

Tenn. ghost hunters find evidence at historic landmarks
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MON
84°/63°



TUES
81°/59°



WED
78°/60°



MT baseball takes series win against South Alabama
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MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

EDITORIALLY INDEPENDENT

MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2009

VOL. 85, NO. 27

Texting while driving clashes in House

By DUSTIN EVANS
Assistant Production Manager

The Tennessee State House of Representatives is scheduled to take a vote on legislation today that would crack down on individuals that send text messages while driving.

The bill, which passed in the state Senate with a 23-6 vote, institutes a class C misdemeanor and comes with a \$50 fine to those drivers who are caught texting while driving.

"My hope is that it will bring [the problem] to light [for] law enforcement," said Sen. Jim Tracy, R-Shelbyville, who introduced the legislation on the Senate floor.

Tracy said that the bill would be effective, even though the bill would be considered a non-moving violation and would not put any points on the offender's license.

"People as a whole like to follow the law, so hopefully this will deter people from texting while driving," Tracy said.

The bill is being opposed by members of state legislation, like Senate Minority Leader Jim Kyle, D-Memphis, who said he feels that texting while driving is already illegal in Tennessee.

"We already outlaw reckless driving and driving while distracted," Kyle said via Twitter.com on April 23.

Kyle also said via Twitter.com that the bill was re-

dundant, a viewpoint that is shared by MTSU students like Mellissa Nicholson, a freshman accounting major.

"It's not safe, but I still do it," Nicholson said. "I think [the bill is] stupid, they just want some of our money."

Similar legislation has been passed in 11 other states — Alaska, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Louisiana, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, Utah, Virginia and Washington, as well as the District of Columbia.

"This is a start and we will see how it goes," Tracy said. "It will get people to think about it."

Shaun Surgener, a sophomore pre-med major, said he thinks that the penalty is not enough to really make a difference.

"I don't really think a \$50 fine is all that much, so I don't think it would help out a whole lot," Surgener said. "It would still be pretty easy to get away with texting while driving, because you can have [the phone] near your lap."

Surgener said that while the bill as it stands may not enforce texting while driving, something should be done to keep people safe.

"I really don't think it should be allowed simply because it is pretty distracting while you are driving," Surgener said. "You should have most of your attention on the road and what's going on around you."



Photo illustration by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

A new bill could be passed making driving and text messaging illegal. Driving while text messaging is distracting, according to some representatives, and could be punishable with a \$50 fine.



Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photographer

Si Liu (left), a business administration major, talks to Greg Ryan, a political science professor, about the MTSU on Friday at the Rotaract Club picnic in Walnut Grove.

Rotaract Club holds picnic for English Language Services

By SPENCER MOHEAD
Staff Writer

The Rotaract Club, in association with the Breakfast Rotary Club, held a picnic for MTSU's English Language Service students as a celebration of their graduation and an opportunity for them to mingle at Walnut Grove on Friday.

Several MTSU colleges, including Business, Behav-

ioral Sciences, Liberal Arts and the University Honors College, sent representatives to advise the ELS students and tell them about their respective colleges.

"This was so nice," said Maegen Endert, ELS international student adviser and MTSU alumna. "Every opportunity [for ELS students to] interact with native English speakers is great [because] it makes us

feel more like a part of the school."

ELS is an English-language program that coordinates with MTSU. The international students take intensive 20 to 30 hour weeks within several four-week sessions to learn English, grammar and academic formatting in an hands-on environment.

ROTARACT, PAGE 3

Referendum to enlarge SGA Senate passes

By MICHAEL STONE
Editor in Chief

The student body voted in favor of a referendum this week that will increase the number of senators in the Student Government Association.

The referendum, which passed 921-288, states that the number of SGA senators will be based on every 500 students within each of MTSU's five main colleges. Before the referendum, the number of senators was based on every 750 students. This legislation will apply for every 500 undeclared students as well.

The referendum also states that the current number of large senators will be changed from 5 to 7.

Brandon McNary, executive vice president, president elect and speaker of the Senate, said this will help create more diversity in the SGA, allow the organization to reach out to more students and create more debate within certain legislation.

The senators that will fill the empty seats created by the referendum are scheduled to be selected in the fall during a special vote to correlate with the Homecoming elections. After this election, the additional seats, along with all other SGA positions, will be voted on during the SGA's spring elections.

The number of additional seats will be determined by fall enrollment. McNary said that he predicts the number will be approximately 16.

Critics of the referendum have said that the Senate's expansion is a misappropriation of funds and that the SGA

"It's about properly [publicizing] it, and you'll get enough people to do it."

BRANDON MCNARY

SGA EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT ELECT

didn't take the proper steps to inform the students about the legislation.

"It's going to create animosity," said Steven Altum, a senior liberal arts major and former SGA election commissioner. "With the university having to cut \$20 million over the next two years, for us to increase the size of our SGA and to bring that cost onto is hypocritical of the SGA."

Altum, who was defeated this spring by McNary for SGA president for the 2009-10 school year, said that each senator is provided with various supplies and participates in "retreats" funded by the SGA budget.

"The cost adds up," Altum said.

Altum said that there was "very little publicity for this vote," and the SGA only publicized it to people that would be impacted by it.

"They really pushed it toward the Greek organizations," Altum said. "It's also the wrong time to have a vote

because people are getting ready to graduate and take their finals."

Critics have also cited that since the Senate had 15 vacant seats after the last SGA

elections, the organization won't be able to fill the increase in number of seats.

McNary, who will take over as SGA president at the beginning of May, said that vacant seats don't happen because of a lack in interest, but because students aren't aware of how to join the organization.

"It's about properly [publicizing] it, and you'll get enough people to do it," McNary said.

The president-elect, who is in charge of appointing the 15 empty senate seats for next school year, said he has been able to recruit students to fill those seats. The Senate will decide on McNary's appointments through a simple-majority vote on May 8.

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MTSU to host 'The Big Breast Cancer Festival'

By ALICIA WILSON
Production Manager

"The Big Breast Cancer Festival" is scheduled for Wednesday, April 29, in the Learning Resource Center's room 221 from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. in an effort to raise awareness and funds to assist one student's fight against breast cancer.

MTSU Records, Omega Delta Psi and Word Up will be sponsoring the event, which is a benefit show for Brenda Navarro, an MTSU student battling breast cancer.

Navarro, 19, a sophomore anthropology and global studies major, said she was diagnosed with breast cancer shortly after turning 18. Doctors first told her the cancer was at stage one and had a tumor that had not spread to her lymph nodes.

"About a year and a half later, the cancer is at stage two," Navarro said. "The treatment has become more in depth."

Navarro said that the impact on her life "has been ridiculous." She added that as a full-time student working two jobs to pay medical bills, she is about \$78,000 in debt because she doesn't have health insurance.

"School has probably been impacted more than anything in my life," Navarro said. "My treatments are always in the morning, which is when I have classes, so it messes up my grades and messes up my money."

However, Navarro said she still recognizes the positive effects of her illness.

"It's made me way stronger than I was before," Navarro

said. "It's helped me slow down a lot and not take things for granted."

