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Andreas the Giant ready to dominate

page 6

Don't Feed the Plants

In :flash, inside



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Middle Tennessee State University SIDELINES

Volume 80 No. 48

Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Student plays Carnegie Hall

By Michaela Jackson
Staff Writer

Student musicians at MTSU rarely miss opportunities to light up the local stage. Bars and coffee shops in Murfreesboro nightly turn the microphone over to up-and-coming rockers. Sophomore recording industry major Tyler Andal, though, has surpassed the local norm and taken his act to the big time.

Last December, Andal, a fiddle player, joined other young musicians in performing at Carnegie Hall as a part of the Global Studies program.



Andal

According to the Carnegie Hall press release, Global Encounters is an event hosted by the Weill Music Institute that fosters cultural exchange between students around the world.

A live satellite feed was used to connect an audience of 400 New York City high school students, watching the performance live at Carnegie Hall, with 200 students in New Delhi, India.

The event featured traditional Indian music broadcast from New Delhi, and American jazz and bluegrass.

Andal, 16, was approached about the opportunity by event organizers after being seen in the Fox Family Bluegrass Festival last July in New York. He was appearing with the Ryan Holladay Band. Holladay, 12, was also asked to perform at Global Encounters.

After performing at Carnegie Hall, Andal said his focus remained on his music, not on the size of the venue.

"As long as I'm up on stage making music, it doesn't matter if I'm in a parking lot," he said.

Far from being nervous, Andal said he simply relished in the opportunity to do what he loves to do. "It was just fun," he said.

Before the performance, Andal had three days to rehearse with the band. That's protocol in the music industry, though, he said. "It's not that hard to put together. We had one six-hour rehearsal."

Andal, who is a life-long resident of White House, Tenn., began playing music when he was approximately 11 years old.

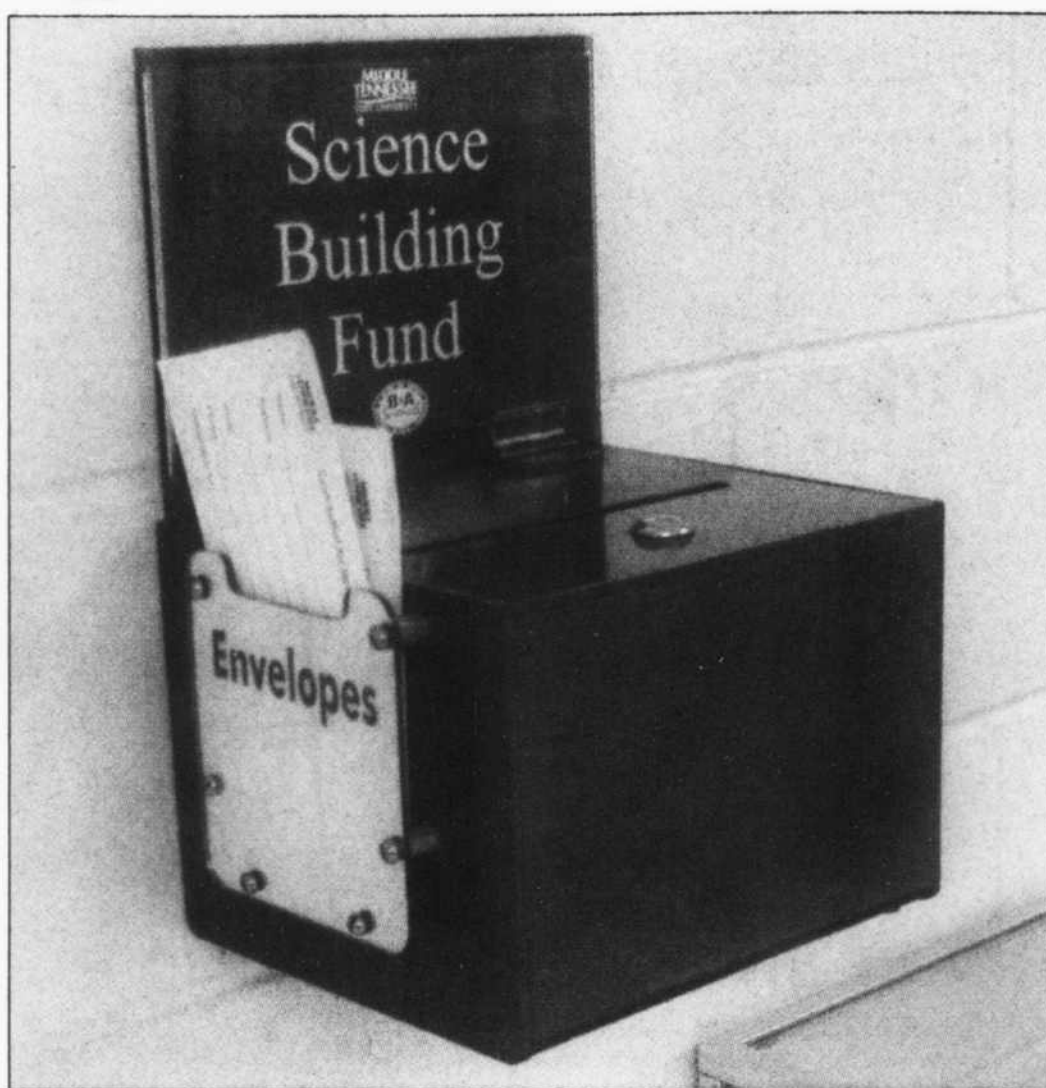
"I started playing for fun. My uncle had a violin, so I was like, 'I'll try that,'" he said. After giving up the classical violin and nearly losing interest in music altogether, Andal said his mother took him to a bluegrass festival where he was introduced to the fiddle.

Andal said he didn't know right away that he wanted to seriously pursue music. "It grew on me. It took me a little while."

Andal said that a big part of his music career has consisted of festivals and contests. Going to such events helped him develop a network of friends

See Carnegie, 2

Suggestions.... donations?



Photos by Rachelle Morvant | Chief Photographer

Charitable students and faculty can contribute to the science building fund in Davis Science Building. The projected cost for a new facility is \$150 million.

Officials expect planning money this year for new science facility

By Matt Anderson
News Editor

Planning for a new science facility could begin as early as this year, depending on the governor's 2005 - 2006 budget.

MTSU President Sidney McPhee and Vice President of Business and Finance John Cothorn both expect planning money either this year or next. And Thomas Cheatham, dean of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, says it's no longer a matter of if, but when.

The Tennessee Board of Regents' 2005 - 2006 budget request for \$13.8 million in planning money.

A new science facility has been on the TBR capital improvement list since 1997. Last year, Breideneser appropriated money for capital projects for higher education for the first time in five years, funding the top eight projects on the list. MTSU's science facility is now number eight.

"I'm crossing my fingers that we'll get a similar response from the governor's budget," McPhee said. "That will get us off that list and on the way to be funded this year. If not this year, definitely next year."

"The significance of that is once the state

assigns planning money, the project is essentially approved. There is no going back. Planning money is a commitment to move forward with the project."

With a total projected cost of \$150 million, it will be the most expensive capital project for higher education ever undertaken by the state. Cheatham says the new building will likely exceed 300,000 square feet, slightly larger than James E. Walker Library.

McPhee expressed concern that the high cost could mean only the top seven projects get funded.

"I don't think that the high costs necessarily will shy them away from doing the project, because once you are on the list, the commitment is there to do it," he said.

McPhee admitted that \$150 million is a lot of money, but added that MTSU is the largest undergraduate institution in the state. TBR's most expensive capital project in 2004 - 2005, a humanities building at Northeast State Technical Community College, had a projected cost of \$14.8 million.

"It's major dollars, and it might mean that we have to wait until next year. The governor has realized that the situation with capital

See Building, 2

Majority likely to keep HOPE scholarships

By Diana Paschal and
Michaela Jackson
Staff Writer and Assistant News
Editor

After their first fall semester, about 60 percent of the freshman class will likely retain Tennessee Lottery HOPE Scholarships for the 2005-2006 academic year, according to university officials.

To maintain their scholarships, students must keep a cumulative average grade point average of at least 2.75. For the first-time freshman class of 3,169, the average GPA was 2.597 according to Teresa Thomas, director of records.

There were 1,194 HOPE Scholarship freshmen with GPAs of 3.0 or higher when the Office of Records submitted reports to Financial Aid Director David Hutton and

Sherian Huddleston, assistant vice provost for enrollment management.

Another 266 freshmen have GPAs between 2.75 and 2.99, Hutton said.

The rest of the first-semester freshmen who had GPAs ranging from 2.5 to 2.74 must raise their averages to 2.75 by the end of spring 2005 semester to keep their \$3,000 lottery scholarship for their sophomore years.

"They will get one more semester and will have a serious challenge in the spring semester," Hutton said in a press release.

MTSU faculty and staff are doing all they can to make students aware of their academic standings and help out those students struggling in their class

See HOPE, 2

Song profits benefit cancer patients

By Hillary Robson
Staff Writer

Recording Industry major and Houston, Texas native Kristin Hart is making a difference by donating proceeds from the downloads of her single, "Cowboy Café" to the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

The foundation offers mammograms for low-income, battered and homeless women and increases awareness about breast cancer. One in eight women will contract the disease in their lifetime, and it is the second leading cause of cancer death.

The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2005, approximately 211,000 women will be diagnosed with the disease. The foundation stresses that the best way to fight breast cancer is early detection, which can be unavailable for some women that are in need.

