



Spring Break Special Edition

February 9, 2005

Sidelines

Middle Tennessee State University

table of contents

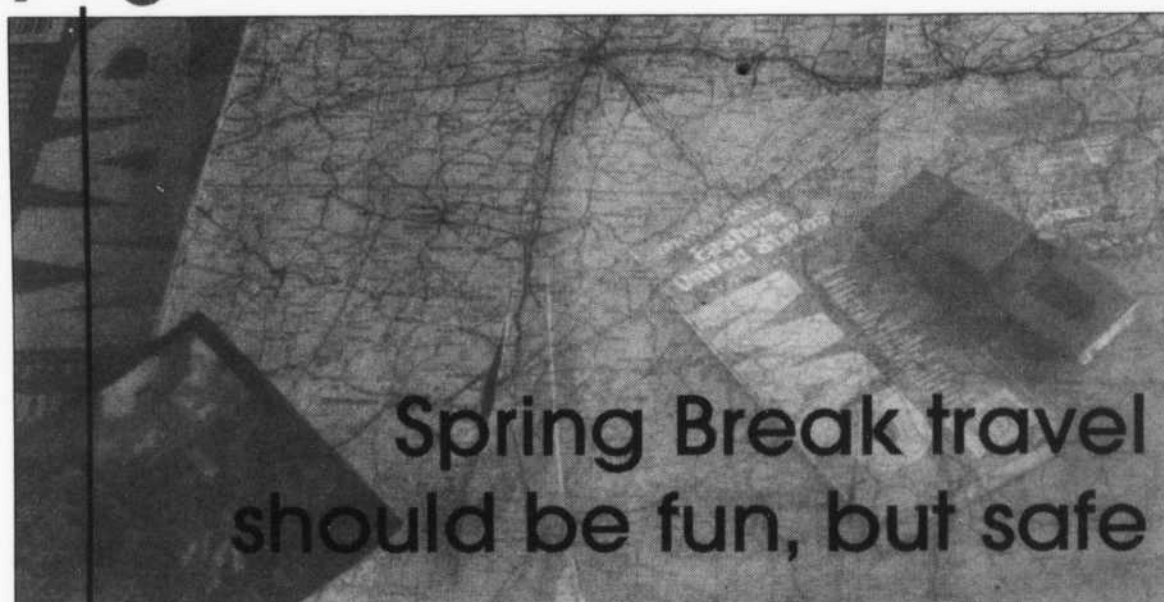
page3

Alternative Spring Break: Students
opt for service over sunbathing

page4

Cruise down to Fort Myers
for rest, relaxation

page6



page10

Spring Break in the 'Boro
still offers options

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Alternative Spring Break

Students opt for service over sunbathing

By Kimberly Peer
Staff Writer

Students dreaming of a memorable Spring Break without breaking the bank in sunny locales can have both with Alternative Spring Break.

MTSU and Collegiate Challenge, a college program sponsored by Habitat for Humanity, have teamed up to provide 12 students "the opportunity to get away from campus for a week and do something for a community in need," said Jackie Victory, coordinator of student organizations and community services.

"The Alternative Spring Break program is one in which a group of students travels outside of Murfreesboro

in order to learn about themselves and the world around them by volunteering for those less fortunate," said Jonathan Sanders, student organizations and community service graduate assistant.

The chosen group can expect to experience "life-changing" benefits of this "on-going service project," Sanders said.

However, "a desire to work and make a difference" is expected, he said.

Habitat for Humanity, a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry, allows students to share their mission of eliminating the problems of poverty, housing and homelessness and creating decent homes for the victims of these situations.

Along with community service,

Sanders said students will "have free time to explore the area," which is built upon a variety of people from "all backgrounds, races and religions."

Group activities aside from the building project are also scheduled during the week.

When filling out the application, students should consider the fact that the main purpose of the trip is to "[aid] victims of poverty and homelessness and our accommodations may be less than what we are used to," Sanders said.

Another consideration, he said, is that "living and interacting with the residents of the community may ... cause you a little discomfort."

