

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

EDITORIALLY INDEPENDENT

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2008

VOL. 84 NO. 43

INSIDE

Dealing with a sudden death



A student reflects on the unexpected loss of an MTSU alumna.

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OPINIONS

Work hard now, it pays off later

With an economy that's only getting worse, now is the time to get ahead.

OPINIONS, 7

Check out this week's comics.

OPINIONS, 7

SPORTS

Reese Smith Field reopens

After playing without a home stadium last season, the Blue Raiders cut the ribbon on new field.

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COMMUTE

Alumni Drive from Blue Raider Drive to Friendship Street will be closed for the fall semester for road improvements. With the closing of Alumni, there will be no access to the library parking lot. During the construction period, the northern part of the parking lot by the Honors Building will be changed from green to white. The southern end of the lot by Ezell Hall will remain green for students. You will not be able to access the campus via Womack Lane.

Due to construction, several lots have been rezoned. All legal parking areas are designated by signs, painted stripes, or other marks. Be sure to check the posted signs BEFORE you park your automobile. If it is not marked, don't park!

For more information, visit www.mtsu.edu/~parking.

Students rely on Raider Xpress

Faced with ongoing gas crisis, students turn to local, campus public transportation



Photo by Alex Trenuff, staff photographer

Students board the RaiderXpress on Tuesday afternoon. Since the recent spike in gas prices, the bus system has seen a recent spike in student riders.

By FAITH FRANKLIN
Assistant News Editor

In the wake of the gasoline price spike and the ongoing gas shortage, ridership of public and campus transportation has increased in Middle Tennessee.

However, the spikes and shortages have not economically affected public and campus transportation to and around campus.

The ridership of the Raider Xpress and Nashville Metro Transportation has increased after Hurricane Ike.

"As of right, now the re-

cent increase in gas prices has not affected the Raider Xpress," said Tracy Read, assistant manager for parking services. "We have had an increase in ridership on the Raider Xpress."

The Raider Xpress averages 3,240 riders a day.

The recent shortage of gasoline did not affect the Raider Xpress's 10 buses because they are fueled by diesel.

"Each bus contains a 60 gallon fuel tank, and we fill our buses usually about once a week," Read said. "We get our fuel on campus from the Motor Pool department."

Similar to the Raider Xpress, Metro Transit Authority in Nashville has seen a rise in ridership in accordance with the gas prices and shortages.

MTA provides a bus route that runs to and from Nashville to Murfreesboro making eight stops. One of those stops is behind the James Union Building.

"A lot of people have been riding the bus because of the whole gas thing," said Ashley Steele, freshman undeclared.

Steele has been riding the Nashville/Murfreesboro Re-

lax & Ride route since the beginning of the school year. She said she has noticed the correlation between the spike in gas prices and the spike in ridership.

"In the mornings, the bus is crowded, and in the afternoons, there used to be one seat per person. Now, there are a whole bunch [of people]," Steele said.

MTA statistics and comments from its operators indicate that more people are riding its buses.

"So far this month, we have had two days when the weekday ridership was more

than 36,000, and one this week when it was 37,000," said Patricia Harris-Morehead, communications director for MTA.

Like the Raider Xpress, MTA was unaffected by the gas shortage or rise in gas prices.

"MTA buses have plenty of fuel because there is not a shortage of diesel fuel," Harris-Morehead said.

MTA's storage tanks can hold up to 30,000 gallons of fuel, and they have been able to keep them full, according

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New initiative asks for lower drinking age

By ALEX MOORMAN
Assistant News Editor

College presidents from over 100 universities have created an initiative to lower the drinking age from 21 to 18.

These presidents argue that the current drinking age encourages dangerous binge drinking on campuses and that with the age lowered it will be easier for universities to instill responsible drinking habits.

In 2005, about 10.8 million people from 12 to 20 years old reported drinking alcohol in the past month, and nearly 7.2 million called them "binge drinkers," according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

The movement is called Amethyst Initiative. It began more than a year ago and now includes such universities as Duke, Dartmouth, Ohio State, Syracuse, Tufts, Colgate, Kenyon and Morehouse.

According to Monitoring the Future, an ongoing study of the behaviors, attitudes, and values of American secondary school students, college students, and young adults, three out of every four students had consumed alcohol by the end of their high school career.

"A drinking age doesn't really matter because age doesn't determine whether someone is mature enough to drink," said Brandon McNary, vice president of the Student Government Association at MTSU. "I know people who are 18 that I feel like would be mature enough to drink, and I know people who are 21 than definitely aren't."

The presidents have said they are not calling explicitly for a younger drinking age. Instead, they are seeking an informed debate over the issue and the "Federal Highway Law" that made 21 the national drinking age by denying money to any state

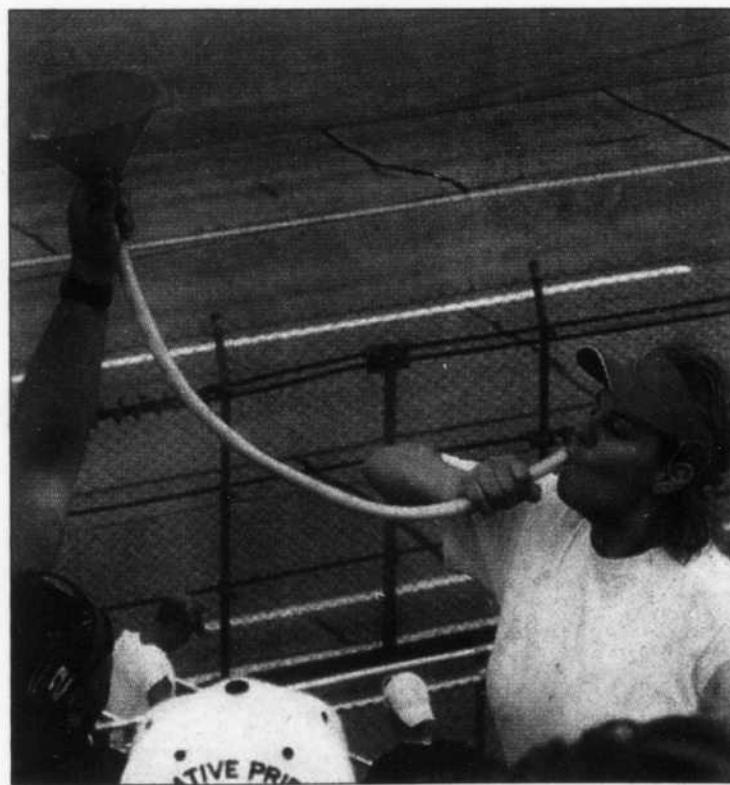


Photo Courtesy of Morguefile.com

The issue of drinking age has become a recent issue at colleges.

that refuses to comply.

In 1984, Congress passed the National Minimum Drinking Age Act, which imposed a penalty of 10 percent of a state's federal highway appropriation on any state setting its drinking age lower than 21.

"Changing the age won't happen, because it's all about Federal money," said Tim Miles, owner of Premium Wines and Spirits in Murfreesboro. "New Orleans was holding out on federal money to keep their

drinking age at 18, but they are the last ones who caved. The government basically forces people to make the drinking age 21."

Mothers Against Drunk Driving said that lowering the drinking age would lead to more fatal car crashes. It accuses the aforementioned presidents of misrepresenting science and looking for an easy way out of an inconvenient problem. They are also encouraging parents

Campus police put crime log online

By TIFFANY GIBSON
Campus News Editor

Campus police have begun putting crime and media logs online to make information more accessible to students and community members.

Instead of viewing the paper log at the campus police station, the crime briefs and media advisories can be viewed online at police.mtsu.edu.

Chief of campus police Buddy Peaster said that the old method was "fine," but it began causing a few problems.

"One of the few problems is that if someone who typically did the crime log was out then the information might be different," Peaster said. "Someone might put out information they shouldn't have."

Peaster said that in addition to this problem, pages would

DRINKING, PAGE 3

CRIME, PAGE 5

When she said, "stop,"

I STOPPED.



WHEN I REALIZED I

HAD THE POWER TO

CONTROL MYSELF,

BECAME A

BETTER MAN

88% OF TENNESSEE HIGH SCHOOL BOYS
SAID THAT EVEN IF A GIRL IS NAKED,
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Planned Parenthood
of Middle & East Tennessee, Inc.

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

DRINKING
FROM PAGE 1

to consider carefully when sending their children to colleges whose presidents have signed on.

"You could have more people drinking and driving but who's to say that there aren't already underage people drinking and driving," McNary said.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 39 percent of fatal crashes, counting all age groups, include alcohol.

"I think that the drinking and driving rate would be a risk, but kids already do that," said Pratik Patel, freshman psychology major. "You don't have to be 21 to get a DUI."

The rate of current alco-

hol use among youths 12 to 17 declined along with binge drinking from 2004 to 2005, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

"I don't think students at 18 are old enough to take responsibility for drinking," Miles said. "Students between 18 and 21 are different when handling responsibility."

Amethyst Initiative's statement says the current law isn't working, implying that it has created a culture of dangerous binge drinkers and noting that while adults under 21 can vote and enlist in the military, they are told they are not mature enough to drink.