In July 2004, Hart was contacted by The Clear Channel Network, owners of 1,200 radio stations across the United States, to participate in the

fund-raiser. The network chose less than 100 independent artists and Hart enthusiastically accepted the offer.

This month, the singer, songwriter, instrumentalist and producer is the featured artist at www.helpcurebreastcancer.clearchannel.com.

Hart made her debut on stage at age 5 with a local singing group. She moved to working with live bands at age 9 and has performed at the Wortham Center in Houston, at Disneyland and on a local popular talk show, *The Deborah Duncan Show*.

She co-produced and wrote two songs on her first album, *Clever Country Girl* following her high school graduation in 2002. Throughout her career she has been backed by her parents, who double as her management team.

Hart's enthusiasm for learning about the craft of singing and her love of music quickly became an academic goal.

See Song, 2

MTSU to provide training, support to Murfreesboro schools



Photos by Rachelle Morvant | Chief Photographer

Sidney McPhee and city schools director Marilyn Mathis sign a partnership agreement at a ceremony Tuesday.

By Esparanda Waller
Staff Writer

MTSU students and professors will soon be sharing time and resources with the Murfreesboro public schools after university officials and city educators signed a three-year partnership agreement Tuesday night.

"We've spent the last two years at the university developing a strategic plan that focuses on three broad goals: enhancing the quality of the university with students, faculty, and our facilities, focusing on the student centered environment, and focusing on strategic partnerships that will enhance this community," MTSU President Sidney McPhee said.

"These partnerships will allow MTSU to use its expertise and resources to solve problems

within the community and state," McPhee said.

According to the school board's memorandum, the university will provide training, technical support and resources at the school partner sites or on campus. Emphasizing readiness and parental involvement will strengthen pre-kindergarten programs. Research-based practices by MTSU will be provided for classroom teachers.

"All city and county schools have drawn on the resources of MTSU that help educate our children," Murfreesboro vice-mayor Chris Bratcher said. "The resources that MTSU provides are the teachers. They come here to study education and they want to stay and teach here because they see what a good school system we have. It's a win-win situation for Rutledge county and MTSU."

The agreement will allow MTSU students and professors to conduct field research at city schools. The College of Education and Behavioral Science, the College of Mass Communication and the College of Liberal Arts are among the departments that will participate in the partnership agreement.

"Although we have enjoyed many partnerships with MTSU over the years, this will help formalize those partnerships and create additional ones," Marilyn Mathis, Murfreesboro City Schools director told *The Tennessean*. "We see this relationship as mutually beneficial and we are excited about it."

Bratcher said that one of the city's goals is to encourage city students to choose MTSU to

See Partnership, 2



This week's poll question at
www.mtsusidelines.com

Do you feel that ID readers are
necessary to ensure campus security?

Building: 'Not asking for marble stairways'

Continued from 1

funding is critical, that we've been neglected the last five or six years."

Indeed, programs such as biology, which are housed in the Davis Science Building, have been neglected in terms of facilities.

Science equipment and classroom furniture spill into the third floor. Stepping onto the hallway, once home to an animal lab and greenhouse, is a violation of fire codes, according to George Murphy, biology department chair. Graduate students' offices were converted into faculty offices; now those faculty offices are cluttered research labs.

Biology professor Stephen Wright said the costs may sound high, but emphasized that disgruntled faculty didn't generate them.

"We were told to create this vision of what your dream facility would look like," Wright said. "That's dangerous, like if I were to say what would your

dream house look like."

"It turned out that overall, faculty dreams were under what they should have been," he said. "The professionals told them they were asking low. We're not asking for marble stairways."

Murphy added that they high costs were deceptive.

"It's not all bricks and mortar," Murphy said. "There will be some demolition, making space. A big chunk of the change is for the heating and cooling system."

A new science facility will require a new heating and cooling system, because the current system is at capacity, according to Murphy. McPhee said the costs also include renovations for the current science facilities.

"If you want to see the value of what can happen with old buildings, look at Todd," McPhee said.

McPhee and Cothorn said the state will be the primary source of funding, and that the university has explored all possibilities for funding.

"We truly are [at the mercy of state funding]," McPhee said.

"Foundations and the federal government are not giving bricks and mortar money for these kinds of projects. They are saying the state should be obligated to provide bricks and mortar funds for projects like this."

Last year, Bredesen floated an idea that said the state would give two thirds of capital funding, and universities should find private donations for the remaining third.

"For small projects, that might be doable," McPhee said. "We're talking about raising \$50 million in private funds just for this science building. The chances of that happening is very unlikely."

Cothorn added, "it'd be tough."

"Very few contributors like to give to brick and mortar," he said. "Some of the equipment you could probably get through the federal government from grants and research programs, but the basic cost, we'll have to fund it from state capital money, or take it out of your

hide if they'll let us take it from plant funds."

"Generally they don't like for you to do that," Cothorn said.

Plant funds typically go toward building renovations.

Cothorn stressed that even if MTSU receives planning money, nothing can happen overnight.

"They'll have to get a more designated designer, plan it, draw up the specs, then hopefully the legislature next year gives you \$50 - 60 million for a first phase," he said.

In the meantime, Wright and Murphy will have to deal with a science facility completed in 1968. Their department has the exact makes and models of the machines researchers used to map the human genome, and one of students, Eric Freundt, was accepted to Oxford.

"We've gotten so used to doing a lot with a little, that I almost think we could do something with nothing," Murphy said. ♦

CRIME LOG

Compiled By Matt Anderson - News Editor

Wednesday, Jan. 19 - 6:48 p.m.
James E. Walker Library Vagrancy

Trespass warning issued to Michael McQueen of Murfreesboro. Subject is not a student.

Thursday, Jan. 20 - 3:33 p.m.
Davis Science Building Harassment

Complainant reported being harassed by ex-boyfriend, who had been told by administration to stay away.

Thursday, Jan. 20 - 3:33 p.m.
Cason-Kennedy Nursing Building

Theft over \$500
A laptop was reported missing.

Friday, Jan. 21 - 11:23 p.m.
Sigma Alpha Epsilon - Fraternity Row Alarm - Fire call

Fire alarm, sprinklers reported going off on 3rd floor.

Saturday, Jan. 22 - 12:36 a.m.
Tennessee Boulevard at Greenleaf Drive DUI 1st offense

Andrew Wilson, 21, of Lascassass, Tenn. charged with DUI, possession of

marijuana, possession of drug without prescription and open container violation.

Sunday, Jan. 23 - 3:18 p.m.
Cummings Hall

Theft reported on stolen purse. Purse last seen in Keathley University Center at noon on Jan. 22.

Sunday, Jan. 23 - 10:34 p.m.
James E. Walker Library Vagrancy

Individual looking at pornography on library computers.

Monday, Jan. 24 - 11:24 a.m.
Business Aerospace Building Leaving Scene of Accident

Subject advised that someone hit her truck and left the area.

Monday, Jan. 24 - 8:57 p.m.
Corlew Hall

Drug Abuse/Possession
Possible drug activity reported.

Tuesday, Jan. 25 - 1:29 a.m.
Sigma Nu - Fraternity Row Vandalism over \$500

Complainant reported vehicle had been spray painted and had eggs thrown at it. ♦

HOPE: Help available for at-risk students

Continued from 1

work.

In December, financial aid and enrollment management officials mailed 7,126 letters to students and parents or guardians advising them of the students' academic status.

Out of the 3,573 students, 2,095 in-state freshmen and sophomores receiving the scholarship were sent letters acknowledging their academic success.

Chemistry major Katherine Langford had little trouble keeping her lottery scholarship.

"I'm working hard anyway for pharmacy school," Langford said.

She said the scholarship takes "a big worry off my shoulders about money. I'm not borrowing money from my family."

For the 286 students who had a GPA of 2.74 or less, the letters suggest they seek help from on-campus math and writing labs or tutoring. It is

also suggested they try to earn extra-credit course work and seek help from their advisers and faculty members.

All of the students whom are on the verge of losing their scholarships were sent information on the different means of financing their tuition through grants, outside scholarships and loans.

The HOPE Scholarship was approved by the state legislature in 2003 in time for the high school graduating class of 2003

to benefit college freshmen in the fall semester. For these scholarship recipients, only 40 percent kept their scholarship for their sophomore year.

The HOPE Scholarship caused a 10.7 percent average increase in first-time freshmen at four-year universities this past fall. This last semester it provided \$47,303,266 for 36,672 students in 85 institutions in Tennessee. ♦

Song: Donations fund cancer awareness

Continued from 1

"When I was in high school all I did was vocals ... and I would always have ideas in my head for writing songs but I couldn't get them out because I could never play anything," Hart said.

Her first two years in college were spent at South Plains College in Levelland, Texas, where country stars like Natalie Maines studied.

South Plains was where Hart learned to play the guitar and bass.

"It's always been important for me to be prepared," Hart said, and that involved learning how to play different musical instruments so that she could better communicate with fellow musicians while on stage.

Hart transferred to MTSU so that she could more fully understand the business side of music.

"I think [performing music and learning the music business] ties together ... It's always been important to me to have a college education and then on top of that if I can get a degree in a business, in a career that I love, why not be that [much] more educated?"

Hart's dedication to learning the business side of music is matched by her belief that music has the power to make a difference in the lives of others.

The dollar donation for breast cancer awareness and detection is a gift she wholeheartedly supports.

"I'd like to think that I used at least part of my music, or part of myself, to help better the community or better the world," Hart said.