Collegiate Challenge was discovered by MTSU as a result of brainstorming,

Victory said.

Choosing service projects for Alternative Spring Break is often a matter of availability, and Habitat for Humanity was very accessible and appropriate for this program.

"The experience will be tremendously enriching, but it will be different from any other Spring Break you have probably ever experienced," Sanders said. "This is not your traditional Spring Break," Victory said.

There are no special requirements for applicants, and there is no cost to students other than food and other purchases. This is the ninth year MTSU has offered Alternative Spring Break. ♦



Photo Illustration by Rachelle Morvant | Chief Photographer

Cruise down to Fort Myers for rest, relaxation

For years, Panama City, Daytona Beach and Cancun have been among the top Spring Break hot spots. Chances are if you've been on a Spring Break trip, you've been to one of them.

Why not broaden your horizons this year, and cruise down Florida's Gulf Coast to Fort Myers Beach, nestled between Sarasota and Naples?

Fort Myers Beach is known as one of the world's safest beaches, according to the official travel site of the Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau (www.leeislandcoast.com).

I can certainly vouch for that.

For the last four years, I have been going to Fort Myers Beach at least once a year — sometimes twice. I've gone with friends, family and by myself to visit my dad and have had a blast every time.

My dad, known as "Captain Ron" to the locals, makes Fort Myers Beach his home for about seven months of the year. As the birds are flying north for the spring, my dad is flying south. He lives there in the spring and summer, so my first vacation there was to visit him, and I have been going ever since.

Fort Myers Beach has so much to offer. It's located on Estero Island, but first you must cross over Sky Bridge to get there. Sky Bridge overlooks the bay, where fishing and boating charters and offshore gambling boats set sail.

At the north end of the beach is Time Square, which hosts a wide variety of restaurants, bars and shopping. The south end of the beach is more family-oriented with resorts and Lovers Key State Park.

But let's face it, we college students want to unwind by day and let loose at night, so I'll cut to the chase.

Accommodations

My pick of places to stay is The Lighthouse Island Resort Inn & Suites (www.lighthouseislandresort.com). It's afford-



Tiffany Elkins
Guest Columnist

able, and it's only 200 feet from the beach. The closer you stay to the beach, the more money you are going to spend. It's located in the center of Time Square, so you won't have to hoof it very far for shopping and eating.

Spring break is March 7-12, so if you were to stay there for seven nights during that time, a standard room with double beds is going to run about \$170 per night. Split that between four people and it is only \$42.50 per night, per person. For seven nights, each person will pay only \$297.50, which isn't much for a memorable spring break on the Gulf of Mexico.

There are two pools with waterfalls, and poolside tiki bars, perfect for basking in the sun and drinking margaritas, if you choose to hang out at the resort. Find someone to rub lotion on your back and you've got it made!

Beach

If you are more of a beach babe, it is directly across the street, and depending on where you choose to settle down for the day, you may find yourself watching a live show, or maybe even being a part of one. From karaoke to bikini contests, the beach has it all.

The best show on the beach, by far, is put on by the Cincinnati, Ohio firemen, who rent the house beside the Lani Kai, a beachfront hotel, every year for two weeks. Every day they put on a wild show for all to see.

My mom and I were lucky enough to be part of the show one year. By coincidence we happened to be laying out beside the house, totally obliv-



Photo Illustration by Rachelle Morvant | Chief Photographer

ious to the fact there was a show going to take place later that afternoon. Before we knew it, we were in their man-made pool, wearing Mardi Gras beads, having the time of our lives.

One fireman was wearing patriotic thongs dancing around the deck, while others dressed as the Village people and were dancing to "YMCA."

As if that weren't enough, a young studly fireman burst out of the house wearing leather chaps dancing to Kid Rock's "Cowboy." Even after the show was over, they continued to party, inviting people over for alcoholic refreshments.

