their community. Coal fly ash, the residue leftover after coal is burned for electricity, contains heavy metals that are

harmful if ingested. It is kept wet when in storage so that the ash cannot dry out and fly into the air, but with a large-scale spill, the ash cannot be contained.

Despite reassurances from the Tennessee Valley Authority that the air was safe to breathe, an 18-month old boy became ill after the coal fly ash irritated his respiratory system. The boy and his grandmother were ordered by doctors to stay out of their community until the ash was controlled, which might take years.

FEATURES, PAGE 5

## McPhee provides transparency President receives mixed reviews on open forum

By DUSTIN EVANS  
Staff Writer

President Sidney McPhee dismissed a student's question on Wednesday in his open forum that was supposed to answer questions and concerns from employees of the university.

A senior philosophy major, who did not say his name at the forum, asked why the university was not making a moral commitment to save the Department of Philosophy. McPhee replied, "Any other questions?"

"To dismiss one of our students in that manner is unconscionable," said Kristen Boatwright, a teaching assistant in the English Department. "I wouldn't do it in a classroom, and it saddens me to think that our president would do it in a public forum like I just saw."

The forum was an attempt for the president to address concerns that the faculty, staff and students have and allow them to question the president directly.

"I think that some [questions] he handled well - others - I think he is assuming some things that weren't in the questions," Boatwright said.

Boatwright questioned the

president on the amount of money that the university has spent specifically on the "Positioning the University for the Future" initiative - the president responded, "I have no idea."

"He could have stopped at, 'I have no idea,'" Boatwright said. "The commentary that follows assumes that there is some ulterior motive in asking the question."

Throughout the open forum, McPhee said that the crisis of the university is due to direct issues with Tennessee.

"In the good times, if this state had funded our universities like they should, the problems we are experiencing in addressing this critical crisis would have been much easier," McPhee said.

McPhee said that, while he and MTSU administrators take no pleasure in the process, the university must make cuts to the overall budget of the university.

"This is not by choice," McPhee said. "Last fall, we were mandated to address these budget problems in

coming up with a plan that would reduce our budget by \$19 million, and we were told and mandated by the state to have a plan in place by July of this year."

McPhee said that while he is aware of the difficulties in budgeting the university, the administration is committed to protecting the academic quality of the institution as best they can under the circumstances.

"We have always said that we are going to use our Academic Master Plan as the basis for our decisions, our actions and our deliberations," McPhee said.

McPhee said that he is very pleased to see responses amongst the student body, however, while showing that they are not "apathetic," they are not directing their message in a professional or productive way.

"I talked with a number of the students who protested in front of my lawn a couple weeks ago," McPhee said. "As I asked them questions, a majority of them did not know that the majority of the recommendations had to deal with concentrations that had little or no majors in them."

FORUM, PAGE 3

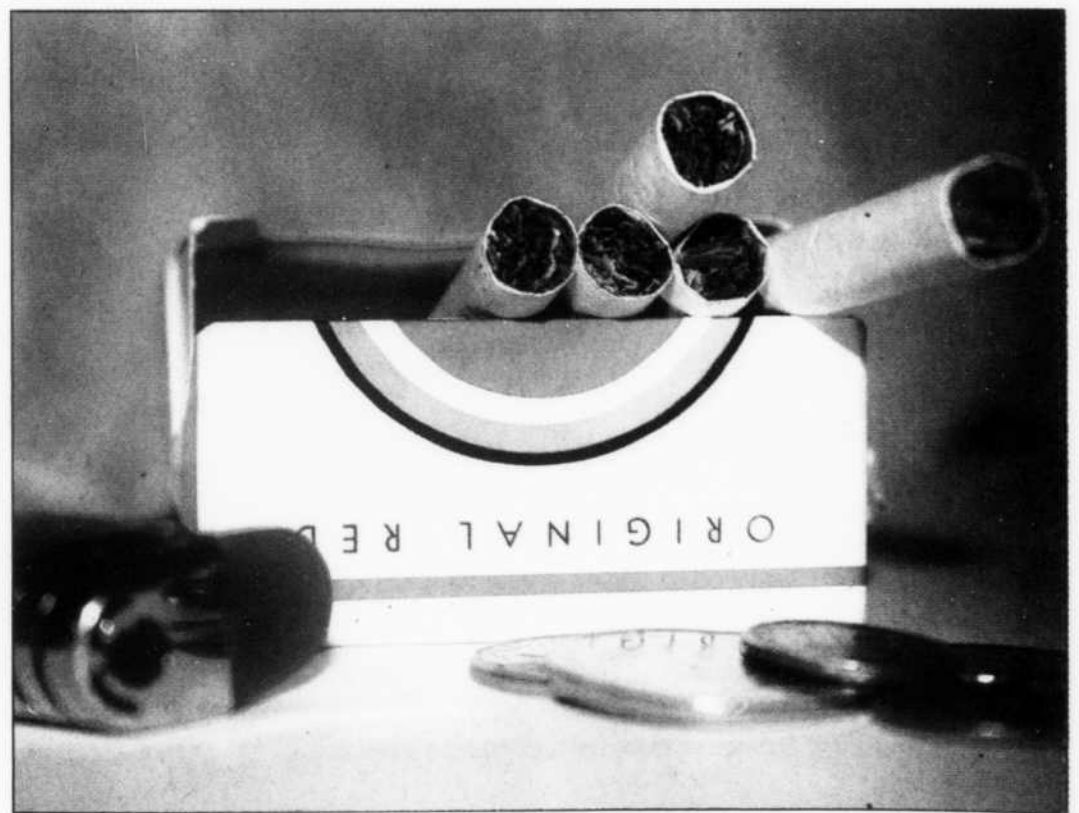


Photo courtesy Morguefile.com

## New tax inflames tobacco costs

By FAITH FRANKLIN  
Community News Editor

Smokers in Middle Tennessee may cut back on the amount of cigarettes they smoke because of the federally mandated tax, according to local convenience store managers.

The tobacco tax rose 62 cents per pack yesterday. Funds received from the tax will go to aid a children health insurance initiative President Barack Obama signed soon after taking office.

"The new tax might slow smokers down, but they are not going to stop buying," said Faris Alk, manager of Middle Tennessee Super Market on Middle Tennessee Boulevard. "It is just like beer, if they don't have enough for the six pack they will get one."

Alk said some smokers would switch to a cheaper brand of cigarettes.

The price of cigarettes has risen within the past few weeks, Alk said, partly to offset the possible profit

drops once the tax is in place.

"I don't think anyone will stop smoking because the odds are against them," Alk said.

Abdul Ahmad, manager of Tobacco Outlet and Market on Memorial Boulevard, said that the new tax will decrease smokers buying habits, however they are not all going to give up smoking.

"Ten percent of smokers may stop," Ahmad said.

TOBACCO, PAGE 3



# Students sleep in boxes to raise awareness

By ALEX MOORMAN  
Campus News Editor

MTSU's chapter of Habitat for Humanity hosted an event earlier this week to raise awareness for the homeless by sleeping in boxes outside the Keathley University Center.

"The project is important because with the economy the way it is, homelessness is not just the poor anymore, it now can be hard working Americans," said Megan Bolin, president of the chapter. "It's all about giving people a hand up and not a hand out because all we want is a little change so we can change the society one home at a time."

This week is MTSU Habitat's "Habitat Week". Shanty Town along with other events such as the Habitat Car Bash will be held throughout the week.

"The reason for doing the Shanty Town was to attract attention towards the poverty that happens around us daily," said Whitney Morris, special events coordinator for the chapter. "When I say us, I mean not

just college students, but people."

