

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

EDITORIALLY INDEPENDENT

MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2009

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Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor
Kevin Holman dodges a snowball from his 3-year-old son, Gabriel, on MTSU's campus yesterday. Holman and his family drove more than an hour from White House, Tenn. to play in the snow.

MTSU blanketed in winter

By STAFF REPORT

Late Saturday evening, MTSU became engulfed in a snowstorm that coated the Murfreesboro area in an average of 4 inches of snow.

High windfall combined with increasing precipitation turned into massive snow coverage, which surprised many residents of Rutherford County.

The National Weather Service stated at 12:20 a.m. Sunday morning that 2 inches had accumulated in as little as one hour.

The campus awoke Sunday morning to fields of white, with snowmen and tracks of footprints showing the campus residents winter celebrations.

"I got up early to look at the snow [and] just to



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor
A snowman greets drivers on Middle Tennessee Boulevard yesterday at the Baptist Collegiate Ministry. Sara Wood, Brent Walker, James and Angelica Cable built the snowman.

play in it," said Tiffany Scott, a junior animal science major. "I wish it had come [Sunday night] so that school would be cancelled."

Some students have

found their journeys across campus to be quite a challenge.

"I find it to be hazardous," said Jason Absher, a freshman chemistry major. "I am worried for my safety

and the safety of others."

Want your snow pictures published? E-mail them to *Sidelines* for possible publication.
slsubmit@yahoo.com

Tuition hike raises concerns

Possible rise in tuition causes officials, university president to weigh in with responses exposing their point of view

By DUSTIN EVANS
Staff Writer

The strategic work group overseeing possible budget cuts within academics at MTSU released a suggestion to President Sidney McPhee on Feb. 12 showing the benefits of raising tuition in these times of economic crisis.

The report states that if an 8 percent tuition increase were authorized, revenue would increase by \$360 per full-time student. It also states that if approximately 23,000 students were to pay this increase, it would raise an estimated \$8.2 million in revenue for the university, thus substantially reducing the \$19 to 20 million of necessary budget cuts.

The recently approved congressional stimulus package suggests state

universities use the federal stimulus money instead of raising tuition costs.

"A public institution of higher education that receives funds under this title shall use the funds for education and general expenditures, and in such a way as to mitigate the need to raise tuition and fees for in-state students," according to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the recently signed stimulus package.

Gov. Phil Bredesen said in a recent interview that he may not wish to accept the stimulus money.

"We are evaluating this piece of money, whether it makes sense for us to take

it," Bredesen said to the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*. "We may well be one of the states that say we can't take on that portion of it."

Regardless of the state government's decision, the stimulus act will provide monetary support for college students through federal allocation.

Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, said on her Web site, speaker.gov, that the legislation will provide an increase of the higher education tax credit to a new minimum of \$2,500, an increase of the maximum Pell Grant by \$500. This would result in a new maximum of \$5,350 in 2009 and an

additional \$200 million to the national work study program.

"The American people expect bold and rapid action," Pelosi said. "That will modernize education to foster innovation and competitiveness in the global economy."

McPhee will make all of the final decisions regarding the Steering Committee and the Strategic Work Groups' suggestions by May 1.

"It is important to note that the information represents a work in progress and in no way reflects any formal decisions that have been made by MTSU," McPhee said in a letter regarding the "Positioning the University for the Future" campaign.

For further information, please visit mtsu.edu/strategic.



Results in: students vote their choice

McNary elected president, students say no to All-Access Campus Improvement Plan

By EMMA EGLI
Assistant News Editor

Brandon McNary defeated Steven Altum for Student Government Association president by 656 votes in an election that is vital to MTSU's future due to the impact of pending budget cuts.

Other winners in the election include Heather Rawson, executive vice president and speaker of the senate, Sarah Ayache, vice president of administration and public affairs, and Patrick Mertes, election commissioner.

All candidates who ran for positions in the senate won. Thirteen seats were left vacant, and no students ran for a senate position in the College of Mass Communication.

"The first thing I will be doing is meeting with President [Sidney] McPhee," McNary said. "We are going to sit down and talk about the most important thing: our education."

McNary said he will try his hardest to make sure that MTSU will remain an institution of higher education, despite the predicted budget cuts.

"I also want to make sure everyone has the ability and opportunity to speak up and tell us what's on their mind," McNary said. "Hopefully we can get a lot of great ideas, and we'll move from there."

Currently, the SGA president gets 100 percent of his or her tuition paid for, and McNary said that he will take a pay cut in order help the SGA budget.

"I'm going to have them reduce it to 75 percent," McNary said. "This won't be a permanent change for future presidents, but for my term, I want to save some of SGA's money."

Candidates will not take office until May 1, but until then, they will be preparing for their newly appointed positions.

"Right now, I'm just going to start reading up on everything," Rawson said. "It's going to be quite a process getting there. I've got a lot to learn, and it's going to be a challenge to transition."

Gene Fitch, associate vice president for Student Affairs and dean of Student Life, said he, as well as the previous officers, will be assisting them before they take office.

"We are going to sit down and talk about the most important thing: our education."

BRANDON MCNARY
SGA PRESIDENT-ELECT

"I think that the biggest thing that I emphasize every year is that they need to talk to each other," Fitch said. "Communication is the key for them to be successful."