"The age for drinking is skewed because, in America, you are considered an adult at 18," McNary said. "You are tried in criminal court as an

adult and therefore receive stricter punishment; you can sign up and go overseas, serve and kill someone for your country all at the age of 18. The government treats them as an adult in every other facet of the society other than drinking. It is hypocritical."

MTSU has not joined Amethyst Initiative and remains a dry campus. There have been no reports by the university to change either of these facts.

"I think that alcohol is associated with crime a lot and people will drink, but I don't think it would be best for MTSU to be a wet campus," McNary said. "I'm sure there are people who will try and drink when they aren't supposed to but I don't think we should change our policy because of that."

Duke University faced ac-

cusations that heavy drinking was involved in a 2006 rape allegation. The rape allegations proved to be false, but the alcohol involved was never addressed.

"It looks good from a political stand point for MTSU to say they don't allow alcohol, but I'm not sure it wouldn't make any difference," Miles said. "There are other colleges that have wet campuses, and I don't think that it affects the campus. When you put it under the rug and act like its not going on then they are not looking out for the best interest of the campus."

Amethyst Initiative says that by choosing to use fake IDs and drink illegally, students make ethical compromises that erode respect for the law.

"We should lower the drinking age, because drink-

Young adults ages 18-22 enrolled full-time in college were more likely than their peers not enrolled full time to use alcohol in the past month, to binge drink, and to drink heavily.

In 2005, more males than females ages 12-20 reported current alcohol use, binge drinking, and heavy drinking.

Three out of every four students have consumed alcohol by the end of high school.

Adults age 21 or older who had first used alcohol before age 21 were more likely than adults who had their first drink at age 21 or older to be classified with alcohol dependence or abuse.

Graphic by Alicia Wilson, production manager

ing is going on anyway," said Brittini Blackwell, sophomore chemistry major. "I think that if it weren't illegal for 18-

year-olds, then it would happen less. A lot of the reason for underage drinking is the thrill."

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UPTILDAWN

Don't forget about the Kickball Tournament Sept. 26!
Registration information in KUC 326-S

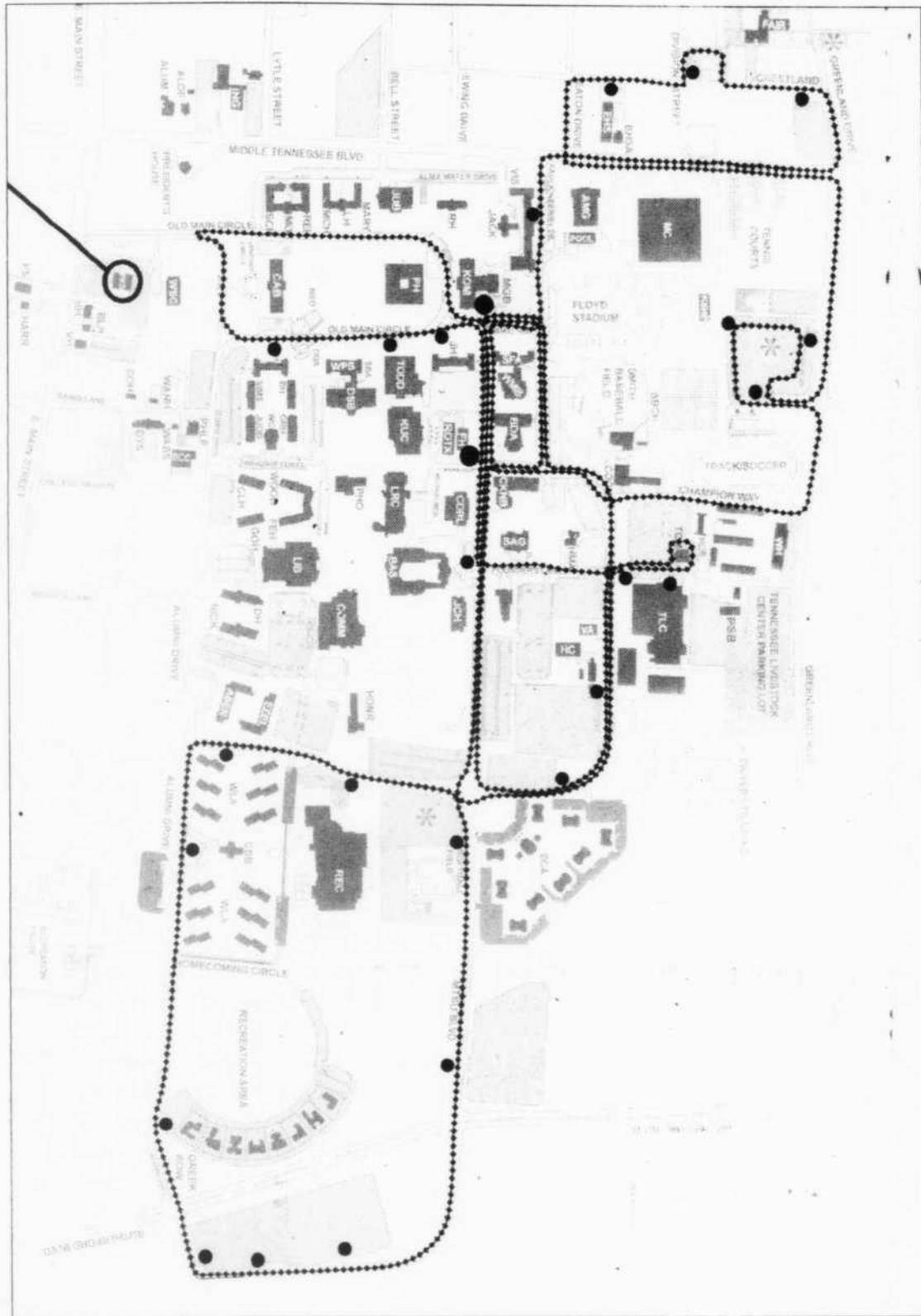


Photo Courtesy Tracy Read
The Raider Xpress runs throughout campus. For a better look, go to mtsu.edu/~parking.

BUSES
FROM PAGE 1

to Harris-Morehead. They routinely receive shipments of 7,500 gallons.

Harris-Morehead said that it is too soon to say whether the cause of the two record breaking numbers in ridership this month can be attributed to the post-Ike gas prices.

However, ridership from this past year to this year has increased at MTA 11 percent, Harris-Morehead said.

Steele said she rides the MTA bus because it is the easiest and most economical route for her and because she lives in Antioch.

"Riding the bus saves me money on gas," Steele said. "It's cheap, and it's easy."

The cost of a one-way trip on the Nashville/Murfreesboro Relax & Ride route reduced fare for students is \$1.75.

Other students have also elected to ride public transportation instead of driving themselves to campus.

"I don't drive to campus because it saves on gas and almost as important, I don't have to spend half an hour looking for a parking spot," said Cory Steffes, senior psychology major.

Steffes has been riding a shuttle to campus off and on since the beginning of the semester. He said he attributes his recent dedication to taking the shuttle to the gas crisis.

Steffes has also noticed the increase in the amount of people who are riding the shuttle.

"The shuttle I take is a 15-passenger van," Steffes said. "It carries more people than it is supposed to. It is overflowing with people."

The Raider Xpress currently runs three routes. The Green Route services the east side of campus and Greenland Drive. The Blue Route services the north side of campus and the Red Route services the west side.

The shuttle service is available Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. and Friday from 7 a.m. until

6 p.m., according to MTSU Parking and Transportation Web site.

The bus routes are chosen at a sit-down with the bus supervisor, who drives a bus route 80 percent of the time.

The route decisions are based on the best way to get students from the perimeter of campus into the campus.

Read said that the Raider Xpress shuttles do not run on a particular schedule due to the pedestrian traffic on campus. Having a schedule, she said, would be "almost impossible."

The one major thing students could do to make the Raider Xpress a smoother operation is for students to not drive on campus unless they have to, Read said.

"The Raider Xpress has a hard enough time running with pedestrian traffic on campus," Read said. "If you add to that students and employees driving on campus when there is no need to, keeps the buses stuck in traffic for an extended period of time."

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
SIDELINES

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Homecoming Candidates 2008

King Queen



Jameel Braddock



John Carter



Steven Disser



Lindsey Atkinson



Maryin Chavez



Seth Howell



Brandon Jones



Cord Martin



Camden Dykes



Meredith Howell



Sam Murley



Jeremy Simpson



Steven Giles



Jessica Utley



Tiffanie Winkler

Fraternity Recruitment 2008 comes to an end

STAFF REPORT

Rush week, which began Sept. 15th and had a successful turnout rate of over 180 men that chose to join a brotherhood at MTSU.

Rush week, continued on Tuesday Sept. 16., with an open aired cookout called the GRILL OFF in the old intramural fields with each fraternity cooking a different entrée.

Nathan Haynes, IFC president along with Nic Palmer, vice president of Recruitment ran the event. Over a hundred and fifty potential new members filled all 12 twelve tents learning about each fraternal organization.

All fraternities hosted an open house that all potential new members were able to talk with brothers of each organization, visit each house, and learn about each different fraternity.

The potential new members were given the option of attending two "Smoker" sessions of the fraternities they felt most comfortable with.

Bid day was a festive in the LRC yard, all fraternities waited for their prospective pledges.