Austin Ellis, a senior recording industry major and artist for MTSU Records, the student-run record label, is one of the individuals actively involved in promoting the benefit.

"When I met her, it was obvious that I needed to help her," Ellis said. "The idea that we have the choice to help others is becoming more recognized these days and I hope it continues."

For those who are unable to attend but still wish to make a contribution, private donations will be accepted through MTSU Records. All proceeds will go directly to Brenda Navarro. To arrange donations, contact Austin Ellis at 410-703-7014.

Tenn. state trooper tests positive for drugs

ASSOCIATED PRESS

A state trooper in Memphis, Tenn., who was assigned to the drug interdiction squad could lose his job after a random drug test tested positive for amphetamines.

Trooper Mark D. Williams was on duty when the amphetamines were found. The *Tennessean* reported

Sunday that Williams, who works in Crockett County, could not provide a valid medical reason for the drugs, according to Safety Department documents.

Later, Williams said it's possible that he mistakenly took Adderall — used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder — which is prescribed for a family member.

The Department of Safety notified Williams on Friday of its intent to terminate him based on the drug test findings and accompanying violations of policy.

Williams, 41, has a due process meeting with Department of Safety officials Thursday.

He remains on administrative leave with pay.

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

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

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

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



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

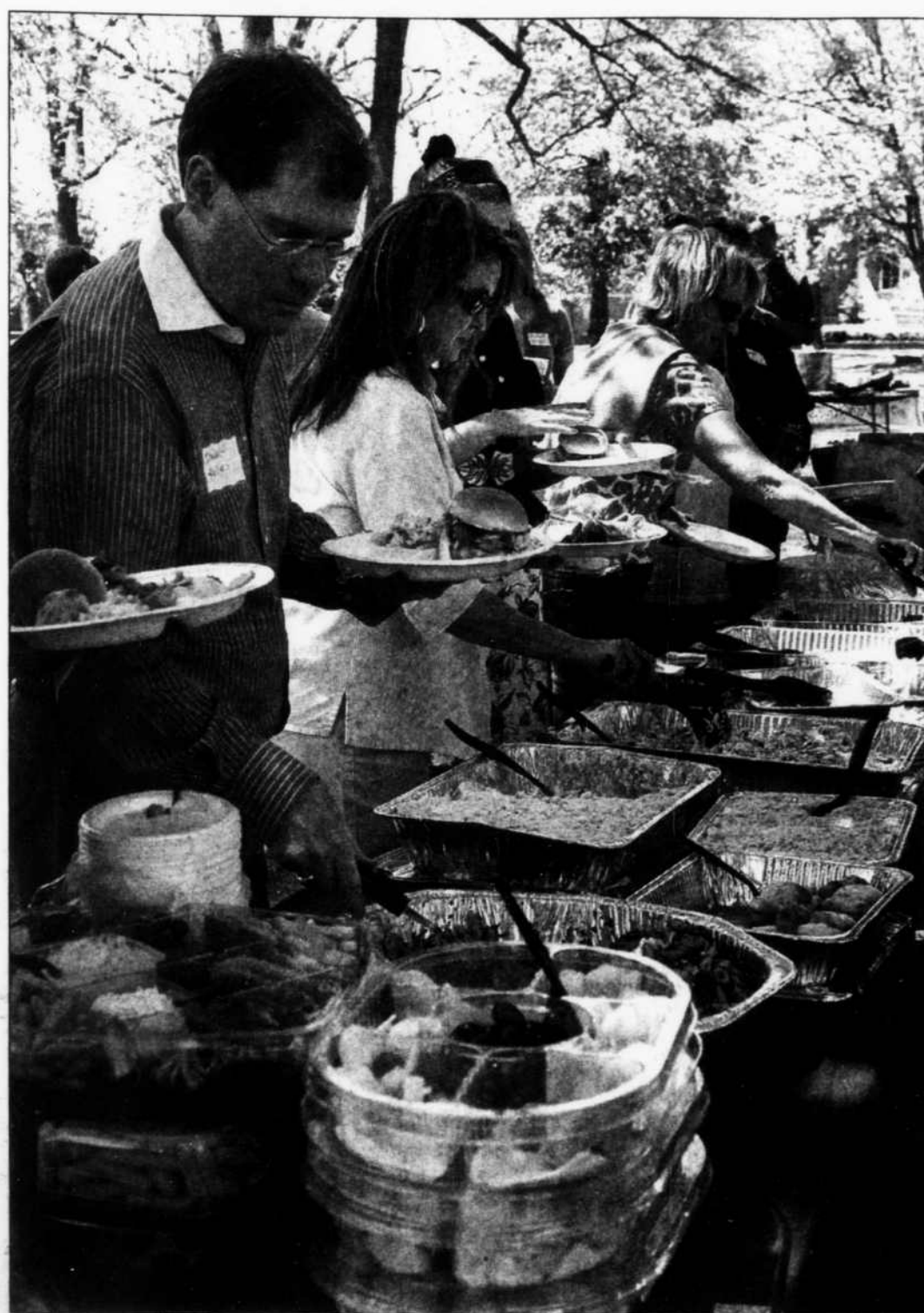


Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photographer
Danny Kelley (left), dean of Student Life, along with other participants, enjoy food from the Rotaract Club picnic, which was sponsored to celebrate English Language Services.

ROTARACT FROM PAGE 1

"The picnic was nice and I hope it will happen again," said Maitham Al Saihati, an ELS and Saudi Arabian computer engineering student. "It's good to get information."

After the barbecue buffet, several raffle items donated by Continuing Education were given away in a ticket drawing. These included a computer bag, thermoses, tote bags and MTSU umbrellas. The students played whiffle ball and Frisbee for the rest of the afternoon.

Si Liu, an ELS and a Chinese business administration student, said that this was the first time she had experienced an American picnic. Liu added that the food was delicious.

Rotaract is a community service club that is a branch

of Rotary International. It has been active on the local and international level since its inception in October 2008. Rotaract has worked with such charities as the Middle Tennessee

bake sale. Most of the proceeds went to the Red Cross and Kiva, with about 20 percent helping fund Rotaract activities like the picnic.

"Kiva offers international

"It was a success. We had a great turnout: about 80 to 100 people."

JOSHUA FRYER
ROTARACT PRESIDENT

chapter of the American Red Cross and Read to Succeed, a Murfreesboro literacy program.

"It was a success," said Joshua Fryer, Rotaract president and an international relations major. "We had a great turnout: about 80 to 100 people."

Recently, Rotaract raised \$250 through its

al microcredit lending to individuals in developing states," said Karen Petersen, assistant professor and Rotaract faculty adviser.

For information about joining Rotaract, contact Karen Petersen at kpeterse@mtsu.edu or visit the Rotaract Web site at mtsurotaract.wordpress.com.

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Tenn. tornadoes run up large tab

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Local government and public utilities are facing a combined \$8.1 million in emergency expenditures from the April 10 tornadoes at a time when revenues are down and home and business owners are also facing hefty cleanup bills.