Fitch said he feels confident in the candidates who won due to their abundant amount of experience with SGA. "Each one of them has experience and has served at least one year in the senate," Fitch said. "This will be a challenging year for everyone, but I'm looking forward to working with them."

Altum said he was frustrated that more of the student body didn't participate in the election considering all of the issues that are impacting the school.

"I think SGA elections don't allow enough time for candidates to present their platforms to students," Altum said. "Out of the entire student body, only 4,000 actually voted."

Altum said that although he lost, he will still actively fight for things he talked strongly about while running his campaign.

Despite the university spending \$10,000 on "vote yes" advertising for the "All-Access Campus Improvement Plan," students shot down the referendum by 380 votes.

The improvement plan stated that student fees would be raised for the next five years to a capped total of \$60 in order to help pay for a parking garage, additional buses and a new entrance to campus.

CURRENT EVENTS

Role Model
March 2-6
Monday-Thursday, 7 p.m. & 10 p.m.
Friday, 7 p.m.
Admission: \$2
Location: KUC Theater

U Decide: Drinking, Driving and Consequences

Held by MTSU Health Promotion Department
An MTSU alum will give a personal testimony on how her life changed after deciding to drink and drive.
Monday, March 2, 5-6 p.m.
Admission: FREE
Location: KUC Theater
More Information: call Lisa

Thompson at 615-494-8704

Christian Music Society Meeting
For students interested in participating.
Thursday, March 5 at 7 p.m.
Location: Bragg Mass Communication Building, Room 149
More Information: call Loren Mul-

rairie at 615-904-8364

Annuals
With Jessica Lee Mayfield and What Laura Says
Friday, March 6, 8 p.m.
Admission: \$10-\$12
Location: Exit/In
More Information: exitin.com

Musical Traditions of Rutherford County Program
Hear about the various music traditions of Rutherford County, featuring an exhibit showcasing John Work, III.
Thursday, March 12, 7 p.m.
Admission: FREE
Location: Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County

More Information: call 615-217-8031

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
March 16-20
Monday-Thursday, 7 p.m. & 10 p.m.
Friday, 7 p.m.
Admission: \$2 at KUC Theatre

CRIME BRIEFS

Feb. 24, 6:47 p.m.
Miscellaneous
Gracy Hall
Caller said that there has been an ongoing dispute over some property.

Feb. 25, 1:03 a.m.
Drug Possession
Alumni Drive
Bronson Ballew, Joshua Palmer, Brian Ricks and Alex Burk were arrested for simple possession of marijuana and unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia.

Feb. 25, 10:35 a.m.
Theft
Alumni Memorial Gym
Subject called and said that someone stole his wallet.

Feb. 25, 11:44 p.m.
Underage Drinking
Reynolds Hall
Samina Ahmad was issued a state citation for consumption of alcohol under the age of 21, and Dale Skipworth was issued a state citation for contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Feb. 25, 11:55 p.m.
Miscellaneous
Peck Hall
A smoke detector was activated on the second floor of Peck Hall in a janitor room.

Feb. 26, 12:46 a.m.
Suspicious Person
Womack Lane Apartments
Subject called stating that a suspicious person she reported seeing earlier was back in the area of her apartment.

Feb. 26, 3:25 a.m.
Possession of a weapon
Scarlett Commons parking lot
Mark Downing was arrested for possession of weapons on campus.

Feb. 26, 12:31 p.m.
Vandalism
Greenhouse lot
Officer saw subject writing on a vehicle's passenger window with lip balm. The officer made him clean it off.

Feb. 27, 3:01 a.m.
DUI
East Main Street
Mitchell Wood was arrested and charged for DUI and implied consent.

Feb. 27, 5:26 a.m.
Miscellaneous
Scarlett Commons
An officer responded to reports of a noise complaint.

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MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

| EDITORIALY INDEPENDENT |

HELP WANTED

Sidelines, the student-run newspaper of MTSU, is seeking the following positions for the spring semester:

News reporters
Feature writers
Opinion columnists
Sports writers
Photographers
Graphic designers
Advertising representatives

Meetings are Mondays and Thursdays at 6 p.m.
Please attend if you are interested. Mass Comm 269

SGA 2009-10 voting results



President
Brandon McNary-1,853
Steve Altum-1,197

McNary



**Exec. Vice President,
Speaker of the Senate**
Heather Rawson-2,049
Michael Borella-989

Rawson



**Vice Pres. of Admin.
and Public Affairs**
Sarah Ayache-1,829
Erin Johnson-1,249

Ayache



**Election
Commissioner
(one candidate)**
Patrick Mertes-2,766

Mertes

**College of Liberal Arts senators
(5 seats available)**
Brittney Sceals-332
Brandon Thomas-299
Courtnei Secrest-288
Samuel Ashby-275
Samantha Nichols-255

**College of Business senators
(5 seats available)**
Aaron Adkisson-349
Bonnie Hix-305
Michael Hollis-210
Kenneth Whorles-179

**College of Education, Behavioral Sciences
(5 seats available)**
Chloe Robinson-472
JaMichael Smith-351

**College of Mass Comm. senators
(4 seats available)**
No students ran for senate seat

**At-Large senators
(5 seats available)**
Adam Kelly-1,847
Blake Jenkins-1,358
Michael Roberge-1,329

**College of Basic and Applied Sciences
(8 seats available)**
Samantha Cobb-407
Aaron Bertrand-383
Erika Maclin-371
Jennifer Lee-361
Christopher Jones-332
Matt Russell-315
Jeff Higginbotham-304

**Undeclared senators
(3 seats available)**
Meagan Daugherty-224

Check into Travel Clinic before break

Student Health Services reminds students to make appointments before going abroad

By FAITH FRANKLIN
Community News Editor

Student Health Services' Travel Clinic, which opened last fall, is reminding students and faculty members to visit the clinic before traveling internationally for spring break or studying abroad.