Current Events

Campfire Concert Series

Friday Sept. 26

General Bragg Trailhead

Admission is free for all ages

Live music from local bands around a campfire. Listen to three part harmony on songs and sing along with fold and gospel favorites.

Salvation Army Craft Fair

Sept. 27 at 10:00 a.m.

Salvation Army of Rutherford County

Vanderbilt Commodore Quake

Oct. 28 at 8 p.m.

Featuring Lil Wayne, Lupe Fiasco, and Free Soul

Freshman Senate Candidates:

Raymond Batey

Quincy Bell

Antonio Benson

Caleb Brooks

Lanna Martin

Jeff Higginbotham

Bonnie Hix

Randy Jackson

Matt Russell

Tazamisha Maston

Ashlee Moore

Lindsey Moore

Quinton Hathaway

Samuel Ashby

Trisha Thompson

Andrew Troutt

Jordan Turri

Cody Young

Erica Maclin

Chelsea James

Tramine Nixon

Sydney Hester

CRIME BRIEFS

Sept. 17, 2008

at 4:08 a.m.

MIDDLE TENNES-

SEE BLVD.

Jose M. Sanchez DUI

1st, DWOL 1st, Violation

of Implied Consent, Felony Evading,

and Open Container

Law Violation

Theft

At 1:12 p.m.

KUC

Subject said that

someone stole her cell

phone while she was

handing out flyers.

Vandalism

At 1:24 p.m.

Todd

Subject called and

said that there was

someone who vandal-

ized the Todd building

on the Peck Hall side.

They spray painted on

the side of the building

and someone noticed

and advised that an

officer should come

and fix it.

THEFT

At 1:43 p.m.

BEASLEY HALL

Subject said that

someone stole a book

from him room.

Traffic

At 2:33 a.m.

Rutherford Blvd.

Lindi D Rogers ar-

rested for Driving on a

suspended license.

Sept. 18, 2008

Vandalism

At 2:36 a.m.

CORRAL LOT

Ticket writer saw

someone stealing a

sign.

DUI DUI 1st Offense

A/M*

At 11:20 a.m.

Rutherford Blvd.

Mark J. Leitheiser a

White Age:20 was

arrested for DUI I

and Consumption of

Alcohol under 21.

Nathan A. Day was

issued State Citation

#1715 for Purchase of

Alcohol for Persons

Under 21.

Samuel E. Riley a

White Male was is-

sued State Citation

#1862 for Consump-

tion of Alcohol under

21.

Sept. 19, 2008

DUI

At 1:27 p.m.

EAST MAIN ST.

Sheena M. Maddox

arrested for DUI II

Vandalism

At 7:39 p.m.

Scarlett Commons

parking lot

Ground services

called and advised

that an employee no-

ticed a tree limb laying

on a vehicle around

Scarlett Commons

building

DRUG ABUSE

At 7:39 p.m.

Davis Science Build-

ing

Ticket writer advised

that he has located a

back pack containing

books and possible

10-84.

Vandalism

At 11:59 p.m.

Scarlett Commons

Apt.

Officer, while on an-

other call, noticed that

the fire extinguisher

had been broken.

Theft

At 6:27 a.m.

Scarlett Commons

parking lot

A wallet was turned

into UPD for complain-

ant, he advised there

was cash missing

from it

Theft

At 12:34 p.m.

Wright Music Building

Subject called advis-

ing that an instru-

ment that had been

loaned to him from

the university went

missing within the last

hour. Estimated loss

is \$3000

Sept. 20, 2008

Assistance

At 12:30 a.m.

Recreation Center

Officer was called to

escort a women out of

her office and picked

up another. Officer

didn't know if the third

party was causing a

disturbance.

Sept. 23, 2008

At 4:07 p.m.

Traffic

McFarland Lot

Vehicle Collision be-

tween a black Honda

Accord and a silver

car.

A \$1,000 cash reward

is offered for the fol-

lowing:

Information on a

jewelry box that was

stolen from the Recre-

ation Center.

Information on a

drivers licence stolen

from a car on Greek

Row.

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THE WALK IN STORES NOW

Murfreesboro walks for heart disease

Members of the 'Start! Heart Walk' raise awareness about cardiovascular disease and exercise

By MEGAN BRYAN
Contributing Writer

On Sept. 27, the Start! Heart Walk will be taking place in Murfreesboro to raise awareness in Rutherford County about cardiovascular disease.

Every 33 seconds, an American dies of cardiovascular disease. Every 26 seconds, an American will suffer from a heart attack. This year, it is estimated that 940,000 people in the United States will pass away from cardiovascular disease, and 125,000 people in Rutherford County will be affected in some capacity by heart disease.

According to the American Heart Association, cardiovascular disease has become the number one cause of death in America.

The American Heart Association is working to change these statistics with their national campaign, Start!, which is bringing together Americans and challenging them to live healthier, active lives to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

According to a study done by Harvard University, exercising regularly will increase people's lifespan.

With 70 percent of Americans not getting enough daily exercise, the AMA hopes to educate the general public about the dangers of cardiovascular disease and to encourage an increase in physical activity.

The donations generated by the corporate partners, individual donors and the walkers will benefit public education of physical fitness.

To encourage participation, rewards and prizes are being given away to the top

fundraisers in the county.

"The goal is to raise \$108,000 in order to boost public awareness and to educate the general public about the dangers of cardiovascular disease," said Kelly Jackson, the regional vice president of the American Heart Association.

"The Heart Walk benefits people of all ages," Jackson said. "It's never too early or too late to start exercising and become healthier."

The Heart Walk will not only be taking place in Rutherford County. On the same day, there will be 200 walks taking place throughout the nation.

There will be three other walks in the Middle Tennessee area and four others throughout Tennessee, resulting in thousands of people taking the first step in becoming physically fit.

The Rutherford County walk will begin at Embassy Suites on Conference Center Boulevard and will go through The Avenue on Medical Center Parkway.

Festivities will begin at 10 a.m. with free body mass index screenings, blood pressure checks and nerve screenings from Total Family Chiropractic and Rehab of Murfreesboro. Check-in for walkers will also begin at 10 a.m.

For families participating in the walk, a Kids Zone will be available to entertain younger children. The Kids Zone will have a bounce house, hula hoops, face painting and educational opportunities for children to learn the importance of exercising and getting into shape at an early age.

The MTSU men's basket-



Photo Courtesy of Kelly Jackson, regional vice president of the American Heart Association

Murfreesboro citizens walk at last year's "Start! Heart Walk" to inform people about the dangers of heart disease.

ball team will be helping and walking with the other participants.

"Everyone has been touched by heart problems in some way," said men's basketball Head Coach Kermit Davis. "By participating in the Heart Walk, the team can be a positive influence for kids and teach them to be physically fit."

MTSU students and faculty are encouraged to come out to Embassy Suites on Saturday to participate in the Start! Heart Walk and support the American Heart Association.



Photo Courtesy of Kelly Jackson, regional vice president of the American Heart Association

This year's goal of "Start! Heart Walk" is to raise \$108,000 to educate about heart health issues.

CRIME FROM PAGE 1

sometimes be missing from the crime log because of students coming in and out of the station to use the vending machines.

"Some of the papers were taken from the crime log, and we would never know until someone brought it to our attention," Peaster said.

In an attempt to correct this problem, and to increase convenience, the log will be put online. Everyone will be

able to access it rather than going to the police station.

However, there are still some kinks in the log due to the formatting of the reports.

"The biggest issue we initially had was technically doing it," Peaster said. "Just because you have data, that doesn't mean that data can be accessible readily like you need it to be."

To make reports more accessible, campus police are looking into putting full police reports online, which will cut down on the costs of

printed versions. Reports still under investigation or that remain confidential will not be available to the public.

With the crime and media log already available on the Web site, campus police have begun looking into alternative ways to supply the community and students with information.

Peaster said that by creating a MySpace or Facebook account, students will be able to obtain their information by other outlets.

"I think posting comments on crimes or allowing people to write on our wall or send us a message would be a good thing," Peaster said.

In connection with MySpace and Facebook, campus police are also thinking of expanding the text message alert system.

"There's a possibility the text messaging alert system

might expand to the point where people can get a text message, and that can get [the information] posted on our MySpace and Facebook in an RSS feed," Peaster said.

By using these social networking sites, Peaster said he

pening at the party, and even then sometimes we don't get an invite."

Peaster said that another benefit of having the crime and media log online is that it will help MTSU comply with The Jeanne Clery Act, which

them."

As of now, Peaster said that crime briefs are updated five days a week. However, The Jeanne Clery Act requires that this information be updated regularly based on business hours. The MTSU campus police station is open 24/7.

To make sure reports are filed, case numbers are printed on the crime and media log. In the press release, Peaster said that case numbers might be included online.

"The reason I said 'might' was because we were looking at where to pull the information, and depending on the incident or event, not everything is documented the same way," he said.

Peaster said that certain incidents such as fire alarms don't require a full written report or case number.

"We're not always sure there will be a case number with the crime log, because there is a discrepancy between the incidents," Peaster said. "We are hoping by using this program, we will be able to pull case numbers."

"The only time we usually get invited to a party is if something really bad is happening at the party."

Buddy Peaster
CHIEF OF CAMPUS POLICE

hopes people will feel comfortable enough to contact the police and give them information as well as receive it.

