

SIDELINES

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Editorially Independent ~ Thursday, Nov. 29, 2006

Students may suffer from winter's SAD

By Tiffany Gibson
Staff Writer

During winter months, many Tennesseans experience mood swings or depression symptoms as a result of cold temperatures and bleak winter days. Most people ignore these factors, which have the potential to trigger symptoms of a serious disorder known as Seasonal Affective Disorder, or winter depression.

People suffering from SAD usually display symptoms similar to depression, such as an inability to continue everyday routines due to fatigue, social withdrawal, appetite changes, anxiety and oversleeping.

SAD is a disorder that affects individuals during the winter months due to lack of sunlight. It has been known to affect 1 out of 100 in the United Kingdom and nine percent of inhabitants residing in Alaska.

SAD has also been reported to have risen in the United States, influencing an estimated 10 to 20 percent of the population. This is a powerful mood disorder that can ultimately cause severe depression and may require hospitalization if not treated correctly.

Treatments for this disorder include several options such as light therapies, medication, and ionized-air reception.

Light therapy, also known as phototherapy, is based on the exposure of lasers, fluorescent lamps or full-spectrum light and has been effective in treating SAD during 30 minute sessions.

Although light therapy is the most common treatment, roughly 19 percent of patients suffering from SAD are required to take medication for their depression or anxiety.

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors are usually prescribed for depression and SAD patients to help balance the serotonin levels in the brain by increasing them. These effective antidepressants are most commonly known as Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil and Wellbutrin.

Another effective treatment an individual suffering from mood swings and lethargy could seek would be counseling. SAD can be a serious and dangerous disorder that could eventually leave an individual contemplating suicide.

"Anything dealing with depression can make a person more likely to commit suicide," said Kevin Breault, Sociology professor at MTSU.

Breault also said that this disorder should be taken seriously even though suicide is most common during springtime.

Even though this disorder occurs during winter, suicide rates among college students have increased, making suicide the second leading cause of death among college students. SAD could be an explanation as to why depression has been more noticeable in younger generations.

"I think this disorder is unknown to most students and could be a big reason why teens are becoming depressed," said Betsy McMahan, freshmen nursing major.

According to Breault, depression is also more commonly seen in women than men; however, women are more likely to seek help before actually committing suicide.

Statistics show that, on average, female suicides are the result of an overdose of narcotics whereas men are more likely to use a firearm.

Breault said that because of the different methods each gender favors, women are more likely to be stricken with depression and attempt suicide, but men are more likely to succeed.

"There might also be a biological factor as to why [it is more common in women] but as of now we don't know," Breault said.

In connection with depression, SAD can also cause up to 20 percent of people affected to develop bipolar disorder.

Similar to SAD, bipolar disorder deals with episodes of abnormal mood patterns and depression symptoms. However when suffering from a bipolar disorder, patients may begin to repeat rapid cycles of mania and alternate mood swings.

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities suggests that to avoid or reduce the risk of SAD, individuals should stay active during the winter months by socializing with loved ones and shopping for the holidays. ♦

Frist Center displays artwork from MTSU

By Brittany Carruthers
Contributing Writer

Art students from MTSU and other universities in Tennessee have pieces on display at the Frist Center in Nashville. The pieces will be showcased through Dec. 31. Art professor Erin Anfinson, with the help of other professors, chose the best student work to be displayed.

"This is a really big deal for them," Anfinson said.

Danny Greene, graduate art major, is one of the artists whose work was chosen for the show.

"More people will be able to see my art in Nashville," Greene said. "It was definitely an honor to see my work in the Frist."

Dale Meier, senior art education major, said that his artwork has a cross hatching feel.

"The content of my work catches the viewer's eye. My prints are kind of like

Goya and Granville," Meier said.

He feels very lucky to be chosen and looks at this experience as being humbling and great, which makes him feel good.

Other artists who have work in the exhibit are Rachel Bonham, Michael Brandon Morgan, Sarah Sullivan and Beth Copley.

"We make stuff worth being shown and we need to show it," Greene said.

"Doctors are doctors; they heal people. Lawyers are lawyers, and artists are artists, it's what we do and all I want to do."

Doors have opened for those that displayed their creativity at the Frist on Friday.

"I met the director and he told me to send him some more images of my work," Greene said.

According to Frist Public Relations Manager Rose Mary Gorman, admission to the exhibit is free of charge for all college students. ♦

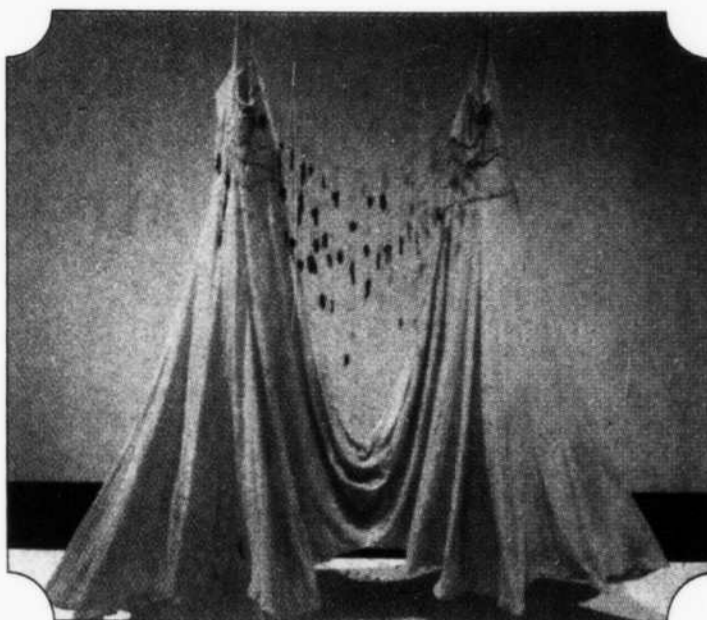


Photo courtesy of Frist Center of the Arts
Student Rachel Bonham's artwork, titled "Duality," was constructed using fabric, wax, thread and glass beads.

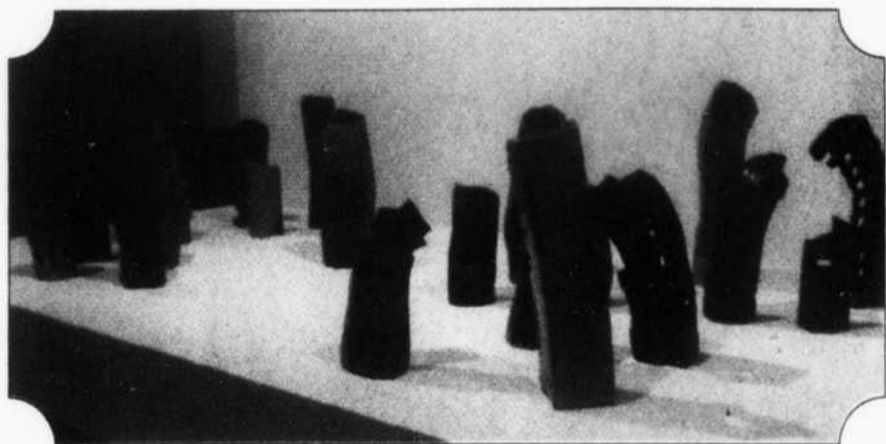


Photo courtesy of Frist Center of the Arts
"Conversations of the old and forgotten," by student Beth Copley, was created in 2006, using ceramic.

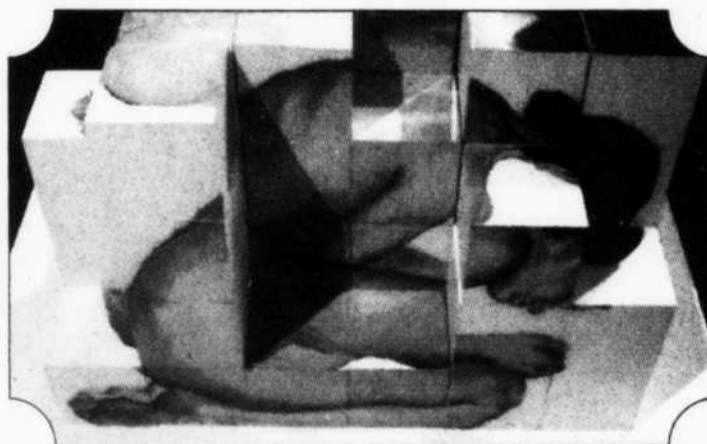


Photo courtesy of Frist Center of the Arts
This untitled piece, constructed by student Sarah Sullivan, was made from acrylic painted on 45 masonite cubes.

Library concerned with waste of paper



Photo by Justin Keoninh | Photography Editor

In an attempt to show students how much paper is wasted during the printing process in the library, the staff strings up garlands of wasted paper to illustrate their point.

By Michael Stone
Contributing Writer

At the beginning of each school year, the James E. Walker Library staff allots funds to keep library printers running for students throughout the year.

The money for this budget comes from the technology-access fee part of tuition.

"The printing budget entails paper, ink, and a staff to keep the printers running," said instructional librarian Kristen West.

Over the past few years, this amount has not been enough to last the whole year and other library funds have been diverted to cover the cost.

"The money is not enough because students are printing too much paper and aren't using much of it. We have had to borrow as much as \$12,000 dollars a year from other library funds to cover the excessive amounts of printing. This is unfortunate because that money could be going to reusable items like books," West said.

The library staff held a meeting last semester to devise a plan on what could be done to urge students to not waste paper.

"We decided the best way to get students to not

waste was to show them just how much they were wasting. We began putting blue recycle bins full of discarded printer paper at the base of the staircase last semester in hopes that students would look at them and say 'Wow, I need to be more mindful about my printing,'" said library specialist Kristen Keene.

The library continued the "recycle-bin" method throughout last semester and at the beginning of this semester.

"Students were paying little to no attention to the bins except to throw trash in them," Keene said.

Statistics from the beginning of this semester showed that students were not printing any less than they had before.

"We got really worried when the first quarter numbers of this year came in. Of the \$73,133 printing budget for July 2007 to June 2008, \$22,475 of it was used in the months of July, August, and September," Keene said.

The library staff once again wondered what to do so that paper waste would be reduced. The decision came to keep the theme of showing the student body how much it was wasting, but this time on a much larger scale.

"Before, when we were showing paper waste to the students, we were only showing them a week's worth, max. We wanted to do something creative that would captivate students' eyes," West said.

The library's external relations committee contacted the Student Art Alliance, feeling that this would be a good source of creativity. The Student Art Alliance is a group of MTSU artists that concentrate on art-related career paths.

"Our sponsor, Cindy Rehm, told us about the project. I, as well as three other members of SAA, agreed to work on the project," said Student Art Alliance member Hannah Green.

The other three members of SAA that volunteered were Christine Peterson, Erin Piper, and Kevin Doyle.

"We were really excited about working on the project. It is a good cause and we were just glad to help. When thinking of an idea, we had to come up with something that would be out of the way and conform to handicap student guidelines," said Green.

The plan the four SAA members came up with

See Waste, 3

Singing praises of
Trailer Choir

See Features, 5

Speical letters to the
editor edition

See Opinions, 4

MTSU cameraman
passes away

See Sports, 7

LOCAL FORECAST

Thursday



HI: 52°
LO: 27°

Friday



HI: 57°
LO: 33°

Saturday



HI: 50°
LO: 47°

Sunday



HI: 64°
LO: 39°

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Johnathon Schleicher
Staff Writer

The 6 schools that were listed on the report card

"It is important to evaluate high schools on a regular basis to recognize what they are doing that works so we can share it with the other schools and also determine areas that need improvement so we could provide assistance," Mosher said. ♦

Continued from 1

The library has provided facts on the matter in both the foyer, by the stack of paper, as well as the

The library plans to keep the display up until Dec. 6. ♦

Sidelines regrets these errors.

CHASE 

And That's No Bull!

24:7 ENERGY DRINK

- Boosts energy
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- Increases metabolism
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Your Nearest Walgreens
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A black and white photograph of a dark, cylindrical can, possibly a beverage can, with a digital display on its side showing the number '24.7'. The can is positioned vertically and appears to be part of a larger advertisement or promotional material.

24:7
ENERGY
DRINK

order

Offer valid at participating Walgreens.
Offer expires 12/31/07.

Plus deposit where required

Walgreens In-Store Coupon

The next time you need to refuel, clip the coupon, pop the top and get to work with **24:7**

OPINIONS

From the Editorial Board:

Printing waste shows inefficiency, budget shortages for technology

Currently, thousands of sheets of wastepaper are strung from the ceiling in the foyer of the James E. Walker Library. To make a point about paper usage, the Student Art Alliance collaborated with the library to hang the paper that would normally be recycled.