Hart's Web site, www.kristin-hart.com, includes a direct link to the download site for her single, sound clips and merchandise for sale. ♦

Carnegie:

Continued from 1

from around the country who share his interest in bluegrass.

"There are festivals all over the country. You'll see people from all over. You develop good connections, and it's a lot of fun," he said.

After college, Andal said he plans to continue making music. He said he wants to continue performing, possibly in a band, develop skills as a studio player and possibly become a music teacher.

On the less distant horizon, Andal's music is slated to lead him to Japan in October. He didn't mince words about his excitement. "Going to Japan's pretty cool," he said.

Andal said he is grateful for the opportunities that he has been afforded, especially the chance to play at Carnegie Hall.

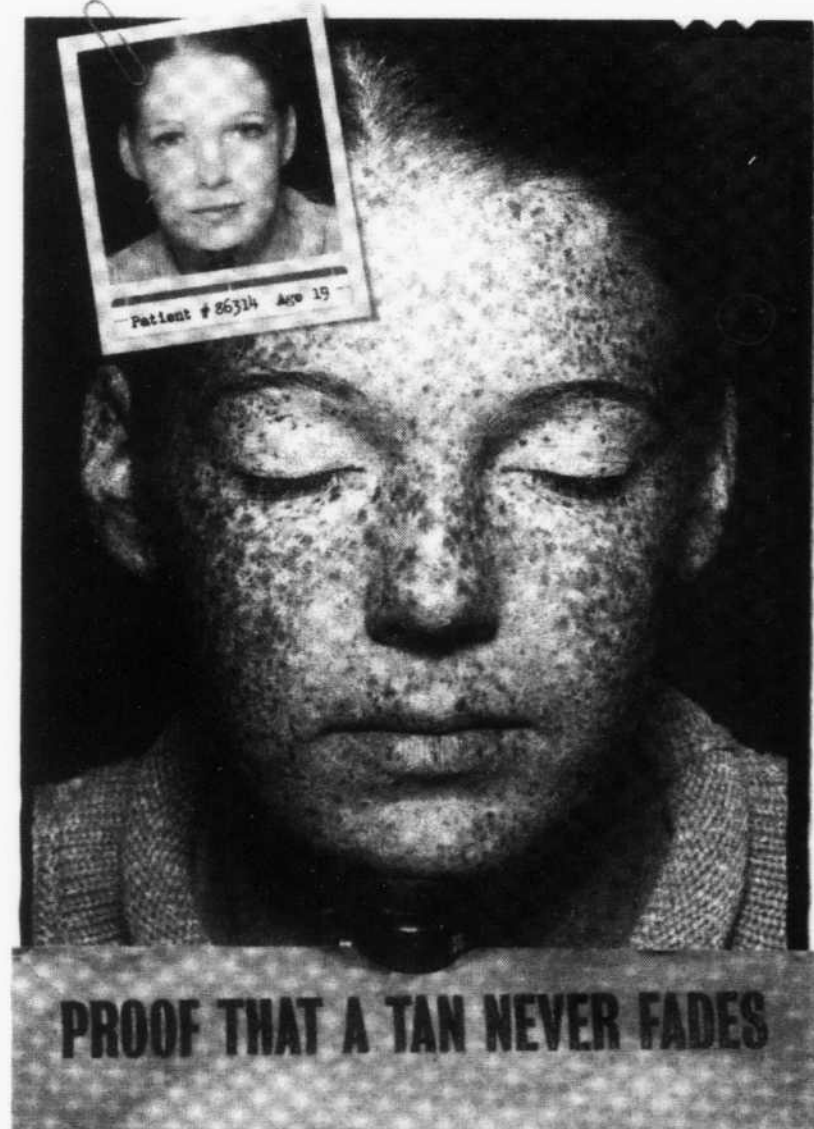
"It seems so cool that I'm 16 and all this is already happening," he said. "I was just glad that I was chosen. It feels good to be chosen." ♦

A special ultraviolet camera makes it possible to see the underlying skin damage done by the sun. And since 1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime, what better reason to always use sunscreen, wear protective clothing and use common sense.



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Officials tell lawmakers diversity improving at state universities

By Lucas L. Johnson II
Associated Press Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Higher education officials told a legislative committee Wednesday that the state is on track to meet the requirements of a court-ordered agreement to improve diversity issues at state colleges and universities.

"Campuses have been working hard," said Wendy Thompson, special assistant to the chancellor of the Tennessee Board of Regents. "These programs are opportunities to make changes for the long-term, and we embrace them as such."

Thompson was among a panel of seven who spoke before the Fiscal Review Committee about the Geier Consent Decree, which gives schools until 2006 to meet required goals.

The agreement stems from a 1984 lawsuit filed by Rita Geier, an instructor at historically black Tennessee State University who challenged the state's "dual system" of higher education institutions.

After one settlement failed in 1984, a federal judge approved a new one in 2001, which became the Geier Consent Decree. If the required goals are met, the litigation ends.

The settlement called for the state to spend up to \$75 million over 10 years to help TSU and other state schools improve their image, but it is mostly focused on forcing the Regents and University of Tennessee systems to look for ways to diversify their enrollment.

Wednesday's meeting stemmed from questions by committee member Rep. Bill Dunn, R-Knoxville, who had pointed to a decline in white enrollment at TSU in questioning whether the money was being used appropriately.

"My No. 1 goal is to get all this before the Legislature, so we can put an end to this court case," Dunn said. "Several times it was supposed to be over, but it

kept going on and on. I think by getting people on the record now, it will be a lot harder in 2006 to say we need to keep spending money on this."

Shilina Chatterjee, the committee's legal counsel, said a recent review shows the directives are being met.

"A majority have been achieved, and the rest will be by 2006," Chatterjee said.

Among those achievements are the completion of African-American retention studies, establishment of minority and nontraditional scholarship programs, and the implementation of pre-doctoral fellowship programs at various institutions.

But education officials say they're most pleased with the increased enrollment, especially among black students. Of the universities overseen by the Tennessee Board of Regents, black enrollment rose from 18.8 percent in 1984 to 24.2 percent in 2004. In the University of Tennessee system, enrollment increased from 7.9 percent to 12.4 percent.

Brian Noland, associate executive director of policy, planning and research for the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, which oversees both systems, said the effects of the consent decree are about more than numbers. He said a recent study he conducted shows students — both black and white — rate their college experience as "favorable."

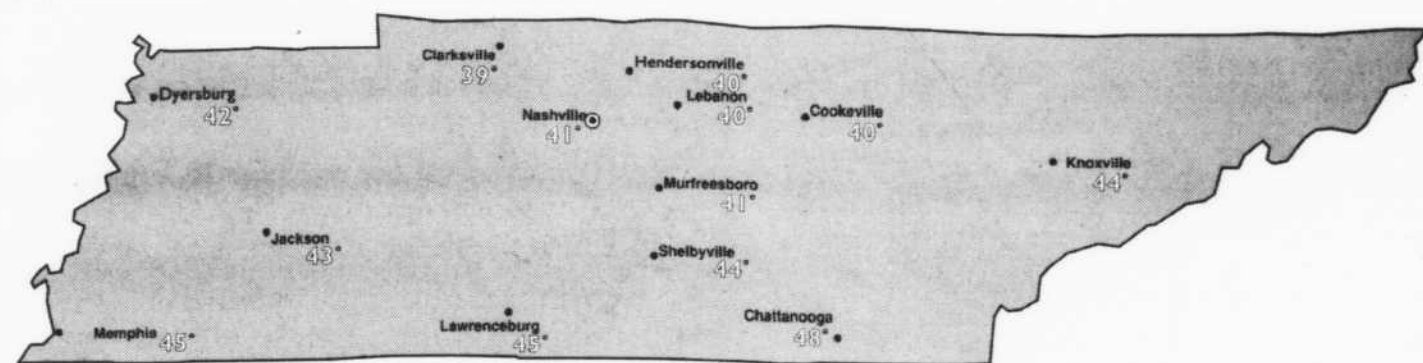
"Geier has made an impact," he said. "It's helped change the hearts and minds of students and faculty across Tennessee."

Committee chairman Charles Curtiss, D-Sparta, said he understands members' concerns about how the state's money is spent, but he believes the consent decree is worth it.

"It's been expensive, but it has opened a lot of doors," Curtiss said. "I think overall we've accomplished a great deal. When we get beyond this and look back, we'll have a great deal of pride." ♦

Tennessee Weather – Thursday's Highs

From the Associated Press



Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
46° ▲ 31° ▼	45° ▲ 38° ▼	49° ▲ 35° ▼	56° ▲ 43° ▼	52° ▲ 35° ▼

Bredesen proposes \$20 million jobs training program

Associated Press

PINEY FLATS, Tenn. (AP) — Saying he "won't be satisfied until every Tennessean who wants a job has a job," Gov. Phil Bredesen on Wednesday proposed \$20 million in new funding for job training and expansion of the state's technological infrastructure.

"We must get back to basics and modernize the economic development 'tool kit' we use to recruit and retain new industry and business in Tennessee," Bredesen told an audience at Tri-County Industrial Park.

"That means investing in hardworking Tennesseans to

ensure they have the skills to participate in this changing economy. It means expanding our infrastructure to make Tennessee more competitive for new industry and to foster growth in the industry we already have."

The governor said the \$20 million request in "one-time funds to help jump start these efforts" will be contained in the fiscal 2006 budget he will submit to the state General Assembly on Monday.