"We want people to know our number and talk to us, but we're not usually on people's speed dial," Peaster said. "The only time we usually get invited to a party is if something really bad is hap-

pening at the party, and even then sometimes we don't get an invite."

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JORDAN LUTHELMAN, ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

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CD sales continue to fall, vinyl sales push up

By BYRON WILKES
Community News Editor

The future of CD sales continues to look bleak as consumers turn to digital formats and other media devices, such as vinyl.

As the music industry reaches out into online markets, a dwindling CD audience has become the target of other media devices.

"There are lots of reasons that media device sales are down," said Stephanie Taylor, recording industry law professor at MTSU. "One reason is that games, movies and other devices like those directly compete with CD sales. Each company is thinking about the disposable income of its consumers."

Local businesses have clearly been affected by the downward trend of CD music sales. Cat's Music and Music Jams have both closed in recent years. Cat's Music closed just this past year.

"Cat's left Murfreesboro because it wasn't profitable where it was located," said Michael Morrison, who owns Digital Planet along with his wife Jennifer. "There are probably more people downloading illegally on campus than anywhere else."

A sign on what used to be Music Jams simply reads "CLOSED: Attn: All shippers hold packages until we reopen...CLOSED."

Music Jams could not be contacted from its business phone number.

"CD sales are down tremendously," said Jerry Jones, owner of Century 21. "Our customers are made up of about 50 percent students, 50 percent locals. There's not much you can do about people getting on the Internet and

finding the music that way. It's gone from a major artist selling about 15 million records to an artist doing pretty well by selling 200,000."

According to the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), domestic unit sales dropped 10.3 percent from 2000 to 2001, representing a 4.1 decrease in dollar value of all music product shipments.

"Statistics indicate that CD sales peaked around 2000 and since then have been declining," said Paul Fischer, recording industry professor at MTSU. "Corporations function by putting music out there that is popular now. Corporate motives lie in per unit sales, so representatives are pushed to sell a certain number of units every quarter."

Since the inception of Napster and similar websites, people across all demographics have been prosecuted for illegal downloading by companies like Universal Studios and organizations like the RIAA.

"It's certainly important to education more people," Fischer said. "RIAA is making people aware of the severity of piracy by suing thousands of people from all age groups, from college kids to adults."

Many people don't perceive illegal downloading as ethically wrong as perhaps stealing something from Wal-Mart or not paying a check at a restaurant. Yet the music business and others continue to pursue lawsuits on individuals who obtain music illegally.

"Another reason is that there's more theft prevalent now," Taylor said. "People don't consider stealing intellectual property the same as

physical property because they don't associate that feeling someone gets while stealing in a store with piracy. People under the age of 25 have grown up always having free music at their fingertips."

Still, labels continue to expand into alternative media that have growth potential in the future of music sales.

"Generally, the expansion of downloading has been good because the mainstream industry produces a greater volume of material," Fischer said. "It provides more alternatives to people. In 2003, iTunes made legal downloading popular with audiences looking for the convenience of digital files."

One surprising form of music product making a comeback in sales is new vinyl.

"We've seen a 300 percent increase in vinyl sales over the past year," Morrison said. "Even though we sell new and used vinyl, companies are making quality new vinyl records and people are buying them."

According to Nielsen SoundScan, an information system that tracks music sales in the United States and Canada, vinyl sales declined 43 percent from 2000 to 2006. Yet vinyl sales increased about 15.4 percent in 2007 alone.

"Some people just prefer the quality of sound in vinyl because of specific discrepancies," Fischer said. "CDs are compressed and not as complete as vinyl records. You can hear this even on the radio. MP3s are actually worse because they use algorithms to produce nonessential sound that is congruent to music."

While the market for CDs is falling, the music industry is finding new ways to make



Photo by Byron Wilkes, community news editor

(Above) Digital Planet CD section remains eerily empty. (Below left) Closed sign on Music Jams. (Below right) Music Jams CD store has recently been forced to close its doors.

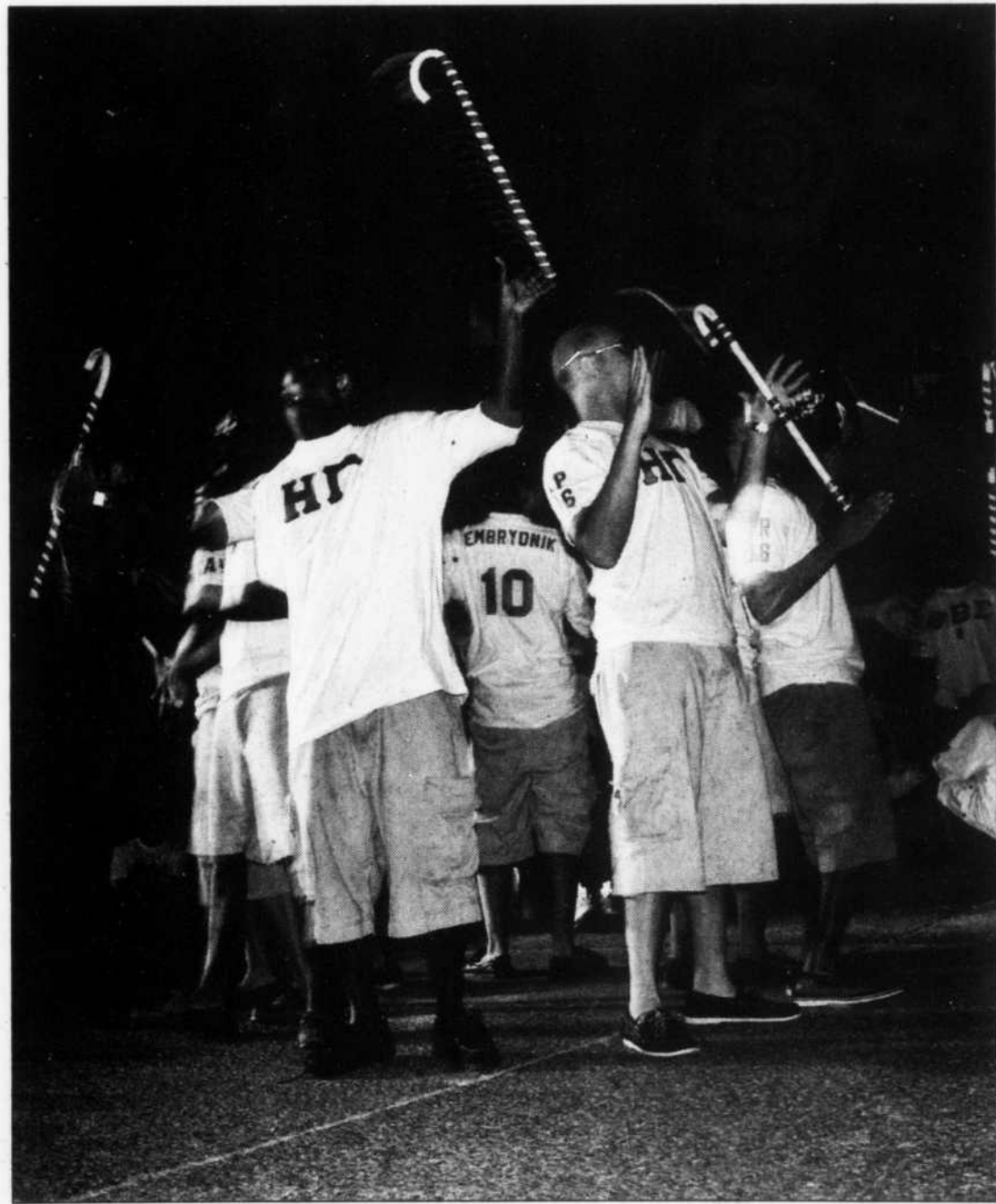


music available for all audiences.

"It's interesting to see how the music industry started off being mom and pop stores selling records, then it moved to larger, corporate stores," Morrison said. "Now, it's coming back to its roots, and consumers are supporting their local businesses."



MT National Pan-Hellenic's Annual 'Step Off'



Photos by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

This year's annual "Step Off" was held on the Recreation Center sundeck on Wednesday at 7 p.m.

The event is hosted each year by the MTSU National

Pan-Hellenic Council to introduce Greek organizations to freshman.

"We do this every year to show the freshman what we do and to show them

a little bit about our history though stepping," said Courtney Banks senior business major and NPHC president.