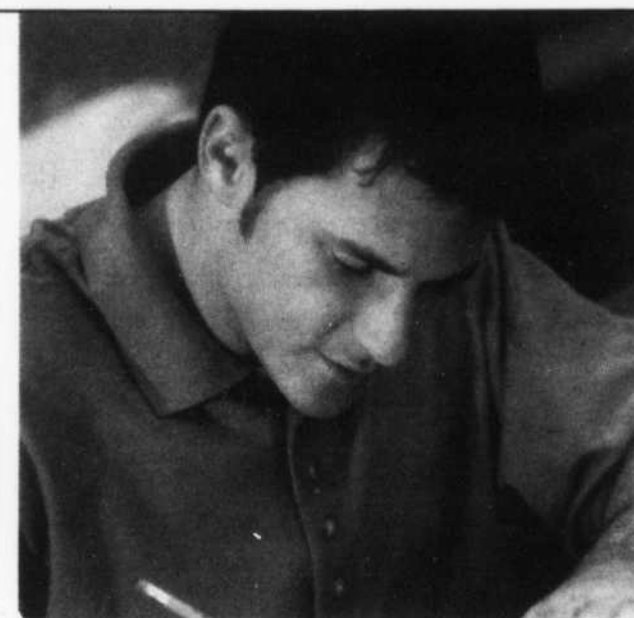
It's hard to top that show, but if you are the meek and mild type, you'll have fun just lying on the beach listening to

live music.

Maybe lying around doesn't tickle your fancy. If not, you can go parasailing, sailing, jet skiing, water skiing or fishing.

There's even a trolley that carries you wherever you wish to go, providing it's on the beach, for a mere 25 cents.

See Fort Myers, 9



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Spring Break travel sh

By Stephanie Hill, Staff Writer

With Spring Break right around the corner, many faculty and students alike are planning to take a much-needed vacation.

But before heading out, one should remember some very important travel safety tips to ensure a fun, relaxing and stress-free vacation from the norm.

Kim Velker, travel counselor for AAA Travel Agency, urges students to book early in order to get the best deal possible.

"Generally you need to book six months prior to your trip for good rates. The longer you wait to book a trip, such as a cruise to the Caribbean or Cancun the less available there is," Velker said.

Remember, a passport or certified birth certificate is required for international travel.

"If you are going outside the USA, then you must get a passport or a certified birth certificate," Velker said. "Some islands in the Caribbean, such as Barbados and Costa Rica required a passport, though, as well as the European community."

In order to get a passport, you must fill out the necessary form, show proof of a certified birth certificate and get two passport pictures taken.

In Murfreesboro, you can take your passport application to the DMV to get it processed. The application fee is \$85.

"Cruise lines prefer you to have an active passport, however, you can use your expired one if it has not been expired for more than one year," Velker said.

She also noted that when going on a cruise if one passenger is under 21 then he or she must have someone over 25 in the same stateroom to accommodate them.

If you have to fly to your destination, Velker urges passengers to arrive in plenty of time.

"For domestic flights inside the USA you need to arrive two hours early, if you are flying

internationally, you need to arrive at the airport three hours prior to take-off," Velker said. "Also, do not bring pocket knives, scissors or anything else questionable in your pockets, purse or baggage. The airlines will take them away from you."

The Better Health Channel (www.betterhealth.vic.gov) suggests that when you are picking up your luggage at the airport carousel, watch for your suitcase immediately. Do not wait for the crowd to break up because someone else might have stolen your suitcase. Also, when traveling internationally avoid changing money at the airport. Instead change the money at the hotel or a bank.

General safety tips offered by The Better Health Channel include keeping your travel plans, including accommodation details, to yourself. Also, avoid the "seedier" areas of the city you are visiting – especially at night. Ask the hotel staff about the different neighborhoods and which ones are safer than others.

Another helpful hint from The Better Health Channel is do not stand out in crowds. Even if you are in an unfamiliar city, do not act like you do not know where you are going. Always walk with a purpose.

Velker also noted that when booking a trip such as one to Cancun or Jamaica, many of the hotels do not accommodate four people to a room, instead they accommodate two. So check with the travel agent or hotel for room accommodation information.