The Daily News Journal reported Sunday that public officials are counting on President Barack Obama to declare the tornadoes a federal disaster in order to allow federal money to pay for 75 percent of costs not covered by insurance.

Officials reported that around \$7.5 million must be spent by local and state governments and public utilities to be eligible for federal funding.

Rutherford County Mayor Ernest Burgess says the county, Murfreesboro and public utilities have exceeded the threshold for federal assistance by around \$600,000 without counting other counties and state expenses.

"We hope the numbers will hold up," Burgess said.

The county's costs come to nearly \$1.5 million, including almost \$1.1 million for the landfill expense to collect tornado construction debris.

Middle Tennessee Electric reports an estimated \$210,607 expense to respond to the tornadoes, and Murfreesboro Electric Department's overtime bill came to \$652,000.

Murfreesboro's bill, when excluding its electric depart-

ment, came to \$5.8 million. City Manager Roger Haley said last week additional charges may be forthcoming.

Representatives with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Tennessee Emergency Management Agency are examining the costs before reporting results that Gov. Phil Bredesen can use to request federal assistance.

Without a declaration, "We'll have to eat it," Burgess said.

As the county is already facing a \$10 million projected deficit for next year's budget, the additional costs would be a hard pill to swallow.

"It's a major concern," the mayor added. "This is an extraordinary event we have no control over."

A twister that strengthened to an EF-4 tornado with 166 to 200 miles per hour winds traveled 23.5 miles from west Murfreesboro to the north side of the city. The tornado, which killed two people, was a half-mile wide at its widest point.

The tornadoes destroyed an estimated 118 homes and affected 845. Structural damages are estimated at more than \$41 million. Several homes in the Bradyville area in Rutherford County were also affected by a smaller tornado.

Home and business owners will be able to pursue low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration for tornado damages not

covered by insurance. The administration issued a "Disaster Declaration" this past week after the governor made the request.

CRIME BRIEFS

The campus police department has not updated its crime reports over the past week. The Jeanne Cleary Act requires the publishing and distribution of information related to campus safety and security. Until the crime log is updated, *Sidelines* will not be able to publish crime briefs.



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CURRENT EVENTS

The Breast Cancer Festival
Benefit show hosted by Omega Delta Psi, MTSU Records and Word Up
Wednesday, April 29 from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Location: Learning Resource Center Main Room
More Information: call Austin Ellis at 410-703-7014

"Top of the Drops"
Final event for "Jaz's Jammies" pajama drive
Thursday, April 30 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Location: Honors Building room 106

Chris Young & Friends
tornado Relief Benefit
Friday, May 1 at 7 p.m.

Admission: \$15
Location: MTSU Murphy Center
More information: visit chrisyoung-country.com

Shiny Toy Guns
With AutoVaughn and Mike's Pawn Shop
Friday, May 1 at 8 p.m.

Admission: \$15
Location: Exit/In
More Information: call 615-321-3340

13th Annual JazzFest
Featuring John Ellis, Percussion XS, the Music City Swing and U.S. Army Jazz Guardians
Friday, May 1 from 6 p.m. until 10:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 2 from 11 a.m. until 9:30 p.m.

Free and open to the public
Location: Town Square

More information: call 615-895-1887

Paper Route
With Brian Lee and His Orchestra and Mikky Ekko
Saturday, May 2 at 8 p.m.

Admission: \$10 in advance, \$12 day of show
Location: Exit/In
More Information: call 615-321-3340

Free Self-Defense Workshop
Conducted by Don Dennis, Police Officer
Saturday, May 2 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Location: Auxiliary Gym 1 Murphy Center
More information: RSVP by April 24 to Nancy James at 615-898-2970

Alpha Jam - Challenged Athletes Playing Equally Competitive Basketball Tournament hosted by Alpha Tau Omega
Saturday, May 2

More information: contact Edgard Izaguirre at eizag001@gmail.com

Framing Hanley with DJ Cliff D, The Good Side and Flight Case for Sushi
Saturday, May 2 at 9:30 p.m.

Location: 527 East Main

The Veronicas
With Pretty Reckless and The Love Willows
Saturday, May 9 at 6 p.m.

Admission: \$15
Location: Rocketown
More Information: call 615-843-4000

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Letters Policy

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

OPINIONS

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

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Tenn. texting bill raises several questions

Drivers in Tennessee could face a penalty for sending text messages while driving depending on how the Tennessee State House of Representatives votes.

Individuals caught texting while driving could be charged a \$50 fine.

The reason behind the fine seems to be legitimate; in the past there have been numerous accidents and even fatalities where texting while driving has been an issue.

In today's technological society, the radio, iPod, cell phone conversations and other general distractions, such as eating or applying makeup, already divert the attention of individuals. Texting seems to have become the most dangerous.

Drivers tend to keep their eyes off the road for longer periods of time while texting than when participating in any other distracting behavior.

While the bill aims to create a safer driving environment for all motorists, it does leave several unanswered questions.

The first question being whether or not the bill is exaggerating the severity of texting while driving. There are countless other ways to become distracted while driving that do not include the use of a phone.

Another question involves the way in which law enforcement officials can regulate whether or not individuals are texting while driving.

Officials could look through an individual's phone if they suspect texting while driving, however, this does present a privacy issue. Does law enforcement have the right to search through a driver's cell phone under probable cause?

In addition to regulation issues, the bill also raises the question of whether or not \$50 fits the crime.

Texting while driving is a conscious action that takes a driver's attention away from the road. Is \$50 enough of a punishment for individuals who knowingly endanger the lives of other motorists?

It only takes one second of a driver's attention to be diverted to cause an accident.

Texting requires a driver to read and respond, which takes his or her attention away for several seconds.

The act of texting while driving is not only a dangerous action, but it is also unnecessary. Officials are not proposing banning the use of a cell phone while driving, but they are restricting the use of certain applications.

There is no good reason for an individual to be texting while driving. If a conversation is so important, it could be held verbally, or the driver could pull over to a safe location and continue texting.

Driving while texting could lead to serious consequences such as injured motorists or fatalities.

Individuals who consciously choose to endanger the lives of their passengers, other motorists and themselves should receive some type of retribution.

However, the most effective way to regulate and distribute such retribution requires careful consideration.

GOP must back same-sex marriage

Both Iowa and Vermont recently legalized same-sex marriage. The Iowa Supreme Court struck down a 2007 ban by a lower court against same-sex marriage, and the Vermont legislature voted to override a veto by the governor. Four states now recognize the practice: Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa and Vermont.

Conservatives for the most part have resisted permitting civil unions and same-sex marriages, oftentimes citing the defense of the family or religious objections. However, true conservatism advances the principles of personal liberties and limited government. Why have some conservatives not embraced same-sex marriage as an issue of these aforementioned principles?

Understandably, the Religious Right and other socially traditional elements within the conservative movement would object to such a notion, but there are many conservatives who enthusiastically embrace limited government interference on this and other social issues.

This is why, as many conservative thinkers have argued, it is extremely difficult to define conservatism. There is a conservative argument that can be made in support of same-sex marriage.