The Travel Clinic is open during regular SHS hours. It was established in response to MTSU increasing study-abroad population, said Eric Clark, a university physician for SHS.

"If students are planning on going to another country, [they should] check with us," Clark said. "We will sit down and check their itinerary and see if they need any vaccinations or medications for their trip."

Traveling to some countries without proper vaccinations can have negative consequences, Clark said.

"It depends on where you are going," Clark said. "We have a lot of students who

are going to underdeveloped countries that are not like the United States and West Europe, where there are a little bit more tropical diseases."

Clark said the biggest concern for a student who contracts a disease while traveling is that the he or she could become critically ill in a country that does not have adequate access to appropriate medical care.

Students are encouraged to visit the Travel Clinic months before they depart.

"The earlier the better," Clark said. "If students are planning on going on a trip, the earlier they can let us know, the more likely we can get all the vaccines in."

According to the Centers for Disease Control individuals traveling internationally should set up an appointment with their health care provider at least four to six weeks before departing.

"Many vaccines take time to become effective,

and some vaccines must be given in a series over a period of days or sometimes weeks," the CDC's Web site said.

Clark said that another thing for students to be aware of is the possible need for follow-up visits to the Travel Clinic after returning to MTSU.

"If students are going to a country that has high incidents of tuberculosis we can tell them that before they leave so they will be aware of it," Clark said. "When they come back, we can give them a TB skin test."

There is no cost to students for visiting the Travel Clinic.

To make an appointment, can call 898-2988 or visit mtsu.edu/healthservices.

Student Health Services is open Mon-Thu from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and Fridays from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.

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Latest lecture series initiates Athena search

By CORBIN PHILLIPS
Contributing Writer

The latest lecture in the 2009 Spring Honors Lecture series, "Wisdom and Knowledge in Honors Education," is scheduled to take place today in the Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building Amphitheater.

The lecture is part of a distinguished series entitled "Searching for Athena: An Exploration of Honors and Gifted Education." Ada Long, founding director of the University of Alabama at Birmingham's nationally renowned Honors Program, is scheduled to present the lecture.

Long also authors a journal called *Honors in Practice* for the Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council and is a former president of the National Collegiate Honors Council.

Today's lecture will focus on honors programs in college and the K-12 "gifted" education system. It will also look into standardized tests such as the ACT and SAT and see if they truly represent students' knowledge.

"What we're trying to do with this series is to look at both of these worlds [honors and gifted education]," said Scott Carnicom, associ-

ate dean of the Honors College. "We want to compare and contrast them and see what makes them different."

Carnicom said the lecture is free and anyone is welcome to attend.

Carnicom is scheduled to present a lecture on March 16 entitled "Portraits of 'Intelligence' in Popular Films."

"Not only are we talking about honors education from a philosophical standpoint but also from a sociological standpoint," Carnicom said. "As an honors college, we aspire to be a national leader in honors education."

Final report available today

STAFF REPORT

The Steering Committee, the group overseeing possible budget cut suggestions at MTSU, is

scheduled release its final report today. The report, which contains research and suggestions compiled by four subcommittees, was submitted to Sidney

McPhee Friday. To view the complete report, visit mtsu.edu/strategic. For continuing budget cut coverage, visit mtsusidelines.com.

Urbana University asks for help Charity fundraiser to benefit three graduate students injured in auto collision in 2007

STAFF REPORT

Urbana University in Urbana, Ohio is collecting donations to aid three Chinese families who lost their children in a fatal car wreck on March 8, 2007.

Nearly two years ago, three graduate students from Urbana University – Bian Jin, Sun Yan and Xue Bing – were returning from shopping and died in a multi-car collision.

The continuing concern for the three students' moth-

ers is the extensive sums of money they had to borrow from friends and families to send their children to school, along with the costs of the funeral arrangements.

"You return what you owe," said Yu Ming, the mother of Sun Yan, in an interview with CNN. "It is the bible of heaven and the ground rule of Earth."

According to the CNN interview with the mothers, the Chinese rarely borrow money from banks, and

personal debts are taken with severity. Filing for bankruptcy and making excuses are not even an option for the people of China.

Urbana University has already raised tens of thousands of dollars, and they have vowed to maintain the charity indefinitely.