"I came to support our

African-American Greeks and to see the unity of everyone out and about," said Jonathon Williamson, junior electronic media communication management

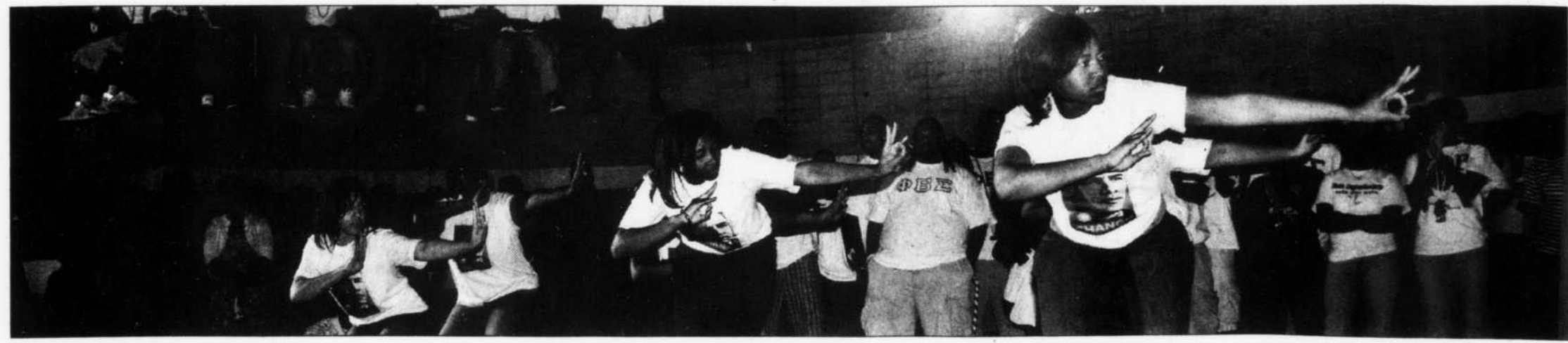
major.

The event is traditionally held outside behind Corlew Hall during the day.

"We changed the location this year just to try some-

thing different," Banks said.

"We also wanted to discourage students from skipping class, so we decided to have it at night."



OPINIONS

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Crime logs need to be available, updated

"In the early morning of April 5, 1986, Jeanne Clery, a 19-year-old freshman at Lehigh University, was suddenly awakened in her dorm room. She was then sexually assaulted and brutally murdered by a fellow student she did not know. Her attacker cut her throat with a broken beer bottle, kicked her, sodomized her, bit her cheeks and breasts and then strangled her until she died."

This case summary is taken from the third edition of "Covering Campus Crime," a manual published by the Student Press Law Center as a tool for college journalists to maintain a strong, ethical and frequent coverage of criminal acts on campuses.

The law that resulted from the above case – the "Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act" – requires campus police stations to maintain an updated and complete campus police and security log.

On July 23, *Sidelines* wrote an editorial board that began with the above first two paragraphs of this editorial. Two months later, we have seen very little improvement from the Middle Tennessee Department of Public Safety.

The fact that we harp on these issues is not in an attempt to discredit our university police force, but instead to better it and the knowledge of our readers.

When the student newspaper conducts research that results in 418 missing or non-existent crime records from 2007, it is because we are concerned about holes in our university's public records and the fact that our audience is not as informed as it should be.

It is our job as a media outlet to make sure the administrations that we place our money, trust and lives in are doing their jobs.

As for the 418 crime reports from 2007, we do not know if they are missing, improperly numbered or exist at all. It is a story that we are continuing to investigate and will have out as soon as possible.

What we do know and are confident in publishing is that we are being slighted in the area of public safety. We do know that upon retrieving crime reports for our "Crime Briefs" section, there are frequently skipped report numbers and incomplete, outdated reports. We do know that we have had recurring difficulty retrieving updated crime logs during the weekends. Even though it might not be technically within the department's normal business hours, we would expect an updated log up to the week's closing. According to the Jeanne Clery Act, that is illegal, and there is no gray area.

In the words of Police Chief Buddy Peaster, "The Clery Act is a good starting point, but I think that in addition to doing things that are required by Clery, it's important to consider what the community's needs are and address them."

What we need is a complete record of crimes committed in our community so we can obtain important information regarding our safety.

Making it through rough times

Working harder will make living in our struggling economy bearable

You're too good to perform product labor, are you not? Well guess what, everyone thinks they are – including me.

It's hard to get away from that mentality as a nation. Going to college is just "what you do" after high school. Attending a higher education institution is becoming easier and easier, with lower education standards and more assistance being given to incoming students.

And what do you learn – or at least what are you supposed to be learning – in college? Generally, it's how to perform service-oriented labor.

So who's making all the junk we use each and every day as we run around doing services for each other? Nations with high export rates and low costs of production or, in other words, nations with bustling economies.

Our economy, on the other hand, imports a lot and exports very little because

of, among other things, the high cost of labor. It's just cheaper to import, plain and simple.

Having little to offer the world in terms of exportation devalues our nation on the global market and sends the worth of those George Washingtons in your pocket straight down. We just keep borrowing and borrowing to compensate.

Don't believe me? Just look around. Downsizing. Bankruptcy. The material American currency is made out of is becoming worth more than the actual value of it.

An economy based on the middle class, like ours is currently, can't survive. Eventually, it would come down to everyone performing services for each other, but never producing the products that are at the base of each and every service.

The inevitable solution, if our nation can survive it, is economic downturn – strong economic down-



You know nothing and neither do I
Michael Stone

turn. Heard of our struggling economy yet?

People are going back to product laboring because they can't find "middle-class type work" anywhere, sometimes even with college degrees. Companies just can't afford to pay the middlemen and women of America.

What does all this mean for you as a college student after graduation as you begin to look for jobs in your field?

It will probably mean that your bachelor's will be worth the high school di-

ploma of ol' – you can start working second shift at the factory instead of third. Well, that is for some degrees at least.

Others that take more effort to earn and have more prestige behind them just might possess enough worth to earn their owner solid middle- to upper-class work out of college.

But for those degrees that are a dime a dozen, going to class and doing just enough to pass won't cut it in the days of our struggling economy.

If you, as a student, want a good job once the "real world" (thanks for pounding that expression in my head, mom) hits, work to the best of your potential and beyond.

Read more than class requires you to read. Do more examples than what will get you a passing grade on the test. Get involved in an organization that pertains to your major.

Employers are still hiring,

but you will have to prove that your resume is worth more to them than the other ones in the stack.

And if you do this, life truly will give back what you put into it.

Yes, you will have to put more effort and time in, but it will all pay off. At the end of the day, a sigh of relief and accomplishment will emit from your head rather than a worry-filled sigh of how to pay the bills.

Just remember all this next time you're watching a bleach-blond woman running on a life-sized hamster wheel on television. Oh, and TV is the root of most of the things wrong with our country, but that's a story for another day. Sorry for digressing.

As wise man told me about a month ago, "Don't be somebody. Do something."

Michael Stone is a senior journalism major and can be reached at mjs3v@mtsu.edu.

COMICS



LETTERS

Marijuana is not harmful to health, productivity

Just for the record, there is no scientific evidence that using marijuana impairs the ability to learn. Many straight-A students later admit to using marijuana without any reduction in their scholarship. The records of thousands of highly successful people, including presidents, who used marijuana puts the lie to "Reefer Madness" notions that marijuana injures the brain. The real danger is teaching students that lies can justify a brain-dead policy.

-Redford Givens,
California

Focus on crime, not drugs and alcohol

The article in Monday's paper concerning alcohol and drug use among young adults, particularly MTSU students, took me by surprise. The fact that college students will party is not big news and it is definitely not something college students have never heard.

Alcohol and drug usage is a problem among young adults but not with the severity this article made it seem. Being an alcohol user does not necessarily make you an abuser, nor does it mean that

you are breaking the law.

This article made the majority of alcohol users appear as criminals. The article negatively targeted tailgaters and Greek organizations just on their alcohol involvement alone.

"The number one problem on campus is alcohol-related cases," said writer Jessica Pace. Not knowing the statistics is minor to me considering that I do know how many crime related e-mails I get a semester from the school itself. All of the crime alert e-mails I receive are about violence involving weapons and robberies.

I would hope that the safety of the students on campus would be the number one problem. Instead of cracking down on Greek Row for its traditional parties or targeting the irresponsible drinkers of this university, the campus police should be more concerned with things such as campus foot patrol.

I would like to see some action taken with the campus journalists and the campus police that make me feel more safe and secure on the sidewalks of this university.

-Amanda Davis, junior

Palin vs. Clinton: a double standard

I am writing to you in response to the article "MT

Voters Question Palin's Judgment" (Sept. 22). I found this article very interesting. It was written very well, and I would like to congratulate Tiffany Gibson for doing a fine job on presenting both sides of the story. The story was kept neutral and did not seem to favor one side over the other.

I would, however, like to voice my opinion on the matter. It is no secret to the people I associate with that I tend to lean towards the more liberal side of politics.

I am very pleased with the Democratic Party nominee. I believe that Barack Obama is very capable of bringing the United States back to where we need to be. I believe that Obama will fix our economy over time in a better manner than John McCain would do.

I have personally seen many people who represent the Republican Party say that they believe a woman should not be in office. They have said that from the minute Hillary Clinton announced she was running for President of the United States. I felt as though Clinton had an ample amount of experience and would be a great president. Most Conservatives would disagree.

This brings up my main point. If they felt as though Clinton should not be in office, why is it that Alaskan

Gov. Sarah Palin is fit for office?

Palin is a woman. She has less experience in politics than Clinton. In my opinion, she has less experience than Obama.

As soon as McCain announced his Vice Presidential running mate as Gov. Palin, Conservatives were all for a woman in office. How do they explain their switch of opinion? It is very unclear to me. Honestly, I find it annoying and stupid.

When Democrats had a woman vying for office, Republicans thought we were crazy. But now that they have a woman as a running mate, it's no big deal. Please, someone explain the irony to me.