Last week, Bredesen identified preschool programs as his top priority for the new legislative session, with job creation and work force training his second priority.

ond priority.

Tennessee's unemployment rate in December was 5.2 percent, up two-tenths of a point from November but down from 6 percent a year ago. While last month's rate was still below the national average of 5.4 percent, it meant some 153,500 Tennesseans were out of work.

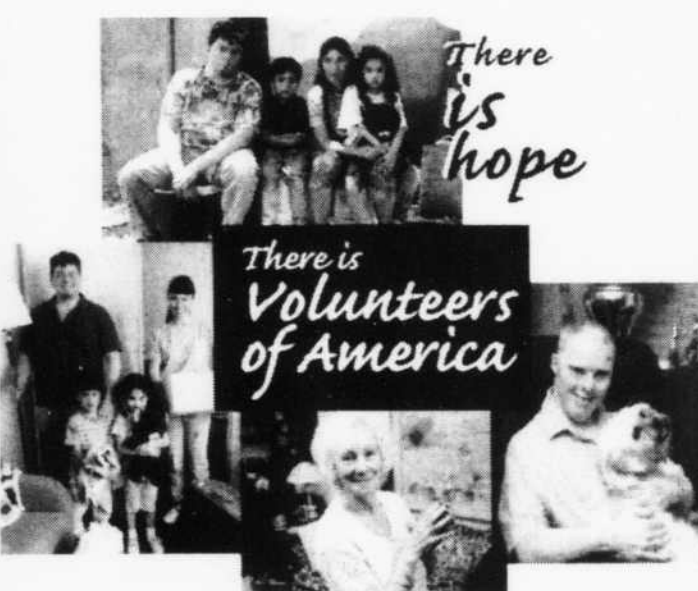
The governor said a portion of the new job-training money would be used to help companies already in Tennessee upgrade their employees' skills.

"By providing this help to current industry, we accomplish two things. We keep those Tennessee companies here in Tennessee and we increase the

overall skill level of our work force — making us even more attractive to new industry."

In addition, Bredesen wants to devote some of the \$20 million to developing a statewide broadband capability that would link small locales as well as large cities "to meet the economic challenges of tomorrow." He said Tennessee already trails surrounding states.

"Technology is the thread that runs through entire organizations, connecting people, ideas and powering business operations and strategy," he said. "We must work together to build a foundation for innovation in Tennessee." ♦



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WORLD BRIEFS



Rice's confirmation as Secretary of State eminent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite strong Democratic dissent, Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's trusted national security aide and a main architect of his policies on Iraq and the war on terror, appears headed to overwhelming Senate approval as the next secretary of state.

Once approved, Rice, 50, will replace Colin Powell and to become the first black woman to serve as the nation's top diplomat.

A dozen or so Democrats were lined up to vote against her Wednesday.

Probably as many others intended to yield to President Bush's right to pick his own Cabinet even though they, too, harbored serious doubts about Iraq policy.

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., predicted Rice would have "an overwhelming majority" of votes.

What had seemed at the outset to be a cinch turned into sometimes angry debate over Bush's decision to go to war with Iraq, his struggle with a potent insurgency and Rice's role in helping him make a case for overthrowing Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Israelis, Palestinians resume diplomatic talks

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel and the Palestinian Authority resumed diplomatic contacts Wednesday after a two-week freeze, and Israel agreed to suspend targeted killings of Palestinian militants — two more steps toward a cease-fire and a resumption of peace talks.

Also Wednesday, Israeli and Palestinian security chiefs held their second meeting in several hours on completing plans for the deployment of 1,500 Palestinian officers at flash-points in central and southern Gaza. Commanders met at a key junction in southern Gaza, ahead of Thursday's deployment.

About 100 Jewish settlers came to the junction to protest

the security coordination. Settlers flattened tires of Palestinian police vehicles, one of the Palestinian commanders said.

The relative calm of the past week was marred by a brief burst of violence in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, including Palestinian rocket fire and the killing of a Palestinian girl, apparently by Israeli army fire. Doctors initially said the girl was 3, but later said she might be a little older.

It appeared unlikely the violence would slow the momentum toward a truce.

Insurgents attack political party offices in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — Insurgents staged attacks against U.S. forces, schools to be used as polling stations and political party offices on Wednesday, as they pressed a bloody campaign to undermine Iraq's weekend elections. A U.S. Marine transport helicopter crashed in western Iraq.

Three car bombs exploded Wednesday in Riyadh, a tense town north of Baghdad, killing at least five people, including three policemen.

One of the car bombs targeted a U.S. convoy but there was no report of casualties, police said.

In Baghdad's Sadr City district, Iraqi forces backed by U.S. troops raided a Shiite mosque, detaining up to 25 followers of a radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, police and the cleric's supporters said. There was no immediate word on casualties in the helicopter crash, which took place Wednesday morning near the town of Rutbah while the aircraft was transporting 1st Marine Division forces, the U.S. military said in a statement.

A search and rescue team had reached the site and an investigation into what caused the crash was under way, the military said.

Safety whistleblower recommended for bonus

WASHINGTON (AP) — A government scientist who blew

the whistle on shoddy research had been recommended for a cash bonus, but his bosses pulled it back and tried to fire him after the scientist raised allegations of interference with his safety work, memos show.

"This is going to take some work," National Institutes of Health AIDS Division Director Dr. Edmund Tramont wrote Feb. 23, 2004, in an e-mail that laid out plans to fire whistleblower Dr. Jonathan Fishbein. "In Clauswitzian style, we must overwhelm with force," Tramont wrote, referring to 19th-century Prussian military strategist Carl von Clausewitz.

Just weeks earlier, Tramont had recommended Fishbein for a \$2,500 award for his first-year performance and sent an e-mail praising Fishbein for improving AIDS research safety and compliance, according to memos obtained by The Associated Press.

Since Fishbein's allegations of shoddy government research practices and poor patient protections inside NIH were reported by the AP in December, the agency has said he was being fired for poor performance while on probation.

NIH officials said this week they could not discuss the new documents obtained by AP because Fishbein's case is a personnel matter protected by the Privacy Act.

Fishbein's lawyer said the documents, some of which he hadn't seen before, clearly conflict with NIH's official story.

"This is a clear-cut case of retaliation. NIH's attempt to 'overwhelm' Fishbein with 'force' was both unethical and demeaning," attorney Stephen Kohn said Tuesday.

"Worse than just retaliating against the whistleblower, the agency's conduct has chilled the willingness of other employees to publicly disclose wrongdoing."

Schools reopen in Aceh; disaster remembered

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia (AP) — One month after an epic tsunami ravaged southern Asia, children and teachers in

Indonesia's worst-hit Aceh province on Wednesday made an emotional return to school, where thousands of desks of classmates and colleagues sat empty.

Alqausar, a 6-year-old boy with neatly parted hair, arrived at school with his mother and wondered where his best friend Andi was.

But reality soon dawned on him.

"I don't think he's coming," whispered the boy, one of six in his class of 43 who showed up at a primary school. Of the school's enrollment of 600, only 260 came Wednesday. The others are presumed dead.

Mourners along a road on Sri Lanka's shattered coastline lit candles and set colored flags in silent memory of at least 30,957 people who died there Dec. 26.

"In memory of that day, for the missing and dead in all the countries, we are praying that a tsunami will never return, said L. Chandaransi, head monk at the Ariyakara Viharaya temple near the southern Sri Lankan city of Galle.

Up to 147,000 people are still missing following the tsunami, and differing government tallies put the overall death toll between 144,000 and 178,000.

Workers continued to find bodies under mud-caked rubble, and the toll was expected to rise.

Estimates show budget deficits remain large

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House says its drive to halve federal deficits by 2009 remains on track, though it projects that the cost of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will help drive this year's shortfall to a record \$427 billion.

The figure, provided by a senior Bush administration official who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity, was among a flood of numbers released Tuesday that underscored a gloomy budget picture.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said projected deficits for the decade ending in 2014 had

grown \$503 billion worse than it calculated in September, excluding war costs. The deterioration was chiefly due to tax cuts and hurricane aid enacted since then.

The congressional analysts projected that this year's deficit would hit \$368 billion, excluding war expenses, and about \$400 billion with them.

The highest deficit ever was last year's \$412 billion.

The administration official said the White House's 2005 projection of \$427 billion showed progress because it was less than last year's gap when compared with the size of the growing U.S. economy — a key measure of the deficit's potency.

Confidence in Iraq's future slips, even among supporters

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some of President Bush's bedrock supporters — Southerners and rural residents — have lost confidence in the likelihood of a stable, democratic Iraq.

Euphoria over the swift toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime has been dimmed by the violent struggle to install a new Iraqi government.

If it continues, the decline in optimism among those groups, in part of Bush's base vote in November, could make it harder to rally congressional support for his Iraq policies.

The Army plans to keep troop strength in Iraq at current levels through 2006, which would include the November midterm elections.

In Iraq, elections for a 275-member parliament are scheduled Sunday.

U.S. officials expect the days leading up to it to bring even more of the deadly insurgent attacks that for months have targeted U.S. troops, Iraqi police and soldiers and Iraqi political leaders.

More than 1,370 U.S. troops have died since the U.S.-led invasion in March 2003.

More than half of Americans polled by The Associated Press in mid-January — 53 percent — said they think it's unlikely that a stable, democratic Iraq will be

established, while 46 percent said that is likely.

In mid-April, 55 percent of Americans said they thought stable, democratic Iraq was likely.