Send donations to
c/o Jim Wilson
Office of Development
Urbana University
579 College Way
Urbana, Ohio 43078

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FEATURES

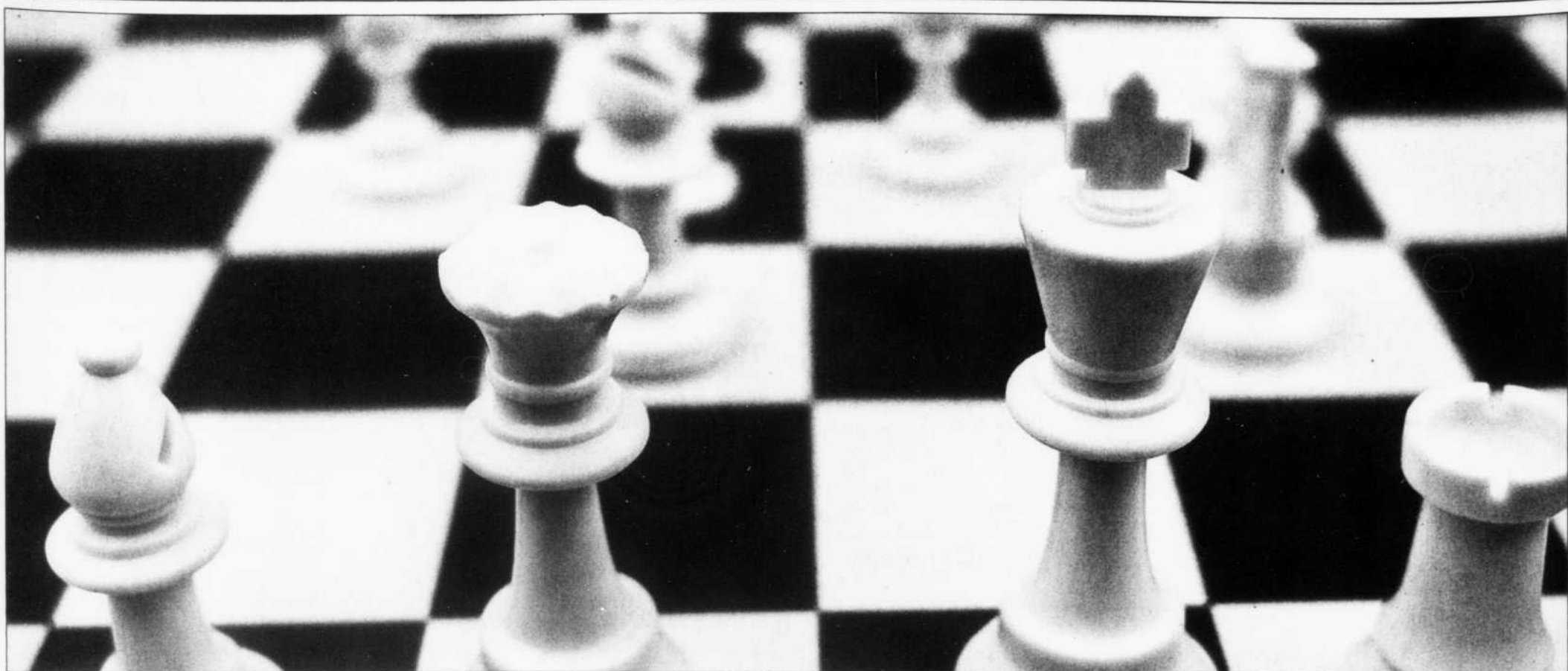
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Photo illustration by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

Chess, one of the oldest games in the world, originated in the Middle East, according to luxurychess.com. The word "checkmate" is derived from the Persian phrase "shah mat," meaning "the king is defeated."

A beautiful checkmate

Story of classic board game that requires critical analysis, provides deadly fun time

By MICHAEL STONE
Editor-in-Chief

Most of them will die, that is if it's a good game.

The matches my opponent and I play are always of the utmost quality, at least in my opinion.

There are many who would observe our competitions and laugh within the confines of their ingenious heads.

I'm playing with white and he's using black. Chess is often joked about as a racist game - white always goes first.

Chess, though, is firm on its stance for female superiority. The queen is powerful, but the king can do no more than attempt to not be killed.

I begin by moving one of my eight pawns - D2 to D4. My goal is to control the center of the compilation of black and white squares that once weaved together make up the battlefield. If you control the center, you control the game.

I foresee where the game is traveling with the first move. The more

chess battles you participate in, the more your mind transforms into a crystal ball.

Each move affects the whole flow of the game, and the more games you play, the more you realize what is likely to happen.

Chess is an art that requires quick and deep planning. If you don't develop tentative blueprints

and gloat on the inside.

The object of chess is to "checkmate" your opponent's king. Checkmate is when the threatened enemy's king can move to no square without being "killed" by one of your soldiers or defended by one of his own.

As our battle continues, I don't attempt to checkmate my opponent - he and I have developed our strategies enough to know neither of us will let an early checkmate happen.

Instead, I try to sway the game in my favor with positioning, planning and patience.

About 20 moves into the contest,

my opponent makes a move that I swear to myself has happened in a previous game.

Déjà vu happens often in chess. A frequent player's subconscious becomes a filing cabinet full of various patterns constructed of pawns and rooks, bishops and knights, kings and queens.

The game is turning toward my favor, but my opponent makes a perfect

The Chess Club of MT

Weekly meetings:
Tuesdays @ 7 p.m.

Where: KUC 316

for your moves, your hazard, arbitrary choices will lead to your demise.