-Taylor Rubright, senior

Physical activity center a good idea

In response to the "MT center to tackle childhood obesity" article (Sept. 22), I want to say that this article really caught my attention. I agree with the writer that childhood obesity is definitely an issue that needs to be addressed by everyone, including college students.

It is important to list statistics about this problem in hopes that readers recognize it and help correct it. I think it is a great idea for MTSU to

create a center for physical activity for youths.

A suggestion would be to advertise this new center all over campus and possibly even Middle Tennessee. The center is a great idea, and more advertisement would encourage families to take advantage of it for the benefit of their children's health. Make it a point to recognize the problem now so it can be corrected before it is too late. The camp is definitely a perk and can be an extra selling point in the advertisement.

Another improvement to add would be additional statistics once the families are involved with the center. This could promote the idea of staying with the strategies and benefits of getting the children involved with physical activities.

I think this was an important issue to cover. With slight improvements in the information provided to the public, the center will be able to start improving children's health as soon as it is open.

-Sarah Kulesza, junior

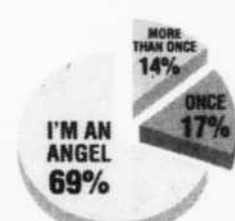
Fight for Fight Song

I think it is ridiculous that we are even considering doing away with one of campus' most time-honored and school-spirited traditions

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FEATURES



HAVE YOU EVER
GOTTEN IN TROUBLE
FOR DRINKING OR
DRUGS?

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Remembering her kindness

An MTSU alumna with a 'heart of gold' passes before her time

By MICHAEL STONE
Features Editor

I was awoken early Monday morning by the words: "Michael, Katie's dead."

Disbelief came over me. What my roommate told me could not be true. Not having had to deal with the death of a loved one since I was young child, I didn't know what to say, think or do. My body and mind froze. Later, it would all come melting down as the realization of it all set in. But for the time being, nothing. Everything felt silent.

I met Katie Rose Martin on my way home for winter break in December 2006.

Three of my dorm friends and I decided to go out to eat together one last time before we parted ways for the break. The destination we chose was a high-class restaurant that leaves customers with extreme satisfaction in their bellies and smiles on their tomato-pasted faces: Cici's Pizza.

The polite young lady that tended to us had a great deal of charm to her, accented by her big, green eyes that squinted almost shut when she smiled and mannerisms that could make the shyest person feel comfortable.

The four of us did the type of casual badgering young men do with waitresses of her charm, and she responded by showing what seemed to be genuine curiosity, though we assumed she just wanted a tip.

We left the restaurant, the charming waitress and a few one-dollar bills on the table, and proceeded to the parking lot to reminisce on the first semester of our sophomore year before saying our good-byes to each other.

Low and behold, seconds before we were about to leave, we see the now off-the-clock waitress walking towards us.

"Hey guys, thanks for the tip," Katie said.

That sentence was the beginning of four beautiful friendships between Katie Rose and us.

Engaging in conversation is what Katie did best. She would talk to anyone about anything.

But that wasn't that the only thing that made her such a great friend to have. Katie would be there for the good times and the bad times and always helped out in any way she could. And though this may be true most of the time with really good friends, Katie was that 100 percent of the time.

Often, as our friendship grew since the chance meeting at Cici's, I would contemplate in my head what made her so compatible with—not only me—but everyone around her.

What were our common



Photo courtesy Natasha Hudson

A memorial stands where the car accident happened on John Bragg Highway.

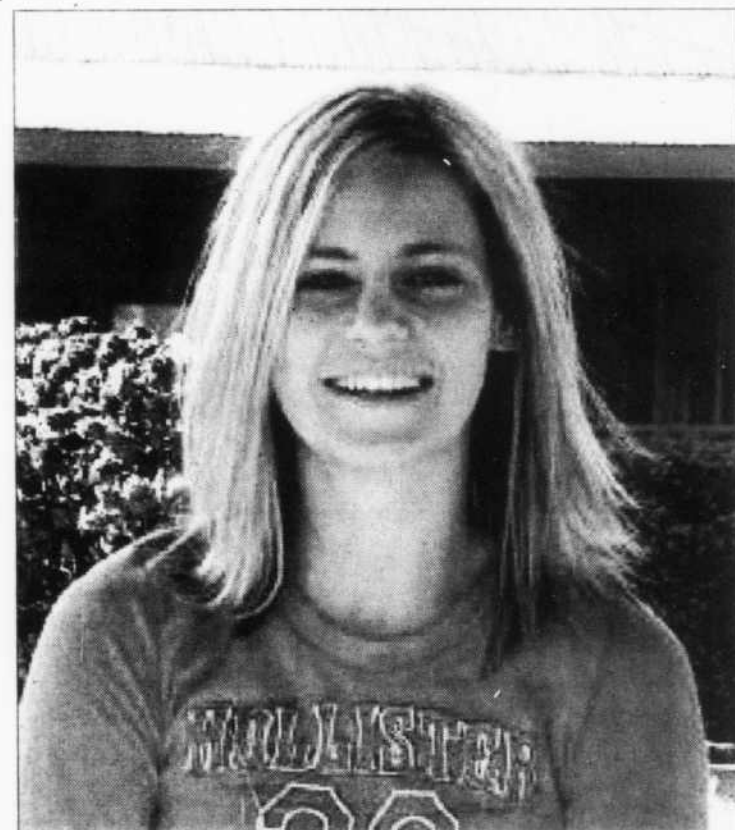


Photo courtesy the Martin family

The picture that appeared in Katie Martin's obituary on Monday.

bonds? What was our friendship based on? Can a friendship be based on kindness even when people are genuinely two different types of people?

Katie was a shining example of the fact that, yes, it could.

She dropped out of MTSU's nutrition program this past year to start school at Salon Professional Academy in Nashville. Katie said she wanted to help women feel

good about themselves, but I think she just wanted to meet and talk to new people all the time.

She started there this semester, and I had never seen her more happy, even though it was hard to tell when she ever felt slightly blue at all.

Sadly, though, she would not complete her schooling at the academy. Katie's huge heart stopped beating right before midnight on Sunday.

She was 18.

She was riding in the passenger seat of a friend's car late Sunday night on John Bragg Highway. The vehicle went off the road, spun around, struck a guardrail and rolled into a ravine. She was thrown from the car, leaving her dead at the scene.

Hearing that this happened left me completely aghast. My mind didn't comprehend it at first. Some of our mutual friends were calling me and asking me what happened. Others were telling me.

The roommate who woke me up to tell me, Chad Howse, furthered my confirmation.

"I talked to Joe at the gas station," he said. "He told me a cop came in there talking about the accident. He tried to resuscitate her for over an hour."

As the day turned from the early morning to afternoon, the situation became all too real. Facebook statuses began reading, "R.I.P. Katie Martin." Then I saw one of the worst sights of my life—her obituary on the funeral home's Web site. It had a picture of her smiling the smile

that never seemed to leave her face.

That's when the emptiness set in. It was, and still is, an emptiness that I don't think can never be filled again, like a hunger that, no matter how much you eat, will never go

“She has the tendency to make everyone she is around happy and smiling.”

BRITTANY JACKSON
FRIEND OF KATIE MARTIN

away. It is an emptiness that is being felt from all who knew Katie, whether they met her just once or have known her since childhood.

Howse says he has known Katie ever since he started college.

"She was the kindest person you will ever meet," Howse says. "[She was] always so positive and happy with life. She will forever be missed by a lot of people."

Brittany Jackson says that Katie was her best friend and that the two were inseparable.

"She has the tendency to make everyone she is around happy and smiling," Brittany Jackson says. "Words cannot describe how great of a person she is."

Dedrick Mitchell says he hasn't met anyone that disliked Katie, and everyone she knew loved her.

"It all just doesn't seem real to me," Dedrick Mitchell says. "My mind just can't wrap around the fact that I'll never

have her run up and give me a hug and say 'Hey Dedrick!'"

Katie's visitation was yesterday and she will be buried to-

day at 11 a.m. at Jennings & Ayers Funeral Home.

Dealing with her death has been a difficult feat to overcome, as anyone who has lost someone close knows. It is like losing a piece within you that can never be replaced.

No one will consistently spell my name like M-i-c-h-e-a-l instead of Michael like she did. No one will ever talk with the blend of Northern and Southern accents like she did. No one will ever be so hospitable, caring and friendly as she was. No one will smile like she did.

And even though she's gone, she will never be forgotten. Rest in peace Katie Rose Martin, you'll never stop making us smile. June 26, 1990 - Sept. 21, 2008.

Local band's sound indescribably delicious

Thief's in-your-face rock 'n' roll makes them one of Murfreesboro's premier local bands



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, Photography Editor
Matt Tubandt performs at Last Band Rocking competition.

**BAND
OF THE WEEK**

By LAURA RAINES
Staff Writer

The crowd at Club 527 grows restless as they wait for the music. People upstairs halfheartedly play pool and talk excitedly of the

approaching performance. Strains of guitar, bass, mic testing and drums can be heard floating up the stairs as the crowd slowly migrates down below.

The show is on the verge of beginning as the mob of 70 jumps to their feet and

crowds the stage, as Ryan Hart, Steve Janson, Matt Tubandt and Brennan Walsh get ready to rock. Tubandt steps up to the mic, and Thief drives the mass like they stole it.