"Reduce" is the name of the project, and it's a clever idea. It makes a statement without words, highlighting not only the waste of trees, but the waste of money involved in the production and purchase of paper.

The library has tried to cut down on paper usage by setting the default on computers to double-sided printing, and while paper waste is down, it sometimes inadvertently creates waste of its own.

When a student prints off an English paper and it emerges double-sided, it often has to be reprinted, since many professors will not accept papers printed this way. This solution may be remedied by making use of the new online learning system, Desire2Learn, or d2l.

Using d2l, it is possible to submit assignments in a digital drop-box in practically any format. Professors may place comments and grades on the assignment, with nary a sheet of printed paper.

Of course, not all paper waste is due to finicky professors. With finals approaching, it is tempting to use the library's ostensibly free printing to make copies of a semester's worth of notes. This, too, is something that may be done more efficiently by the use of computers. If a professor is nice enough to post their notes online, one may study them at home, on a computer. It is likely that most students simply toss those stacks of notes after their exams, further contributing to the waste glut.

There is certainly an egregious amount of waste involved in 'free' printing, and we could all probably be more efficient. However, the amount of money budgeted for printing is also questionable. With a total of \$75,000 for printing, and approximately 23,000 students, each student should be allotted roughly \$3.26 for a year's worth of printing.

This minuscule amount is supposed to cover the cost of paper, toner, maintenance and workers to staff the labs. It hardly seems sufficient.

Any abundant resource is subject to overuse, until either the supply becomes short or the users voluntarily curtail their usage. The solution to this problem will require a little of both.

Paul conscientious, honest in actions

Matthew Hurtt

Guest Columnist

I must respectfully disagree with Daniel Potter in his latest attempt to persuade readers with his political insight ["Ron Paul unusual, unfavorable" Nov. 19].

The Ron Paul supporters with whom I speak know full well what Dr. Paul's campaign platform is. Granted, he must not have been alive when he began his service in the House of Representatives, but they have read up on his goals and ideas, and I would assume they know more about their candidate than any other supporter for any other presidential candidate.

Anyone who has followed Paul's voting record for any length of time knows that he first consults the U.S. Constitution before voting in favor of or against any piece of legislation. If it isn't allowed in the Constitution, then Paul does not vote for it. Pretty simple.

Potter's concern seems to be with the elimination of "all manner of [federal] government agencies," many of which did not exist prior to the 20th century. What Potter may have forgotten is something known as the Tenth Amendment, which leaves powers not delegated to the federal government up to the states.

Potter crows about Paul's dedication to limiting government "where it interferes with the free market," but I would assert that Paul strives to limit government wherever it is. "That government governs best, which governs least." Thomas Jefferson saw the light — why can't modern day politicians and political pundits do the same?

Potter's concern with riot police would be spot-on if Paul advocated a police state. Quite the opposite, however, Congressman Paul routinely votes against government intrusion into the lives of its citizens. He voted against the USA PATRIOT Act and domestic wire-tapping.

Potter also ignores Paul's foresight in endorsing Ronald Reagan in 1976. I certainly wouldn't have endorsed George W. Bush in 2004 just because he was the incumbent.

Potter seems to forget the primary system of voting that exists here in America.

At first Paul's opposition to the War in Iraq disturbed me, but then I looked back at my first opinion column in *The Blackman Voice*. I originally voiced opposition to the war because it was liberal interventionism and nation building — no conservative would support that idea. I was labeled "anti-American" and "unpatriotic."

In fact, Republicans in Congress voted against funding for the situation in Kosovo in the late 1990s. Who complained then?

Not to digress, but my favorite anti-war group are the "out of Iraq, into Darfur" folks — like pulling us out of one quagmire and putting us into another will solve the problem. Like a good Lifetime movie, it's all the same plot, just different names.

Those "key facets" Potter expounds upon are not lost to Paul's supporters. "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" are ideals with which we agree. People should be allowed to live their lives without government intrusion.

We shouldn't have to work until May every year to pay off the federal government. Social programs should be cut, allowing only those who truly need them to receive them.

Ron Paul exhibits qualities of an early American: a self-made, hard-working individual who strives to make his life and the lives of those around him better. Henry David Thoreau wrote about men like Paul in his essay "Self Reliance," which everyone should read.

Mark Twain once said, "In the beginning of a change, the patriot is a scarce man: brave, hated, and scorned. When his cause succeeds, however, the timid join him, for then it costs nothing to be a patriot."

Maybe Potter's waiting for his patriotism to be free.

Matthew Hurtt is a junior liberal arts major, and can be reached at Matt.Hurtt@gmail.com



Cyber-suicide tragic, senseless

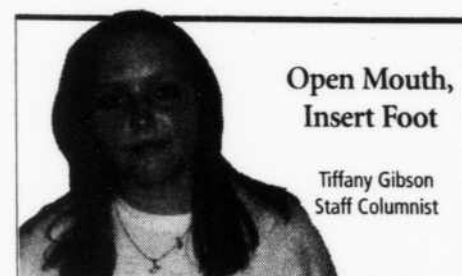
On Oct. 16 2006, Megan Meier committed suicide due to a cruel MySpace hoax created by her best friend and her best friend's mother. Over a year later, charges have yet to be served to the harassing family.

Meier was only 13 years old when she committed suicide by hanging herself in her own bathroom. Apparently, Meier had previously had a falling out with her former 16 year-old best friend. After the two distanced themselves from each other, the girls' petty argument soon erupted into a revengeful plot that would ultimately leave one teen dead and the other party unharmed.

When Meier's best friend's mother soon found out about the girls' conflict, she cooked up a vicious scheme as a way of teaching Meier a lesson. The idea was formed by both mother and daughter that it would be 'fun' to create a fake profile on the popular Web site, MySpace, and trick Meier into falling for an online love interest. The mother and daughter worked diligently on their revengeful plot by creating a boy named Josh Evans.

Over time Meier and Evans conversed daily and Meier actually began to fall for Evans. Meanwhile, Meier's mother was aware of the online love interest and the fact that her daughter had a profile on a Web site that only permitted registration to ages 16 and up. Even though all of the signs were right in front of her face, she refused to take control of the situation and restrict her daughter from coming in contact with a complete stranger.

Mrs. Meier should have never allowed her daughter to even create a profile in the first place. Even though these sites are socially accepted and a 'popular' thing to have, they should still only be available for those of the legal age requirement. Teens similar to Meier create profiles every day and carelessly give out



Open Mouth,
Insert Foot

Tiffany Gibson
Staff Columnist

information regarding their phone numbers or locations. These young girls and boys that are lying in order to reserve ridiculous artificial pixel pages in exchange for their lives are not mature enough to handle certain situations they may be getting themselves into.

Pursuing this further, the mother and daughter team behind Evans' existence felt they had earned Meier's trust and decided it was time to crush Meier by sending her hurtful messages claiming she was a 'slut' and 'fat'. Meier finally snapped after reading these messages and decided to retaliate. When her mother returned home one day she noticed her daughter's vulgar language in messages to Evans on the computer screen. When confronted by this, Meier tried to explain the situation, but her mother had no sympathy and displayed her disappointment in her daughter. In a rage, Meier stomped off to her bathroom where she immediately hanged herself.

Authorities are currently still investigating this case, but openly admit that the guilty party responsible for this young girl's death cannot legally be touched, since there is no law stating that creating a phony profile is illegal. In fact millions of people own a MySpace or Facebook profile, so the probability of this happening to another teen is extremely vast.

The worst part of this case appears to be the desperate need for justice. The mother and

daughter that plotted this scheme should be charged for harassment and booked at the nearest courthouse due to their extreme measures in what began as a simple teenage quarrel. There is no excuse for the behavior both of the participants displayed during the six weeks they continued to lead the young girl on.

Due to several tragedies such as Meier's case, many people have begun to question whether or not these online personal profile sites are strictly used for pleasure or for deception.

According to research done by Cox Communications in 2006, parental awareness of their teens' online activities has risen significantly in the last year. Cox also discovered that teens whose parents have talked to them a great deal about online safety are less likely to consider meeting in person someone they met on the internet.

Meier's mother knew of the love affair occurring online and should not have let her 13 year old daughter continue it. Even worse than the fact that a squabble spiraled out of control, both mothering parties failed miserably in their attempt at setting good examples for their daughters. While one mother prolonged the warning signs, the other party displayed a malevolent characteristic that will most likely be portrayed by her daughter in future years.

When it comes to internet harassment, MySpace, Facebook and Xanga are commonly known as sites that allow easy access for online bullies. However, there is a way to reduce the amount of teens harassed online, and this method can be summed up in one simple action: supervise!

Tiffany Gibson is a freshman English major and can be reached at tdg2w@mtsu.edu.

'Abstinence-only' teaching flawed

Lakiesha Seay

Contributing Columnist

"Don't have sex until marriage." That was the message that was pounded into my head during what was supposed to be a class about sex education. The only education that I received, however, was about how if I had sex before marriage, I was going to catch a disease and die. At least that is what I heard.

Whatever happened to the concept of actually educating people about sex as part of the curriculum in sex education, anyway? Sex education isn't supposed to just be about abstinence.

There should be a mixture of education about abstinence, along with information about sexually transmitted infections (STI) and ways to prevent them. There also should be information about the different kinds of birth control.

From what I've gathered, advocates of abstinence believe that teaching comprehensive sex education teaches people to have low morals and values and that only sex in a married setting is healthy.

Seemingly, those who endorse abstinence-only sex education think free information about how to make informed choices regarding sex leads to immorality, as well as unhealthy and unlawful practices.

So, free information about how to make informed choices related to sex education leads to immorality? What does that mean? Does it mean the government is trying to suppress information that is available, because it doesn't like what people might do otherwise? If so, I consider that an unlawful practice myself.

The federal government champions the

abstinence-only approach, and funds only those schools and programs that teach abstinence-only education, according to MSNBC, which also reports that the federal government spends about \$176 million annually on abstinence programs for students in middle school and high school.

In my opinion, though, by providing funding to schools that solely teach abstinence-only sex education, the federal government is trying to impose its morals on students. These would be, in my view, the morals of the same group of people who are unconstitutionally wiretapping telephones and sending soldiers to fight and be killed in a war that some believe can't be won.

If the government wants to speak about comprehensive sex education or a lack of morals, perhaps those who make these decisions should open a dictionary and find the definitions for both 'comprehensive' and 'morals' before they begin to criticize a program for supposedly not having any of the latter.

Some school administrators in California have opted out of federal funding for their schools' sex-ed programs to teach more comprehensive sex education. To schools leaders such as these in California and other places that are choosing to expand their sex-ed programs, I say, "Good for you!"

By doing this, you are helping America's youth and the future of America. You have realized that just by telling teens not to do something because it could possibly hurt you does not mean they are going to abstain.

Realizing that teenagers, quite naturally, are going to be curious about sex because it's part of puberty and growing up demonstrates that some forward-thinking leaders—such as those

in California — have decided to teach their students how to be safe and protect themselves.

Don't get me wrong, though. I don't want to sound as if I am completely against abstinence, because I am not. I'm not against the idea.

It is agreed that that abstinence is the best way to prevent unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, but I'm against using it as the only method of sex education when it's not the best one or the only one — and it's obviously not working in most settings.

For example, statistics in a 2004 edition of Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health composed by H. Weinstock show increases of nearly 19 million new STI cases in America every year and the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ranks Tennessee 10th in cases of sexually transmitted diseases, part of an overall increase across the country. Half of the 19 million new cases are teens ages 15-24, and the U.S. has the highest teen pregnancy rates of any developed country in the world, according to the Guttmacher Institute.

What do these numbers tell me? The numbers tell me that the government is hurting the country and the world's future. Sex education is supposed to be just that, an education, and teaching abstinence is one option, but such an education should also include info about methods of prevention of infections and diseases, as well as help young people with all the emotional and physical changes one goes through during the ages when sex education is introduced.

In my opinion, it's about time the government opened its eyes and realizes it's causing more harm than good.

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Sidelines will not publish anonymous letters. We reserve the right to edit for grammar, length and AP Style.

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Letters to the Editor

MT's Wi-Fi, e-mail woefully inadequate

To the Editor:

I have noticed in my past year at this university that there are two things that are desperately needed to help students achieve an education.

The first of these is the size of our e-mail inbox. 5MB is too small for any real use on a university campus. Students are required to obtain free e-mail addresses from providers such as Gmail or Yahoo in order to have an effective e-mail.

Our school e-mail system does not provide enough space to receive a typical PowerPoint presentation. With e-mail being such a vital part of communication between teachers and students, why are we reduced to using such an archaic system?

My second complaint is that of our Wi-Fi system on campus. It seems impossible to get a decent and more important, reliable connection anywhere on campus. Connecting to wireless internet is spotty at best in the newer buildings, such as the BAS, and non-existent in the older ones. The repository of knowledge, Walker Library, is quite possibly the worst of them all. This new and modern building has no connection in any of the group study rooms. The connection in the main hall is not much better. If a signal is obtained, it will disappear within a few minutes.