I form a plan early - to "fork" my opponent and good friend's rook and king with my knight. I would attempt to explain the term "fork" to you if you consider chess an alien being. But it would be difficult to do so without provoking a large sigh.

Success. My plan to fork my opponent works. I scream



Photo illustration by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

The names of chess pieces - king, queen, knight, bishop and pawn - originated from the Middle Ages, according to luxurychess.com. Some believe the game was first brought to Europe during the Crusades.

move, followed by another and then another. He now has better control of the battlefield.

My mind quickly rushes to the drawing board so I may once again be the dominating force.

I sense weakness and fear from my opponents

remaining plastic troops. I capitalize.

The black king's mannerisms convey a longing to escape his 8 x 8 prison that is a chessboard. But there is no room for breaking the rules of chess in this formal yet casual match.

I push his king about the

board until he finally submits.

Checkmate. Beautiful. "Good game, man," my opponent, Dedrick Mitchell, says in the spirit of good sportsmanship. "I think chess is the most beautiful game ever invented."

CALENDAR

movies, music, nightlife and more

MUSIC

March 2

Mr. Satisfaction @ Club 527 - 8 p.m.

March 3

Blues Jam @ Club 527 - 9 p.m. - \$5

March 4

Nashville All Star Band @ Graffiti Bar - 8 p.m.

Penny Beer/DJ Spins the Fun @ Club 527 - 8 p.m.

March 5

S.O.S. @ Graffiti Bar - 8 p.m.

Behind the Sun (Red Hot Chili Peppers Tribute) @ Club 527 - 10 p.m.

March 6

Losing Hope @ Club 527

- 8 p.m.

The Middlemen w/ We Were the States, Bohannons @ Wall Street - 9 p.m.

Paper Route w/ Former, The Compromise, Dear Future @ Club 527 - 9 p.m.

Christian Bradley @ Graffiti Bar - 10 p.m.

March 7

Fuel 2 the Fire @ The Boro - 8 p.m.

Ronnie Pittman Band @ Graffiti Bar - 8 p.m.

Los Cobra w/ Millionaire Magicians, Black Catfish @ Wall Street - 9 p.m.

Cold Truth @ Club 527 - 10 p.m.

March 8

The American Life w/ Callahan, Sail by the Stars @ Club 527 - 7 p.m.

PacAKracRs @ Graffiti Bar - 9 p.m.

OTHER

March 2

Joker's Poker @ Graffiti Bar - 7 p.m.

March 3

Karaoke Contest @ Graffiti Bar - 9 p.m.

March 4

Live Trivia @ Wall Street - 8 p.m.

Submit events to
slfeatur@mtsu.edu

Letters Policy

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

OPINIONS

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

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Budget cut decisions needed sooner

The Steering Committee, the group overseeing possible budget cuts for MTSU, is scheduled to release its final report today. The committee will not finalize "suggestions" on the report until May 1.

The purpose of the suggestions is to prepare MTSU to receive around \$19 million less in state appropriation funding for the upcoming school year.

It seems like the administrators overseeing these cuts have already made up their minds as to what they are going to give the ax to but are just keeping consistent with the word "suggestions" to soften the blow.

One of the "suggestions" is to cut the MTSU all-girl's cheerleading squad, but in talking with members of the team, it appears the squad has already been eliminated. The girls are not being allowed to try out with the other two "Spirit Teams," the dance team and the co-ed cheerleading team, during tryouts near the end of March.

The suggestions will be finalized on a Friday – the first day of final exams and near the beginning of the summer break. Releasing the final decisions on this date would lessen the amount of outcry but still allow MTSU administration to state that it announced the decisions during the spring semester.

A member of the Faculty Senate said that university officials make a lot of decisions during the summer when many students who would be affected by those decisions are not active at MTSU. The move as a whole is rather disturbing, though clever, and will keep possibly unpopular cuts under the radar and out of the realm of public discourse.

So what's the solution?

We at Sidelines call on MTSU President Sidney McPhee, the Steering Committee and all of the other committees involved in attempting to strategize before the brunt of the budget cuts hit home for a drastically increased level of transparency in terms of the budget's real breakdown and effects.

Reports with "suggestions" are nowhere near sufficient and are filled with jargon that could potentially confuse the average student.

If McPhee is willing "to do whatever it takes," as he said he would at his Town Hall Meeting, surely fulfilling his duty to students is preferable for him over cutting back his frugal \$250,000 annual salary.

Lazy students hurt MTSU

Last week, the student body elected its new Student Government Association president.

Or, rather, roughly 10 percent of the student body did.

A little more than 3,000 students voted for the SGA president, with these numbers dwindling as the positions continued.

Three thousand. In a school that has more than 22,000 students, I find it disheartening, and regrettably laughable, that such a small slice of the students here would take the time to vote on something so important to MTSU as a whole.

Voting for SGA president probably seems futile or idiotic to some students who perhaps fail to see the connection between whom they elect and how the SGA will handle these turbulent times. Or perhaps they just don't care.

In this period of budget cuts, students also seem lethargic or apathetic to the severity of what these cuts will actually do to campus programs. Why is this?

Are students just fed up with all the brouhaha being brought up by faculty and staff concerning the budget? Or are they just



Desist! Rely! Conform!

Byron Wilkes

unaware of the real impact the administration's future decisions will have on them?