While on spring break this March, do not set yourself up to fall prey to a scam. Always be familiar with your surroundings.

Do not act like too much of a tourist, allowing thieves to know you are in unfamiliar territory and allowing yourself to be a more vulnerable prey.

And finally, have fun seeing somewhere new. ♦



should be fun but safe



Travel Tips

● A passport or certified birth certificate is required for international travel.

● Book travel and accommodations six months prior to your trip for better prices.

● When flying, arrive at the airport in plenty of time before your flight.

● When flying, do not bring pocket knives, scissors or anything else questionable in your pockets, purse or baggage.

● When you are picking up your luggage at the airport carousel, watch for your suitcase immediately. Do not wait for the crowd to break up, because someone might steal your suitcase.

● In international travel, avoid changing money at the airport. Instead change the money at the hotel or a bank.

● Keep your travel plans, including accommodation details, to yourself.

● Avoid the questionable areas of the city you are visiting – especially at night. Ask the hotel staff which neighborhoods are safer than others.

● Even if you are in an unfamiliar city, never act like you do not know where you are going. Always walk with a purpose.

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Fort Myers: Try a new locale to spice up this Spring Break

Continued from 4

Food

If you're anything like me, good, inexpensive food on vacation is an added bonus. Before going out for a night on the beach, you should fill up on great food. Plenty of restaurants feature everything from pizza to fresh seafood.

One of my personal favorites is pizza. Dockside is the best place to go for it, especially if you like white pizza. It has a special butter and garlic sauce, tomatoes, onions and mushrooms. But any pizza you choose will be great. While you are scarfing down pizza, you can get in a quick game of pool, too.

For the steak and seafood lovers, Matanzas is another personal favorite. You can settle down for a romantic or casual dinner on the waterfront. It's directly on the bay, and you're almost guaranteed to see dolphins or manatees while sinking your teeth into a

juicy steak or fresh seafood, such as Florida lobster, grouper, mahi mahi, rock shrimp, scallops or tilapia.

You can't leave Fort Myers Beach without having Beach Bread from The Cottage, a beachfront bar, or the Beached Whale restaurant/bar. It's loaded with garlic butter, cheese and grilled salsa, sometimes even with seafood on top. Various places make it various ways, but nonetheless it is to die for.

Now that you're hip to fantastic food, you should know where to get good drinks and go dancing.

Nightlife

One of the most important aspects of spring break is, of course, the nightlife. All of the drinks and dancing you can handle are within walking distance, which is definitely a plus. Of course, if you don't want to walk there are always cabs ready and willing at a moment's notice at almost

every corner.

If you like to dance, I suggest you hop in a cab and hit up Junkanoo, which is a restaurant by day and a bar/dance club by night. It's located more toward the south end of the beach, but worth the ride. There's also a bar/club underneath the Lani Kai, which is within walking distance. It's where you'll find the majority of Spring Breakers.

Of course, these are not the only places to dance. You can take a cab to downtown Fort Myers for a wider variety of clubs.

If you choose to stay on the beach, the majority of the bars have live local bands. At The Cottage on any given night you may get the pleasure of hearing Fort Myers' own Soapy Tuna while mingling with the locals. They play alternative cover music and originals and are one of my favorites.

Across the street from The Cottage at the Beached Whale, if you like '80s and '90s rock,

you will love the Howling Dogs, but don't let the name fool you.

No doubt, there is nothing better after a relaxing day of basking in the sun than kicking back a cold one; whether it is dancing at Junkanoo or Lani Kai, listening to Soapy Tuna while the ocean breeze rushes through your hair at The Cottage, or trying to hang with the Howling Dogs at the Beached Whale.

Now that you have a place to stay, a beach to lay, great

food and exciting nightlife, you have no excuses. The drive is about 13 hours and well worth the trip.

With Spring Break around the corner, there's no time to waste. Don't be a sucker to conformity, be different and try something new.