The members of Habitat for Humanity participating agreed to sleep in boxes for two full days, only leaving to attend classes. There were 10 participants and seven boxes.

"What originally made me want to do it was that it's a unique concept," said Brittany Rutledge, head of fundraising for the chapter. "I mean, how often do you get the chance to willingly sleep in a box while raising awareness of homelessness, as well as funds to build homes and help correct the problem."

Members of Habitat for Humanity said that an event like this will benefit MTSU.

"To some college kids, homelessness is a far away problem that doesn't affect them in any way or they think that all homeless people are just bums or drug addicts," Rutledge said. "We give a face to this issue and bring it to the forefront and change their perspectives of the home-

less." Morris said students can gain knowledge so that hopefully one day poverty will end and that anything students could do to make a difference with poverty might change the world.

"[Habitat for Humanity] decided after last year to do it again because it was a great hit and raised so much awareness," Bolin said. "Truthfully that's all I really want, for people to be aware of in our society."

Rutledge said the experience was one she won't forget.

"While laying in my box trying to go to sleep, I was pondering what if all I had were the clothes on my back, a sleeping bag and a few other personal items; how would I manage to survive without a means of income," Rutledge said. "You get to walk in their shoes for just one day and it makes you appreciate the things you have in life, even the simplest things we take for granted like running water and heat."



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer  
Members of Habitat for Humanity slept in boxes for two days to raise awareness about homelessness.

## Habitat takes it to the dogs

STAFF REPORT

"See Spot Run," a 5K run/walk, is being presented by the office of Leadership and Service and the Student Government Association Sunday to help raise money for Habitat for Humanity.

The event is part of a series of campus fundraisers designed to generate the \$50,000 necessary to sponsor Habitat for Humanity's

construction of a "blitz" built home on campus during Homecoming Week.

The event features a certified 5k course through the campus for participants and their dogs. Local businesses and organizations have helped by providing financial support and volunteers.

Registration is from 6:30 a.m. until 7:50 a.m. outside of Peck Hall with a \$25 entry fee. The race will of-

ficially start at 8 a.m. All proceeds, including entry fees, admissions and sponsorships, will go towards the MTSU Habitat for Humanity Building fund.

In preparation for the event, Habitat is also hosting a "See Spot run Hot Dog Day" Thursday, April 2 on the Keathley University Center Knoll starting at 11 a.m. A minimum \$5 donation will go towards Habitat's funds.

## CORRECTIONS

The article entitled "Twitter is taking over cyberspace" from Monday's edition of *Sidelines* was written by Errine Garnett, not Shannon Goostree.

A sentence in the article entitled "Thunderstorm damages Murfreesboro" from Monday's edition of *Sidelines* said, "Storm sirens on campus did not go off because

the campus was only under tornado warning when storms hit." The sentence should have said, "Storm sirens on campus did not go off because the campus was only under a tornado watch when storms hit."

In the article entitled "Wing eating contest sets MTSU on fire" from Monday's edition of *Sidelines*, "Batman"

Capazoli is quoted several times in describing how the hot wings from Aramark's Hot Wing Eating Contest were made. These quotes should have been attributed to Duane "Batman" Schmelhaus, Aramark's executive pastry chef.

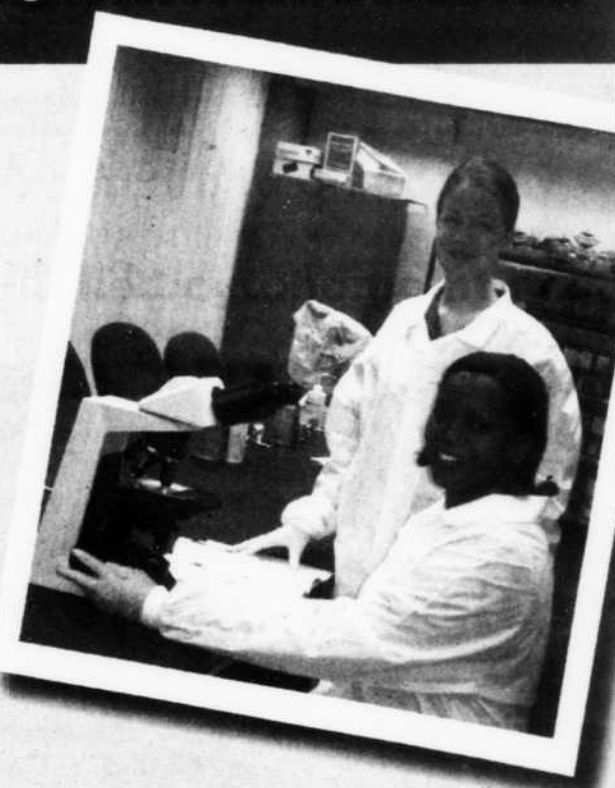
*Sidelines* regrets these errors.

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## Through the Sidelines' Lens



Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photography

### TOBACCO FROM PAGE 1

"I have heard people complaining, but that does not mean that they are going to stop buying."

**"I have heard people complaining but that doesn't mean that they are going to stop buying."**

**ABDUL AHMAD**  
MANAGER OF TOBACCO OUTLET AND MARKET

Whitlee Fletcher, a junior international relations major, said that she and her friends have been thinking about quitting smoking ever since she heard about the tax.

"More than likely, I will quit," Fletcher said. "I have been saying that the past

week since I found out about [the tax]."

Fletcher said she thinks the rising prices of cigarettes will make more smokers quit.

"People were already complaining about the price being too much, before the tax," Fletcher said.

Fletcher said that she would not quit smoking "cold turkey." She said that she would slow down, although it will be difficult.

Students said they are feeling the financial burden that smoking causes. Most of them said they would not be able to afford to continue to smoke if the price continues to rise.

"I don't make enough money to support the habit," Fletcher said.

## CRIME BRIEFS

**March 27, 10:21 a.m.**

### Reckless Driving

Off Campus

An officer was flagged down after a vehicle demolished a mailbox. The vehicle ended up stuck in a fence behind a house.

**March 28, 2:29 a.m.**

### Traffic Offense

Ewing BLVD

Mark Kaiser was issued a citation for registration violation.

**March 28, 3:36**

### Public Intoxication

MTSU BLVD

Logan Heckert and Andrew Kamp were arrested for public intoxication and consumption of alcohol under 21.

**March 28, 1:03 p.m.**

### Harassment

MTSU Police Department

Subject came in to the department and wanted a report on her ex boyfriend harassing her.

**March 29, 8:45 a.m.**

### Traffic

Mass Comm South Parking Lot

Woo Kyung Kim was issued a verbal

warning for speeding and running a stop sign. Issued a state citation for driving on a suspended license.

**March 30, 7:56 a.m.**

### Vandalism

Nicks Hall Lot

Subject called and advised that one of the parking meters at Nicks Hall had been pulled up and was in the middle of the roadway.

**March 31, 2:00 p.m.**

### Theft

Murphy center

Subject called and requested an officer in reference to missing items.

**March 31, 9:11 p.m.**

### Theft

Library

A witness to a bike theft requested to file a report.

**March 31, 11:44 p.m.**

### Harassment

Mary Hall

Subject requested to speak to an officer in reference to harassing phone calls.



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

President Sidney McPhee speaks to students and faculty about budget cuts and the future of MTSU.

### FORUM FROM PAGE 1

McPhee said that the students would be more efficient if they were more informed, and if they delivered the message in the right direction.