I suspect it's part of a larger trend of gross student inactivity on campus.

Granted there are a number of students who have gone above and beyond their education's call of duty.

Many students are formally organizing and protesting the Tennessee Board of Regents' proposed shake-up of universities across Tennessee, even physically going to the Capitol and making their views known to legislators.

The sad fact is these students compose a bleak minority. There is only so much such a small contingent of students with limited connections can do.

The languid larger portion of the student popu-

lation must make some attempt to mobilize itself, and it must be done on an individual basis.

Students need to realize the only way they can hope to have a hand in the university's future is if they get involved and start actively participating in extracurricular activities on campus.

How hard is it really to get involved with a single college organization?

If you're interested in helping the environment, there's Students for Environmental Action.

If you're interested in horses, there's the Equestrian Team of MTSU.

If you're interested in global affairs, there's the Society for International Affairs.

There is a veritable laundry list of the more than 200 organizations MTSU offers students in which they can participate on our school's Web site.

But without students involved in them, many of these organizations and clubs, as well as the educational opportunities afforded by them, stand to be lost forever in the wake of the school's budget burden.

It's ironic to me how quick people are to judge fraternities or sororities for being essentially useless on campus, existing only to party and go to sporting events. In reality, the Greek population is probably the most mobile, interconnected and visible student bloc on campus.

Not only do members dedicate much of their on-campus lives to the organization with which they are

could learn a lesson from their Hellenic peers.

If more students got involved with organizations and took the initiative to participate, life on campus would change drastically.

There would be an increased level of connectivity between students, with networks forming between students involved with the same groups, and even on a larger scale, with clubs becoming more and more

familiar with members of other like-minded clubs.

Students would meet

new people and form connections that could last into their professional lives and prove to be particularly valuable.

It's no secret that having a few college organizations can't hurt one's résumé, but why aren't more students taking advantage of this?

Byron Wilkes is a senior journalism major and can be reached at bdw3t@mtsu.edu.

To read more, visit us online.



Higher ed revamp coming, be heard

State Sen. Jim Kyle, D-Memphis, introduced legislation last week that would restructure higher education by eliminating the Tennessee Board of Regents and University of Tennessee systems and replacing them with a unified system under which all higher education institutions would be governed.

SB 2122 – the "Streamlining Higher and Post-secondary Education (SHAPE) Act" – reads, "The Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the present systems of governance of the University of Tennessee system and the [Tennessee] Board of Regents system shall cease to exist on July 1, 2010." This legislation compels THEC, TBR and UT to submit plans for restructuring by January 2010 for consideration and possible implementation.

In an interview, Kyle remarked, "All we're trying to



Hurt Pride

Matt Hurtt

do here is force educators to examine themselves, come forward with a better way and tell us what it is. If they can't do that, then we'll do it for them."

Kyle's proposal is not the only one that has been filed, as Sen. Andy Berke, D-Chattanooga, filed a similar bill that would establish a task force to investigate the possibility of streamlining higher education and propose recommendations accordingly.

The culmination of three events likely created an environment feasible for this discussion: UT President John Petersen tendered his resignation

several weeks ago; TBR suspended its search for Chancellor Manning's replacement; and Tennessee is currently experiencing a near \$1 billion budget shortfall. These factors are causing lawmakers to think outside the box in an effort to both reduce costs and increase the efficiency of higher education.

Students should inject themselves into this discussion. Lawmakers routinely allow experts to testify before committees on the specifics of any given piece of legislation. Sens. Kyle's and Berke's bills will be heard in the Education Committee, chaired by Delores Gresham, in the Senate and in the Higher Education Subcommittee, chaired by David Hawk, in the House.

Concerned students should contact these legislators – and the other members of these committees – in order to affect debate. Surprisingly enough,

elected officials will not only listen to student recommendations and opinions, but they openly welcome them.

Both sets of bills have each been filed in the House and Senate and will soon be placed on the calendar for their respective committees. To find these bills online, visit capitol.tn.gov. Make sure these elected officials understand that you want to be part of the debate.

This is an extremely important time for higher education in Tennessee, but lawmakers and experts are the only voices in this debate. Students – who will likely be most affected by any significant changes to the existing systems – should actively engage these decision makers.

The possibility of merging the systems might seem like an easy task on paper, as both proposals are only about a page in length, but the concrete implications

of such a proposal are undoubtedly complex. The UT offices are located in Knoxville, while the offices for the TBR are in Nashville. Resources will likely need to be combined and services standardized for the merger to work effectively.

Academic programs and courses would need to be standardized, as well. At present, certain credits are non-transferable from one system to the other. These and other issues currently encumber a facilitated relationship between the systems.

Make no mistake, merging UT and TBR will not be easy, but the political atmosphere lends itself to lawmakers tackling this important issue in the very near future. Don't let the lawmakers and experts leave you out of the debate.

Matthew Hurtt is a senior history/political science major and can be reached at Matt.Hurtt@gmail.com.

COMICS



"And Friends"

frankhasenmueller@gmail.com

Frank Hasenmueller

Catch women's basketball head coach Rick Insell today at Coach's Grill at 6 p.m.

At 8 p.m. Insell will be on Sportsline (50+) with Hope Hines



SPORTS



Baseball team will take on Memphis at Reese Smith Jr. Field on Tuesday, March 3 at 4 p.m. and Wednesday, March 4 at 3 p.m.