Marriage, by its economic and legal definition, is a partnership between two consenting adults, whereby the finances and assets of both individuals are merged and legal and other rights and both individuals assume responsibilities jointly. It is the responsibility of the state to recognize and even



Hurttt Pride

Matt Hurtt

siastically embrace limited government interference on this and other social issues. This is why, as many conservative thinkers have argued, it is extremely difficult to define conservatism. There is a conservative argument that can be made in support of same-sex marriage.

Marriage, by its economic and legal definition, is a partnership between two consenting adults, whereby the finances and assets of both individuals are merged and legal and other rights and both individuals assume responsibilities jointly. It is the responsibility of the state to recognize and even

defend economic and legal contracts between individuals. In the eyes of the state, a marriage should be nothing more than a legally binding partnership between two consenting adults.

Economic conservatism, it would seem, supports and even encourages these contractual agreements. Homosexuals are just as productive as heterosexual members of society: they contribute to the tax base and provide goods and services to the public. By permitting same-sex marriage, the same economic opportunities are afforded to heterosexual couples as homosexual couples. Conservatives should support allowing contributing members of society the same economic opportunities regardless of sexual orientation.

The concept of limited government and support by conservatives of such a principle should also translate to support for same-sex marriage by conservatives. Allowing government to

restrict who can and cannot get married is just as limiting as the other policies conservatives often criticize when addressing the ever-expanding federal government.

Individual liberty and personal responsibility are two other basic tenets of conservatism that would allow many conservatives to support same-sex marriage. So long as someone isn't harming another individual, they should be allowed to exercise their basic rights without legal hindrance.

If homosexual couples want to get married, why should they be stopped? They should be extended those same rights – coupled with the same responsibilities – as heterosexual couples.

In order to continue to thrive as a movement, conservatism should adapt and expand so as to attract new individuals into the fold. Without compromising the basic principles of limited government, economic free-

dom, individual liberty and personal responsibility, conservatives can support the concept of same-sex marriage. In fact, the basic tenets of what I call "leave me alone" conservatism seem to encourage support for this and other social issues.

The ability of a political movement to survive relies on its ability to adapt to new policies and cultural changes. As one aide to the McCain presidential campaign said, the Republican Party – and by extension, conservatism – runs the risk of devolving into a regional and religiously exclusive party if its membership does not adapt certain social practices.

I encourage conservatives to examine this and other issues in an effort to expand the movement.

Matthew Hurtt is a senior history and political science major and can be reached at Matt.Hurttt@gmail.com. Read more at matthewhurttt.com.

Amazon takes blame for censorship mishap

In response to my last column, I want to offer my apologies to Amazon.com. If you're easily angered, you may be disappointed to learn that the Web site does not, in fact, hate gay people.

The large number of GLBT books being removed from the site's rankings and bestseller lists was an internal and unintentional error that was unfortunately widespread, and had Internet users howling in fury over Easter weekend, leading to hundreds of angry blogs, news stories, petitions and Twitter posts.

Amazon.com spokeswoman Patty Smith says that GLBT literature was not the only type of book



The C-Word

Courtney Watson

that was affected by this internal glitch. Others categories, such as Health (including sexual health), Mind & Body and Erotica were also removed, making it appear as if the site was a censoring corporation intending to ban all adult-oriented books, which, according to Smith, amounted to 57,310 books in total. These were

not only removed from the searches in the United States, but also globally.

A hacker who simply goes by the handle "Weev" claims to have been responsible for hacking into the site and having the books removed from the lists by simply using a few lines of code to create outrage, and it was initially reported that he was the one responsible.

Weev also claims to have hired third-world sweatshops to create dummy Amazon.com accounts used to deem content inappropriate.

Amazon.com says this is not true. They were the ones in error, and the hacker story has become increasingly less likely, and the news stories

have been updated to reflect the Web site's comments and apologies on the matter. They claim sole responsibility for what happened.

For me, there is no way of telling if Amazon.com's story is true, but from the claims the alleged hacker made, I'm certainly inclined to believe that the error is Amazon.com's and its error alone. This is regardless that it would be relatively simple to flag items as inappropriate, and probably does not take very many votes to do so. However, the story of sweat shops and flagging more than 57,000 items is hard to believe.

If Amazon.com is embarrassed by being hacked and that is why they are claim-

ing responsibility, well, at least in the future they may disregard flags that come from brand new accounts, and find other ways to ensure that this does not happen again.

Whether the unfortunate incident was the product of a punk hacker who wanted to get a rise out of people, or if Amazon.com really did have an internal glitch, it is good to know that such a big corporation is not prejudiced against gays and lesbians, or at least that no hacker forced them into the closet for good.

Courtney Watson is a journalism senior and can be reached at cew2y@mtsu.edu.

COMICS



"And Friends"

frankhasenmueller@gmail.com

Frank Hasenmueller

FACES IN THE CROWD

Do you think that same-sex marriage should be legalized on a national basis?



Foriest

"Yes, because the Constitution enshrines such a quality. Depriving people of marriage is depriving them of their civil rights."

Matt Foriest, sophomore history & political science



Morgan

"No, I don't believe so. Parents consist of a father and a mother. Men are considered the father and women are considered the mother."

Carlos Morgan, graduate student exercise science



Nelms

"With my beliefs, it's not right. It's sort of complicated to explain. But for me, it's to each his own."

Haley Nelms, freshman undeclared



Johnson

"That's fine. Quite honestly, there should not be any limitations on who can or can't get married."

William Johnson, junior art education

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Tennessee Ghost Hunters seek supernatural

Group explores allegedly haunted sites like Waverly Hills Sanatorium, Thomas House, prisons

By TIFFANY GIBSON
Managing Editor

Investigating the paranormal has become a popular hobby in the last decade. Shows like "Supernatural" and "Ghost Hunters" are entertaining to some viewers, but don't exactly portray the real organizations and groups that investigate abnormal activities at historic landmarks.

Even though genuine groups are scarce in Tennessee, there is one group called the Tennessee Ghost Hunters that has been around for 13 years. Joanne Shelton, a day care director, says she founded the Tennessee Ghost Hunters after her daughter began college.

"I've always been interested in the paranormal, and my daughter just started college and we needed to get a computer, so the first thing I looked up was ghost hunting," Shelton says. "There were about three groups in Tennessee, [and] I e-mailed all of them and only one replied back."

"He was this man from Hermitage and this was when this was just starting to get popular. He was mostly interested in the angel aspect of it and was about to move, so he turned it over to me."

The group began going to places that were public, Shelton says, but then started looking at places on the Internet that were expected to have ghosts.

"We even went to out-of-state places like the Myrtle twice, which is in Louisiana," Shelton says. "It is supposed to be the most haunted home in the United States. We've been to Gettysburg Battlefield, which is very haunted because so many deaths occurred there."

"We would go to the old Tennessee Prison, which was one of my favorite investigations. Once you get started, they [customers and locations] come to you, and you don't have to seek places out."

Shelton says that she has heard of instances where shows exploring haunted places tend to embellish and add their own effects instead of obtaining real evidence.