"At some point, we need to direct our frustrations — in addition to the president, we also need to be strategic in delivering our message to people who really make a difference," McPhee said.

McPhee said that while the Gov. Phil Bredesen has made comments that higher education dodged an immediate bullet, and that there is no need to cut, people should read the governor's speech to see the reality of his budget.

"This university's budget will be reduced, effective July 1, 2011, by \$19.3 million, that's a fact," McPhee

also covered tuition rates regarding to the budget, along with the effect of stimulus funds on the current crisis.

"As a result of those stimulus dollars, we do not have to make the drastic decisions by July of this year," McPhee said. "It has given us some time to address

reductions, particularly in layoffs."

McPhee said that the stimulus monies are one time, non-recurring dollars that will not only provide temporary assistance.

"The governor made it clear, not only for higher education, but also the public school system, that anyone who builds their budget in the future on those one-time dollars is making a serious mistake," McPhee said.

After his opening remarks, the president opened the forum to questions from the audience. Faculty, staff and students were allowed to ask the questions directly in a public audience.

"It answered a lot of questions, but at the same time, I'm still unsure of the future," said Anita Nicholson, a teacher in the Childcare Lab.

The president, after hosting the chairmen of the Tennessee House and Senate committees on education, is scheduled to host another open forum today at 3 p.m. in Tucker Theatre.

"I felt that he was trying to be positive, give us a glimmer of hope," Nicholson said.

## CURRENT EVENTS

"Yes Man"

March 30- April 2  
Monday-Thursday, 7 p.m. & 10 p.m.  
Friday, 7 p.m.  
Admission: \$2  
Location: KUC Theater

Paradigm Shift: Beyond Haute Couture  
Annual fashion show hosted by Textiles, Merchandising and Design Department  
April 2 at 7 p.m.  
Admission: \$5  
Location: JUB Tennessee Room  
More information: contact SGA office at 615.898.2464  
Or the Human Sciences Department at 615.898.2884

"Positioning the University for the Future"  
Open Forums for Faculty, Staff and Administrators  
Thursday, April 2 from 3 to 4 p.m.  
Location: Tucker Theatre

Habitat for Humanity "Car Bash" and See Spot Run Hot Dog Day  
April 2  
Proceeds go to Rutherford County Habitat for Humanity

Ninth Annual MTSU Student Film Festival  
April 20-24

Submissions due April 3  
Stop By KUC 308 for applications and more info

The BIG Event hosted by the Student Government Association  
Saturday, April 4  
Registration begins at 9 a.m. in the Murphy Center Parking Lot  
For more information: visit mtsu.edu/~sga/bigevent  
Or call the SGA office at 615.898.2464

See Spot Run 5k Run/Walk Hosted by Habitat for Humanity  
More information: contact SGA office at 615.898.2464  
Or the Human Sciences Department at 615.898.2884  
Entrance fee is \$25  
Registration held outside Peck Hall  
For more information contact Olivia Barker at 615.898.5812

"Valkyrie"  
April 6-10  
Monday-Thursday, 7 p.m. & 10 p.m.  
Friday, 7 p.m.  
Admission: \$2  
Location: KUC Theater

Seven Secrets to the Hidden Job Market  
Presented by Donald Asher  
Wednesday, April 8 from 12 to 1 p.m.  
Location: KUC 332  
Free and open to MTSU community

## Back to school-do's

Do get a great cut

Don't jack it up to heaven

(...and DON'Ts)

Do get a professional massage

Don't nap in the mall massage-lounger

Do get a rejuvenating facial

Don't spackle over the bad spots

Do get a real manicure

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**Letters Policy**

Sidelines welcomes letters to the editor from all readers. Please e-mail letters to [slopinio@mtsu.edu](mailto:slopinio@mtsu.edu) and include your name and phone number for verification. Sidelines will not publish anonymous letters. We reserve the right to edit grammar, length and content.

# OPINIONS

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

**FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD**

## Tobacco tax to be used on uninsured children

Recently, the U.S. government approved a new tax on cigarettes that will affect smokers nationwide.

The revenue that will be generated via this new tobacco tax will be used to pay healthcare for uninsured children.

We feel this is not only a worthy cause, but also an admirable one that has long been needed here in the states.

It's no secret that the American South tends to have lower cigarette prices than the rest of the country, with some metropolitan areas like New York and Los Angeles charging around \$10 a pack of cigarettes.

Many health experts claim that the price of tobacco is directly correlated with how likely a person is to pursue a smoking habit, citing decreased numbers of smokers in countries like Canada.

The price of cigarettes will most definitely have an affect on struggling college students. Many students have already switched to a cheaper brand or are thinking about, if not deciding, to quit.

But tobacco companies aren't going to stand around while what's left of their dwindling profit margin goes up in smoke. According to the British Broadcasting Corporation, cigarette companies have been raising prices in the weeks prior to the tax hike in an attempt to counter losses.

So Big Tobacco isn't exactly rattling its saber in the name of a smoke-free America, but what's new?

We're talking about the same entities that marketed cigarettes as healthy in the 1950s and used cartoon characters to market, allegedly, towards adult audiences.

Because of this tax and the possible decline in sales of cigarettes, can we expect tobacco companies to more new-fangled marketing campaigns? In times of need, why not create a product to appeal to younger audiences?

In fact, the R.J. Reynolds tobacco company already has, in the form of "Snus." These smokeless tobacco-filled pouches offer the same cancer-laden benefits as dip, but without getting brown plant matter between your teeth, not to mention they're sold in a freezer so you know they're cool. Ah, expert marketing never felt so addictive.

Despite the clattering of withering corporations to squeeze every last cent out of a dying industry, Americans should be happy about this new tax. Most Americans don't smoke, and probably don't want their children to pick up the habit any time soon.

Additionally, the monies being used are going to a worthwhile cause. It's inspiring to see that the government that stood idly by while Joe Camel played pool on T.V. is now allocating Joe's would-be profits to children who would otherwise not have the means for basic medicine.

We applaud Congress for its visible steps for health and also for our kids' future.

## Bredesen to mete college resources

Tennessee lawmakers are beginning to explore the reality of restructuring the higher education system in the face of dramatic budget cuts. Both Democrats and Republicans have presented cost saving strategies and solutions in an attempt to streamline academic programs and combine duplicate services across the higher education systems.

In a recent interview, Gov. Phil Bredesen asserted the necessity for smaller universities to eliminate graduate programs and narrow their focus.

Additionally, Tennessee universities should seek to eliminate similar academic majors provided by other nearby universities. For instance, Bredesen might encourage Austin Peay State University to eliminate its education program so resources could be shifted to strengthen MTSU's education program. Similarly, the engineering programs available at Tennessee Tech might be strengthened while



**Hurtt Pride**  
Matt Hurtt

identical programs at MTSU or Austin Peay are eliminated. Purging duplicate programs would potentially save money because related faculty and services could be cut from those universities where such programs would be eliminated.

Bredesen also suggested that the University of Tennessee continue to develop its graduate programs in order to compete with other regional universities. While his obvious love affair with UT Knoxville is – at first glance – disgusting to most of us who are affiliated with MTSU, Bredesen rightly believes that UT Knoxville is on course to compete with other regional

state universities. His support of UT is trumped only by his expressive word choice when describing other state universities.

"The other four-year schools are living in a shadow land right now," Bredesen said. "They are mostly trying to be mini UTKs or mini Vanderbilts."

The governor has never been known as an eloquent speaker.

Longtime critics of Bredesen on the right side of the aisle are finding it hard to disagree with his most recent assessment.