Lady Raiders finish season with 87-61 win



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Junior guard Chelsia Lymon protects the ball from WKU's Vanessa Obafemi in the 87-61 win yesterday in the Murphy Center.

By CHRIS WELCH
Sports Editor

The Lady Raiders put their mark on the 2008-2009 season with an 87-61 hometown victory over the WKU Lady Toppers yesterday. The win sealed their place as the regular season Sun Belt Conference champions and gives them a further advantage in tournament play.

Junior forward Alysha Clark, still the nation's leading scorer, shot for a Murphy Center record 45 total points in her 39 minutes of play. Clark further assisted the team with yet another double-double, while junior guard Chelsia Lymon assisted with her 16 total points.

Both sophomore guard Anne Marie Lanning and junior guard Jackie Pickel also had good point games, scoring 10 and nine points, respectively. Lanning also had a game-high six assists, leading her hand to the three MT players who scored in double digits.

The Lady Toppers started

the game with a jumper by WKU's Amy McNear. McNear and sophomore guard Hope Brown led WKU for most of the first half.

Lymon's 3-pointer—the first of four—at 15:10 helped get MT back into the game. This put the score at 9-5 and sparked the Lady Raider charge.

"Coach [Rick] Insell always tells me it's the point guard's fault when things go wrong, and it's the point guard's fault when things go right," Lymon said. "So when our team was down, the only thing I could do was knock down my shots."

Lymon and the rest of the Lady Raiders got into a groove by eight minutes into the game and would not turn the lead over again. MT went into the half after a basket by junior guard Dana Garrett, leading 48-28.

The Lady Raiders defense stepped up during the second half, answering almost every WKU point with another Blue Raider basket.

With a supportive Blue Raider Nation cheering the

team on, the Lady Raiders scored 42 percent of their field goals in the second half, bringing the tally to 87 total points by the end of the night.

Despite the early difficulties, the 87-61 win was enough to grant the MT women's basketball team the regular season SBC title.

"It's tough [to win the conference championship]," Insell said. "It's a long grind. When we went to FAU, they outplayed us. They deserved to win and they did."

"It's tough to win a championship and I feel for everyone around the country who is trying to win one."

MT enters the Sun Belt Championship tournament as the No. 1 seed. They will face the winner of No. 8 Florida Atlantic/No. 9 New Orleans game this Saturday in Hot Springs, Ark.

Photo slideshow

online

www.mtsusidelines.com

Men's basketball drop season finale against rival WKU

By ZACH REVES
Assistant Sports Editor

The Blue Raiders couldn't overcome a poor start as they fell just short in their second half comeback attempt with a 49-68 loss to Western Kentucky Saturday night.

After trailing 17-39 at the half, MT closed within four points in the second half, but the boys in blue couldn't bridge the gap with WKU, who clinched the Sun Belt Championship with the victory.

In this regular season finale, the Blue Raiders fell behind early due to a combination of foul trouble, poor shooting and a toothless defense in front of more than 5,100 fans in the Murphy Center. Despite these problems, MT almost came back in the second half.

"We couldn't get over the hump in our comeback and score those last four points," said senior guard Kevin Kanaskie who broke MT's all-time record for games played with his final regular season and 122nd contest. "You can't beat a

team like WKU with the first half we had."

And what a first half it was. The Blue Raiders tied a season-low for points scored in a half with 17. MT shot only 28 percent from the floor and 20 percent from behind the three-point arc. WKU, however, shot 56 percent from the floor including 5-for-11 from downtown.

MT turned it around in the second half, outscoring WKU 32-29. The Blue Raiders also shot 57 percent from the floor compared to WKU's 38 percent. But the halftime gap was too large, and the effort came a little too late.

"We caved in at the end," MT head coach Kermit Davis said. "I'm proud of our comeback attempt, but I can't sugarcoat it, we got beat by a rival."

Davis also said that foul trouble hurt his team and its momentum all night long. Junior forward Desmond Yates, who leads the team in points per game, fouled out three minutes into the second half. Senior guards Nigel Johnson

and Demetrius Green also collected five fouls in the game and were forced to watch the rest of it from the bench.

The Blue Raiders were led in scoring by junior forward Montarrio Haddock who totaled 13 points and added four rebounds. Junior guard Calvin O'Neil and Kanaskie both contributed 10 points and four rebounds for the game.

Senior guard Orlando Mendez-Valdez led a balanced WKU offense with 19 points, 5 rebounds and 5 assists. Three other WKU starters scored in the double figures.

The loss ends MT's regular season with a record of 17-13 and 10-8 in the SBC. The Blue Raiders end the season in fifth place in the SBC.

MT began the first half neck and neck with WKU until the second time out at the 11 minute mark. After the break, WKU came out on fire with a 16-2 run that was fueled by 10 points provided by Mendez-Valdez. MT could do little to stop WKU's superior play from

the Hilltopper's guards.

"We had poor perimeter play," Davis said. "We were ineffective defensively in the first half."

WKU cruised into halftime with a comfortable 39-17 lead. In the second half, MT started attacking the lane, and WKU had little response. A 21-5 run was orchestrated by the Blue Raiders who closed the gap to 44-40 on a steal and lay-up play by senior guard Eric Allen.