"At the Waverly Hills Sanatorium in Louisville, Ky., the guy there told me that they had a production company come in that was doing a documentary on the place," Shelton says. "He said they wanted to set up some fake stuff and he said 'absolutely not.'"

Shelton says she's always had a passion and interest in things that can't be explained.

"I've always been inter-

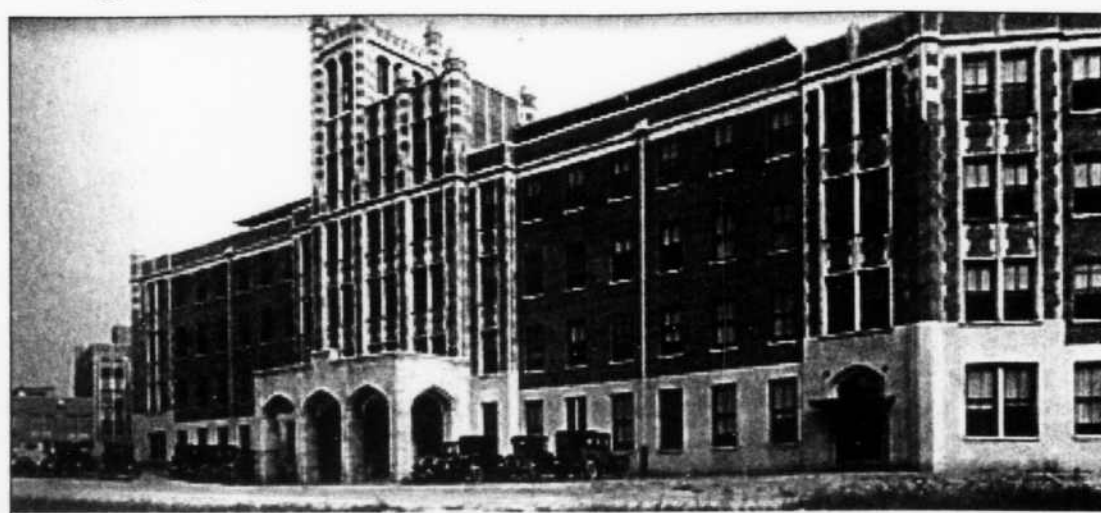


Photo courtesy Waverly Hills Sanatorium
Located in Louisville, Ky., the Waverly Hills Sanatorium was built in 1910 to care for TB patients. It is now considered one of the most haunted hospitals in the Southeast.

ested in ghosts, Big Foot and UFOs," she says. "It was hard to find books in the library on ghosts, so one of the things that really peaked my interest was one Sunday my husband and I were driving around. We were in Gallatin, and there was a historical home and we decided to tour it."

The house Shelton toured was the Thomas House in Red Boiling Springs, Tenn., built in 1890 and originally called The Cloyd Hotel, according to the TGH Web site.

It was here that Shelton says she had her first encounter with ghosts. She says she also visited the place so frequently that she was asked to give tours of the hotel on Sundays.

"I was giving a tour one Sunday, and I was in the front part of the house and as I was talking to the people, I saw someone pass in front of the window," Shelton says. "There were two windows beside each other about 4 feet apart, and I never saw them pass in the second window."

"I knew it wasn't a person because the house is on 400 acres, and there was nobody there at the time, except me and the people I was giving the tour to. Also, the bottom of the window sill was 6 feet off the ground, and I saw this person from the chest up, so I knew that it was not a human that was walking."

Shelton says experiences like these make it hard for any member of the TGH to be skeptical toward ghosts and the paranormal.

Ben Clark, a senior computer science major at MTSU and computer programmer for TGH, says he tends to be biased towards skepticism when it comes to individual locations.

"I am a Christian and completely believe in the soul or spirit," Clark says. "I have been in situations where I have seen and heard things which support the idea there are spirits and hauntings."



Photo courtesy Waverly Hills Sanatorium
Staff members from the sanatorium pose outside the building. The doctors and nurses shown here were assigned to care for the TB patients.

Clark says he never had experience with ghosts before joining the TGH but did hear stories about a spirit in his grandparents' house.

"I believe I was about 14 when they started sharing the stories," he says. "You might think, 'Well, it is his sweet little old grandmother. She is probably a little off, or, she probably just mistook a creaking noise or had a hallu-

cannot be proven over the Internet."

Shelton says one of the most memorable investigations that really opened up some of the group members' minds was when they went to a private home in Brentwood, Tenn., that was built on a golf course in the 1980s.

"A lady and her mother had leased this house and immediately stuff started happen-

"Sometimes there is a knocking or an object moves. Many times, it is when you return to analyze the recordings made when you find your evidence."

BEN CLARK
GHOST HUNTER

cination or a few fries short of a Happy Meal."

"She, however, is as smart as they come; a retired microbiologist who worked for the government in weapons development. If she said something happened, I believe it did."

The only way to believe something, Shelton says, is to experience it firsthand. She explains that the paranormal

ing," Shelton says. "They were seeing someone in her bedroom at night, and she could hear people in the kitchen and voices. She asked us to come over, and the first time we went we took too many people, so she asked us to come back with less people."

The group returned with five people and began exploring the house using digital and infrared cameras, thermal



Photo courtesy Waverly Hills Sanatorium
Known as the "Body Chute" or "Tunnel of Death," this tunnel in the Waverly Hills Sanatorium was used to remove corpses from the sanatorium without making the deaths obvious to other patients.

scanners and tape recorders, Shelton says. While she says she was interviewing the homeowner downstairs, one of the members came down and said there was some activity in the woman's bedroom where she had been seeing the shadow of a man at night.

All of the members retreated to the bedroom and formed a circle on the floor, Shelton says. They went around and asked, "If there is anyone in this room, can you please let your presence be known?"

When the group listened to the tape, it could hear a knock every time someone would ask that question, Shelton says.

Clark says that most of the time someone won't know they are in the presence of a spirit, but there are some typical indicators.

"Fresh batteries will give out and EMF detectors go crazy," he says. "Sometimes, you hear it and don't even realize it is a spirit."

"Sometimes there is a knocking, or an object moves. Many times, it is when you return to analyze the recordings made when you find your evidence."

That night, Shelton says one of the male members asked, "What's your name? I want you to know you're scaring these homeowners, and you need to leave here because this house doesn't belong to you anymore." When listening to the tape, Shelton says the group heard some type of noise, and the voice sounded like a woman who said, "[Expletive] you, what's your name?"

"We were shocked because this was the loudest and most clear EVP [electronic voice phenomenon] we had gotten to that date," Shelton says. "It just really shook us up, and as we were standing there with Grace and her mother, one of our skeptical members saw a man standing outside and felt like something was biting his legs."

Following the investigation,

Shelton claims TGH received a letter from the real estate company that took the house after the owners moved out. She says the letter threatened to sue the organization if it disclosed anything that happened in the house.

"They wanted to sell it but didn't want people to know what was going on in the house," Shelton says.

Shelton says she could talk to someone for an hour and show pictures and EVPs, and even though the person might not be a complete believer, he or she would have second thoughts about it.