How are students expected to utilize these rooms and the library if we cannot have decent internet connection? Student government needs to address these problems and bring MTSU into the 21st century.

Matthew Davis
Senior, College of Basic and Applied Sciences

Web site honors Jeremy Beatty's life

To the Editor:

Just in case anyone who knew Jeremy would like to go, there is a new web site called www.rememberjeremy.com that we can all post memories on.

Christy Corvin
Old Trinity Lane, Nashville

Blevins' column incomplete, inaccurate

To the Editor:

Our reporting class (3090-003) was surprised Thursday afternoon to read the *Sidelines* opinion column written by S.N. Blevins ('08 candidates bad, worse" Nov. 15). After reading the piece, we as a group were disappointed in the quality and factuality of Blevins' work.

We have investigated the current presidential candidates for the entire semester and has found a number of facts that are missing from the column.

Blevins is entitled to his opinion, but his argument is weakened because the column lacked any specific flow or direction. He left out major candidates such as Mitt Romney and John Edwards. Overall we were disappointed in the quality of the piece for publication.

The G.O.P.:

Former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani is the current Republican front-runner. Giuliani vaulted into the national spotlight after the attacks of Sept. 11, when he gained support from both parties for his leadership of New York City.

Giuliani has used his media credibility, his aggressive stance on terror and his record of tax cuts and fiscal responsibility in his campaign. He told the New York Sun in August, "I am the Republican who has the best chance of winning against any of the Democrats."

Giuliani's anti-abortion stance and liberal history, however, have hurt his support from the conservative base and may split the vote against him in the election.

Mitt Romney, former governor of Massachusetts, campaigns on a pro-growth tax agenda, a federalist approach to nationwide health insurance and improving and sustaining the culture and values of America.

Romney says he aims to lower taxes for the betterment of the economy and to keep companies from moving their businesses overseas.

As governor of Massachusetts, Romney set a statewide health care plan into place.

"The law appears to be working. As of Nov. 1, the date for the most recent statistics, more than 200,000 formerly uninsured people had gotten insurance, roughly half of the state's target," said Glen Johnson of the Associated Press.

Tennessee's former senator Fred Thompson wasn't even mentioned in Blevins' article, although he is five points ahead of John McCain, who was mentioned, according to a poll by the American Research Group.

If Thompson had been mentioned, we're sure it would have included facts like his 'yes' vote on banning partial birth abortions in Oct. 1999, and that he voted 'yes' on allowing foreign workers into the U.S. for farm work in July 1998.

U.S. Senator John McCain has taken a strong stance in favor of continuing the Iraq War and has voted 'yes' on numerous bills to increase funding for the military.

McCain has favored free trade. In May 2000, he voted 'yes' on expanding trade to the third world. In September 2000, he voted 'yes' on permanent normal trade relations with China and he voted 'no' on a bill for trade sanctions against China if it sold weapons.

McCain sidestepped an issue when he reacted to a statement made by a woman in Hilton Head Island, S.C.

McCain chuckled after the woman asked, "How do we beat the bitch?" implying Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. McCain asked, "May I give a translation?" and added, "That's an excellent question."

McCain tried to minimize the crudeness of the situation and said, "I respect Senator Clinton. I respect anyone who gets the nomination of the Democratic Party."

However, he did not denounce the derogatory term used by his supporter.

Former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee also should have been mentioned in Blevins' story. Huckabee is dueling with Thompson for third place in the Republican party, and has made remarkable progress in the first three primary states with a modest budget.

U.S. Rep. Ron Paul, of Texas, is the only candidate advocating the immediate withdrawal from Iraq (and 130 other countries with a U.S. military presence), which explains the support from troops Blevins mentioned in his opinion piece.

Dr. Paul is a strict constitutionalist, and his grassroots campaign boasts no contributions from corporations. His libertarian policies and ability to stick to his ideals appears to have attracted disenfranchised voters.

Alex Blackwelder's well-researched letter to the editor ["Rep. Paul responsible spender" Nov. 15] presents an exam-

ple of Paul's adherence to the U.S. Constitution.

Paul has stated that he has no intention of repeating his unsuccessful 1988 presidential campaign as a third party candidate, where he ran as a Libertarian while remaining a registered Republican. He also refuses to support other Republican candidates if he loses the nomination unless they change their stance on the war.

The Democrats:

U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton is the front-runner in the Democratic primary race. She maintains a steady, healthy distance in the polls from her closest opponents, Senators Obama and Edwards. She supports troop withdrawal while maintaining stability in the Middle East, she is for health care and education reforms, and she favors environmental legislation.

Former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards has been left with the duty to slug it out with Hillary Clinton, the acknowledged favorite. While other Democratic candidates have kept a lower profile, Edwards is risking his second-place position by opposing Clinton's day-to-day political statements.

U.S. Sen. Barack Obama served as the Illinois state senator for seven years before moving onto the U.S. Senate. Early in his career, Obama was a civil rights attorney in Chicago. He entered politics in the 1980s.

Obama handled voting rights and discrimination cases. His community projects helped low-income workers in Chicago get local jobs, fix up the areas and remove asbestos in their homes. Obama is responsible for starting the largest voter registration drive in Chicago history for President Clinton's campaign in '92.

Joe Biden of Delaware was elected to the Senate in 1972. Biden's main issues are the war in Iraq, health care, and education. Biden has a five-point plan for Iraq consisting of establishing one Iraq with three regions.

The plan would share oil revenues with Sunni Arabs, assemble with the U.N. a regional security conference, downsize U.S. troops, and provide more reconstruction assistance and the establishment of jobs in Iraq for natives.

Biden's health care plan would cover all children, gain access for adults, reinsure for catastrophic cases concerning employers, and encourage prevention and modernization. His stances on education consist of establishing a sixteen-year school system, providing more training and higher salaries for teachers, and reducing the size of classes to provide teachers with the resources they need to build the opportunities for learning that our students deserve.

New Mexico governor Bill Richardson has steadily held his number four position in the polls against the Democratic candidates, despite making one large promise to the American people. Richardson stated he would leave zero troops in Iraq. He made the statement at Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H. on Sept. 26 and again in Iowa at the Jefferson-Jackson dinner on Nov. 10. While no other Democratic candidates could promise removal of the troops until 2013, Richardson claims he can do it by the end of 2009.

One issue that might not sit well with conservative Republicans is that Richardson supports abortion rights like all of the other Democratic candidates.

Daniel Dean
Senior, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Reggie Miller
Junior, College of Mass Communications
Henry Mullins
Senior, College of Mass Communications
Mandie Rowden
Senior, College of Mass Communications
Kristopher Sage
Sophomore, College of Mass Communications
Britney Spear
Junior, College of Mass Communications
Jesse Trew
Senior, College of Liberal Arts
Ben Underwood
Junior, College of Mass Communications
Andre Youmans
Junior, College of Mass Communications

Thanks to community from Beatty family

To the Editor:

I am writing to thank everyone from MTSU for their support during this last week since the death of my nephew and Godson, Jeremy Beatty. The family is grateful for all the phone calls and beautiful flowers from the Administration, as well as the tremendous support from all of the students who came to the funeral home and church and spoke with his parents.

A special thank you also to Sara Sudak and Andy Bickers from Housing, and my friend, Lisa Thayer, who all helped me pack and move Jeremy's things. I'd like to correct one thing in your article ["Student dies in Cummings Hall, official cause remains unknown" Nov. 12], however - we know Jeremy died due to complications from his diabetes. There was no autopsy, and we are not waiting for any test results. Thank you very much again for all support.

Peggy Duszynski
Secretary, MTSU Undergraduate Research Center

Feature story wrong to use blog posts

To the Editor:

I was disappointed to see the "article" on Jeremy Beatty. I found it rude and insensitive to copy and paste his blogs as some form of a news article. Although I'm sure it was very simple to find his webpages and copy his blogs, maybe it would have benefitted the writer to actually take some time to find out who Jeremy was from his closest friends and family. Simply regurgitating what is the easiest to find online is a cop-out. It seems that *Sidelines* has suddenly turned into the "Mini-feed" that Facebook already provides.

Amanda Cook
Junior, College of Mass Communications

Ron Paul only common-sense politician

To the Editor:

I must respond to your staff columnist, Daniel Potter, whose letter "Ron Paul unusual, unfavorable" appeared in *Sidelines* on Nov. 19. Ron Paul is "unusual" simply because our government has strayed so far from its Constitutional limits that our founders wouldn't recognize us. And Dr. Paul is "unfavorable" to many because they have grown accustomed to our oversized federal bureaucracy.

The reason there is a "rabid base of supporters" who may "vote for the first time next November" is that Dr. Paul has cured their apathy. Potter questions whether these new voters truly understand his platform, or have just "fallen prey to his shrewd marketing of choice issues." People understand the message of liberty.

Issues like limited government interference, protecting national sovereignty, staying out of foreign wars (noninterventionist policy), sound money instead of fiat currency, and more individual responsibility appealed to America's founders, not just a bunch of today's college kids.

Regarding Ron Paul's forward-thinking endorsement of Ronald Reagan in 1976 even while "the Republicans already had an incumbent in the White House - Gerald Ford", I think Potter misses the point. You'd be hard-pressed to find many people who don't agree with Dr. Paul that Reagan was a much better (though not perfect) voice for limited government than Ford. Reagan proved it from 1980 - 1988.

Support for the Second Amendment was appreciated by our founders, not just to today's "hard music demographic." Makes me wonder whether Potter has a problem with other parts of the Bill of Rights.

Dr. Paul's "disdain for the War on Drugs" is borne out of common sense, a commodity lacking in Washington. Why continue spending billions of your tax dollars on a losing cause? Prohibition against alcohol failed, and so has the war on drugs. In Lyndon Johnson's "war on poverty", poverty won, as more people became dependent on government welfare. Those billions can be much better spent and invested by its earners - you and I.

If Potter's mother had exercised her power to choose an abortion, he would not have been around to write "being anti-choice is not rock 'n' roll [or cool], and therefore neither is Ron Paul." Since when is killing unborn babies "rock 'n' roll", or cool? 1973, I guess - Roe v. Wade.

Now to Potter's "heart of the matter" - Ron Paul's "ostensibly noble goal of eradicating government as we know it." Dr. Paul, and his growing following, just want a constitutional government, where the states or the people (10th Amendment) do the things the federal government was NOT established to do. See: U.S. Constitution.

And reducing burdensome regulations and taxes on business is always a good thing, keeping good jobs and industries here in America, and growing the middle class.

It is with good reason that Ron Paul has been called "the Thomas Jefferson of our day." Jefferson said, "I deem [one of] the essential principles of our government [to be] peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none..." Unusual, yes...and wise.

Jim Sandman '01, USN Ret.
Gold Valley Dr. Murfreesboro

Feature's title misleading, upsetting

To the Editor:

I wrote a letter to *Sidelines* yesterday, part of which alerted them to an error in their first article about Jeremy ["Student dies in Cummings Hall, official cause remains unknown" Nov. 12]. There is no question about the cause of death - Jeremy was a Type 1 diabetic, determined to move out on his own and go to college. We don't know exactly what happened, but our guess is it was faster than in the past, (he had been close to death twice before, he knew what going into diabetic shock felt like) making him unable to call any of his family. There was no autopsy - we are not waiting for any test results. *Sidelines* advisor, Steven Chappell, told me today that the MTSU Chief of Police reported to them that there was an autopsy done. I placed a call to the detective who handled Jeremy's case to verify this, but have not heard back. His parents did not request an autopsy, and if the state had ordered one, I think we would have been told.

I also tried to reach Andy Harper [Managing Editor] today, leaving a voicemail, but did not hear back. I guess it was his decision to copy and paste Jeremy's blog into the newspaper. Since I just read here that someone else said it bothered him that his blog could be printed in a newspaper, it validated how exploited I felt, as a member of Jeremy's family, when I saw this entire page in the paper today. Then I thought, well, he himself posted it on the internet ... but, I don't think his intent was the same as this article today.

What bothered me the most was the title saying, "blog gives insight into student's death" ["The Life of Jeremy Beatty" Nov. 19]. I asked Mr. Chappell what insight they had received? He said that wasn't a good title, it should have said, "insight into student's life". I said, yes, that would be very different, wouldn't it? That, along with saying we are waiting for autopsy results, sounds to me like you are trying to make this into a mystery when there is none. He offered no further explanation, or apology. I asked if he would correct these inaccuracies. He said he could online but not in the paper.

I know some of you said you thought the "article" had heart, but you also said it made you feel sadder about his life. That is not the way any of us want him remembered.