State Representative Stacey Campfield (R – Knoxville), who blogs about political issues regularly, recently signaled his agreement with Bredesen and offered a harsh critique of the seemingly endless layers of administrative bureaucracy within Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Tennessee Board of Regents and UT.

more from the taxpayers to give the administration more money when they come calling?" Campfield writes. "Some say yes; give it to them blindly. Others are sick of the fat cat administration getting rich whenever the state pays out."

Campfield's sentiments echo those of concerned students and faculty who feel that major cuts should be

tial rounds of cuts last year.

Campfield continues by expressing his reluctance to vote in favor of appropriating more revenue to higher education because so much of the overhead is tied up in administrative salaries.

There seems to be no argument about whether or not action should be taken to reduce the overall burden of higher education on the state treasury, and there seems to be no shortage of ideas on how exactly to save money.

With MTSU President Sidney McPhee's recent

**“The other four-year schools are living in a shadow land right now. They are mostly trying to be mini UTKs or mini Vanderbilts.”**

**PHIL BREDESEN**  
GOVERNOR OF TENNESSEE

made at the top. He argues that – before any student is taught at MTSU – \$50 million is paid out in salary and benefits to administrators in TBR, THEC and the Cope Administration Building on campus. To put that figure into perspective, \$50 million equals roughly half of MTSU's budget prior to the ini-

tions along with Bredesen's suggestions as well as those of other lawmakers, there really seems to be no shortage of ideas. Now, if we can just find enough elected officials with the political will to act...

Matthew Hurtt is a senior history and political science major and can be reached at [Matt.Hurtt@gmail.com](mailto:Matt.Hurtt@gmail.com).

## Average women get a chance on Fox

With the popularity of shows such as ABC's "The Bachelor," Fox television network has decided to develop a new dating show that features "average-looking" women as its contestants.

The series will be titled "More to Love," and will open its doors to overweight women interested in finding their match.

The network believes that people will be interested in watching these average-looking women because of the popularity of the show "The Biggest Loser," which is a weight-loss competition. Apparently the network believes that, based on the high ratings for that show, the country isn't interested in seeing only beautiful people on television.



**The C-Word**  
Courtney Watson

The difference between "The Biggest Loser" and "More to Love" is that the contestants on the former show are trying to lose weight, and therefore their heaviness was a negative factor, while on the latter show they are using the fact that these women are overweight as a positive factor.

The network may be right. The country may like to see

overweight people, but they like to see them bettering themselves, they like seeing them as encouragement, not using their extra baggage as a selling point.

Maybe to some people, overweight women finding love is encouraging, but still, it doesn't send a good message when it's saying "it's all right to be overweight and unhealthy, because you can still find true love."

The format is very similar to "The Bachelor," and the networks best bet for ratings will probably be how controversial it is to only invite average-looking women to compete for the love of one man, who producers describe as a "Kevin James type."

The show will also have

makeover elements, but the main focus won't be on bettering the women's physical appearances.

There have been shows similar to this before, such as "Average Joe" and "Beauty and the Geek," where average-looking men competed for the love of a supermodel-esque woman.

Producer Mike Fleiss said that they are not going to thin the girls down so that they can find love, because that is a backwards message. However, promoting the fact that these women are overweight, and playing it off as a good thing sends a backwards message.

Fox president of alternative Mike Darnell says that real women, the women who watch these shows for the most part, should be able to

find love, too. Well, if these women are overweight and sitting on the couch watching two other people fall in love, they don't sound too motivated to me.

Darnell is teaming up with Mike Fleiss for the first time in nine years. This isn't their first controversial dating show together; they're also the duo behind the popular show "Who Wants to Marry a Multi-Millionaire," which aired in 2000.

Honestly, if I wanted to know what the real dating world looks like, or to see average-looking people hooking up, I don't need cable television to see it. I'd probably just go to a bar.

Courtney Watson is a senior in journalism and can be reached at [cw2y@mtsu.edu](mailto:cw2y@mtsu.edu).

## FACES IN THE CROWD

### Do you think President McPhee is handling the budget cuts well?



**Miller**  
"Actually I don't. I'm having a difficult time accepting that my friends are getting screwed out of their future because he wants to build new buildings."

Kyle Miller, senior digital animation major



**Ochoa**  
"No. I just got here, and already I see there are a lot of problems with budgeting in the school."

Betsy Ochoa, freshman studio art major



**Fagan**  
"I regret that I don't know more than I do. I'm unhappy thinking the appeal of the school will be reduced by limiting by the number of majors it has."

Noah Fagan, sophomore English and RIM



**Smith**  
"I don't, I believe there are several overpaid staff, including himself and several advisors. We need to be cutting budgets for private jets."

McKinley Smith, freshman graphic design major

## COMICS



"And Friends"

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# FEATURES



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## TVA ash disaster displaces Tenn. family

Penny Dodson and grandson find lifestyle, health buried under coal residue

By ALEX BLACKWELDER  
Photography Editor

On Dec. 22, 2008, rural Roane County in East Tennessee was catapulted into the international spotlight by what some describe as one of the worst environmental disasters to happen in the United States.

An earthen dike broke at a waste detention pond at the Kingston Fossil Plant, releasing 1.1 billion gallons of coal-fly ash into the nearby waterways of the Emory and Clinch rivers.

The fly ash, residue left over after the burning of coal, contains heavy metals and is a health hazard if ingested.

Fly ash isn't a concern when wet, but when it dries, as its name suggests, it begins to fly in the air. Breathing it in is hazardous.

The tidal wave of water and ash damaged 42 residential properties and left three completely destroyed. No one was injured, but the event left hundreds of residents concerned about the air and water quality of their community.

Penny Dodson, whose 18-month-old grandson Evyn lives with cerebral palsy and an assortment of other disorders, was one of those worried about her way of life.

With piles of ash nearly half a mile from her lakeside home, she called the Tennessee Valley Authority, the government-owned corporation running the Kingston Fossil Plant.

Dodson voiced her concerns to the corporation and said the TVA representative responded by saying, "The ash is wet - you'll be okay."

After several days, Penny says she noticed the ash drying out and called TVA to request filters for her home at the recommendation of Evyn's doctor.

The filters were on backorder, but "the wind doesn't blow your way," Dodson remembers the representative saying. The next day, she woke up to a



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

Penny Dodson wheels her grandson around the Holiday Inn Express in Harriman, Tenn. During their three-week stay, the hotel let the family use the lobby for Evyn's therapy.

yellow-gray coating of ash on her car.

On Dec. 30, Dodson says Evyn began coughing and sneezing, and he wouldn't eat, sleep or drink from a bottle.

Evyn's doctor told Dod-

son being told that is I began to wonder if I was going to be homeless," Penny said. "I really didn't have a place because my home is on the water on Swan Pond Circle."

TVA relocated Penny and Evyn to a hotel farther from the site. They stayed there for weeks, not knowing where they were going to live when their stay ran out.

"Here we are in a hotel - we don't know how long we'll be here, and we didn't know if we'd ever get to go home," Dodson says. "It's kind of like you are living on the edge of uncertainty and homelessness."

While staying in one room with a bathroom sink as a dishwasher, Penny says she felt very claustrophobic and alone.

"It's tough to not cook a meal for us, and it's tough not to walk around in my pajamas," she explains

While in the hotel, Penny says she continued to push TVA for relocation and for answers to her questions.

"If I don't stand up and ask questions, demand answers, advocate for him as loud as possible, who is going to do it for us," Penny says. "I carry a lot of guilt because we stayed as long as we did, and Evyn got sick. If I were given any information on what the hazards were, I would have left earlier."

