

MONDAY

May 3, 2004

41  63
Few Showers

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In Living, 6

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SIDELINES

MURFREESBORO,
TENNESSEE

Volume 79 No. 87

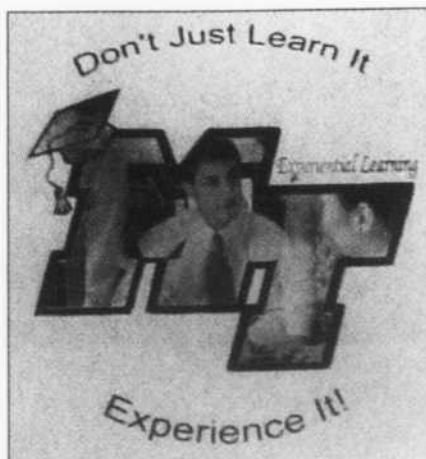
Initiative to focus on experiential learning

By Nona Kempton
Staff Writer

Slogans and logos designed by two student groups will be used to build an identity for the upcoming Southern Association of Colleges and Schools reaffirmation process for MTSU, university officials said.

Marketing and management student groups presented advertising campaigns in a reception held April 22 at the Alumni Center for the official kick-off of the Quality Enhancement Plan, one part of the SACS presentation that MTSU will develop over the next two years.

"Forty students participated in developing slogans and themes," said



Jill Austin, chair of the marketing and management department and the leader of the quality enhancement pro-

gram for the SACS reaffirmation team, "and it was difficult to choose a winner."

The seven members of the two student groups were awarded a cash prize, and their designs, as well as parts of the other campaigns, will be incorporated into a campuswide advertising campaign this fall to raise awareness of the SACS project.

Photo provided by Jill Austin

The QEP, which involves developing new strategies for learning, is one component of a three-part program that the university will present to SACS in 2006 to maintain accreditation.

To remain an accredited post-secondary school, MTSU must reaffirm every 10 years with SACS, the organization designated by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit schools in the southern United States and Latin America. Accreditation means that the university is meeting SACS standards and entitles the school to a variety of federal programs including financial aid and grants.

The focus for the QEP, chosen from the results of a campus survey, is experiential learning, Austin said, which is

hands-on, real life experience in a field of study.

"I think we had almost 500 responses to our survey," Austin said, "and 85 percent of those respondents expressed some interest in experiential learning."

The student groups are part of Melodie Phillips' undergraduate class in entertainment marketing and graduate class in applied promotional strategy. Phillips said that designing the promotional campaigns was part of the assigned coursework for the students.

"We were asked to help develop ways to communicate the QEP as part of the reaffirmation process," Phillips said, "so we pulled together logos,

See SACS, 2

Roots of rock, blues examined

By Carrie Hargett
Staff Writer

A panel discussed on Thursday the development of race relations and music and how Nashville fit into the civil rights movement.

The panel included several professors and a local newspaper columnist.

Participating were professor Mark Neal from the University of Texas-Austin, professor Guthrie Ramsey from the University of Pennsylvania, professor Brian Ward from the University of Florida, Gainesville, and columnist Ron Wynn of *The City Paper*.

Neal said he was 13 years old when he fell in love with hip hop. He never saw hip hop as different from traditional black music. It was a continuation of the music, he said.

"You almost don't have black music without James Brown's beat," Neal said.

In the 1960s, most black singers learned to sing from the church choir. Neal said he believes that is the one big difference between old music and new music.

"Music won't cure cancer, but it makes you want to cure cancer," Ramsey said.

Ward encouraged everyone to go to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's new exhibit, *Night Train to Nashville: Music City Rhythm & Blues*.

"Music brings the races together," Ward said.

Music was able to bridge the race gap during desegregation. The greatest example was Elvis Presley, who had 23 R&B hits, Ward said.

Wynn said that in the 1970s he would ask different magazines if anyone was writing on a particular black artist, and if not he would write about them.

"I got into journalism almost by accident," Wynn said.

Wynn calls himself a "music nerd." He would work every Saturday for eight hours in order to buy a box set when he was growing up.

They all agreed during their discussion that the current black musicians are not that different and that modern music owes a lot to traditional black music. Many hip hop songs make references to older artists.

They discussed the idea of this year being the 50th anniversary of rock 'n' roll, but they all said rock 'n' roll has been around