"I love the energy they give the crowd," fan Tony Ewin

exclaims. "When Thief is onstage, you know you're in for a wild ride."

online

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SPORTS



Photo courtesy of MT Athletic Communications

MT Head Baseball Coach Steve Peterson (far right) stands next to Murfreesboro mayor Tommy Bragg at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Reese Smith Field.

MT baseball cuts ribbon on renovated Reese Smith Field

By CHRIS MARTIN
Sports Editor

After playing all of last season without a real home, the Blue Raider baseball team cut the ribbon on the new and improved Reese Smith Field Tuesday.

Last season, the stadium was undergoing massive renovations that forced spectators to observe the game from the top levels of Floyd Stadium since the baseball stadium was under construction and not open to the public. The team was forced to move three home games, against Tennessee and Mississippi State, to Winchester, Tenn. in order to accommo-

date the larger SEC crowds.

"Thank goodness I was an old, experienced coach, because last year would have driven me crazy," MT Head Coach Steve Peterson said. "Experience tells you that part of progress, there is going to be a step back sometimes."

With expanded seating, new dugouts, a new fence, new suites and a renovated press box, the Blue Raiders shouldn't have to make any more trips to Winchester.

"From a player's perspective, it means so much more than what we had last year," first baseman Rawley Bishop said. "We had no fans. We could barely hear the

fans when we're playing ball games.

"We have more seats here than what we had there. It's much nicer here."

Even though the stadium was officially opened only this week, MT baseball has already received some important benefits from its renovated facility.

"We've received more early commitments than we ever have," Peterson said. "They saw it, they want to be a part of it. With this facility, we're going to be able to recruit more great players."

After some dismal attendance last season, Peterson is confident the new facility will have no trouble attract-

ing fans.

"There is no doubt in my mind this stadium will be packed because they're coming to see it and if they come back, they're coming to see my team," Peterson said. "We've had overflowing crowds in the past, and we will run out of room. It'll be a tough ticket."

There were some prominent members from the Murfreesboro community who attended the private ribbon-cutting ceremony, including MT President Sidney McPhee, Mayor Tommy Bragg and Vice Mayor Chris Bratcher.

Director of Athletics Chris Massaro said the \$6.2 mil-

lion addition was one project he wanted to complete since he was hired.

"The project was never in doubt," Massaro said. "Give our fans credit and our university credit. We were able to find money and finish it properly and put the iron-gate fence in and the brick-work to give it a true stadium feel."

McPhee and Bragg addressed the crowd with dinner and a stadium tour following the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The baseball team has not yet released its 2009 schedule, but it is practicing in the new facility.

Don't ditch Blue Raiders quite yet



Real Talk with C-Bow
Casey Bowman

Boy, what a difference a couple of weeks can make in the world of college football.

As far as impressions go, this year's Middle Tennessee football team has given their fair share.

Week one came, and many said this team would be lucky to win three games this season. Ouch. Everyone seemed ready to chalk up the season as a wash and blame it on youth and questionable coaching.

Then came week two, and after handling Maryland, those same people jumped back on the bandwagon and started touting potential records of nine or 10 wins, a conference championship and the program's first-ever bowl victory.

Week three saw heartache and another defeat, but the naysayers stayed at bay. After all, MT was one yard away from dismissing an SEC team in their own backyard. There was still hope that the ship was heading in the right direction, and as long as MT took care of business in the conference, then all would be well in the land of the Blue Raiders.

The naysayers came back though, after the week four drubbing at the hands of Arkansas State. The Blue Raiders went into a hostile Sun Belt environment and it seemed as if Kentucky was still on their minds. They were dominated — plain and simple.

Now we are here — on the cusp of the programs biggest home game ever, which will be broadcast around the country on ESPN2, and the naysayers are at it again.

These detractors like to go on about how much the current coaching staff looks like the previous staff, in that they had early success, but are now struggling to find an identity for the team.

To that, I say if it wasn't for good ole' Andy Mac, this staff wouldn't still be dealing with the muck and mildew that was left behind for them.

Everybody seems to forget that this team is still not at the maximum amount of scholarships, and never mind the sanctions that were placed upon this staff when they first came into their job. There seems to be a re-occurring theme amongst all this, but you will never hear Rick Stockstill and company complain about any of that.

And that right there proves the difference between the staffs in question.

That in and of itself does

FIG investigating China's 2000 team, too

By NANCY ARMOUR
AP National Writer

China's gold medal gymnasts aren't the only ones whose ages are getting a closer look.

The investigation into the eligibility of the Chinese women's team in Beijing has been expanded to include

members of the 2000 squad, which won the bronze medal in Sydney, The Associated Press has learned.

International gymnastics officials are examining whether Yang Yun and Dong Fangxiao, in particular, were old enough to compete.

"If we had a look at all the

articles that came before, during and after the games, there were always rumors about the ages of China's athletes in Sydney," Andre Gueisbuhler, secretary general of the International Gymnastics Federation, told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

No other Chinese teams

are being investigated, Gueisbuhler said.

The investigation is ongoing, a month after the Beijing Games ended, and there is no timetable for when it will be finished.

"It's a work in progress," said Emmanuelle Moreau, spokeswoman for the Inter-


national Olympic Committee. "Until the work has been completed, there is nothing we can say."

Yang's age has long been an issue for debate.

In a June 2007 interview that aired on state broadcast-

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Armstrong preparing for Tour de France

By RACHEL COHEN
AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Lance Armstrong is chasing an eighth Tour de France title and an elusive feat: persuading everyone he's clean.

As Armstrong reunites with his close friend and Astana team director Johan Bruyneel, the man behind his yellow jerseys, he's also adding a new member to his support group. Anti-doping expert Don Catlin has been hired to test Armstrong anytime, anywhere — and to post the results online for the world to see.

"I think it's the first time an athlete can actually be totally validated on the chance he's successful," Armstrong said Wednesday. "In my opinion, Don Catlin is beyond reproach."

Armstrong revealed details of his comeback two weeks after saying he would end a three-year retirement. He'll ride for Astana and will compete in the Tour Down Under in Adelaide, Australia, in January.

The setting was the Clinton Global Initiative, the annual meeting of former President Bill Clinton's

foundation. Armstrong held a news conference to talk cycling after announcing a new worldwide campaign to fight cancer before an audience of political and corporate leaders.

As he described his 2009 Tour plans, the 37-year-old Armstrong sometimes made it sound as though this was more a publicity move to raise awareness about the fight against cancer than a legitimate shot at winning an eighth title.

"I think we're sure we'll have success with the movement, because we need it," he said in an interview with The Associated Press, "but I'm not sure I'll be the fastest cyclist in the world."

Astana was banned from this year's Tour because of past doping violations. But Pat McQuaid, the leader of cycling's governing body, said he believed the team would be allowed to return in 2009.

The Amaury Group, which owns the company that organizes the Tour, has confirmed in writing to UCI that Astana is on its list of teams "that they say are guaranteed to ride to the Tour de France in 2009 and 2010," he

told the AP.

Tour director Christian Prudhomme didn't respond to messages.

The makeup of the 2009 Astana team is unclear. Alberto Contador, the 2007 Tour de France champ, suggested in AS newspaper Tuesday that the two elite riders couldn't coexist on the same team.

In a statement released by Astana on Wednesday, Contador was conciliatory but didn't commit to remaining on the team.

"Right now people are looking to make up controversy, but honestly I have no ill will towards Lance," he said. "I identify with his passion for the sport. He has certainly been a role model for me and others throughout the world, and I imagine having him on Team Astana will only motivate me further."

Contador, signed with Astana through 2010, won the Spanish Vuelta on Sunday. Combined with his 2008 Giro d'Italia title, he became just the fifth cyclist to win the three highest-regarded Tours.

"I think there's room for all of us on that team," Arm-

strong said.

Another Astana rider, American Levi Leipheimer, is a former Armstrong teammate with U.S. Postal Service.

"He will make everyone on the team better, and that is a good thing," Leipheimer said from the cycling world championships in Varese, Italy.

Armstrong also hopes to improve the next generation of cyclists, starting an under-23 team that will include 18-year-old Taylor Phinney. Phinney, the son of 1984 Olympic medalists Connie Carpenter-Phinney and Davis Phinney, finished seventh at the Beijing Games in the individual pursuit. Axel Merckx, son of cycling great Eddy Merckx, will lead the development team.

Armstrong, the greatest rider of his generation, is counting on Catlin to help cement his legacy. Catlin will be paid by Astana, but McQuaid had no problem with that.

"I would have every faith that the results that he will find will be correct and transparent," McQuaid said in a telephone interview. "He wouldn't suffer fools,

and he wouldn't be a man that would be involved in anything unethical or incorrect."

Catlin oversaw testing for anabolic agents at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics and ran the country's first anti-doping lab at UCLA for 25 years. He now runs Anti-Doping Research, a nonprofit organization he founded to research performance-enhancing drugs, uncover new drugs being used illegally and develop tests to detect them.

Armstrong said he didn't know what kinds of tests Catlin would use.

Catlin did not immediately return messages and emails left by The Associated Press.

"I think this will be the most advanced anti-doping program in the world," Armstrong said. "I'm going to talk about it today; beyond today, I'm not going to tell you how clean I am, and I'm not going to insinuate how dirty the others are."