"I would not have stayed and put Evyn at risk."

Penny says she felt TVA was downplaying the health hazards to the citizens and the media. She says she knew many people getting sick, including her grandson, but it was not being reported in mainstream media.

After living in the hotel for three weeks, TVA relocated Penny and Evyn to a temporary home where they are still living.

Despite the relocation, Penny says she just wants to go home safely, but the ash cleanup is estimated to

take years.

"I don't want to be forced back home, but I want to go home. I love where I lived," she says. "It was somewhere I dreamed of living for a long time, but I want to make sure that we can breathe the air."

**“It's kind of like you are living on the edge of uncertainty and homelessness.”**

PENNY DODSON

DISPLACED VICTIM OF DEC. 22, 2008 TVA ASH RUPTURE

son to take him immediately to the emergency room, where after a round of tests, Evyn was diagnosed with a respiratory irritation due to the fly ash.

"He inhaled it, and it hit his lungs," Dodson says. "That is why he is coughing and sneezing. His body is trying to get rid of it."

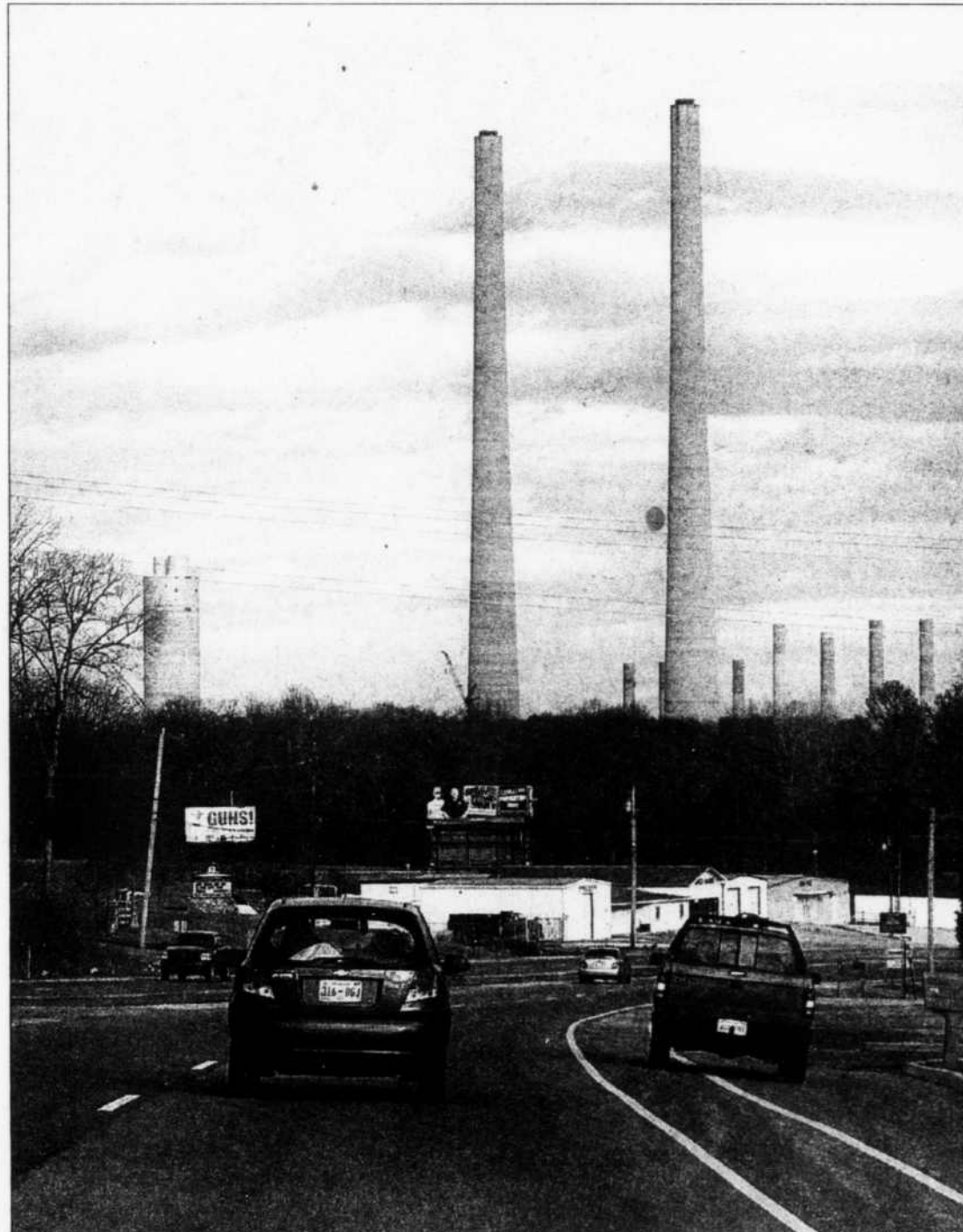
This meant the two couldn't go home because of the ash in the area.

"The hardest thing about



Photos by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

Penny Dodson stands on the dock at her Swan Pond home that she visits when Evyn is in school.



Photos by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

Penny Dodson drives past the Kingston Coal Plant on the way to her new rental home.

Hear Penny in  
her own words

online

www.mtsusidelines.com



# 'Sunny indie rock' trademark of The Broken West

Despite accusations of selling out and enjoying mild commercial success, one L.A. band stays true to itself

By JESSICA PACE  
Staff Writer

It's always sunny in the west, or more precisely, The Broken West. The Los Angeles-based band has proven that last fall with the release of "Now or Heaven," an equally as sunny follow-up to the band's first album "I Can't Go On, I'll Go On."

Because of that upbeat sound, The Broken West is leaving the fringes of "obscure indie band" and moving on to achieve greater recognition.

In 2007, the band played at Austin City Limits and recently made an appearance on "Rockville, CA," a music-themed series made by "The O.C." creator Josh Schwartz. And in the tradition of popular television helping to expose indie bands, many of The Broken West's songs are featured on various television series including "Grey's Anatomy" and "One Tree Hill." Way back when Death Cab for Cutie appeared on "The O.C.," snarky comments flew about the evils of "selling out" and questioned the band's integrity.

But The Broken West guitarist Dan Lead says a little differently.

"Anyone in a band at our level or even a couple notches up doesn't really have a choice," Lead says. "Nowadays, it's really one of the only ways that bands make any sort of income."

Of course, money isn't the main objective.

"If I was making money other ways, I think maybe I would feel differently," Lead says. "Personally, I wouldn't



Photo courtesy of The Broken West

The Broken West has two albums, "Now or Heaven" and "I Can't Go On, I'll Go On," available at amazon.com.

license songs to shows like that, but I am very grateful that we were able to do that. It helped us out a lot."

Lead says he always felt that The Broken West was better received by an older audience. Shows like "One Tree Hill" would certainly expose the band's music to a younger demographic. But commercial success hasn't been the highlight for The Broken West on the band's current tour.

It's members are huge fans of The New Pornographers and recently spent two weeks of shows in March opening for Pornographers' frontman A.C. Newman. Lead was especially excited to be on tour

with Newman. "I remember when I first got 'The Slow Wonder' [Newman's first solo album], and it blew me away," Lead remembers. "I think Ross [Flournoy, Broken West frontman,] and I probably listened to that record thousands of times. But I refrain from being a geek fan boy. I didn't bring it up."

Lead was surprised by how receptive the audience was during The Broken West's Nashville performance on March 21, claiming that the

band has a history of playing shows that do not exactly roll out the welcome wagon.