Clark says that even though people may not admit it, everyone believes in the supernatural to some degree.

"Christians read the Bible, which is filled with stories of demons, angels, spirits, spiritual possession and miracles," Clark explains. "The Koran tells stories of djinn, or genies, and even has an entire book dedicated to them, 'Al-Jinn.'"

"[The religion of] Hindu believes we all have two bodies: a physical body, which they call the gross body, and the spiritual body, which they refer to as the subtle body. Buddhists tell of 'hungry ghosts' and teach of spiritual possession. All major religions and cultures have stories containing paranormal phenomena."

TGH has 25 full-time members but the group isn't looking for anymore, Shelton says. However, Shelton encourages anyone interested in the group to start coming to meetings and apply for an associate membership.

Meetings are held on the first Monday of every month in South Nashville. The address is not disclosed, but Shelton says anyone interested can contact the TGH on its Web site at tnghosthunters.com. Photos and EVPs are also available on the Web site.

CALENDAR

movies, music, nightlife and more

MUSIC

April 27

Dan Fester @ Blue Rooster - 8 p.m.

April 29

DJ Cliffy D and DJ MiQeyQoolaid @ Club 527 - 8 p.m.

The Pulse Show-

case @ Blue Rooster - 9 p.m.

April 30

Steve Moakler w/ The Four Kicks, Marry a Thief @ Club 527 - 8 p.m. - \$7

Barefoot Renegades @ Blue Rooster - 9 p.m.

Mr. Satisfaction @ Graffiti Bar - 9 p.m.

May 1

Coras Core @ The 'Boro - 8 p.m.

Voodoo Prophet w/ Beautifully Crude, Kings in Pieces, Cut Sling Load @ Club 527 - 9:30 p.m. - \$8

Barefoot Renegades @ Graffiti Bar - 10 p.m.

May 2

The Lake w/ Target Market, Twin Thunder, We Were the

States @ The 'Boro - 8 p.m.

The Boomers @ Blue Rooster - 9 p.m.

Framing Hanley w/ DJ Cliffy D, The Good Side, Flight Case for Sushi @ Club 527 - 9:30 p.m.

Brent Hughes Band @ Graffiti Bar - 10 p.m.

May 3

Dr. Manhattan w/ In:Aviate, Scarlett Classic, Pots n Chains @ Club 527 - 7 p.m. - \$8

PacAKracRs @ Graffiti Bar - 9 p.m.

OTHER

April 27

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

April 28

Karaoke @ Blue Rooster - 9 p.m.

Karaoke @ Graffiti Bar - 9 p.m.

April 29

Live Trivia @ Wall Street - 8 p.m.

April 30

Tip of Your Tongue Trivia @ Blue Rooster - 7 p.m.

SPORTS

Blue Raider baseball wins Sun Belt series

Hines becomes second player in school history to hit for cycle helping MT take two out of three

By STEPHEN CURLEY
Staff Writer

Senior Nathan Hines hit for the cycle in game three as the Blue Raiders took two of three from the University of South Alabama this past weekend in Mobile, Ala.

As the second player to hit for the cycle in school history, Hines completed it on a two-run home run in the seventh inning after hitting a single, double and triple in that order. He finished the game 4-for-5 with four RBIs, helping MT to an 11-5 win.

Adam Warren was the last Blue Raider player to hit for a cycle, doing so on April 25, 2006 at home.

"Hines had a great day hitting for the cycle," head coach Steve Peterson said. "When Nathan is hitting the ball to the opposite field, he is unstoppable. What a wonderful day, [the cycle] doesn't happen very often and I know he will remember it."

Junior pitcher Chad Edwards (7-1) was credited with the win, giving up four runs over 5.1 innings. Junior Coty Woods picked up his 10th save, throwing 1.2 scoreless innings.

Sophomore left fielder Bryce Brentz also finished 4-for-5, elevating his batting

average to .490.

Senior shortstop Rawley Bishop, senior designated hitter Grant Box and junior right fielder Blake McDade each drove in two runs.

USA starter Phillip Byrd threw two pitches before giving up a hit and being removed from the game due to injury. That hit ended up being enough to stick him with the loss after being driven in by junior catcher Drew Robertson.

The Blue Raiders lost game one, 4-3, on a bottom-of-the-ninth, bases loaded single by Jaguars catcher David Doss, who drove in the winning run.

The MT offense managed only six hits for the whole game, with no player finishing with more than one hit themselves.

Brentz started the game at pitcher but struggled early, allowing three earned runs on seven hits with two walks in four innings of work. Junior Coty Woods gave up the winning hit in his relief appearance.

Junior first baseman Ben Darlington led the struggling MT offense, driving in two runs and scoring one himself.

Game two was a completely different story for the Blue Raiders offense, as it thumped the USA pitching staff for a 14-1 victory.

Brentz once again led the MT lineup, finishing 2-for-5 with a home run and four RBIs. He now has 51 for the season. Sophomore shortstop Tyler Burnett also had two hits, driving in three runs.

The MT offense started quickly, scoring three runs in the first inning, followed by one in the third and five in the fourth. By the time USA even got on the board, the Blue Raiders were ahead 12-0.

Junior pitcher Kenneth Roberts (5-1) pitched a gem, giving up one unearned run through eight innings on six hits. He was credited with the win. Sophomore Marshall Mears ended the game with a 1-2-3 ninth inning.

Jaguars pitcher Matt Jackson received the loss after being hammered early, giving up nine runs, one of which was earned, over four innings of work.

USA scored its only run of the game on a fielding error by Bishop.

The series win improves the Blue Raiders' record to 30-12, keeping the team in pace with WKU at the top of the Sun Belt standings.

MT will return to action Tuesday, when the team takes on Belmont at home starting at 6 p.m.



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Junior pitcher Kenneth Roberts gets ready to sling a pitch against ULM. Roberts is 5-1 this season with a 3.77 ERA and 41 strikeouts. The Blue Raiders are now 30-12 this season and in contention in the SBC.

Softball clinches series win against FAU

By CHRIS WELCH
Sports Editor

The Blue Raider softball team scored four runs in the sixth inning as the Blue Raiders managed a comeback victory to clinch the series against Florida Atlantic University Sunday afternoon.

MT (13-31 overall) opened up the series with a doubleheader Saturday morning, scoring an early five runs and garnering a 5-3 victory over the Owls in the first game.

Junior pitcher Lindsey Vander Lugt shot her third-straight shutout in the early game, throwing five strikeouts and allowing only three hits. By comparison, FAU's Amber Barton gave up five runs on three hits in a single inning.