"I'm going to ride my bike, I'm going to spread this message (about the fight against cancer) around the world, and Don Catlin can tell you if I'm clean or not."

Kazakh Cycling Federa-

tion deputy chief Nikolai Proskurin said Armstrong agreed to ride for the Kazakhstan-based team for the first year and has signed up to take part in five races. Armstrong wouldn't rule out competing beyond 2009, but for now that's all he's committed to.

His goals for his charitable work are clearer. Armstrong plans to hold a global summit on cancer in Paris after the Tour. He hopes to draw nearly a dozen world leaders, including the next U.S. president. His schedule in the months leading up to the Tour will be influenced by the campaign to expand his foundation's fight against cancer to underserved parts of the world.

"This will not look like any other Tour de France preparation," he said. "The fact that we're starting the season down under in Australia, looking to events in South Africa, looking to do training camps in South America — this won't resemble any of the other seven victories, which is slightly scary."

"But I think you have the need and the void in these societies that it helps when you go."

Lions can Millen after seven years of mediocrity

By LARRY LAGE
AP Sports Writer

ALLEN PARK, Mich. (AP) — Matt Millen insisted he would stick with the tough job of turning the Detroit Lions into a winner instead of returning to the broadcast booth to make easy money.

So the Lions got rid of him.

Finally. The Lions fired Millen seven-plus years after the acclaimed TV analyst and Super Bowl-winning linebacker took over as team president for one of the NFL's mediocre franchises and made it the worst.

"I have relieved Matt Millen of his duties effective immediately," Lions owner William Clay Ford said in a statement Wednesday afternoon.

Messages seeking comment were left on Millen's cell phone.

Millen's teams won a league-low 31 games since he took over in 2001, but his boss refused to get rid of him until now.

Bill Ford, son of the team owner, said Monday he would fire Millen if he had the authority.

Detroit was routed in each of its first three games this season, falling behind 21-0 twice and 21-3 once en route to lopsided losses going into its bye week.

"I am very disappointed with where we are as a team after our start this season," Ford added in his statement. "Our sole focus now is preparing for our next game against Chicago."

The 0-3 record dropped Millen to 31-84 overall, giving the Lions at least 10 more losses than any other NFL team since 2001, one of the worst stretches in league history. They gave up a league-high 25.3 points and ranked 30th with 18.3 points a game under Millen, according to STATS.

After winning just five games in his first two seasons, Millen bristled when a reporter told him some people were already predicting he would eventually walk away to get paid stress-free

millions as a broadcaster again.

"Those people don't know me that well," Millen said in a 2003 interview with The Associated Press. "I can't not finish something that I started. That bugs me. I've got to get this finished."

"This gray hair shows how much I care. Look at me. I look like Kris Kringle!"

The Lions' front office will now be led by executive vice president Tom Lewand, who will report to the owner on business issues, and new general manager Martin Mayhew, who will report to the owner on football matters.

"These decisions are for the duration of the 2008 season," Ford's statement said. "Once the season is over, we will undergo a thorough and comprehensive evaluation of our entire football operation and put together a plan that we believe will transform this team into a winner."

William Clay Ford also has been the target of criticism because since his first full season in 1964, the Lions have won only one

playoff game. He has hired and retained people to lead the franchise, such as Russ Thomas and Millen, who weren't able to build a consistent winner.

In a rare interview late in the 2003 season, the owner said he hadn't considered firing Millen.

"I want him. I don't need any more reason than that," he said.

The tipping point might have been public comments made by the owner's son. Lions vice chairman Bill Ford said Millen should leave the team, and the Ford Motor Co. executive chairman said if he had the authority, he would make moves.

"I think the fans deserve better," Bill Ford told reporters. "And if it were in my authority, which it's not, I'd make some significant changes."

His father finally agreed that Millen had to go.

Drivers of vehicles whizzing past the Allen Park facility beeped their horns and gleefully yelled out about the end of the Millen era.

China FROM PAGE 9

er China Central Television, Yang said she was 14 at the Sydney Games.

Gymnastics rules require athletes to be 16 during an Olympic year in order to compete.

"At the time I was only 14," she said in the interview, done in Chinese. "I thought that if I failed this time, I'll do it again next time. There's still hope."

That interview, which has been widely reported, contradicts her official birthdate, which is listed as Dec. 2, 1984 and made her eligible for Sydney.

Dong's birthdate is listed as Jan. 20, 1983, making her 17 at the time of the Sydney Games. Her blog, however, includes a reference to being born in 1985.

Yang is now engaged to Olympic all-around champion Yang Wei. Dong was a national technical official at the Beijing Olympics, serving as the secretary on vault. She was not part of any judging panel.

Kui Yuanyuan, Ling Jie, Liu Xuan and Huang Mandan were the other members of China's 2000 squad.

Age falsification has been a problem in gymnastics since the 1980s, after the minimum age was raised from 14 to 15 in an effort to protect young athletes, whose bodies are still developing, from serious injuries.

Younger gymnasts are also thought to have an advantage because they are more flexible and are likely to have an easier time doing the tough skills the sport requires. They also aren't as likely to have a fear of failure.

The minimum age was raised to its current 16 in 1997.

There were questions about the ages of China's Beijing squad months before the games, with media reports and online records suggesting several of the gymnasts on the six-woman squad might be as young as 14.

In August, The Associated Press found registration lists previously posted on the Web site of the General Administration of Sport of China that showed He Kexin and Yang Yilin were too young to compete. A Nov. 3 story by the Chinese government's news agency, Xinhua, suggested He was only 14.

But Chinese officials insisted — repeatedly and heatedly — that all of its gymnasts

was hired. "Matt offers us an opportunity to move ahead."

Coach Rod Marinelli will be left with the task of salvaging something from the final 13 games of the season. But he and the players haven't inspired much confidence with an NFC-worst 10-25 record since 2006.

Ultimately, the Lions are left with Millen's mess that led to a pitiful era that compares only to Tampa Bay's 12 straight double-digit loss seasons from 1983-94.

This offseason was productive and the practices were great, Millen and Marinelli insisted, but that didn't make a difference on Sundays.

The Lions are winless, and 1-10 dating to last season. The latest loss at San Francisco dropped Marinelli to 3-15 on the road and dropped the Lions to 8-60 as visitors with Millen in charge.

The former Penn State standout was an NFL linebacker from 1980-91 with the Raiders, San Francisco 49ers and Washington Redskins. He won the Super Bowl four times.

were old enough, and they had not cheated their way to their first Olympic team gold. The FIG and IOC hoped the matter had been put to rest before the games, when the IOC said it had checked all of the girls' passports and found them to be valid.

The controversy never went away, though, and the IOC announced three days before the games ended that it had asked the FIG to investigate one more time.

China turned over birth certificates, passports, ID cards and family residence permits for He, Yang, Jiang Yuyuan, Deng Linlin and Li Shanshan.

"The international federation has required the delivery of birth certificates and all the documents like family books, entries in schools and things like that," IOC president Jacques Rogge said on the final day of the games. "They have received the documents, and at first sight it seems to be OK."

If evidence of cheating is found, it could affect as many as four of the six medals the Chinese women won in Beijing. In addition to the team gold, He won gold on uneven bars and Yang got bronze medals on bars and in the all-around.

Fight Song FROM PAGE 7

("Fight Song fund issue unresolved" Sept. 15).

This was going to be the first year that we actually got more organizations involved and actively participating and we are going to throw it out the window.

I think that the SGA Executive Branch and the Senate need to think long and

hard about how they vote on the budget tomorrow, and remember all of the parents and alumni that come to campus just to see Fight Song.

We are always complaining about the lack of lasting traditions on this campus, but we will never have true, lasting traditions if we keep eliminating events that invite students, parents, alumni, and the Blue Raider community to come out and show their Raider pride.

I urge every member of the

I, for one, am not so worried.

That is because there is still a glimmer of hope left, and that is in the heart of this team. Whether or not anyone sees it, I do.

Now is not the time to fade away and dawn your orange tee shirts again, but rather, now is the best time to go get your blackout shirt and wear it proudly, because next Tuesday, records won't matter anymore.

Next Tuesday, the spotlight will be on Murfreesboro, and whether the media buzz around the game is good or bad will have a lot to do with the bodies in the stands.

A full house will undoubtedly give MT the illustrious

home-field advantage that they deserve and could propel their performance to the next level, a level that will be needed to beat Florida Atlantic — a team that seems to have MT's number as of late.

Things always look bad before they look good, and while right now things might look grim, winning solves everything, and a win against FAU would keep the hope alive.

I'll be out at Floyd Stadium next week because I haven't given up on MT yet.

My message to you is simple — go out next Tuesday and show the Blue Raiders you haven't given up on them yet either.

—Steven Altum, junior

Real Talk FROM PAGE 9

not change MT's current predicament, though.

Yes, MT was contained by Arkansas State, and yes, MT is now 0-2 in conference play and on the outside looking in, but I would urge everyone to not give up on them yet.

This team is still young and still experiencing the growing pains of college football and everything that comes with it.

It's a long season, and MT is only a third of the way through it. There is no denying that next Tuesday's "Blackout Game" is a must-win for the Blue Raiders, but