"It's a really tough town, kind of like Los Angeles," Lead says of Nashville. "I feel like everybody plays music, and I always assume that everybody in the crowd is in a band or works for some studio and is judging us."

Music snobs may run rampant in Music City, but on March 21, The Broken West was feeling the love from

Nashville at Mercy Lounge.

The venue off 8th Avenue harbors retro vibes within a beautiful old building, and the place was packed while The Broken West performed some of the best from "Now or Heaven."

The album encapsulates The Broken West's signature sun rock. It's a catchy piece of work, especially "Ambuscade" and the subtle hooks and almost oceanic-sounding guitars of "Gwen Now and Then."

At Mercy Lounge, Flournoy even stepped aside while bassist Brian Whelan crooned the sweet and infecting "Got it Bad," also from "Now or Heaven."

Bonus track "No One I Know" probably revisits the sounds of "I Can't Go On, I'll Go On," the most, though Lead, who primarily writes all the songs with Flournoy, says he never really thought that there was any huge difference between the two albums.

"I Can't Go On, I'll Go On" features songs that the band had written years before, while "Now or Heaven" was written in six months and recorded in four.

"We had more resources for 'Now or Heaven,' production-wise," Lead says. "Sound-wise, I never thought there was that big of a difference between the two."

The Broken West is staying true to its optimistic, California-infused indie rock. If anything, "Now or Heaven" lacks the same level of '60s pop influence that coursed through the band's debut album, but "Now or Heaven" remains more or less an extension of the sunny sounds of "I Can't Go On, I'll Go On."

"For us, I would say we were reaching a little bit with 'Now or Heaven' because we've always been fans of traditional song forms, and we were trying to expand on that," Lead says.

Lead admits that "Now or Heaven" was made during an uncomfortable time for the band, but the stressful environment did not tax its upbeat sound. The Broken West proves that it is possible to put the best elements of indie into a feel-good, refreshing album and abandon the moping melodies that can go hand-in-hand with the genre.

**BAND  
OF THE WEEK**

## Up 'Til Dawn raises \$81,000 for St. Jude

Positions are open for next year's Up 'Til Dawn. Once you become part of this organization, you will receive experiences sure to add value to your resume and make you feel good about helping children at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

There are many ways to get involved as a volunteer, team member, executive board member or planning committee. Within these positions are opportunities in entertainment, catering, corporate sponsorship, public relations, recruitment, finance, patient relations, logistics, fundraising and more.

Applications are in the KUC room 326-S and are due Friday, Mar. 20. For more info visit <http://frank.mtsu.edu/~uptildawn> or call 615-898-5812.



Up 'Til Dawn is a national student-led, student-run fundraising organization. Over 200 campuses participate in an Up 'Til Dawn event, but MTSU is among the best. For over 10 years, MTSU students have been leading the way in hosting this campus and community wide event, raising over \$640,000 to fight childhood cancer.



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# SPORTS

## ULL employs mercy rule in MT road loss

Sun Belt doubleheader hands Blue Raiders series of defeats to add to already tough softball season

By ZACH REVES  
Assistant Sports Editor

The Blue Raider softball team has been hanging tough in many games this season, but it certainly didn't help the slumping team to face the nationally ranked University of Louisiana-Lafayette in a doubleheader Tuesday.

MT (6-23) closed the No. 21-ranked Ragin' Cajuns as the girls in blue fell 7-0 in game one, and 11-3 in a mercy-rule shortened game two.

The losses continue the Blue Raiders' rough season in the Sun Belt Conference, as they fall to a 1-10 record in league play.

Costly defensive errors and an unproductive offense were the culprits behind MT's 7-0 defeat. The Blue Raiders compiled only two hits in the contest while committing five errors in the field.

Junior pitcher Lindsey Vander Lugt (4-11) started the contest and was credited with the complete game loss. She pitched six innings and gave up two earned runs on

11 hits and seven strikeouts. Vander Lugt also walked five batters for the game.

On the opposite side, ULL's Donna Bourgeois earned the complete game shutout with seven innings of two hit baseball. Bourgeois struck out seven batters while only issuing one free pass.

The Blue Raiders couldn't get any base runners MT had all night were on a walk and a pair of singles by junior left fielder Caitlin McLure and sophomore second baseman Kandra Singleton. MT did steal two bases in the game, but the girls in blue couldn't produce a clutch hit to bring the runners home.

MT started the game well, with sophomore center fielder Kelsey Dortch reaching third base on a ULL error and a Blue Raider sacrifice bunt. However, MT couldn't bring her home as the following hitters struck out.

The Blue Raiders threatened again in the top of the third when ULL committed a throwing error allowing MT players to reach second and third base. The Ragin' Cajuns got out of the jam as both Blue Raider runners at the plate on successive plays.

ULL burst on



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

Senior third baseman Martha Davis takes a strike at Blue Raider Field. Davis highlighted the MT offense with a three-run double in game two.

to the board in the bottom of the third with back-to-back home runs as the Ragin' Cajuns plated five runners.

In the bottom of the fourth, ULL added two insurance runs off of MT fielding errors to put the game out of reach, 7-0. The Ragin' Cajuns fell back on their defense to close

the game as the Blue Raiders never strung any hits together for the rest of the game.

Things didn't get much better in game two of the doubleheader as ULL outscored the Blue Raiders 11-3 by the conclusion of the fifth inning enacting the NCAA mercy rule and ending the game.

MT's sophomore pitcher Kellie Head (1-5) took the abbreviated loss as she pitched four innings, giving up 10 earned runs on 14 hits. Head also walked five and struck out two.

ULL's Ashley Brignac earned the win, pitching five innings and giving up three

earned runs on four hits with 12 strikeouts.

MT had a better game at the plate in game two, as it scored three runs on a huge double by senior third baseman Martha Davis in the top of the third. McLure also

SOFTBALL, PAGE 8

### BOX SCORES

Game 1:

MT-0 ULL-7

Game 2:

MT-3 ULL-11

## Brentz powers into Sun Belt baseball weekly honor

Blue Raiders collect second individual award of season as team grabs first place in conference