Many, many students came to the visitation and the funeral.

They were wonderful to talk to Jeremy's parents personally. However, and I may be wrong about this, as far as I know, there wasn't anyone at MTSU other than me who had known him more than 2 months. It seemed to us that he had formed some wonderful friendships in that short time, and some of you maybe were getting to know a whole side of him that we did not, but no one here was informed enough to write "The Life of Jeremy Beatty" by doing nothing but choosing blog entries. The article reached no conclusions about his life or death, and I consider it extremely irresponsible. I hope his grieving parents and sister do not see it. I hope this is not indicative of what is being taught in any of our journalism classes.

Peggy Duszynski
Secretary, MTSU Undergraduate Research Center

Jeremy Beatty feature in poor taste

To the Editor:

I am not an MTSU student, but I was a friend to Jeremy Beatty who was a student and an amazing person. I am completely appalled at the 'feature' article that was written about Jeremy's life ["The life of Jeremy Beatty" Nov. 19]. Stealing his words from his MySpace and Facebook profiles is not an 'insight' into his life.

If you wanted to know about or tell people about Jeremy's life, do some real journalism and interview his friends and family. Go to the places he used to work or respond to someone who posts a comment to get some real insight into what his life was like.

I'm sure that you or the author of that 'article' were never blessed enough to have known Jeremy, or else you would have respected him a little more than to post what you did. I know that in today's world, the lines are a lot thinner when it comes to internet postings and privacy, but have some integrity when writing something that could damage the reputation of someone who is deceased.

Everyone who knew Jeremy knew what he had been through and how far he had come. There is no reason to bring up the negatives of his life in his death. He was truly one of the greatest people I will ever have the pleasure of knowing and I am heartbroken that you and your staff think it is appropriate to 'write' what you have. Hopefully, you will have a little more tact in the future when it comes to situations such as this.

Amy Weber
Crump Drive, Nashville

FEATURES

Culture Shock

By Lemon Keith
Staff Writer

After glancing over magazine covers dominated by half-naked women or irrelevant material, many college students wonder what journalism is coming to.

Just when despair was about to set in, advertising major Tatiana R. Johnson created Culture Shock Magazine. She now serves as editor in chief and finds it refreshing, keeping up with the latest news and trends.

"I wanted people to start reading again, and I wanted my peers' opinion as well."

Culture shock magazine is the spin-off to the innovative show that stars Johnson that is broadcast on YouTube and Comcast channel 10, which is geared toward skateboarding and fashion culture.

The current target market is college and high school students. Johnson's goal is to cover issues people are interested in reading. It is also geared toward career-minded people who enjoy reading about the music and fashion industry. She hopes to attract a modern and younger generation.

"Culture Shock Magazine presents the facts, interesting stories, what actual students think about their culture. The fashion is not focused on one particular brand or designer; instead, it's focused on current and available fashion."

Culture Shock Magazine is currently available online at culture shockmag.com and focuses on music, fashion and culture, written only by young adults who are mostly students.

"We don't have 30 or 40-year-olds writing for our audience. It's written by people who know, who experience it, and write about it. We write because we are passionate about it, just as you don't have to tell an artist to paint, because it is who they are and want to be," says Davis.

"The fashion section is geared toward stuff our generation wears, and that our target audience has resources to get, not from France, Italy or some other country, but what is in right now here," says Davis. "We simply say, hey this is what people are wearing in New Jersey, etc. If we say it's hot, than it is, because we wear it and we know."

"We are not currently getting paid to write, but doing it because we love it; it makes us work harder, and I know someday it will pay off when I get paid for writing for someone else's magazine or someone is writing my magazine," says Davis.

"Our writers are not told what to say or write, they actually buy the CDs and listen to the music. They are interested and understand it," says Johnson.

The magazine has gained a lot of support from Ohio, Atlanta, St. Louis and New Jersey. All these states currently have contributing writers, but Johnson hopes that she will continue to get more sponsors and advertisers on the web.

"There are currently so many magazines, but I think something is missing. Student writers add spice of what we know and what we think," says Johnson.

The magazine is still looking for students to write and help with promotion. "The only stipulation is that those interested want to learn, write and help with promoting and advertising so that the success of the magazine will continue as people become more aware," says Johnson, emphasizing her passion for the magazine.

Although the idea generated with Tatiana and her friends, she is still trying to expand it. Riverdale Shock is a new page Johnson is working on that will keep high school students updated on events and current news.

One of the weaknesses Johnson sees with the magazine is the communication with long-distance writers because they cannot physically attend the weekly meetings.

Aside from that, the magazine has several strengths, including writers from different regions who write on diverse topics.

At the age of 20, Johnson has already started work on one of her main goals.

"My overall goal is to give back to college students because it is hard to go out and get a job, but hopefully I can help by providing internships. I want to build a strong empire including my clothing line Immer Voran which means 'always ahead' in German, I want to grow as a magazine, ad company, and television show."

Along the way, she hopes that her company will provide jobs, and build a community center so kids can learn and gain experience in mass communication industry.

"I don't think culture shock magazine has a future, I think it is the future," says Davis. "I will stay with it as far as it goes." ♦

Top 10 MTSU downloads

MTSU's Top 10 most downloaded music on RUCKUS.com this week:

1. "I Get It," Chevelle
2. "Bohemian Rhapsody," Queen
3. "Should've Said No," Taylor Swift
4. "Hot Blooded (Single Version)," Foreigner
5. "Heels Over Head," Boys Like Girls
6. "Kiss Kiss," Chris Brown featuring T-Pain
7. "Ball And Chain," Social Distortion
8. "On Top Of The World," Boys Like Girls
9. "Sunday Bloody Sunday," U2
10. "I'm Shipping Up To Boston (Album Version)," Dropkick Murphys



Photo courtesy of Trailerchoir.com

(From top right, clockwise) Mark "Butter" Fortney on vocals and guitar, Big Vinny "The Mack" Hickerson, a singer and dancer from Perry County, TN and Crystal Hoyt, a bombshell soul singer from Louisiana "that makes the whole band look better."

Alumnus succeeds in music world

By Emily Sterrie
Staff Writer

Do the words whiskey, duct tape and "bustubious" mean anything to you? Only after catching a performance from the one-of-a-kind band Trailer Choir can you begin to understand the connection.

Trailer Choir is an up-and-coming country band out of Nashville that will play a special homecoming performance at Bluesboro Bar and Grill this Thursday, Nov. 29 at 10:00 p.m.

Trailer Choir is a unique, fun-loving and energetic seven-piece band led by Mark "Butter" Fortney on vocals and guitar, Big Vinny "The Mack" Hickerson, a singer and dancer from Perry County, TN, who's got the "gyrations that shake the foundations," and Crystal Hoyt, a bombshell soul singer from Louisiana "that makes the whole band look better," according to their Web site.

Butter, originally from Ohio, first started playing guitar in high school and began dabbling in songwriting soon after. He came to MTSU because he knew he wanted to pursue a music career.

While at MTSU, Butter says he performed his music everywhere, from Bluesboro to Gentleman Jim's and frat parties, even during Happy Hour at the Holiday Inn.

After graduating from MTSU in 1997 with a major in Mass Communications and an emphasis in the music business, Butter worked at publishing companies and record labels for a few years before starting his own publishing company.

Of his experiences at MTSU, Butter cannot say enough. "MTSU is my life," he says. "Everything that I've become in my life today, MTSU was and is a continuing part of. I learned everything about the business, from copyright law to how to clean the tape machine. I'm very grateful for the education I received and the people I was able to work with there, both student and teachers."

The members of Trailer Choir met about four years ago through Nashville's Muzik Mafia and everything just seemed to fall into place.

"The songs I was writing and performing just started catching on once I began working with Vinny and Crystal," says Butter. "Writing songs and being an entertainer was steering me down this path."

What's unique about Trailer Choir, says Butter, is their style of songwriting

and performing.

"We have a very visual presentation. Vinny dances and is very engaging, and we have a take on songs and living life that is completely our own."

Trailer Choir is all about having fun, making friends and not taking life too seriously, and their shows have explosive and unforgettable hillbilly flair.

Butter says the name of the band arose because they didn't want it to be just one person's name, and because all of the songs they perform are fun sing-alongs.

"And if you're around us for more than ten minutes," he says, "you'll see where the trailer part comes from."

After perfecting their sound and style, Trailer Choir quickly began creating a major buzz around Nashville and were recently lucky enough to be signed to Toby Keith's record label, Show Dog Nashville, in June 2006.

As Butter tells it, one night when the band was performing at 12th and Porter in Nashville, Keith showed up unexpectedly for the last two songs of their set. He asked to meet the band, who were in total disbelief.

"Toby said he really loved what we were doing, asked a few questions, and told us about his new record label," Butter says.

An exchange of numbers led Keith attending another show, along with CMT, his management company and his record label. "He brought the house to come see us at a big showcase in Nashville," says Butter. "It was all on the line and we did great; he offered us a record deal the very next day. It went from zero to sixty in a hurry."

When asked if the band was nervous about their performance for the country music superstar, Butter describes the feeling as "nervous but confident."

"We had been playing so long and had a neat, fun show to put on for him," he says. "We just relied on what we had been doing. We didn't have to change anything; we didn't have to be more or less, we just did the show we were used to doing. We had faith in ourselves. The songs were there, the show was there, and the timing was there."

After signing on with Keith's label, Trailer Choir toured the U.S. with the country crooner last summer and has plans to tour with him again in February and March. The summer tour, which consisted of thirty dates and huge venues, was an incredible experience for the band, who traveled from Delaware to Texas to Seattle to Boston. Butter says the tour truly

changed their lives.

"It was our first time touring in an actual tour bus—one that we could afford—not a rented van and a U-haul," he says. "Tour buses and catering, the whole deal."

Currently, Trailer Choir is garnering an onslaught of media attention while recording their debut album, which is being produced by Keith and co-produced by Butter himself. Of working with someone as famous as Toby Keith, Butter says, "It's wild. We work with him all the time in the studio. He's producing our record and singing our songs. Sometimes it seems so surreal because I've worked so hard to try and make it. It's cool." Butter predicts that Trailer Choir's first single will be out sometime in February or March of 2008.

"We just want to make the songs everything they can be," he says. "All these chunks of the puzzle are finally coming together."

But Butter hasn't forgotten his long struggle to break into the music business.

"I've been one of the typical musician guys all my life, busting my ass trying to be successful. I feel very, very, very lucky. I'm still trying to get signed, and I know the struggle. It's very competitive and I feel very fortunate."

However, Butter offers encouragement to other budding musicians and hopes to be a kind of inspiration to struggling recording industry students at MTSU.

"I hope to continue my career as a writer and performer, and I hope that my success can be a kind of sounding board to promote MTSU for people that have been in my position. I always knew that I wanted to be in Nashville, but I knew I wasn't ready to get right into Music Row. MTSU gave me the ability to be knowledgeable in all aspects of the entertainment business and music business. I still in my everyday activities use the knowledge and experiences I learned at MTSU."

So with the New Year fast approaching and Trailer Choir's fame quickly rising, Butter says that his biggest hope for the band in the coming year is just to get the first single out and start having success on radio and television. But most important, he says, is simply "having the opportunity to be able to create and perform music."

So be sure and make it to Bluesboro on Thursday night to support one of MTSU's own music success stories, and be on the look out for Trailer Choir in '08: "Taking over the world, one smile at a time." ♦

SPORTS

- NCAA Tournament Preview -



Sophomore Leslie Clark, No. 14, sets up a shot against the Golden Panthers of Florida International University. The volleyball team heads to Louisville, Ky. this weekend to begin play in the NCAA Tournament.

MT faces Louisville in NCAA tournament

By Clarence Plank
Staff Writer

Toot's was busy Sunday night with people coming and going, but for a group sitting in front of a TV during the NCAA Tournament selection show. Watching. Waiting. It was business as usual for the Blue Raiders, who for the second straight year had won their conference title and a berth into the NCAA Tournament.

For the second straight year the Blue Raiders will be traveling to Louisville, Ky., to face Louisville as it was announced by the NCAA Volleyball Committee.

The letdown of the night was that the first and second rounds of the NCAA Tournament might have been played in Murfreesboro, meaning that Louisville (22-7), Tennessee (20-13) and Hawaii (26-5) would have come to MT over the weekend.

"We're a little disappointed that we're not hosting," Peck said. "But in all honesty, we play very well on the road and played very well there last year."

Last year MT made history by beating Louisville 3-2 in the first round advancing to the second round where Ohio State knocked the Blue Raiders out of the NCAA Tournament with a 3-1 win.

This year Louisville leads the nation in blocks per (something, someone fix this), where MT is currently seventh. The game is going to come down to ball control for the Blue Raiders and how well they can pass the ball against Louisville.