"Middle [Tennessee] is a good basketball team," WKU head coach Ken McDonald said. "They always keep coming back, and they never go away easy."

However, WKU turned it around and started making big shots, including an AJ Slaughter 3-pointer with no time left on the shot clock to extend the WKU lead to 10.

Down the stretch, MT lost its fire as the team failed to put in a field goal in the last six minutes of play. WKU made 7-of-10 free throws in that same stretch to finish out the game.

Despite the loss, the Blue

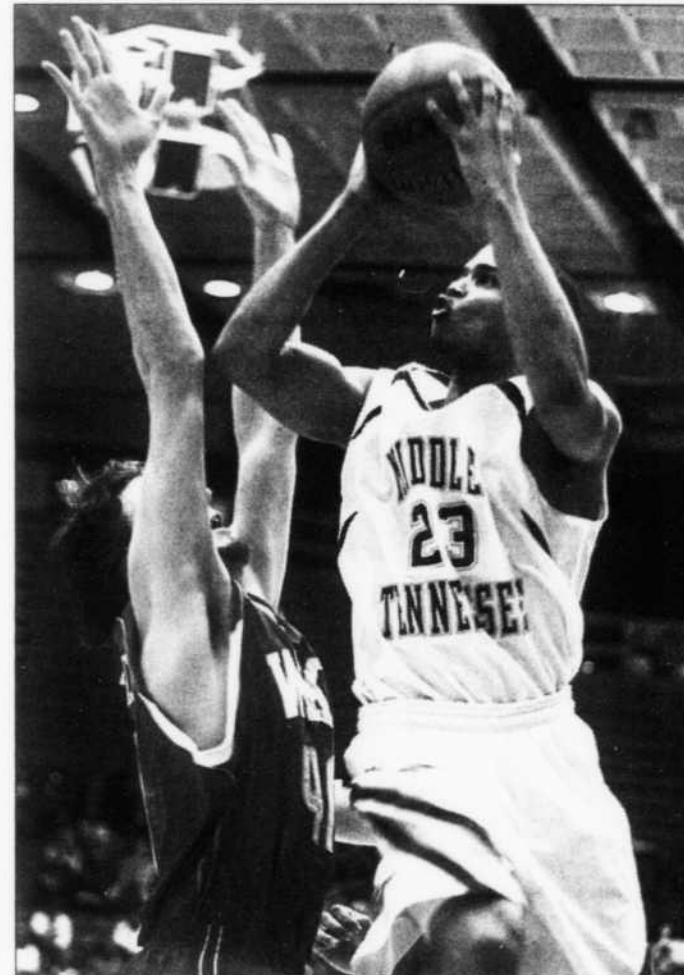


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Demetrius Green reaches for a layup for the score against WKU Saturday in the Murphy Center.

Raiders will host a first round home game in the Sun Belt Championship. MT will enter the tournament as the fifth seed and

they will host 12th seed Arkansas State Wednesday at 7 p.m. The Blue Raiders defeated ASU 60-57 earlier this season.

MT men's track team champions, women's team clench second place

By CHRIS WELCH AND
JAY BAILEY
Sports Staff

Men's track and field finished first place in the Sun Belt Championships at Arkansas State University last weekend with a score of 131 points placing Western Kentucky in second.

Carl Morgan further impressed as well earning a NCAA provisional mark after placing first in the Long Jump with a leap of 24-10.00. Stanley Gbagbeke came in second behind Carl Morgan with a personal best 24-06.50 jump to earn a NCAA provisional mark as well.

Morgan and Gbagbeke scored a combined 41 points for the Men's team in the first day of competition.

An outstanding performance from sophomore Festus Chemaoui in both the 800-meter and the 1 mile run helped to secure the Blue

Raiders' Victory. Chemaoui continued to score points for the Raiders by placing second behind William Songock in the 3,000 meter.

Freshman Roscoe Payne impressed crowds placing second in the 55-meter hurdles with a time of 7.36 behind Junior DeRay Sloss. Sloss placed first with a time of 7.36 seconds.

The women's track team placed second of 11 last weekend, garnering 93 total points in the Sun Belt Championships.

In addition to team accolades, junior distance runner Sarah Nambawa was chosen as the Most Outstanding Female Field Athlete. Nambawa earned the award after an eventful season in which she shattered records in the triple jump and the 800 meter.

Nambawa, junior Zamzam Singau, and junior

Brittany Cox highlighted the overall performance.

Senior TraMayne Gilliard took fourth in the 400 meter sprint, while Ashley Comstock finished fifth in the mile and 3000 meter.

"Ashley Comstock really made a big difference for us," said MT track head coach Dean Hayes. "It was really great to see her do well as a senior. Sarah and Zamzam were our biggest contributors, but I was really proud of all our athletes."

This is the end of the indoor season of MT track and field. Select athletes will travel to Ames, Iowa, for the NCAA Last Chance Meet next weekend, with a possibility of qualifying for the NCAA Indoor.

The teams will begin their outdoor track season March 21 at Rhodes College in Memphis, at the Rhodes Open Meet.



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Sophomore Nyeisha Wright (center) sprints down the track in the 55-meter dash in the Murphy Center during the MT Valentine Invitational.