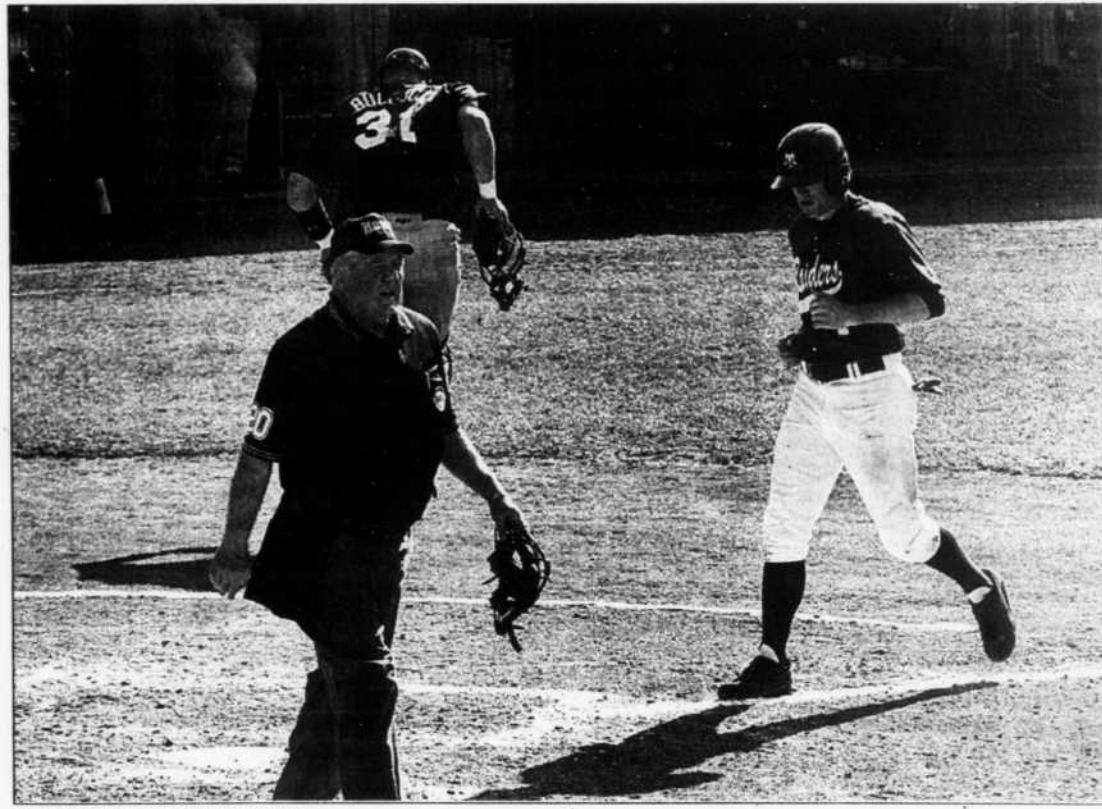


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

Sophomore Bryce Brentz trots into home plate to score another run for the high-powered Blue Raider offense. Brentz was named the SBC player of the week after hitting four home runs in four games.

By ZACH REVES  
Assistant Sports Editor

As a group, the Blue Raider baseball team has been collecting wins, but some players are also starting to rack up individual awards as well.

On Monday, sophomore Bryce Brentz was named the Sun Belt Player of the Week, according to conference officials.

Brentz, who switches between pitching and playing left field for the Blue Raiders, started all four games last week to help MT to a 3-1 record, including a Sun Belt Conference series sweep of the University of Arkansas-Little Rock. He started three games in the field and one on the mound for the week.

The SBC award was given to Brentz after a dominating

performance from the plate over the past week. He posted a .571 batting average after going 8-for-14 in the previous four games. Brentz also compiled a 1.500 percentage for the week.

The Knoxville native recorded seven RBIs and scored five runs, rocketing MT into first place in the SBC. Also, four of Brentz's hits cleared the fence for home runs.

"Brentz had an outstanding day today," head coach Steve Peterson said after Sunday's 11-7 win. "We are getting good quality at-bats out of him."

As a pitcher, Brentz picked up his third win of the season in the series opener against UALR. He worked 7.2 innings and allowed five runs on eight hits.

For the season, Brentz is

3-0 from the pitcher's mound with a 3.72 ERA and MT's only complete game of the season. Currently, Brentz leads the team in innings pitched with 38.2 and has 25 strikeouts, which is good enough for second on MT's roster.

At the plate, Brentz is second on the Blue Raiders in hitting .440 with 37 hits. The 21-year-old player leads the team and the Sun Belt with 12 home runs this season.

The individual league honor is the second for the Blue Raiders this season. Senior center fielder Nathan Hines was the SBC Player of the Week earlier this season.

Brentz and the rest of the Blue Raiders will return to action on the road with a three-game series against the University of Louisiana-Lafayette Friday starting at 6:30 p.m.

## Highly ranked teams disappoint in NCAA tournament

March Madness is over, and it's down to the Final Four in the NCAA women's college basketball tournament. Stanford is scheduled to play Connecticut and Louisville will take on Oklahoma for a chance to compete in the championship game.

So far, this year has been a disappointing bracket with highly ranked teams being knocked out by underdogs. MT, University of Tennessee, Rutgers and Maryland have all been eliminated.

The MT Lady Raiders entered the contest as underdogs and as a No. 8 seed and played No. 9 seed Michigan State on the road.

Up by four points at half-time, the Lady Raiders soon lost their lead and continued to let the win slip through their fingers in the second half. Junior forward Alysha



**Open Mouth, Insert Foot**  
Tiffany Gibson

Clark picked up her fifth foul in the last minute and a half of play, and the Lady Raiders ended up losing 60-59.

Watching MT lose was bad enough, but having to watch MT lose next, No. 5 seed UT lost to No. 12 Ball State only made things worse. I knew from the beginning of this season that UT would have a young and inexperienced team, but watching them

play against Ball State was just pitiful.

Sophomore guard Angie Bjorklund and senior forward Alex Fuller, who both helped lead the Lady Vols to win last year's championship, did not show leadership whatsoever. Bjorklund had the misperception that other players should make plays and when it comes down to crunch time, then she "might" feel like hitting a 3-pointer. Fuller completely lacked drive and gave up way too many rebounds.

Not to mention the defense and constant turnovers pretty much sealed the deal for Ball State. UT totaled 16 turnovers, which was three more than Ball State, but that is way too high of a number for a team that expects to advance to the second round.

Just watching the game was painful, and fans prob-

ably had to cover their ears when it was announced that the game would mark the first time ever that Pat Summitt and the Lady Vols have lost in the first round of the NCAA tournament. Yes, it happens, but giving up boards and letting girls drive the lane without any intent to stop them is ridiculous.

After UT was eliminated, I turned my attention to Rutgers and Maryland to make it to the championship game to rob UConn of the win.

Maryland showed great potential after its win against No. 4 Vanderbilt. Marissa Coleman has always been an aggressive player, but now that she's filling the shoes of Crystal Langhorne, she wasn't taking no for an answer.

Maryland came out on top 78-74.

Aside from UConn, Maryland seemed to be the team to beat along with Vivian Stringer's Rutgers team, which made an appearance in the championship game last year against UT.

Rutgers came out strong against Purdue, shooting 50 percent from 3-point range but couldn't buy a basket in the second half. Rutgers senior center Kia Vaughn and junior point guard Epiphany Prince had 25 points combined, but more help from other players was definitely needed. Plus, unjustified calls from the refs always help in games like this. Rutgers lost the game 67-61.

After the Rutgers loss, I turned my attention to Maryland. The team hasn't won a championship since

2005-06, and with star players like senior point guard Kristi Toliver and senior forward Marissa Coleman, the drought should have been over. This young team came in as freshmen and dominated. It would have been nice to see them go out with a bang, but unfortunately they lost to No. 3 Louisville 77-60.

The last team I will place any faith in is No. 1-seed Oklahoma, who might be able to bring the Huskies' perfect season to an end. With seniors Courtney and Ashley Paris taking charge and freshman Whitney Hand helping by collecting 22 points against Pittsburgh, Oklahoma is definitely a force to be reckoned with.

Whatever the case, expect intense matchups and tune in on April 5 for the semifinals at 6 and 8 p.m. on ESPN.



# Women's golf shoots 13

Team participates in UALR Classic, Wilkins takes 13th individual

By CHRIS WELCH  
Sports Editor

The Middle Tennessee women's golf team traveled to the University of Arkansas at Little Rock on Monday to participate in the UALR Classic.

Senior Leigh Wilkins was the sole Blue Raider in the Top 20 at the UALR Women's Golf Classic, placing 13th.

Wilkins shot a 4-over 76, and tied for her rank with MSU's Stacey Rodger and UALR's Daniela Vial.

Wilkins was joined in the top 50 by freshman Steph Gough, who shot a 243, enough to tie for 47th.