MT opened up the game strong. In the first inning, freshman catcher Natalie Ysais looked to have flied out two batters, but FAU left-fielder Brittany Walker dropped her fly ball to push a run

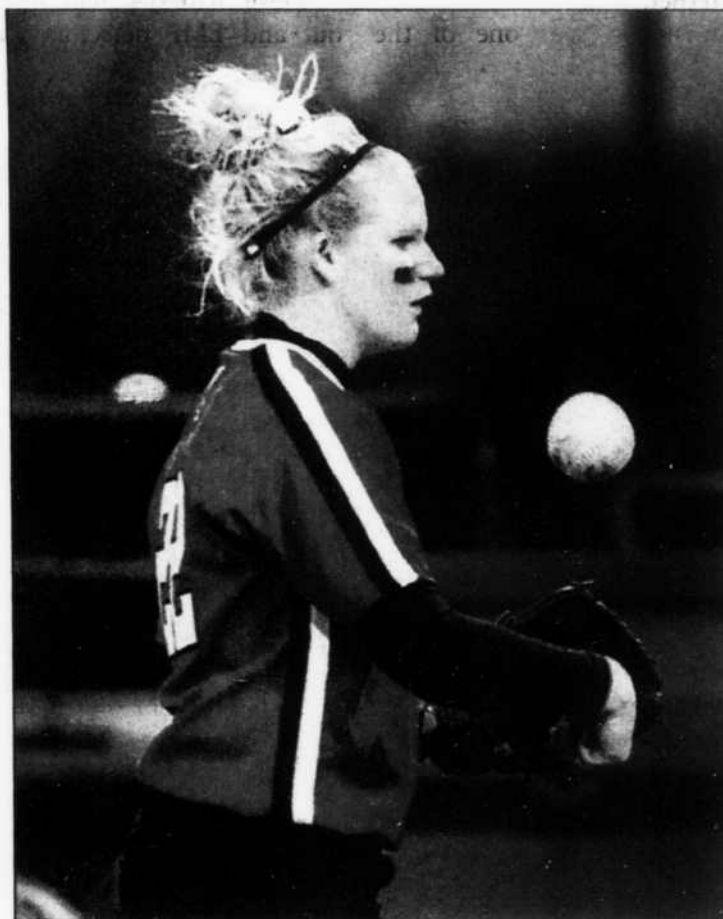


Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photographer
Freshman pitcher Natalie Ysais warms up by tossing the ball into the air before a pitch. MT is now 13-31 for the season after the wins.

across home plate. Kaycee Popham shot a base hit for a Ysais score and make

it 2-0.

MT added three more runs in the second inning, bringing freshman Tobie Joy and sophomores Kandra Singleton and Kelsey Dortch across the plate.

FAU would pull three runs back in the top of the third, making use of a Caitlin Bliss shot to third and an error by MT shortstop Britney Banania.

The Blue Raiders would not be so lucky in the day's second game, as efforts and a poor pitching staff would cause MT to lose 6-3.

Vander Lugt gave up five earned runs on eight hits in just more than four innings.

Sophomore Kellie Head had a strong performance, allowing no runs over the final 2.1 innings in her relief appearance.

FAU's Carrie Ann Potter got the complete-game win for the Owls, giving up three runs on seven hits, and earned seven strikeouts.

The game was tied at the bottom of the first, until the

Owls' third baseman Ashlyn Parmerter threw over the head of the second baseman in a rundown with senior Martha Davis. This mistake resulted in a Davis out, but allowed junior Caitlin McClure to score.

FAU scored one run in both the third and fourth innings and took a 3-1 lead before closing out the fifth inning with a three-run home run by Owl Becky Brandies.

MT took the score to 6-2 when Popham off of a double steal with two outs in the sixth inning. But a Blue Raider rally in the final inning could not prevent the FAU win.

The series continued on Sunday, when the Blue Raiders' hitting powers clinched the series in a final 5-2 victory.

Vander Lugt allowed just one earned run and split seven hits across the innings in her complete-game victory.

FAU took advantage of an MT error to earn an early 1-0 lead. MT's defense would not

allow FAU to do so again and had a huge defensive stand-out in the third inning.

With runners at second and third, Singleton fielded a ball in right field and threw to Popham, who in turn fired to catcher Ysais to tag a sliding Ambar Jones at home plate.

Later in the game, Joy singled to the pitcher before Singleton reached on a fielding error by Owls first baseman Bliss. Banania scored on the play and Dortch smashed a two-RBI next to center field during the next at bat to give MT a 5-2 win.

With their most recent victory, the Blue Raiders need a series sweep at Western Kentucky next weekend and four losses by the University of Louisiana-Monroe to qualify for the Sun Belt Conference Tournament.

MT finishes off its games at Blue Raider Field with a doubleheader against non-conference foe Jacksonville State University on Tuesday. First pitch is scheduled for 1 p.m.

MT sports deserve more support for their success

It's hard to believe that MT has fielded two championship sports teams this spring that have received such little fanfare and support from the school they represent.

Quick—do you know which teams won the Sun Belt Conference in their respective sport so far this spring?

If you said the men's golf and men's tennis teams, then you are one of the few true Blue Raider sports fans. If not, join the crowd of MT students who cheer for the football team and nothing else.

Their efforts stand for themselves and deserve attention and praise—more so than what they currently get.

Blue Raider men's golf and men's tennis brought home championship gold in their



Mr. Irrelevant
Zach Reves

respective Sun Belt tournaments over the last week and a half. As teams, they were the best in the conference and will be representing our school on a national level in the NCAA Championships later this spring.

On April 19, the Blue Raider tennis team took a 4-1 victory over FAU to bring home the championship trophy. The team is

ranked 56th in the nation by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association.

The team consists of two nationally ranked players with senior Robert McKenzie at No. 90 and sophomore John Peers at No. 100. The team also received strong contributions from freshmen Victor Melo and Matthew Langley, sophomore Kyle Wishing and senior Morgan Richard.

Three days later, the Blue Raider golf team took first in the SBC with a six-shot lead over the second-place team. Not many expected the team to win, especially after MT fell behind by 12 shots after the first round.

No one doubts them now because seniors Rick Cochran and Chas Narramore helped lead MT to its first SBC golf

championship. Sophomore Jason Millard, and juniors Kent Bulle and Craig Smith round out the championship-caliber squad.

The efforts that these players have made over the course of their season have propelled the Blue Raiders into the national spotlight. NCAA selection shows and brackets will feature the MT name, creating more acclaim for our school and its athletic excellence.

Yet, many students couldn't care less.

I've talked to a number of students, and most had little knowledge of these national victories. Some were even surprised to hear we had a golf team.

I realize it's hard for people to be fans of sports that don't translate well for spectators.

The Blue Raider golf team never held or attended a competition this season anywhere close to Murfreesboro. And the tennis courts on campus don't give spectators a great view.

But the actual sport that these athletes play shouldn't make their accomplishments any less than what other Blue Raider teams have done. Having the men's golf team win the SBC should be equal to the football team winning the same award. They are all athletes representing the school in their own way with unique talents. There is no difference in the goals that they strive to achieve.

MT students need to start widening their view of the sports world because they are missing out on a ton of

success that everyone should share. So what if we're not always the best football college? Our other sports continuously succeed despite a minimal fan base.

Just imagine what the Blue Raider athletes could achieve if they knew that the student population was completely behind them and cheering for a victory. I know tennis and golf will never receive football's level of support. But with their latest victories they deserve an increase from what they have had in recent years.