MT is going to spend their time before they head to Louisville on Thursday tuning up and practicing, but changing little since this season's formula has proven successful.

"I think we're a better this year than we were last year," Peck said. "That's obvious. We're more balanced, our ball control is better, our defense is better. So we're excited no matter who our opponent was going to be in the first round."

"I think Louisville would be very motivated in playing us obviously, but we're more motivated to play

them, I think it will be a very good match," Peck said. "We'll be playing in the convention center where we played last year and they lost the home court advantage a little bit, I think it will be one of the best first round matches in the tournament."

Right now MT has an RPI of 12 and could finish 20th in the season's final rankings.

"I think we need to have really solid performances from our younger players," Peck said. "They have to step and play big and I believe it will be a great match up."

For the first time ever in the Sun Belt Conference, the team received an at-large bid with Western Kentucky after finishing in second place in the conference as a runner up in the SBC Championship.

The Lady Hilltoppers earned a nod to face Wright State. WKSU won the Missouri Valley Conference. WKU will be traveling to Lincoln, Nebraska for the first round ♦

John Wilson passes away

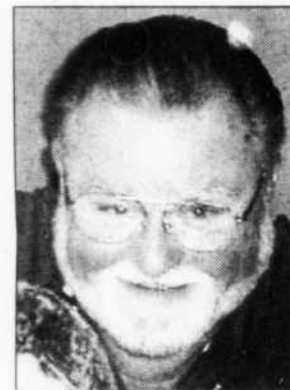
By Richard Lowe
Sports Editor

John Wilson, a camera man in the middle Tennessee area for over 30 years, passed away early Friday morning in a fire at his home. He was 65.

Wilson had worked at WSMV, Channel 4 in Nashville, full and part time since 1972 and spent some time at WKRN, Channel 2. He was also a video photographer for all Middle Tennessee sporting events and coaches' television shows. The last footage he shot for the university's athletic department was show on the most recent episode of "The Rick Stockstill TV Show."

"He meant a lot to (MTSU)" says Chris Massaro, Director of Athletics for MT. "Any time you see highlights of the Blue Raiders over the last several years, chances are it was John's work. He's going to be missed."

John's wife, Harriette, was also in the house, but was able to escape. She was taken to Middle Tennessee Medical Center for evaluation.



John Wilson

The medical examiner pronounced Wilson dead at the scene.

The Wilsons owned and ran a lemonade stand at MTSU football games and the TSSAA state basketball tournament.

They had three dogs. One was found alive outside, one was found dead on the stairs inside, and one was found alive beneath a bed on the third floor.

"He was so well-liked in the media world, and I think he was so respected by people because he cared about what his work and he was always a pleasure to be around," said MT men's basketball coach Kermit Davis, whose weekly TV coach's show was filmed by Wilson.

"You didn't see John Wilson when there wasn't a smile on his face."

"John was as honest as the day is long," said Rudy Kalis, sports director at WSMV and had known Wilson for 33 years. "He could judge someone's character in a heart beat, and he was a perfectionist. But John also loved his horses, and he was probably born 100 years too late because he was a cowboy at heart."

Wilson had many duties behind the camera, but long-time MTSU play-by-play announcer Dick Palmer said he will mostly miss his roommate for Blue Raider road trips.

"We made good roommates for football and basketball trips because we were close to the same age, real compatible, and John was such a great guy," Palmer said. "John was smiling all the time, and he would do absolutely anything for you. I'll miss him a lot." ♦

Information from this article was contributed by Murfreesboro Daily News Journal sports writer Adam Sparks

- Belmont 85, Middle Tennessee 62 -

Blue Raiders lose second road game in a row

By Chris Martin
Staff Writer

With two minutes left in the second half, the Belmont fans jingled their keys and chanted "start the bus" as the Bruins put the finishing touches on an 85-62 pounding of Middle Tennessee.

However, the key-shaking could have begun at 17:54 in the first half when senior guard Justin Hare hit the first basket of the game, a three-pointer. The Blue Raiders never recovered from that three-point deficit.

"We're a poor defensive team right now," MT head coach Kermit Davis said. "It's something that we have always done well. We were just not very alert tonight."

The loss is MT's second big road defeat to an in-state opponent in as many weeks. On Nov. 20, the Blue Raiders lost 109-40 to Tennessee in Knoxville.

One big factor that contributed to the Bruins success was three-point shooting. Belmont hit eight of 20 three pointers, but it did the most damage with the trey in the first half when it hit seven of 11 long-range shots. As a result, the key and baseline opened up for the Bruins as MT tightened its perimeter defense.

"It's so hard to guard all the way out on the three-point line and stop baskets from being scored in the paint," Belmont head coach Rick Byrd said. "Whether it's back-cuts or someone posting up, if you're not making [three's] they can pack it in and none of that happens. Our three-point shooting is a big part of what we do and it always will be."

The Bruins had four players score in double figures, led by junior forward Matthew Dotson who chipped in 18

points to go along with six rebounds.

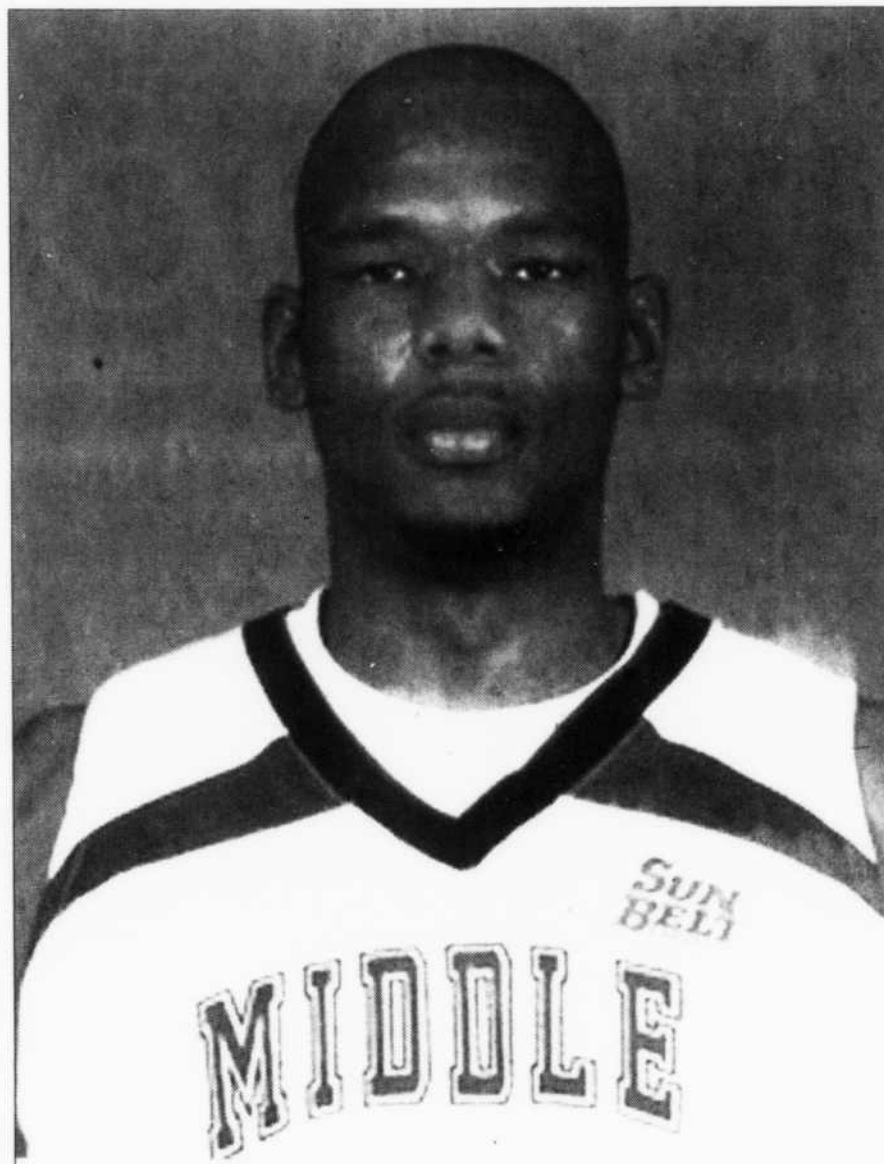
Belmont has proven this season that it can hang with big-time competition. The Bruins already have two road wins over opponents from power conferences. On Nov. 11, they beat Big East member Cincinnati 86-75 and on Nov. 19 they defeated an Alabama squad that won 20 games last season.

The Blue Raiders could have used junior guard Calvin O'Neil's defense on the outside. O'Neil was lost for the season when he injured his right knee in MT's 78-77 loss to San Jose St. on Nov. 15.

"We miss [O'Neil] a ton because he would have played 35 minutes," Davis said. "He was kind of our rock and our tough guy. It hurts us a lot. I don't know if he could solve all of our problems, but he sure would be getting about 30-35 minutes and guarding the other team's best perimeter player."

One bright spot for the Blue Raiders was junior center Theryn Hudson's play. Hudson bested his career high in points when he hit two free throws late in the second quarter to give him 15 points for the game. Hudson also tied with Desmond Yates for the team lead in rebounds with seven.

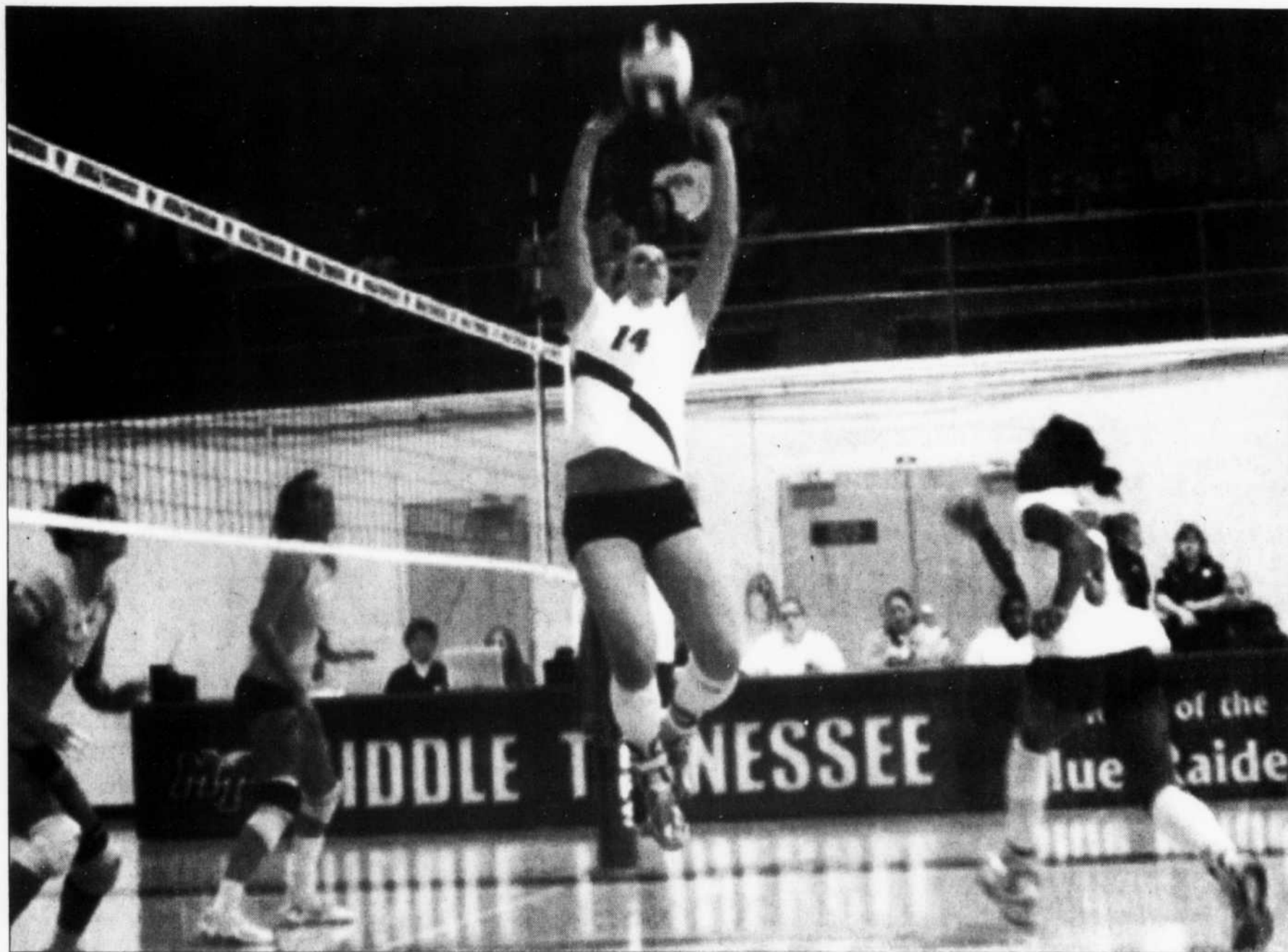
"I thought in the second half, [Hudson] had a lot more aggression," Davis said. "He was more active around the goal and he rebounded the ball better. We've got to have that out of him for 30-35 minutes." The Blue Raiders and Bruins will meet up again on Dec. 12 at the Murphy Center. Before then, MT will travel to Houston, Texas on Dec. 1 to take on the Houston Cougars. That game is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. ♦



Junior Theryn Hudson scored a career-high 15 points and seven rebounds in a loss to Belmont Monday. The Blue Raiders travel to Houston this weekend to take on the University of Houston Cougars.