Blue Raider junior Clara Leathers followed Gough with a 244. Sophomore Morgan Hale shot 246, while freshman Karisa Akin pulled away with a 253.

Wilkins led the Blue Raid-

## (5) MT Team Scores (936)

8 Morgan Hale 76-77-77 230 +14 \*

T9 Leigh Wilkins 77-78-76 231 +15

T9 Hannah Weathersby 77-78-76 231 +15

T19 Clara Leathers 77-81-76 234 +18

T31 Karisa Akin 78-81-81 240 +24

T35 Mallory Bishop 79-81-82 242 +26

At their previous tournament, the USA Lady Jaguar Invite, the Blue Raiders finished fifth out of 16.

UALR and FIU finished the regular matched tied at 927, but a playoff round later determined the champion.

The leading and hosting team, the UALR Trojans, used a 16-over 304 third-round to earn their first place finish.

Oral, Roberts and Central Arkansas tied for third, while Eastern Michigan finished third.

The women's tennis team will compete next at the Canes and Cardinals tournament, being hosted by the University of Miami and Louisville. The event, taking place at Don Shula's Golf Club, will begin on Monday and carry through most of Tuesday.

ers to 13th as a team shooting 961 overall. This left MT placing a mere eight points behind No. 11 tie McNeese State and University of Toledo.

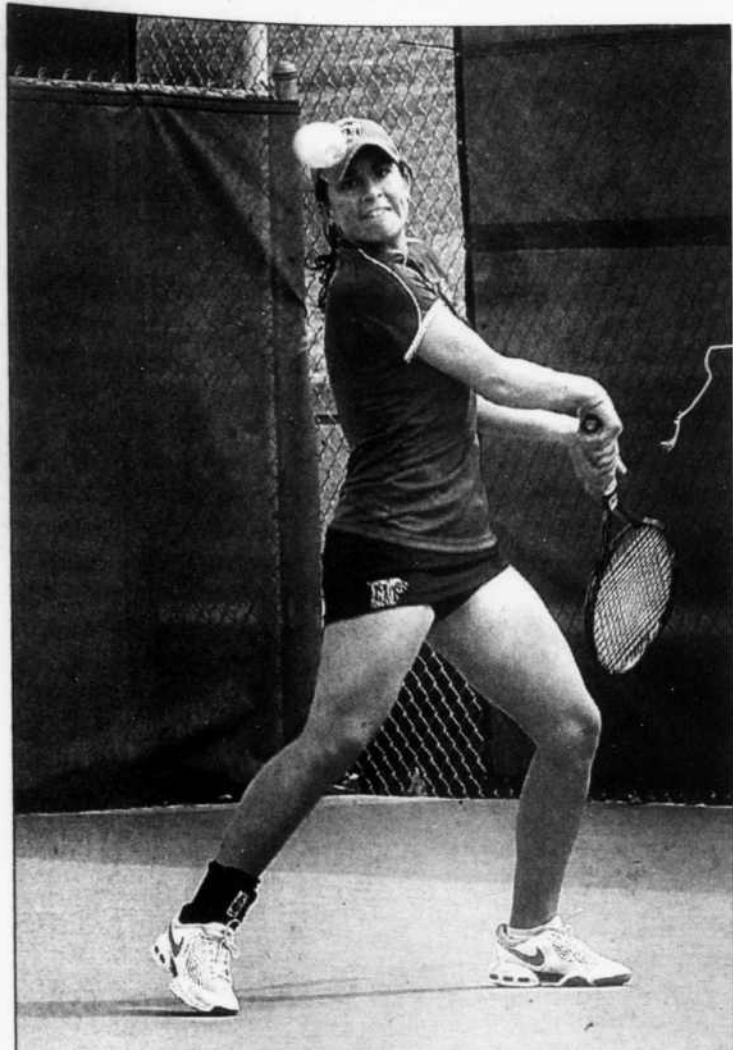


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer  
Senior Andrea Herrera returns a serve from a Princeton opponent.

## Men's tennis triumphs on ITA Poll, women's team struggles

By CHRIS WELCH  
Sports Editor

The men's tennis team is climbing the ranks in the national collegiate scene.

A recent Intercollegiate Tennis Association poll, released Tuesday afternoon, placed the Blue Raiders at No. 56 in the U.S.

This makes MT one of only two Sun Belt Conference teams to make it into the ITA poll.

MT edged No. 59 East Tennessee State University by three rankings, and is just two points shy of Virginia Commonwealth University.

SBC rival University of Denver comes into the poll ranked at No. 74. MT visited the Pioneers over the weekend and pulled out an impressive 4-3 victory.

MT junior Robert McKenzie also earned national recognition, garnering a singles ranking of 94 in the ITA poll with his 5.97701 average. Sophomore John Peers also appears on the poll, maintaining his No. 104 position.

Peers was also named the SBC Player of the Week yesterday. The sophomore from Melbourne, Australia, has won eight of his last 11 matches.

The Peers/McKenzie dou-

bles team made it into the top 30 nationally, ranking No. 29 according to the ITA. The pair is 7-1 in the doubles game.

These accolades all come after an impressive 4-3 win over conference rival Denver on Friday.

The team will try to put these skills to use this weekend as the Blue Raiders play host to the SBC Shoot-out. MT, the No. 1 seed in the tournament, will host No. 74 Denver, No. 2 seed Memphis, Troy and many others.

The contest will run Friday through Sunday, and will take place at the Buck Bouldin Tennis Center.

The women's team did not fare as well. The MT ladies did not appear on the ITA singles, doubles or team rankings.

This follows a loss to No. 42 Denver on Saturday. The 7-0 sweep brought the women's tennis team to 8-10 on the season overall.

The women's team will try to recover their winning season when they take on Marshall University (10-9) this Saturday. The match will be played at the Bouldin Tennis Center, and will start at 1 p.m.

## SOFTBALL FROM PAGE 7

scored a run and collected two of MT's four hits in the contest.

Unfortunately for the Blue Raiders, the Ragin' Cajuns also got better at the plate in the second game of the day. ULL hammered two home runs over the outfield wall and shortstop Codi Runyan went 3-for-4 with six RBIs in the game.

ULL scored early and often in the contest as Runyan plated two runners in the bottom of the first with an outfield single. Runyan would later come home on an RBI single to take a 3-0 lead.

The Ragin' Cajuns continued into the bottom

of the second as they scored five runs to take an 8-0 lead. Runyan added an exclamation point in the inning with a two-run homer.

However, MT would not go down without a fight. Two singles and a walk loaded the bases for Davis in the top of the third inning, and with one swing she cleared them to score three MT runs. That would be the extent of the Blue Raider offense.

ULL would go on to score a run in each of the next three innings to force the officials to end the game prematurely due to the NCAA's softball mercy rules.

The Blue Raiders will return home with a three-game SBC showdown with North Texas starting Saturday at 1 p.m.

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**IMPORTANT CONSUMER INFORMATION:** Subject to Cust. Agmt, Calling Plan, rebate form & credit approval. Up to \$175 early termination fee/line, up to 40c/min. after allowance & add'l charges apply for data sent or received. Friends & Family: Only domestic landline or wireless numbers (other than directory assistance, 900 numbers or customer's own wireless or voice mail access numbers) included; all eligible lines on an account share the same Friends & Family numbers, up to account's eligibility limits; set up & manage on My Verizon. Offers & coverage, varying by svc., not available everywhere. Network details & coverage maps at [vzw.com](http://vzw.com). Limited-time offers. While supplies last. Rebate debit card takes up to 6 wks. & exp. in 12 mos. © 2009 Verizon Wireless. MOUH