Optimism has waned in the last eight months in almost every group of Americans. But it remains strongest among Republicans and suburbanites, especially men, and those who are married, according to polls conducted for the AP by Ipsos Public Affairs.

Some of the larger decline in optimism came among Southerners, Northeasterners, rural Americans and women 40 and over.

Grieving relatives try to identify more than 250

WAI, India (AP)

Thousands of sobbing relatives struggled to identify the blackened and bruised bodies of loved ones in a hospital Wednesday, a day after a stampede during a religious procession to a hilltop temple killed at least 258 people and injured 200 in western India.

The chain-reaction tragedy began inside the Hindu pilgrims inside the temple fell on a slippery floor and were crushed to death by the crowd. Word of the accident then trickled out to some of the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims climbing toward the hilltop on a narrow walkway.

Angered over the deaths, some pilgrims began setting the shops lining the path on fire, sparking a stampede that killed at least 258 people, including 156 women, Subha Rao, the top district administrator, told The Associated Press.

Police chief Chandrakant Kumbhar said the tragedy began when the temple floor became slippery from a ceremony that involved breaking coconuts in front of a deity.

Some pilgrims fell and were trampled to death by others propelled forward by the mass of people behind them trying to get into the temple to make offerings. ♦

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From the Editorial Board

Rice unsuitable to lead U.S. State Department

The Senate overwhelmingly approved Condoleezza Rice to be the next Secretary of State, that she may further guide U.S. foreign policy into four more years of alienation of would-be allies and wanton destruction of the third world.

As National Security Adviser, Rice supported the Iraq war, advising the president and the nation based on faulty intelligence about weapons of mass destruction. Now, with the quagmire in Iraq more obvious than ever, Rice, like the rest of the administration responsible for the war, refuses to give straight answers when asked about an exit strategy.

Rice replaces Colin Powell, who was generally thought to be the moderate voice in the administration. Rice and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld will continue their neo-conservative foreign policy, which further isolates the United States from the rest of the world. The president or critics unlikely to ever hear the voice of descent or criticism, which was almost exclusively provided by Powell during his first term.

Rice has no small task set before her. Two-thirds of Bush's Axis of Evil remain a threat. While Bush was hunting for WMDs in Iraq, Iran and North Korea continued to develop their nuclear weapons programs. They've shown no sign of slowing development of their weapons programs, and the administration hasn't put forth any plans for dealing with these two rogue nations.

Rice equated Bush in a tactless war in Iraq. She had better learn from her mistakes, as Iran and North Korea will require significantly more finesse. She will need the help from the very nations which were most disturbed by the United States' unilateral actions in Iraq.

A better choice for Secretary of State would have been someone with at least the appearance of moderate foreign policy principles.

Rice's reputation will surely precede her, impeding her ability to advance U.S. foreign policy goals. The administration will once again be left with bribery and the threat of force as its only foreign policy tools.

As the old saying goes, when your only tool is a hammer, every problem begins to look like a nail. ◆

From the Opinions Editor

World's nations band together for progress in stopping AIDS

The world is finally starting to see progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa, according to two announcements released earlier this week.

On Tuesday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration

announced that an inexpensive drug developed in South Africa to fight AIDS meets its standards. While business concerns here prevent the drug from being sold to Americans due to patent conflicts, the government is fully able to buy supplies of the drug to expand treatment efforts in Africa.

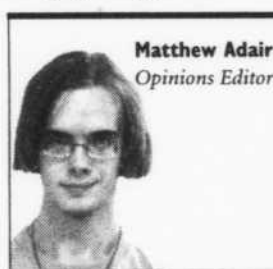
The next day, the World Health Organization announced that 2004 saw significant increases in the number of people in sub-Saharan Africa receiving treatment for HIV. The number doubled last year, with five countries – Botswana, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia – have increased the availability of medicines to cover 10,000 more people with AIDS in each nation.

Unfortunately, of the four million people in Africa who need antiretroviral treatments (a type of drug that is effective against the type of virus that HIV is), only 315,000 people are able to receive them. For the WHO to meet its goal of treating three million people by the end of the current year, \$2 billion will be needed to cover the expense.

Advances such as the newly-approved drug from South Africa as well as wide-spread support and assistance from partner organizations of the WHO, however, have made major strides in controlling the spread of AIDS. Treatment costs have dropped from hundreds of dollars a year to a fraction of that cost. Everyone from the United States to Luxembourg, as well as international funds like the World Bank and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries Fund for International Development are helping to foot the bill for treatment and prevention.

The world finally understands the scope and magnitude of the AIDS epidemic. Hopefully, this week's advancements in treating the people of Africa will extend to the rest of the world, bringing the world closer to a day when HIV/AIDS is nothing more than a terrible memory from the past. ◆

Matthew Adair is a sophomore art education major and can be reached at matt.adair@gmail.com.



Matthew Adair
Opinions Editor

Students in need of more HOPE

First-year lottery revenues for Tennessee were unveiled the other day. To the surprise of many, officials announced that the gross ticket sales amounted to \$863.4 million. Furthermore, an unexpected \$246 million was raised to help fund "scholar dollars." This is a full \$81 million extra than the original prediction of \$165 million for education.

That leaves one question: What is to be done with the extra money? The most talked about solution involves adding an additional \$1,000 to all of the HOPE scholarships. This would raise the total amount to \$4,000 per year or \$2,000 per semester. Of course, if you are from a low-income family or do extraordinarily well on your ACTs, that could mean somewhere around \$5,000 per year.

However, many are opposed. Gov. Phil Bredesen has announced that he would like to use some of the extra lottery profits to fund his priority plan for this year, state

(This Title for Rent)



Gretchen Jenkins
Staff Columnist

pre-kindergarten programs.

Although this is a respectable idea, it would probably cost more than the surplus allows. The conservative estimate is \$240 million to pilot a state-funded pre-K system.

Furthermore, Bredesen's plan does not comply with the original lottery statements. The main purpose in implementing the lottery was to provide scholarships for college education, and to help fund after-school programs.

Others are wary of distributing the extra money for any program, because lottery ticket sales are

expected to drop off next year.

They claim that since this is the first year, there was a lot of excitement to buy tickets, and by next year, the novelty will have worn off. Consequently, there would be a gap in the profits and expenditures of the lottery system.

Lottery officials do expect sales to drop off next year, but they also predict that by 2006, sales will start to increase steadily again.

The state set aside money for 65,000 students to receive scholarships this year, but only 36,600 applied for and received the first year's profit. You might wonder why this is. Many were just too lazy to fill out the paperwork.

That leaves a little less than 30,000 scholarships unclaimed. After this semester the number of recipients will surely decline due to the 2.75 minimum grade point average after 24 attempted hours.

Next year, the requirements will increase from an ACT score of 19 to a 21. As you can see, this leaves

a lot of extra scholarships. So, even if lottery ticket sales do decrease next year, there is ample money to stipend another grand.

As it is, tuition is already high enough that the scholarships don't cover it. Currently, MTSU draws \$3,352 out of you, per semester. That doesn't include housing or food expenses if you live on campus. The University of Tennessee at Knoxville is worse, with a year's tuition consisting of \$4,748. There is more good news, as tuition is rumored to go up, yet again.

Anyone who has ever attended college knows that is can be very expensive. A few extra quarters for laundry, much less a thousand extra dollars, can go a long way. Placing the surplus lottery money in the HOPE chest would benefit more and remain loyal to the original intent of the lottery. ◆

Gretchen Jenkins is a freshman political science major and can be reached at gmj2d@mtsu.edu.

Preserving civilization means putting kids first

I receive a weekly newsletter ("The Week in Germany") from the German Information Center, out of the Embassy in Washington, D.C. Last week, it had an interesting story about the diminishing birthrate in their country.

The projected decline in population is becoming one of increasing concern for European culture, not just for Germany. CBSNews.com ran an interesting story a couple of years ago about the future European population of the year 2100.

The experts are saying that if the fertility and mortality rates continue to stay the same, the societies of the European Union could be looking at a collective decline of around 88 million people by 2100.

Basically, there are more people dying than there are being born.

After polling 40,000 Germans, Forsa, a German research group for public opinion, said last week that top reasons for German parents not having more children were: not being able to find the right spouse, contentment with a childless life, the rising cost of living and an unstable economy.

A significant complaint seems to be that children are not as affordable as they used to be.

Of course, the term "affordable" is relative. We all know that affording what we want has more to do with our priorities than it does with our finances. It's amazing what we have money for if we want it badly enough.

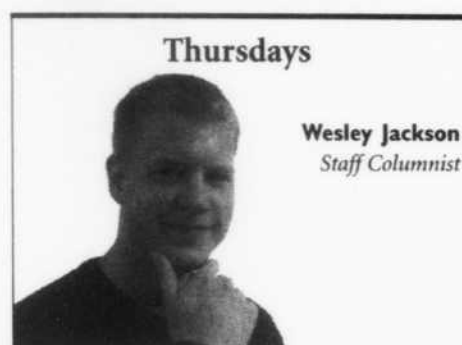
We scrimp and save and sacrifice in some areas in order to make other needs or wants in our lives "affordable."

The Germans seem to recognize this. It is interesting that only around a quarter of those polled thought the problem of child affordability would be eased by either welfare distributions or state childcare.

The majority of people who desire to have children said that what was really needed was a general change in the way society viewed both children and the family.

Around half of the women surveyed said that their superiors at work did not tolerate women with children. More than half the people polled compared parenthood to "bringing victims into the world," an idea which reflects the economic and social lack of welcome toward children.