SPORTS

- NCAA Tournament Preview -



Sophomore Leslie Clark, No. 14, sets up a shot against the Golden Panthers of Florida International University. The volleyball team heads to Louisville, Ky. this weekend to begin play in the NCAA Tournament.

Photo by Justin Kermish | Photographa Editor

MT faces Louisville in NCAA tournament

By Clarence Plank
Staff Writer

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For the second straight year the Blue Raiders will be traveling to Louisville, Ky., to face Louisville as it was announced by the NCAA Volleyball Committee.

The letdown of the night was that the first and second rounds of the NCAA Tournament might have been played in Murfreesboro, meaning that Louisville (22-7), Tennessee State (20-13) and Hawaii (26-5) would have come to MT over the weekend.

"We're a little disappointed that we're not hosting," Peck said. "But in all honesty, we play very well on the road and played very well there last year."

Last year MT made history by beating Louisville 3-2 in the first round advancing to the second round where Ohio State knocked the Blue Raiders out of the NCAA Tournament with a 3-1 win.

This year Louisville leads the nation in blocks per (something, someone fix this), where MT is currently seventh. The game is going to come down to ball control for the Blue Raiders and how well they can pass the ball against Louisville.

MT is going to spend their time before they head to Louisville on Thursday tuning up and practicing, but changing little since this season's formula has proven successful.

"I think we're a better this year than we were last year," Peck said. "That's obvious. We're more balanced, our ball control is better, our blocking is better. So we're excited no matter who our opponent was going to be in the first round."

"I think Louisville would be very motivated in playing us obviously, but we're more motivated to play

them. I think it will be a very good match," Peck said. "We'll be playing in the convention center where we played last year and they lost the home court advantage a little bit, I think it will be one of the best first round matches in the tournament."

Right now MT has an RPI of 12 and could finish 20th in the season's final rankings.

"I think we need to have really solid performances from our younger players," Peck said. "They have to step and play big and I believe it will be a great match up."

For the first time ever in the Sun Belt Conference, the team received an at-large bid with Western Kentucky after finishing in second place in the conference as a runner up in the SBC Championship.

The Lady Hilltoppers earned a nod to face Wright State. WSU won the Missouri Valley Conference. WKU will be traveling to Lincoln, Nebraska for the first round. ♦

John Wilson passes away

By Richard Lowe
Sports Editor

John Wilson, a camera man in the middle Tennessee area for over 30 years, passed away early Friday morning in a fire at his home. He was 65.

Wilson had worked at WSMV, Channel 4 in Nashville, full and part time since 1972 and spent some time at WKRN, Channel 2. He was also a video photographer for all Middle Tennessee sporting events and coaches' television shows. The last footage he shot for the university's athletic department was show on the most recent episode of "The Rick Stockstill TV Show."

"He meant a lot to (MTSU)" says Chris Massaro, Director of Athletics for MT. "Any time you see highlights of the Blue Raiders over the last several years, chances are it was John's work. He's going to be missed."

John's wife, Harriette, was also in the house but was able to escape. She was taken to Middle Tennessee Medical Center for evaluation.



John Wilson

The medical examiner pronounced Wilson dead at the scene.

The Wilsons owned and ran a lemonade stand at MTSU football games and the TSSAA state basketball tournament.

They had three dogs. One was found alive outside, one was found dead on the stairs inside, and one was found alive beneath a bed on the third floor.

"He was so well-liked in the media world, and I think he was so respected by people because he cared about what his work and he was always a pleasure to be around," said MT men's basketball coach Kermit Davis, whose weekly TV coach's show was filmed by Wilson.

"You didn't see John Wilson when there wasn't a smile on his face."

"John was as honest as the day is long," said Rudy Kalis, sports director at WSMV and had known Wilson for 33 years. "He could judge someone's character in a heart beat, and he was a perfectionist. But John also loved his horses, and he was probably born 100 years too late because he was a cowboy at heart."

Wilson had many duties behind the camera, but long-time MTSU play-by-play announcer Dick Palmer said he will mostly miss his roommate for Blue Raider road trips.

"We made good roommates for football and basketball trips because we were close to the same age, real compatible, and John was such a great guy," Palmer said. "John was smiling all the time, and he would do absolutely anything for you. I'll miss him a lot." ♦

Information from this article was contributed by Murfreesboro Daily News Journal sports writer Adam Sparks

- Belmont 85, Middle Tennessee 62 -

Blue Raiders lose second road game in a row

By Chris Martin
Staff Writer

With two minutes left in the second half, the Belmont fans jingled their keys and chanted "start the bus" as the Bruins put the finishing touches on an 85-62 pounding of Middle Tennessee.

However, the key-shaking could have begun at 17:54 in the first half when senior guard Justin Hare hit the first basket of the game, a three-pointer. The Blue Raiders never recovered from that three-point deficit.

"We're a poor defensive team right now," MT head coach Kermit Davis said. "It's something that we have always done well. We were just not very alert tonight."

The loss is MT's second big road defeat to an in-state opponent in as many weeks. On Nov. 20, The Blue Raiders lost 109-40 to Tennessee in Knoxville.

One big factor that contributed to the Bruins success was three-point shooting. Belmont hit eight of 20 three pointers, but it did the most damage with the trey in the first half when it hit seven of 11 long-range shots. As a result, the key and baseline opened up for the Bruins as MT tightened its perimeter defense.

"It's so hard to guard all the way out on the three-point line and stop baskets from being scored in the paint," Belmont head coach Rick Byrd said. "Whether it's back-cuts or someone posting up, if you're not making [three's] they can pack it in and none of that happens. Our three-point shooting is a big part of what we do and it always will be."

The Bruins had four players score in double figures, led by junior forward Matthew Dotson who chipped in 18

points to go along with six rebounds.

Belmont has proven this season that it can hang with big-time competition. The Bruins already have two road wins over opponents from power conferences. On Nov. 11, they beat Big East member Cincinnati 86-75 and on Nov. 19 they defeated an Alabama squad that won 20 games last season.

The Blue Raiders could have used junior guard Calvin O'Neil's defense on the outside. O'Neil was lost for the season when he injured his right knee in MT's 78-77 loss to San Jose St. on Nov. 15.

"We miss [O'Neil] a ton because he would have played 35 minutes," Davis said. "He was kind of our rock and our tough guy. It hurts us a lot. I don't know if he could solve all of our problems, but he sure would be getting about 30-35 minutes and guarding the other team's best perimeter player."

One bright spot for the Blue Raiders was junior center Theryn Hudson's play. Hudson bested his career high in points when he hit two free throws late in the second quarter to give him 15 points for the game. Hudson also tied with Desmond Yates for the team lead in rebounds with seven.

"I thought in the second half, [Hudson] had a lot more aggression," Davis said. "He was more active around the goal and he rebounded the ball better. We've got to have that out of him for 30-35 minutes." The Blue Raiders and Bruins will meet up again on Dec. 12 at the Murphy Center. Before then, MT will travel to Houston, Texas on Dec. 1 to take on the Houston Cougars. That game is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. ♦

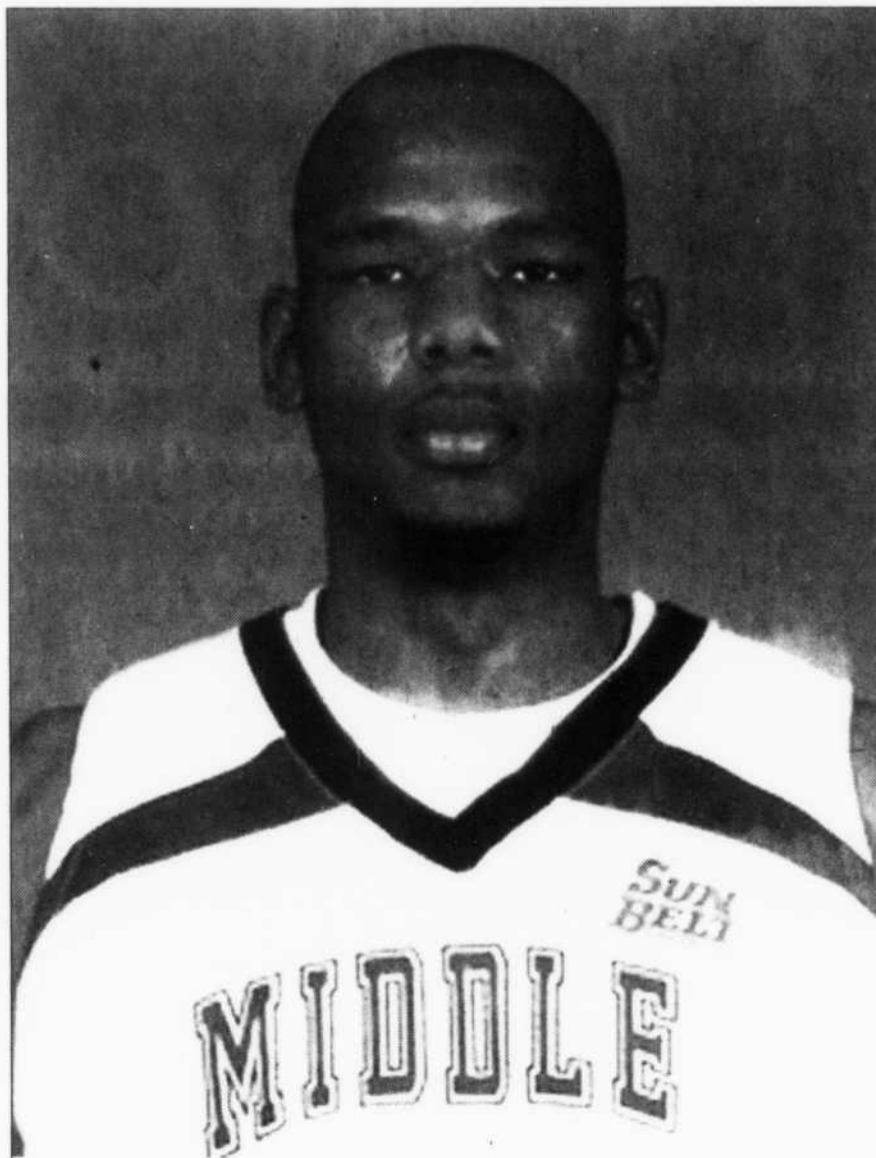


Photo courtesy of MT Media Relations

Junior Theryn Hudson scored a career-high 15 points and seven rebounds in a loss to Belmont Monday. The Blue Raiders travel to Houston this weekend to take on the University of Houston Cougars.

Redskins' Sean Taylor dies day after burglary

By Matt Sedensky
Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Pro Bowl safety Sean Taylor died Tuesday after he was shot in his home by an apparent intruder, leaving the Washington Redskins in mourning for a teammate who seemed to have reordered his life since becoming a father.

The 24-year-old player died at Jackson Memorial Hospital, where he had been airlifted after the shooting early Monday.

"It is with deep regret that a young man had to come to his end so soon," father Pedro Taylor said in a statement on behalf of the family. "Many of his fans loved him because the way he played football. Many of his opponents feared him the way he approached the game. Others misunderstood him, many appreciated him and his family loved him."

A string of mourners, including Taylor's father, visited the player's home and embraced outside. Authorities entered the home, but it was unclear what they were doing.

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell said the league will honor Taylor's memory at all games this weekend.

"This is a terrible tragedy involving the loss of a young man who leaves behind many people struggling to understand it," he said in a statement.

Redskins coach Joe Gibbs said what he would remember most about Taylor was his excitement about playing football.

"God made him to play football," Gibbs said Tuesday during a news conference. "To me, he just loved and thrived on the competition part of it. ... Sean, he loved football. He loved these guys here."

Gibbs acknowledged it will be hard to concentrate on football this week.

"I don't know how we'll deal with it, except we'll all do it together," he said.

Fans already had begun a makeshift memorial by laying flowers on a field near the front entrance to the Redskins' practice facility in Ashburn, Va.

"This is a terrible, terrible tragedy," Redskins owner Daniel Snyder said.