Get a group of friends together, hop in your car, and cruise down Florida's beautiful coast to Fort Myers Beach. It's inexpensive, safe and – most importantly – fun! ♦

**Make some money
for your Spring Break venture.**

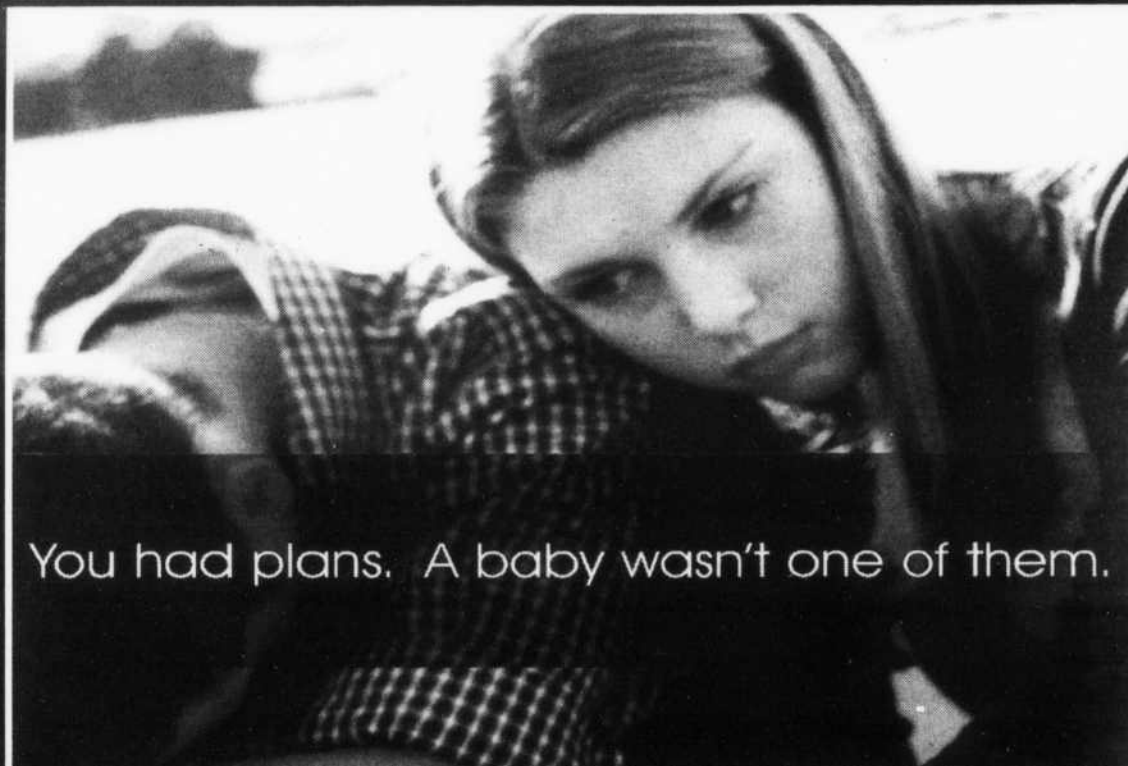
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Spring Break in the 'Boro still offers options

By Stephanie Hill
Staff Writer

If you are stuck in Middle Tennessee this Spring Break because of lack of funds for travel or are wanting just to be able to relax from the time classes get out on March 4 until they resume again on March 14, have no fear.

The events calendar is here to solve your inquiry about what is happening in and around Murfreesboro during your week of freedom.

There are many events occurring during Spring Break from art exhibits to concerts to dances. The possibilities are endless for someone who is staying in Murfreesboro for spring break.

For more updated information on events, keep checking the *Sidelines* Web site at mtsusidelines.com. ♦

'BoroBreakEvents

• Starting on March 4 and running through March 19 is the theater production *I Never Sang For My Father* by Robert Anderson at the Darkhorse Theater on Charlotte Ave in Nashville. This play is sponsored by Artists' Cooperative Theatre I (ACT I), a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing theatrical gems, both classic and modern, to Nashville. Ticket prices are \$15 for adults and \$12 for students. For more information visit www.act1online.com.