The problem seems to be that European



Thursdays
Wesley Jackson
Staff Columnist

society in general – and American society, for that matter – sees children and the family as more of a liability than an investment. Even though most Germans claim that the family is their first priority, the practical outworking of this value has somehow been stunted.

The problem deserves thought and, but I suggest that there is a direct correspondence between a society's birthrate, its concern for the family and the degree to which that society believes in the vision of its own culture.

To say it more simply, if a society believes that its values and its culture are worth preserving, then the family and having children will continue to be an extremely high priority. In other words, the greater vision for passing on those cultural values will transcend immediate, transient problems – like economic stability, or finding the right spouse. There is something more permanent at stake.

On the other hand, if the society loses its faith in its cultural values then it will be more reluctant to invest in the future of that culture, meaning that it will be more hesitant about rearing children and having families. That society will be skeptical of passing down its own heritage.

R.G. Collingwood, British philosopher of early last century, wrote that the Greco-Roman culture faded away for this very reason. "It died of a...long-growing and deep-seated conviction that its own way of life was not worth preserving."

Perhaps in analyzing the projected population of Europe and America for the 22nd century, we should also seriously reflect on our faith in our own Western culture, and consider whether or not it is worth preserving. ◆

Wesley Jackson is a senior English major and can be reached at wty2b@mtsu.edu.

Faith-based believers shouldn't throw stones

It's time to evolve ideas that are not born of fear and regression.

Right now, there is a probe of a highly flammable Saturn moon Titan.

Those crafty

NASA scientists say that one of the purposes of the mission is to possibly better understand how earth developed.

Maybe somebody should enlighten these scientists that the United States is a Christian nation, and we already know how the earth came about.

The "Good Book" says the Earth was created in six days, and life as we know it came about because the first woman listened to the instructions of a talking snake in a tree.

This is the rational idea that many Americans, including our president, believe.

It's always good irony to hear one religious person make fun of another person's religious beliefs and practices. Now that we are in the midst of a religious war, we get to hear people demonize Muslim religious practices.

When the war first broke out in Afghanistan, people were up in arms about how women were not allowed to go out in public with any flesh showing.

And every late night comedian took a shot at the belief that when Muslim suicide bombers die, they go to paradise where they will have 70 virgins each.

What makes it funny is that one person with an irrational unrealistic belief is making fun of another one, with no sense of irony what so ever.

What makes one belief any more legitimate than the other? Yeah, having 70 virgins in paradise seems a little far-fetched, but so does the story of Noah and the ark.

If you don't believe that it's kind of far-fetched, then imagine the very elderly Noah trying to wrangle two massive tigers onto a boat.

At no point in the Bible did it mention that Noah had any zoological skills, so this might have been a difficult task.

The outcome of evolving these ideas might lead to a focus on realistic ideas, and a greater realization of the consequences that our actions can have on the global community.

Imagine, if you will, a community that, instead of having a dozen mansion-style churches, puts those resources into something more useful, like helping out with a homeless problem.

Shouldn't there be a graduation program for churches? If a person were to go to church two days out of the week for 20 years, shouldn't that person have such a great comprehension of the Bible that he or she should be able to give the sermon by then?

At what point does a person no longer need a tutor to help them through this single volume of work?

Extra and since we are imagining, we can take all that extra tithe and gas money, and put that towards a useful cause, like better public schools maybe.

In this vision of evolving ideas, we get to see the money-grubbing leeches like Pat Robertson for who they really are. What kind of man would allow people to tithe themselves broke in promise of small miracles?

Remember, these are just ideas of evolving the human perception for the greater good, and Robertson serving taters at KFC would benefit mankind much more than the role he plays at *The 700 Club*.

The last idea for mental and spiritual growth is to keep the stories of revelations with other fantasy books like *The Lord of the Rings*.

Stop anticipating the afterlife, because you are going to ruin the present one.

Stop saying the Lord works in mysterious ways, because sometimes, things don't work out at all, and it's our job to try to improve upon the existence of mankind. ◆

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SPORTS

6 ♦ SIDELINES

Thursday, January 27, 2005

Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Andreas the Giant ready to dominate

By Casey Brown
Staff Writer

Within the athletic realm, few words are thrown around as much as *potential*. For this reason, it would be understandable to overlook the Middle Tennessee men's tennis team.

That's exactly what Andreas Siljestrom wants you to think. The Swedish sophomore is at the forefront of a youth movement that is giving MT tennis enthusiasts a reason for excitement.

"Last year [Siljestrom] came in as a freshman, everything was new, so he had a bit of a difficult time," head coach Dale Short said, "but now he's got a year under his belt, and he's become more comfortable in the environment of college tennis in America."

In other words, watch out, Sun Belt Conference.

The fall season proved to be successful for Siljestrom. At the MT Fall Invitational, he advanced to the finals, defeating South Alabama's David Kepka and Clinton Jacobs before falling to No. 7 Fero Babej of USA.

He also teamed with partner Marco Born to make the doubles final. Their only loss came against teammates Brandon Allan and Kai Schledorn.

Other highlights of the fall included three straight wins over ranked opponents at the UT Invitational, advancing to the Round of 16 at the Southern Intercollegiate and posting a straight-set victory over No. 32 Jacobo Hernandez of Tulane at the Region III Championships.

"He had a solid fall. He was very close to breaking into the Top 25 in the nation," Short said.

So how does a shy kid from Stockholm end up at Middle Tennessee?

"It was another Swede, Robert Gustavson, who



See p. 7 for Casey Brown's men's tennis season preview

See Siljestrom, 8



Photo by Rachelle Morvant | Chief Photographer

Sophomore Andreas Siljestrom is ranked No. 68 in the ITA preseason singles poll.

Cold? Stay indoors, enjoy live Winter X

Sports commentary

David Hunter
Staff Columnist



The weather will be cold, but the action sports will be hot at Winter X Games Nine.

The best move ESPN made was finally making the events live, which occurred last year. Another move that helped with the growth of the games was putting SportsCenter on location.

However, there need to be a few more changes made to the event to make it even better, including bringing back the sport of Super Modified Shovel Racing. I got so stoked watching it, and it sucks that it was dropped after the first Winter X Games in 1997.

Well, actually, it was just a bunch of guys trying to bust the foam wall at the end of the course into a million pieces.

I hope this sport – if it's still around – stays in the history books.

In all seriousness, ESPN needs to stop saving the final runs for that night's SportsCenter. First, it's too cold for the fans to wait an extra hour just to see the last few runs.

And secondly, some of the viewers that want to watch SportsCenter don't care to see action sports period. It is really unfair for the viewers to have the event being shoved down their throats.

At the same time, the television audience will get an opportunity to see some of the athletes that might be representing our country next year in the Men's and Women's Snowboarding Superpipe and the Bordercross events.

In the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy, the Superpipe event will be returning for the third time, while Snowboarder X will be making its Olympic debut.

At the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics, Ross Powers, Danny Kass and J.J. Thomas swept the medals, while Kelly Clark took the women's event.

Watch out for snowboarders like last year's WXXG gold medalists Hannah Teter (Women's Superpipe), Steve Fisher (Men's Superpipe) and Lindsey Jacobs (Women's Snowboarder X) to state their case why they should be in the Olympics.

Shaun White will also be back after missing last year's Superpipe with an injury.

The Border X is an event in which six contestants at the same time race down a course filled with bumps, jumps and hills with the first one at the finish winning.

There is only one slight change, with Snowmobile Hillcross being taken out in favor of Women's Skiing Superpipe. Good move, because the Hillcross was becoming pointless. All it was a snowmobile race going up a hill.

Other events include Moto X Best Trick, snowmobile racing Snocross, Skier X, Superpipe and Slopestyle. Snowboarding will have events in Snowboarder, Slopestyle and Superpipe. There will also be a tag-team relay race with Snowboarders and Skiers in UltraCross.

The Winter X Games start Saturday at noon on ABC. Action will continue live on ESPN at 8 p.m. through next Tuesday. ♦

David Hunter is a junior mass communications major. He can be reached at dah2e@mtsu.edu.

Blue Raiders hope road trip cures woes

By David Hunter
Senior Staff Writer

The Blue Raiders hit the road this weekend looking for a dead end to a three-game losing streak.

Middle Tennessee (12-7, 2-3) lost two Sun Belt Conference games at Murphy Center to South Alabama and New Orleans last weekend in addition to a 69-62 loss at Arkansas-Little Rock on Jan. 15.

The Blue Raiders will be without leading scorer Mike Dean for the weekend thanks to turf toe. Dean also missed the 66-60 loss to New Orleans last Saturday night.

"We just go to work in practice right now, so we can go on the road and defend well and get our team back together," MT forward Michael Cuffee said.

The Blue Raiders are 12-7 in SBC road games since Kermit Davis arrived, second only to Louisiana-Lafayette over the same span.

"It's the same mindset: We always want to win on the road," MT guard Fats Cuyler said. "It's just more urgent now – we've got to have these two games."

The first stop on the long trip is in Las Cruces, N.M.,

at New Mexico State tonight. The Aggies ended a six-game losing streak on Monday night with a 71-66 victory over Florida International.

Mike Mitchell scored 23 in the win, and Josh Jenkins is averaging 17 points in conference contests.

The victory was NMSU's first SBC win this season and improved their record to 5-13 (1-4). The Aggies are still last in the SBC West Division, however.