He added the team would honor Taylor with a patch on the jersey and the No. 21 on the helmet.

Redskins teammate Clinton Portis also played with Taylor at the University of Miami. He had sensed a new maturity in his close friend.

"It's hard to expect a man to grow up overnight," Portis said. "But ever since he had his child, it was like a new Sean, and everybody around here knew it. He was always smiling, always happy, always talking about his child."

Two bouquets were left by a palm tree outside a front gate of Taylor's home. Beside the mailbox, an untouched newspaper lay with news of his shooting.

Taylor's death comes nearly a year after Broncos cornerback

friend Richard Sharpstein said he was told Taylor never regained consciousness after being taken to the hospital.

"Maybe he was trying to say goodbye or something," Sharpstein said.

Taylor, the fifth overall pick in the 2004 NFL draft following an All-American season at Miami, was shot early Monday in the upper leg, damaging the key femoral artery and causing significant blood loss.

Trauma experts said a serious wound to this large artery, leading from the abdomen through the upper thigh, is among the most difficult to fix and can quickly drain the body of blood. Too long a blood loss prevents oxygen from reaching the brain and vital organs.

"According to a preliminary investigation, it appears that the victim was shot inside the home by an intruder," Miami-Dade County police said in a statement. "We do not have a subject description at this time."

The attack came eight days after an intruder was reported at Taylor's home. Officers were sent to the home about 1:45 a.m. Monday after Taylor's girlfriend called 911.

Sharpstein said Taylor's girlfriend told him the couple was awakened by loud noises, and Taylor grabbed a machete he keeps in the bedroom for protection. Someone then broke through the bedroom door and fired two shots, one missing and one hitting Taylor, Sharpstein said. Taylor's 1-year-old daughter, Jackie, was also in the house, but neither she nor Taylor's girlfriend was injured.

Police found signs of forced entry, but have not determined if they were caused Monday or during the previous burglary.

The shooting happened in the pale yellow house Taylor bought two years ago. In last week's break-in, police said someone pried open a front window, rifled through drawers and left a kitchen knife on a bed.

Taylor starred as a running back and defensive back at Gulliver Prep in Miami. His father is police chief of Florida City.

Associated Press Writer Jessica Gresko in Miami and AP Sports Writer Joseph White in Ashburn, Va., contributed to this report.

This is a terrible tragedy involving the loss of a young man who leaves behind many people struggling to understand it.

Roger Goodell
Commissioner, National Football League

Darrent Williams was killed in a drive-by shooting following an argument at a Denver nightclub on Jan. 1. University of Miami defensive lineman Bryan Pata was shot to death in November 2006 several miles from Taylor's home in an unsolved killing.

"Sean has been a close friend of mine since our days at the University of Miami," New York Jets linebacker Jonathan Vilma said in a statement. "He was a great teammate and an even greater person. It is so hard for me to fathom that I am not going to be able to pick up the phone to call him."

Doctors had been encouraged late Monday when Taylor squealed a nurse's hand, according to Vinny Cerrato, the Redskins' vice president of football operations. But family

Interested in the game? Think you can write.

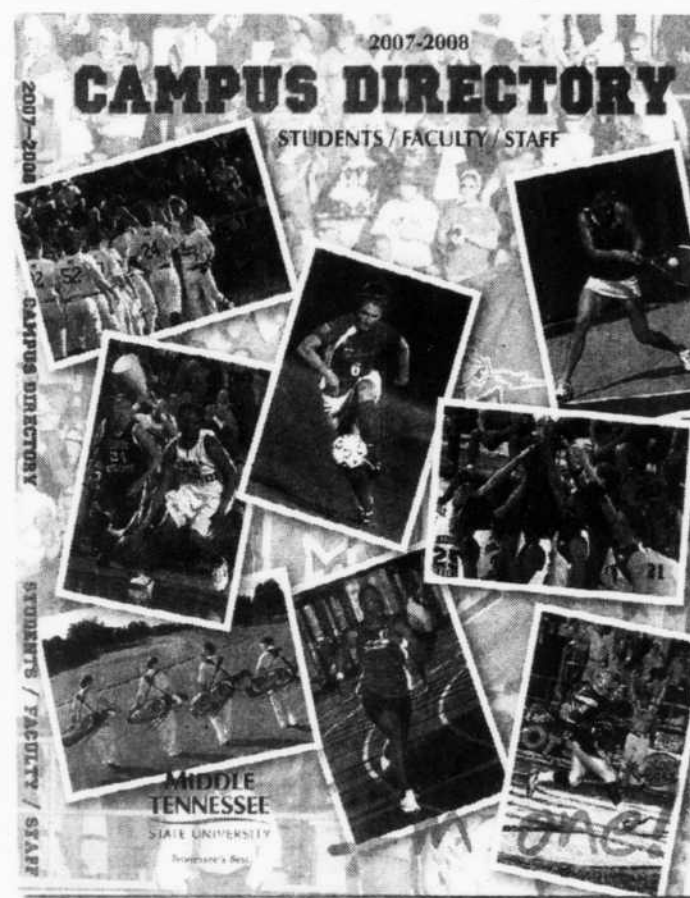
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SIDELINES

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

*Holiday
Shopping
Guide
2007*

Christmas classics to jump start the season

By Andy Harper

Managing Editor

With the holiday season right around the corner and the hectic struggle to promote "peace on Earth," take time to relax out of your whirlwind schedule to enjoy a few Christmas classics.

Although seemingly clichéd, the following movies are great choices for any, or most, audiences. From sorority-slasher spoofs to infamous four-letter words, the following films are a great way to start the holiday season.

Naturally no Christmas cinema list is complete without "The Nightmare Before Christmas." This film, written by Tim Burton, was released in 1993 and features the voice talents of Chris Sarandon, Catherine O'Hara and Paul Reubens.

It is arguable under which holiday this movie actually falls: Christmas or Halloween. Instead of debating, we can all enjoy the fact that it is appropriate and mandatory viewing at least twice a year. The tunes are catchy, the clay animation is stellar – for the year it was filmed, and despite a few somewhat scary moments, it is appropriate for all ages.

Now if the next film lacks in your current movie collection, fear not, "A Christmas Story" can be viewed on TNT for 24 hours, starting on Dec. 25.

This is a must see for everyone. It seems everyone can relate to the W.A.S.P. mother, the overbearing and angry father or the annoying sibling. If you can relate to all three, our deepest apologies.

Despite the quirky, "finding the Christmas spirit through horrible mishaps" feeling the movie portrays, it is a classic comedy. There are enough child-like jokes to entertain the younger generations and plenty of subtle adult humor to keep the older audiences engaged. Just remember, when shooting your new pellet-gun, don't yell "fudge" in front of your father or you will end up eating Christmas dinner at a Chinese buffet.

After the children have had their frightful fun and laughs care of 1983, adults finally get to have some fun of their own. Turn down the lights, cuddle-up under a warm blanket and prepare for some good,

old-fashioned sorority girl chasing and killing.

The 2006 "Black Christmas" is a remake of the 1974 film of the same title. This film is about as typical, suspense/thriller as they get. Same rules apply as to every other movie in the genre: only drink virgin egg nog, don't have sexual intercourse under the Christmas tree and don't run into the attic – the gifts aren't hiding in there, only the killer.

The best thing about "Black Christmas" – Michelle Trachtenberg. The worst thing about the movie – the death of Michelle Trachtenberg. Pity.

Out of this limited list of viewing pleasure, the best is definitely "The Muppet Christmas Carol." It doesn't get much better than Gonzo, Rizzo the Rat and Michael Caine. Seriously, what could be more amazing, having the lesson of Christmas taught to you by the Jim Henson crew or watching Michael Caine play the role of Ebenezer Scrooge?

Same review applies to the Muppets as does to Ralphie. The comedy ranges from simple to clever, giving a level on which any age can relate. Just remember to keep the moral of the Christmas season close to heart: always help tiny frog-children-puppets on crutches, especially when they are reciting lines from Charles Dickens.

Of course, these are only four of the many amazing holiday films to choose from. Whatever film is suitable in jump-starting your holiday season, remember to sit back and enjoy the feeling of togetherness and family. And once again, please be careful when shooting your brand new pellet gun – you'll put your eye out. ♦



Movie Quick Guide:

The Nightmare Before Christmas
Skellington Productions Inc.
Directed by: Henry Selick
Rated: PG

A Christmas Story
Christmas Tree Films
Directed by: Bob Clark
Rated: G

Black Christmas
Dimension Films
Directed by: Glen Morgan
Rated: R

The Muppet Christmas Carol
Jim Henson Productions
Directed by: Brian Henson
Rated: G

"Black Friday," an American tradition

By Nicole Miskelly and Sarah Doyle

Contributing Writers

Known as "hell on earth" in the United States – "Black Friday," the busiest sale shopping day of the year, almost lived up to its expectations.

Black Friday was originally named this because of the heavy traffic on that day. It marks the beginning of the Christmas shopping season, and we managed to survive it.

We came all the way across the pond from the United Kingdom to experience everything over here, so we thought it would be a good idea to stay up all night and wait for the Black Friday shopping to begin.

At 2 a.m., on the cold and eerily silent Friday morning, we waited in Kohl's car park for the stores to open.

We pulled up next to the first shopper, who was sat in her car reading her book. The enthusiastic shopper, in her panic to be the first customer, left her car and quickly positioned herself on the floor in front of the door, suitably dressed for the arctic weather conditions.

Cars full of eager bargain hunters pulled in and found their car parking spaces. Even their half-asleep children were dragged to the events.

We took our place amongst the crazy shoppers for what seemed like hours as the queues began to form. Within minutes, hundreds of people were queued up behind us. Cami Splanding, a regular Black Friday shopper said, "It's the best day of the year. I get all my Christmas presents on this one day. It's a bit crazy but it's worth it." Another professional shopper told us of how chaotic the day can be and how it continues throughout the weekend. "People say I'm mad for getting up to go shopping at 2 in the morning. I went to sleep at nine this evening so I could get here on time," she explained.

At 4 a.m., the shop doors opened. The insane purchasers cheered as they all ran for the entrance, grabbing the nearest bag or trolley to fill them with reduced goodies.

People had clearly been planning what they were going to buy. Customers ran in, grabbed the items they wanted and queued up for the tills to pay. As quickly as the queue formed outside the shop, it formed inside. We had never witnessed anything like it before and it was fun to take part.

Sale days exist in England, but happen over a longer period of time, rather than being compressed into one weekend.

Having traveled to Tennessee for work experience, we wanted to be involved in all American traditions. Yet having no sleep and shopping



Photos by Nicole Miskelly and Sarah Doyle
Customers braved the cold outside Kohl's on Nov. 23, waiting for the Black Friday sales to start.

non-stop for four hours on end is an experience we won't be rushing into again.

It was bizarre shopping at that time in the morning, but the prices were pretty good. Not thinking in terms of dollars but how the prices over here are so much cheaper in comparison to our English ones, we spent a lot of our spending money. We got a lot to show for it. Some shops offered better reductions than others but a lot were 50 percent off, something we are not accustomed to! We were told many horror stories before attempting to shop on this day and were warned by many sensible Americans to stay away. Some even laughed at the mention of us going.