In the end, we are all a part of the same school and every athletic championship achieved is a victory for all of us. I hope that students start giving all MT athletes thanks for all that they've done for us.

Chamaoi takes gold at Penn Relays

MT's Morgan, Nambawa, women's 4x400 team travel to participate in nation's oldest track meet

By SARAH FRYAR
Contributing Writer

Eleven athletes from MT's track and field teams traveled to Philadelphia, Pa. to compete in the Penn Relays Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

This is the Penn Relays' 115th year of operation, making it the oldest and largest track meet in the nation, drawing more than 300 competitors from all over the world.

Thursday's events proved to be successful for sophomore Festus Chamaoi as he finished first in the men's 5,000 meter, leaving the other 30 hopefuls in the dust. Chamaoi set a new MT record with a time of 14:17.79, adding to the records he already holds for the 800- and 1,500-meters.

In addition, the women's 4x100 and 4x400 meter relays competed Thursday. Sophomore Kortney Thurman, senior Tenesha Hill, junior Sarah Nambawa and sophomore Nyeisha Wright of the 4x100 team seemed stuck in the middle placing 39th out of 81 with a time of 47.88 seconds. The 4x400 team of Thurman, Hill, Nambawa and senior Tramayne Gillyard saw bet-

ter luck, finishing 26th out of 83 teams.

Finishing first in the 4x100 and 4x400 meter relays was Texas A&M with a time of 43.80 seconds, while UTech followed with a time of 3:34.99.

Friday's long jump and triple jump events saw action from three MT athletes. For the men's college division long jump, senior Carl Morgan leapt his way ahead of 15 participants to finish in second place with a distance of 7.47 meters. He was beat out by Tyron Stewart of Texas A&M with a jump of 7.50 meters.

In the women's long jump, Thurman placed eighth out of 24 with a leap distance of 5.88 meters. The women's college championship division triple jump saw Nambawa take fourth overall with a jump of 13.13 meters. Winning the women's college long jump and triple jump was Melissa Ogbourne of LSU with 6.11 meters and Florida State's Kim Williams with a 13.66-meter mark.

Blue Raiders senior Greg Franklin, junior Curtis King, sophomore Stanley Gbagbeke

and freshman Roscoe Payne took to the track Friday for the men's College division 4x200 meter relay. Coming up short for qualifying for the final, they finished with a time of 1:24.19 placing them ninth of 55 teams. Landing 16th out of 83, the team also competed in the 4x100 meter relay with a time of 40.99 seconds.

Winning the 4x200 and 4x100 meter relays was Texas A&M with 1:22.03 and Clemson with 39.73 seconds.

Also seeing track action Friday, the quartet of Thurman, Nambawa, Wright and Gillyard clocked a time of 1:37.70, ending 19th out of 53 in the women's 4x200 meter relay.

Rounding out the competition Saturday, Morgan jumped his way into the lead as he placed first of 16 with a leap distance of 15.41 meters in the men's college division triple jump. Morgan added another first place finish alongside Chamaoi, winner of Thursday's men's 5,000-meters.

In addition, MT's 4x100 meter relay team took the track again Saturday, finish-



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

Samuel Adade (left, standing) stretches in preparation for a sprint at the Blue Raider Invitational on Jan. 24.

ing with a time of 40.60 seconds, which landed them in eighth place.

The overall winner of the men's College 4x100 meter re-

lay was South Carolina with a final time of 39.52 seconds.

The Middle Tennessee Blue Raiders will host the Sun Belt Conference Outdoor Track

and Field Championships May 8-10 in Murfreesboro. All events will be held at the Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium.

Upcoming Events					
April 27 Women's Basketball Coach Insell at Woodbury Lions Club at 6:30 p.m.	April 28 Baseball MTSU v Belmont at 6 p.m. Softball MTSU v Jacksonville State at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.	April 29 Baseball MTSU v Austin Peay at 6 p.m. Softball MTSU v Lipscomb at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Women's Basketball Blackman Honors Banquet (JUB) at 6 p.m.	April 30	May 1 Baseball MTSU v Troy at 6 p.m.	May 2 Baseball MTSU v Troy at 6 p.m. Softball MTSU v Western KY at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

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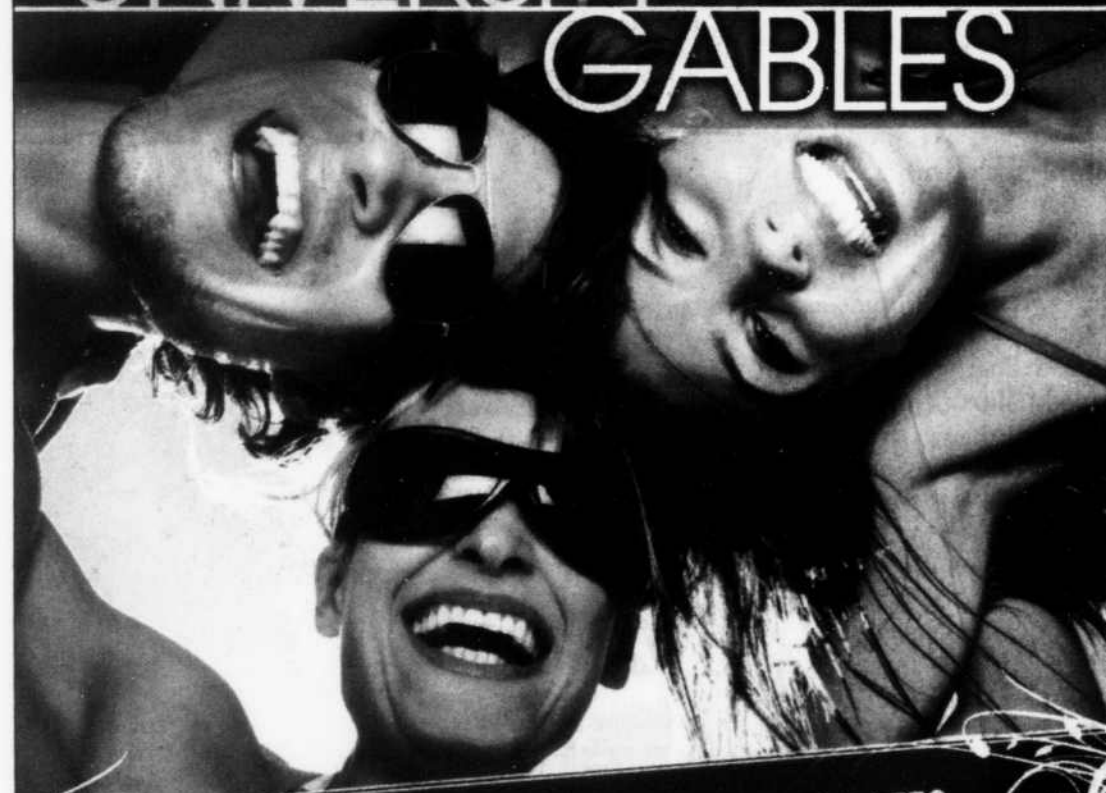
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