Next MT men's basketball game:
Tonight v. New Mexico State

In their only meeting last season, NMSU beat MT 81-76 on Jan. 29, 2004. NMSU is 5-1 all-time against the Blue Raiders, with the Aggies' only loss coming in Las Cruces on Jan. 23, 2003.

Duane John leads the Aggies overall with 16.4 points per game and 7.4 rebounds per contest.



Photo by Jay Richardson | Photo Editor

MT sophomore point guard Brian Smithson leads the Blue Raiders with 3.4 assists per game.

The Aggies had to deal with the retirement of head coach Lou Henson last weekend. Henson is sixth all-time in Division I wins with 779 after spending 41 years behind the bench at NMSU and Illinois, including a trip to the Final Four in 1970 with the Illigios.

Henson is currently in a wheelchair after being hospitalized with pneumonia Jan. 6. Associate head coach Tony Stubblefield is now serving as the head coach on an interim basis.

MT then travels to Louisiana-Lafayette (10-7, 4-1) to take on the reigning SBC tournament champions on Saturday night. The Ragin' Cajuns are currently on a four-game winning streak going into tonight's game against Western Kentucky.

Tiras Wade, who is averaging 20.2 points per game in SBC action, leads ULL. Brian Hamilton averages 13.1 points per game and leads the team with 7.9 rebounds per contest.

Last season, ULL beat MT twice, with the second victory ending the Blue Raiders' season. The Ragin' Cajuns beat MT first on Jan. 31, 2004, by the score of 74-64.

Then ULL defeated the Blue Raiders 70-66 in the Sun Belt Conference tournament semifinals on March 8. The following night, the Ragin' Cajuns clinched the SBC title and an automatic NCAA Tournament bid.

ULL was knocked out of the NCAA Tournament in the first round by North Carolina State.

Saturday's game is the only meeting between the two teams this season.

One of the key issues MT will be looking to improve is the way they have started games. In the past two games, the Blue Raiders have been outscored in the opening half by a combined 26 points. MT outscored opponents by a combined 17 points in the second half in the last two games, but it wasn't enough.

"Our teams get off to quick starts, and for some reason we haven't," MT head coach Kermit Davis said. "Our energy has been a lot better in the second half. It's just something we'll try to keep emphasizing like we have all year, and hopefully we can be more competitive in the first 10 minutes of the game."

The Blue Raiders also need to decide who is going to score with Dean sitting on the bench. Steve Thomas and Fats Cuyler were able to pick up the scoring, with Cuyler scoring 17 and Thomas netting 16 in the last game. Michael Cuffee has been in a bit of a scoring slump, however, with a combined 11 points in last week's two losses.

"Maybe our team has lost a little confidence on this three-game losing streak. Losing your leading scorer hurts – it doesn't matter who you are," Davis said. "We've just got to do a lot of little things on the road Thursday and Saturday to be competitive." ♦

Blue Raiders look to build upon last season

By Casey Brown
Staff Writer

The Middle Tennessee tennis team has high hopes for the 2005 season after a successful fall, with most key contributors from last year's squad returning with another year of experience.

MT will challenge for the Sun Belt title while expecting to be competitive in the always-difficult South Region. The team is ranked 54th nationally in preseason polls, a noticeable jump from last year's numbers.

Among MT's stiffest competition in conference play will be defending champion South Alabama. The Jaguars feature the ever-dangerous Franticka Babej, who advanced to the semifinals of the NCAA Tournament last fall.

USA also hosts the conference tournament.

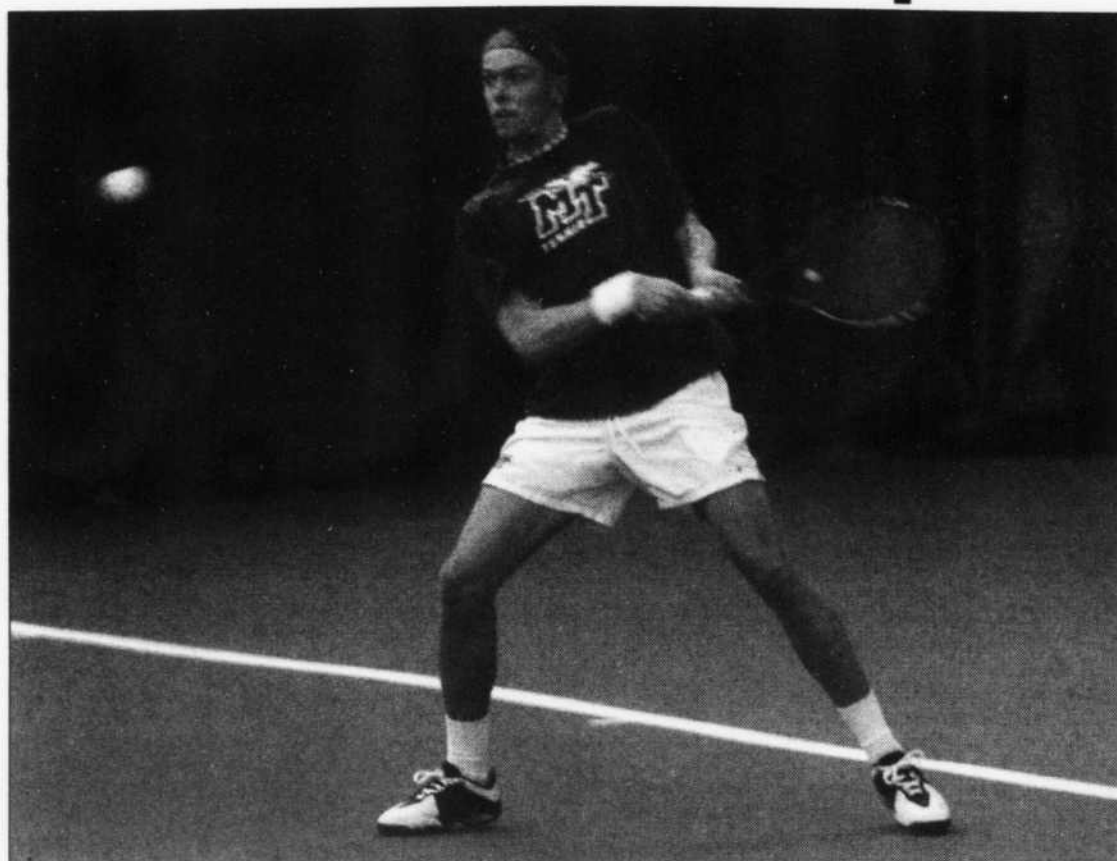
"It's a tough environment to play," head coach Dale Short said. "By late April we [MT] have seen some 70-degree weather, maybe 80 a few times. There it's usually upper 80s with higher humidity."

Louisiana-Lafayette is also expected to challenge for the conference crown. The only other Sun Belt team nationally ranked, the Ragin' Cajuns will be led by 71st-ranked Evghenii Corduneanu.

One dark horse and potential spoiler is Denver, with the talented doubles tandem of Nejc Smole and Adam Holmstrom.

For the Blue Raiders, youth will definitely be served this season. Leading the way is probable No. 1, sophomore Andreas Siljestrom.

After gaining valuable experience in the top two positions in the lineup as a freshman, the Swede had a successful fall with strong showings at the MT and UT Fall Invitationals and the Southern



File Photo

Sophomore Kai Schledorn was one of three First Team All-SBC selections for MT.

Intercollegiate.

Siljestrom is ranked 72nd nationally in preseason polls.

The next two spots in the lineup will most likely be filled by sophomores Marco Born and Kai Schledorn.

Born, a transfer from Tennessee Tech, is expected to build on a strong fall in which he advanced

to the Round of 32 at the Region III Championships and won three consecutive matches at the UT Fall Invitational.

Schledorn will be counted on to provide stability in singles. Perhaps more importantly, however, he will be expected to be a force in doubles with partner Brandon Allan. The duo enters 2005 ranked 19th nationally after winning the MT Fall Invitational and

defeating 27th-ranked Vanderbilt at UT.

Allan, Greg Pollack and Anant Sitaram will most likely round out the top six positions. Pollack reached the Round of 16 at the Southern Intercollegiate, while Sitaram won the Flight A2 title at the MT Invitational. The two teamed up to win the Flight Two doubles title at MT as well.

To emerge as Sun Belt champions, the team will have to receive strong play from its doubles teams. Allan and Schledorn are ranked 6th in the tough South Region, while Siljestrom and Born are ranked 10th.

Those two teams are the only Sun Belt pairs ranked in the South.

"Right now, I think our strength is our doubles. We've got two out of our three teams ranked in the country, and not many teams can say that," Short said.

Siljestrom is currently 17th in singles in the region, with a strong serve and a potent net game. He is ranked below 14 Southeastern Conference players, one Conference USA player and Babej.

"In singles, I think we're fairly solid up and down the line," Short said. "We're still a fairly young team, and we started three freshmen last year."

If anything stands in the way of success this year, it may be a lack of confidence for the relatively green squad. Short feels that the team has the pieces in place for a long postseason run, provided the players can play with confidence.

Several matches at the beginning of the season could provide a needed boost. Belmont and Chattanooga open the schedule, followed by a road trip the following week.

See Tennis, 8

Lady Raiders return home for two

West leader ULL visits Thursday

By Jori Rice
Staff Writer

The Middle Tennessee women's basketball team will take on Louisiana-Lafayette and New Mexico State this weekend at Murphy Center.

MT (12-5, 4-0 Sun Belt Conference) is currently on a five-game winning streak, but ULL (13-4, 3-1 SBC) is currently in first place in the Sun Belt's West Division.