In reality, Black Friday was not as bad as we

See Black Friday, 6

SIDELINES
Middle Tennessee State University
An editorially independent newspaper

*Holiday
Shopping
Guide*

Design:

Manda Turner – Editor in Chief

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Do get a great cut

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(...and DON'Ts)

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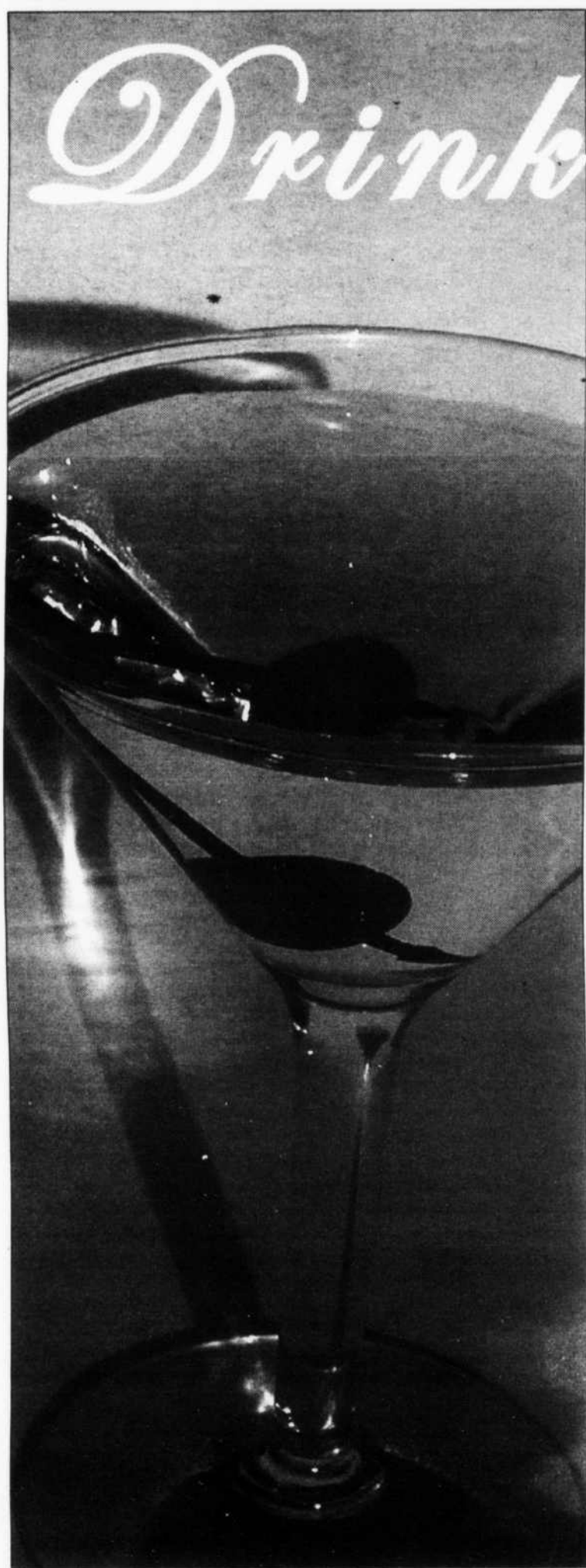
Don't spackle over the bad spots

Do get a real manicure

Don't clean your nails with your keys



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Drink and be Merry

What better way to celebrate the spirit of the holiday season with some seasoned holiday spirits? Below is a compiled list of some favorite holiday-themed drinks to spice up a snowy day. These are a few of the staff recommendations. More holiday drink recipes can be found at the Web site below. Enjoy!

Ginger Snap

Ingredients

3/4 oz. Captain Morgan's Spiced Rum®
1/2 oz. Ginger Flavored Brandy
4 oz. Egg Nog
1 Ginger Snap

Directions:

Whirl ingredients in blender. If desired, garnish with additional ginger snap for dunking.

Drink Type:

Blended or Frozen Drink

Leon Trotsky

Ingredients

1.5 oz. Russian Vodka
3/4 oz. Kahlua®
3/4 oz. Chilled Coffee
1.5 oz. Milk

Directions:

Build in highball glass over ice. If desired, garnish with a toothpick frozen in an ice cube.

Drink Type:

Cocktail

Kahlua Egg Nog

Ingredients

1 oz. Kahlua®
4 Egg Nog
Nutmeg

Directions:

Mix kahlua with eggnog in a wineglass and then sprinkle some nutmeg on top.

Drink Type:

Punch or Party Drink

Peppermint Twist

Ingredients

1 oz. Peppermint Schnapps
1 oz. Kahlua®
1 oz. Brown Creme de Cacao

Directions:

Fill a shaker half full with ice cubes. Pour all ingredients into shaker and shake well. Strain drink into a Cocktail glass and serve.

Drink Type:

Cocktail

The above list could continue on endlessly with the myriad of wonderful holiday spirit selections. Some additional recommended flavors to use in creating your own holiday concoctions include amaretto, peppermint and chocolate. Please remember to enjoy drinking responsibly. Happy Holidays!

Additional drinks can be found online at: whattodrink.com



Unitarian shopping

How to shop for all the non-Christians on your list

By Sarah Lavery

Features Editor

Thank God for Seth Cohen and "The O.C." Because of them, "Chrismakkuha" is now a household term. Because of them, all of us Jews with a Christmas tree can breathe a little easier.

I grew up in a religiously-split family with a Jewish mother and a father who is, well, not really much of anything (although he did grow up Catholic against his will). Even though my mother always exposed me to the traditions and ideas of the Jewish faith, I was always allowed to explore and question the legitimacy of my, and all, religions.

I'm not sure if it's for this same reason that I have always celebrated Christmas, always had a tree, always sang "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and always looked forward to Dec. 25th.

Really, I'm not sure I had any idea that Christmas was at all associated with Jesus and Christianity (I mean, I'd heard the words to "Silent Night" countless times, but ideas about religion are hardly permeable into the mind of a seven year old) until I was well into my teenage-dom.

To me, Hanukkah has always been a celebration of religion, whereas Christmas has one sole purpose: presents, pretty

songs, presents, pretty lights, presents and family gathered 'round. Each year, my family lights the menorah for eight days and the berakhot (blessings) are recited: l'hadlik neir (a general prayer over candles), she-asah nisim (a prayer thanking God for performing miracles for our ancestors) and she-hekhanu (a general prayer thanking God for allowing us to reach this holiday).

I haven't even received a Hanukkah present since the days of my grandparents, in which case the only one that stands out in my mind is 25 Susan B. Anthony's. Not too earth shattering, if you ask me.

Thus, I will always celebrate Christmas (or X-mas, like so many of its non-Christian fans call it), but I will always be a Jew, light the menorah and say the prayers. Maybe it's the conditioning of our consumer-driven society, but the thought of a December without presents to give and get under a beautifully decorated tree leaves me with a feeling of emptiness.

I think people who have grown up with the idea that Christmas equals church, or that the holidays exist to celebrate the birth of Jesus, become nervous at the idea of differing traditions. After all, Christmas is so ingrained into our society among all religions that I'm sure most Hindus,

Muslims and Islamists could list off several of its traditions (I doubt it would work the other way around).

Alas, presents are presents, and I don't know anyone who doesn't like getting them, no matter what the occasion. So, what do you do for a friend who doesn't celebrate Christmas? First off, take the time to find out the details. Don't just assume that because they are not Christians, they don't have a tree and they don't accept presents adorned with candy cane wrapping paper.

Secondly, do it appropriately. If they decidedly don't acknowledge any Christmas traditions, make sure to give the gift tastefully, preferably without a Bible verse inscribed within the card.

I have no idea why reindeer, holly, snowflakes, or a jolly, old man with a white beard would offend, but nevertheless, they do represent a religion that your giftee may or may not follow.

Giving the gift in December denotes nothing more than the spirit of winter, but Christmas Eve and Christmas send a different message.

The bottom line is that you can never go wrong with being tasteful and considerate: think non-themed wrapping-paper (solid colored or secular decorations), a card that expresses nothing more than your ado-

ration for them, and a time that is reflective of the spirit of winter rather than a specific holiday.

As a non-Christian in the Bible-belt, I find nothing wrong with a Christmas-themed gift because I do, in fact, have a tree in my home. But it's always better to be safe than sorry, so if you're not sure, stick with being tactful rather than assuming.

My entire life, I've celebrated my own version of Chrismakkuh before Seth

Cohen coined the clever term; Christmas is for the convenience of palpable holiday spirit, and Hanukkah for the celebration of my religion. This year, Hanukkah starts on Dec. 5, so start giving your Jewish friends their gifts a little early (you can just pop by the Sidelines office anytime to give me mine, thanks!).

But, honestly, what person, no matter what religion or race, would turn down a good present? ♦

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Black Friday: "Not horrible"

Continued from 3

were told. There was a ridiculous amount of people, but no pushing, shoving or fighting over the same item of clothing as we imagined.

The name Black Friday

implies to a naïve British person a day full of sadness or gloom, but it was, in fact, a rather painless experience, surrounded by smiling people who were just happy to be getting a bargain. ♦

Holiday shopping 'Dos and Don'ts'

By Jeselyn Jackson

Contributing Writer

The holiday shopping season is typically a stressful time, but here are a few do's and don'ts to help you bear this year's adventures in consumerism.

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Do:



Know your budget. Each holiday season there's pressure to buy bigger and better gifts, sometimes beyond your means. Make a budget and stick to it; gifts from the heart aren't necessarily expensive.



Make a list of everyone you plan to buy gifts for and divide your budget accordingly. This also helps you keep up with whose gift you've bought and whose you lack.



Use your time wisely; the earlier you shop the better. Try not to visit too many stores. List certain gifts you can find at the same store. You save more money doing early bird shopping than waiting until the last minute when you're forced to rush.

Don't:



Do not lose your receipts. Always keep up with these; you never know what you'll need to return.



Don't buy something for yourself and try to pass it off as a gift.



Do not wait until Christmas Eve to shop. Those who postpone their shopping until the last minute rarely find the gifts they intended, to say nothing of the crowds and the rising prices as Christmas nears.

Early shopping is the key – The holidays have arrived so get in there.

Nearly Horoscopes

Aries

March 21 - April 19

New Years will be a disaster if you stay in Tennessee. Statistically speaking, you are likely to contract herpes.

Taurus

April 20 - May 20

Jupiter is pissed that you stole that last copy of "Guitar Hero 3" from him on Black Friday. Can you say chocolate laxative stocking stuffers?

Gemini

May 21 - June 21

The stars have aligned to ruin your life. Santa doesn't exist, your mother hates you, and everyone knows you bought those presents under the tree from yourself...loser.

Cancer

June 22 - July 22

In the wake of your tragic ice skating accident, the paramedics will mock you for wearing a Rainbow Bright Tee. Oh, and you're pregnant. Cheers...well not for nine months.

Leo

July 23 - Aug. 22

Uranus has decreed that you will grow fat from all the partying you are doing because he hates you for singing Christmas carols non-stop anywhere you go and plus, you are already halfway to being a heifer.

Virgo

Aug. 23 - Sept. 22

Stay away from romantic interludes under the mistletoe. It's actually poison ivy and ironically enough, it is not the only thing that will make you itch if you date this person.

Libra

Sept. 23 - Oct. 23

You should go into hibernation this winter according to the stars. Not because of

any bad omens, you are just that ugly.

Scorpio

Oct. 24 - Nov. 21.

You will actually see your mother kissing Santa Clause. She is having an affair with that creepy bell-ringing drunkard in front of Wal-Mart. Happy holidays!

Sagittarius

Nov. 22 - Dec. 21

Happy birthday and holidays to you! Be prepared for a lot of fun activities, smashing parties, and getting gifts that you don't have to return. Then prepare to wake up because you are dreaming. You are boring, anti-social, and your own mother wouldn't give you a gift other than a used toothpick. You basically suck. Get more exciting dreams too.

Capricorn

Dec. 22 - Jan. 19

The next time you unfortunately sing "Frosty the Snowman" in that dying cat voice of yours, it will open up a time rift enabling a ravenous pack of Utahraptors to burst the gaping maw and messily devour your family. Thumpity thump thump? Really dude? Stop singing.

Aquarius

Jan. 20 - Feb. 18

The Cancer you are dating is totally faking that pregnancy. You also made a C in Calculus because you are a terrible student and you smell. Pretty bad, in fact. Why would she even want to fake having a child with you?

Pisces

Feb. 19 - March 20

Don't pet it; it's rabid. Wait, that doesn't matter to you. You already have it because obviously you are part of the canine family. Look at you.

Happy Holidays from Sidelines...

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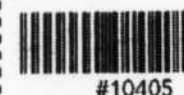
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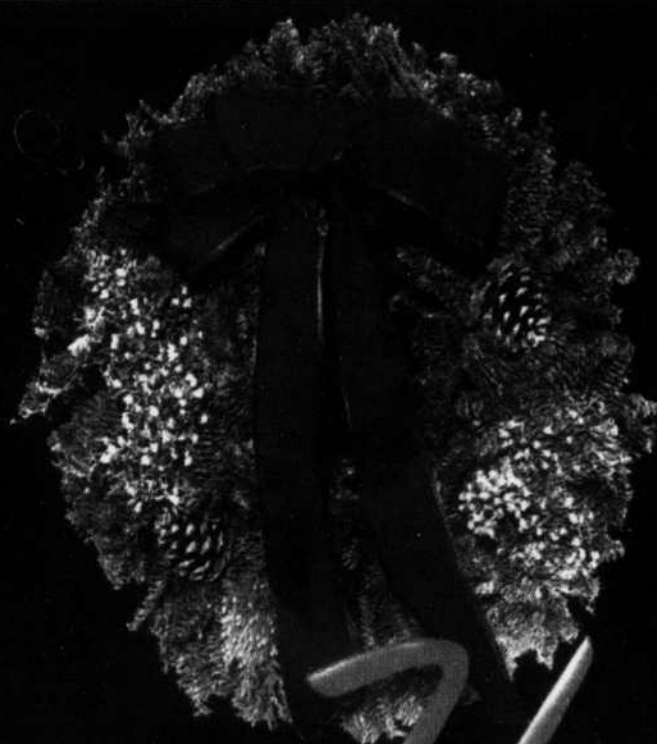
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