• If visual arts are more your thing, the Frist Center for the Visual Arts, in downtown Nashville, has an exhibit, *Living On: Portraits of Tennessee Survivors and Liberators*, running until April 24. The exhibit documents with both photography and writing lives and stories of Holocaust survivors as well as the soldiers who liberated them during World War II. Admission to the Frist is \$6.50 with a student ID and the museum is open Monday-Saturday from 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and extended hours until 8 p.m. on Thursdays and 9 p.m. on Fridays.

• The Ryman Auditorium is also having some great concert events during spring break. On March 8, The Bell South Concert Series presents Styx in concert. Tickets are \$29.50, \$34.50 and \$49.50 and the show starts at 7:30. Likewise, on March 9, Elvis Costello and the Imposters will be gracing the stage at the Ryman. Tickets for that event are \$27.50, \$35.50 and \$49.50. The show starts at 7:30. Finally, as an end to the spring break week, the Ryman presents George Jones with the Singing Sheriff, Ricky Headley at 8 p.m. Tickets cost \$25.50, \$39.50 and \$49.50. For more information contact the Ryman Auditorium at www.ryman.com.

• Or you could go on down to the Bell South Acuff Theatre at 7 p.m. on March 8 and see the "Nashville Star." Montgomery Gentry is performing, and the cost is free. Tickets are available through www.usanetwork.com/nashvillestar or at the Opry Plaza.

• Thursday March 10, Vanessa Carlton comes to Nashville at Exit/In on Elliston Place. Tickets are available through Ticketmaster and cost \$15. If Christian music is more to your liking, head on down to the Gaylord Entertainment Center in downtown Nashville on March 11 to see Bill Gaither. Tickets are available through Ticketmaster and range from \$12 to \$47.

• End Spring Break in style by attending the Bop, Swing and Shag Dance with the Music City Bob Club DJ at the Maxwell Lounge located in the Millenium Maxwell House Hotel located on Metrocenter Blvd in Nashville. The cost is free and the dance starts at 8 p.m. sharp.

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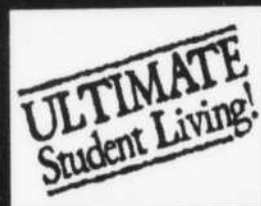
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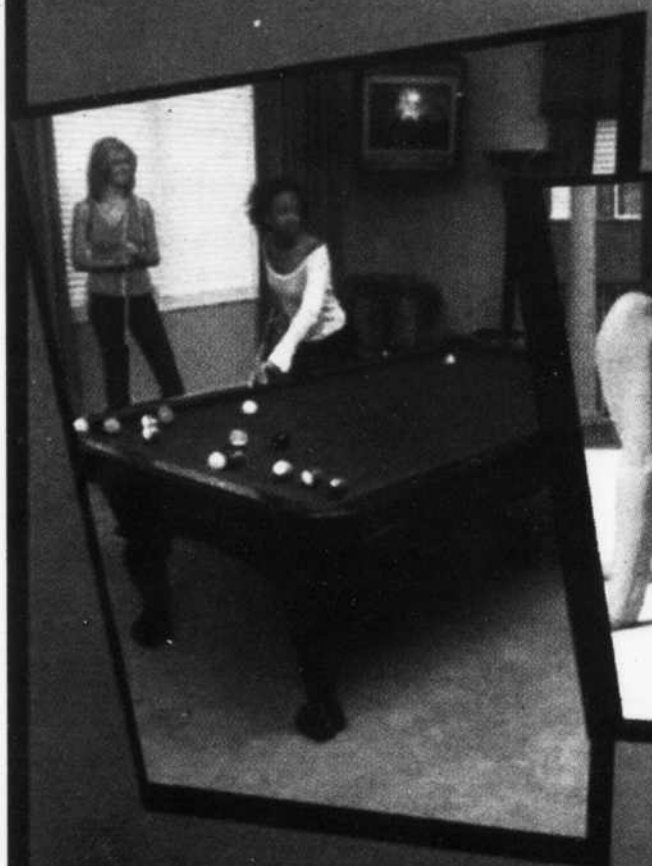


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