"ULL still has Anna Petrakova, who was player of the year last season, and this year she is still having a great season," MT head coach Stephany Smith said.

Petrakova, a senior center for the Lady Ragin' Cajuns, is averaging 17.6 points per game. She's not the only weapon ULL has, however.

"They have added some backcourt players who are doing a great job, and their

point guard is leading the league in assists," Smith said.

Junior point guard Ashley Blanche averages 6.4 assists per game.

"ULL is a very good team, and they don't make a lot of mistakes," Smith said. "They are not going to beat themselves, so we need to make sure we take care of the basketball."

Smith is familiar with ULL's playing style.

"ULL is going to play us a matchup zone for 40 minutes, so we need to make adjustments within our offense and be prepared to stand up and knock down shots," Smith said. "If we come up on the winning side, it will be a close game."

NMSU (6-10, 1-3 SBC) features senior Trechia Kennedy and freshman Monique Bribiescas, who were both named to the Northern Arizona Thanksgiving Tournament Team.

Bribiescas was also named SBC player of the week for the week of Dec. 28. She leads the Lady Aggies in scoring and assists.

Bribiescas is a point guard who averages 9.5 points and 2.44 assists a game. Another

freshman, Sherell Neal, leads the Lady Aggies in rebounding, averaging 7.0 per game.

NMSU also has a sophomore transfer, Cecilia Russell-Nava, who is averaging 12.3 points per game coming off the bench.

ULL defeated NMSU 67-46 last week.

NMSU shot 33.9 percent in the game against ULL, while ULL shot 39.6 percent. The Lady Cajuns also shot 31.6 percent from the three-point line.

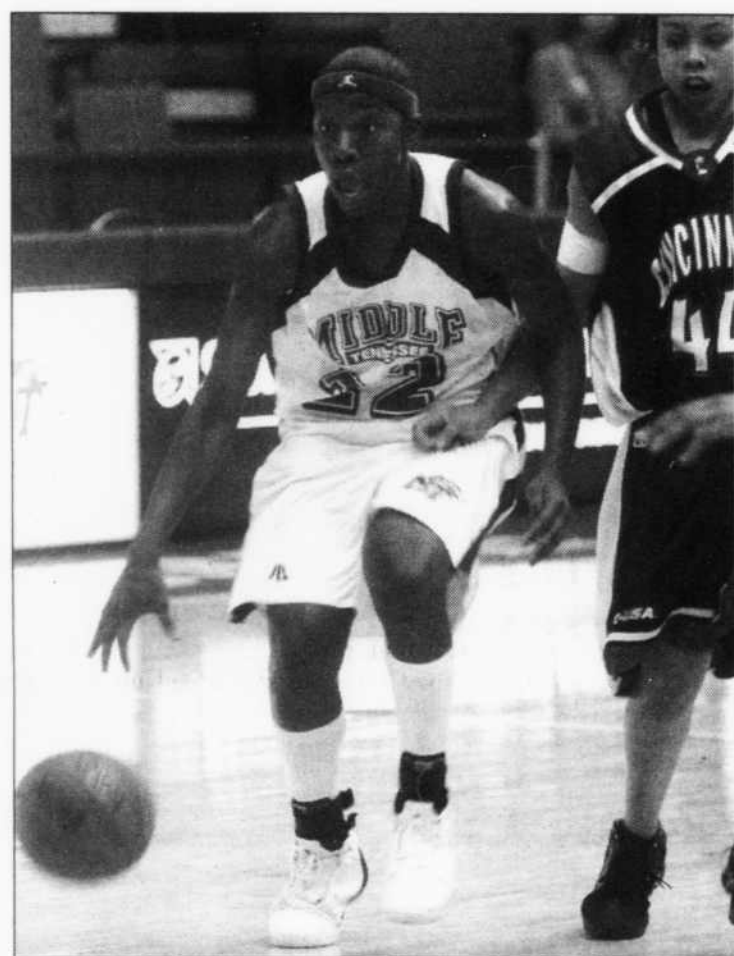
For MT, Patrice Holmes leads the offense, averaging 15.5 points per game. Tia Stovall averages 13.8 points per game, and Krystle Horton has an average of 12.1.

The Lady Raiders are currently atop the SBC East, but Smith wants to make sure her team doesn't let up.

"I think these games are very important, so this is a big weekend for us," Smith said. ♦

Photo by Jay Richardson | Photo Editor

Sophomore guard Chrissy Givens scored a career-high 17 points in a win over South Alabama on Jan. 22.



Classifieds

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Need Money? Student advisors are needed for 120 unit off-campus MTSU apartment community. On-site training, cash referrals and generous hourly salaries are included. Call toll free, 1-866-594-5470 to make an appointment with Kimberly Sanders.

Now hiring full-part time for front desk help. All shifts open. Please apply in person, prefer experience. 1-24 - exit 64 Waldron Road. Super 8 - LaVergne. 615-793-9999.

Five Senses Restaurant & Bar is now hiring cooks, restaurants - good listener, hard working and quick learner. Apply in person between 2-4 pm Tu. - Fr. 1602 W. Northfield Blvd. Suite 515 (Georgetown Park)

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Roommates

Female roommate needed now!! Very nice sub about 2 miles from MTSU, corner lot, fenced back and, vaulted ceilings, central heat and air, super clean. Please call 653-8003 or 217-7737 ecj2g@mtsu.edu. Rent \$315 + utilities.

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Responsible female roommate needed to share new house. room has never been lived in! 3 BR, 2 BA w/ garage not far from MTSU campus. For more information, please contact Ellyn at 615-419-6696.

Need a house for the coming semester? Wanna be a neighbor of the President? Live at 1212 East Main Street! Near Davis Market and the President's House! Covered

garage included with room. Must be able to live with 5 other guys in a 6 bedroom, 3,000 sq. ft. house. 2 baths, basement, covered garage, kitchen, dining room, living room, and reading room. Rent is 280/month plus utilities. Contact Thomas Hilton @ 615-294-1053. Move in asap. House is non-smoking inside.

Roommates needed ASAP. 3 bed house, 2 bath, beds included, Furnished, Hardwood floors, Gas fireplace, H/A, washer/dryer, cable, internet, 2 car garage, 1 mile from campus, large backyard. \$400/month + utilities. Call Lorelei @ 309-261-4842.

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CONDO NEAR MTSU FOR LEASE 4 bedroom, 3.5 bath condo for lease. 3,000 sq. ft. Washer and dryer in unit. \$1,200 a month + small deposit. Avail. immed. call Valerie for details. 943-82-74 or 893-0809.

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Room for rent, plenty of storage, dishwasher, washer/dryer. All utilities included plus cable. Very close to MTSU. \$100 deposit, \$300 monthly. Contact 615-904-2035, leave message.

Walk to MTSU from this beautiful house on Greenland Drive. This house is ready for your new and exciting 2005 Academic Year. Available 2/1/05. Fantastic Location, Quiet environment, Spacious rooms for 4 students as a group.\$300 x 4 + 1/4 utilities. \$350/person security deposit + lease. Circle drive, patio, 2-car carport, hardwood floors, new carpets, new roof, refrigerator, Built-in oven, washer n' dryer, dishwasher, central H/A, fireplace, gas logs. Call 898-2005.

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Siljestrom: Father makes sure son receives early training

Continued from 6

recruited me," Siljestrom said. "He's a friend of mine. He told me it was a good place and a good coach, and I trusted him."

Compared to many of his peers, Siljestrom got a late start in tennis. At age 8, his father began playing with him. Father Anders Siljestrom wanted to play at a younger age, but was not allowed by his parents. He made sure his son would have the chance he did not.

"When I was younger, I started playing at a club and practiced three times a week. Then I started competing in different tournaments around Sweden," Andreas said.

In Sweden, Siljestrom was ranked among the top 12 juniors throughout his career. He posted several victories of Top 500 world-ranked players. Still, the transition to the American game was initially rocky.

"There [are] a lot of differences," Siljestrom said. "In

Sweden we never play outdoors on hard court. Also, the balls are quite different here. They're a bit lighter, so they fly a bit easier in the air."

With a year under his belt, the Swede now appears comfortable at MT. The competition is also satisfying.

"When I played in Sweden, I played on a pro level, but here all the matches are good. Especially if you play high on the team, you get a lot of good matches. It's about the same, I

would say," Siljestrom said.

If the best tennis players truly feel at home on the court, then Siljestrom may want to put up a mailbox this season.

"My serve and volley is pretty good, and my forehand is improving every day," Siljestrom said.

"He also moves deceptively well on the court," Short said. "We've worked on some things, and he seems to improve quite a bit. I'm very excited about the potential he has."

Potential. A dangerous word indeed. In Andreas Siljestrom's case, however, it's an accurate one. ♦

Tennis: MT faces Belmont

Continued from 7

things."

Will this be the year the Blue Raiders add another banner to the wall?

"I don't want to put expectations out there too high, but I think right now we are pretty seasoned," Short said. "We'd like to think we have the potential to challenge for the Top 25 again." ♦

"Our first major test will be Louisville on the road. We have a tough road swing with them, Indiana State and Indiana on consecutive days," Short said. "If we can come out of the first five matches relatively unscathed, I'll feel pretty good about

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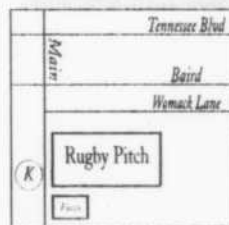
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