See Music, 2

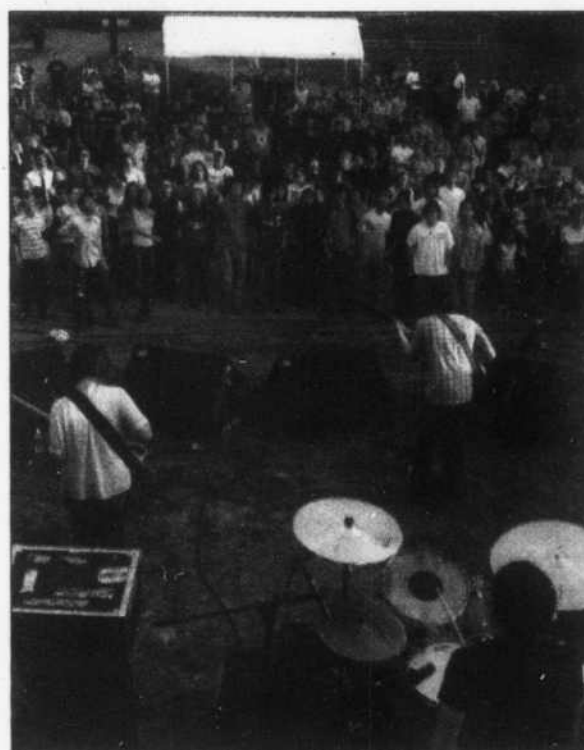
Schoolhouse rock



Photos by Steve Cross | Chief Photographer

(Above) Matt Pelham, guitarist and vocalist for The Features, belts his heart out Thursday during a performance, which was part of Music on the Knoll. The Features, who hail from Murfreesboro, will kick off a tour in the United Kingdom May 24, at Liverpool University. The tour wraps up June 1 at Cambridge Anglia University.

(Right) A crowd looks on as The Features - in addition to Pelham, Roger Dabbs (bass), Rollum Haas (drums) and Parrish Yaw (keyboard) - perform in front of Keathley University Center.



SGA proposal could turn detention pond blue

Graham says water feature could boost school spirit

By Matt Anderson
Contributor

Drive past campus on Rutherford Boulevard after the rain and you'll find them - students soaking in the temporary body of water that forms on the eastern edge of campus.

Students on Greek Row call it the "Sigma Nu Lake."

Although students use the "Sigma Nu Lake" to cool off, it actually has an important function on campus, draining runoff from the parking lots.

"It looks like its being used for nothing," said Patti Miller,

Campus Planning director. "But before it was built, flooding on campus was much worse."

According to Miller, the detention pond, built 10 years ago, has greatly improved drainage across campus. Rain water flows from the lots to the detention pond, then backflows through the same pipe into Sinking Creek. Each new paved lot on campus creates a lot of runoff that must be managed.

But if a new proposal by the

Student Government Association Senate comes to fruition, runoff will have to be redirected to a new location. The Senate has recently passed a resolution recommending that the detention pond be transformed into a real pond complete with a monument that represents MTSU.

The proposal is the brainchild of Ashley Elizabeth Graham, Student Ambassador President and founder of the

Traditions Committee at MTSU. It is part of a larger push to increase school spirit on campus.

"One of the problems with campus is that there isn't enough school spirit," Graham said.

"We don't have a character about us," she said. "Psychology tells you if you see it and you see it and see it, it makes you a Blue Raider all around. Then come

See Pond, 2

Staff Reports

After months of searching, two academics will be joining the ranks of MTSU's provosts.

Jackie Thomas has been named the new vice provost for Academic Affairs, effective June 14.

Abdul S. Rao has been selected to fill the position of the vice provost for research and dean of the College of Graduate Studies beginning July 6.

Thomas comes to MTSU from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. There,

he served as professor and chair of the English department, as well as associate vice president for Academic/Student Affairs. Thomas also acted as executive assistant to the president, and as its interim president.

Rao is a noted researcher and author, and was formerly senior associate vice provost for Research and Graduate Studies at Drexel University. He also served as vice dean for Research, Information Technology and Biomedical Graduate Studies at the Drexel University College of Medicine. ♦

Taskforce studying transfer student admission policy

By Stephanie Hill
Staff Writer

In the coming years, admission standards may be changing for transfer students who wish to attend MTSU.

An informational letter from Vice President of Student Affairs Bob Glenn was sent to the Faculty Senate, informing them of a possible study of the matter changing the admission standards from transfers needing nine credit hours to 24 credit hours.

Faculty Senate President Larry Burriss said the senate has not yet looked at a resolution to address the matter.

"However, the discussion may come up in the fall at the beginning of my term as president," Burriss said.

"At the beginning of each Faculty Senate meeting we get lots of informative letters that

we look over," Burriss said. "This is the case with [Glenn's] letter."

Lynn Palmer, director of admissions, said an enrollment taskforce is studying transfer student standards. The taskforce is composed of faculty and staff from Admissions, Records, Housing and Financial Aid.

Currently, transfer students have to have earned nine hours and have a 2.0 grade point average for admission at MTSU. The proposal is to raise the credit hours to 24, while maintaining the 2.0 GPA.

"In theory, this would mean that students would have attended a community college for two semesters, if they are full time at 12 hours," Palmer said. "This change is to encourage students to take their general education classes at the community college before transferring to MTSU."

Right now the proposal is in the discussion stages.

"If it becomes an official Faculty Senate function, we will appoint a committee to make

See Standards, 2

Standards: Required hours could be upped from 9 to 24

Continued from 1

recommendations to the person in charge," Burris said.

"We will then send a copy of the proposal to the entire faculty and ask for comments, so we will be able to see what the faculty thinks and take their thoughts into consideration."

University President Sidney McPhee and the Tennessee Board of Regents must approve the proposal.

"We want adequate time to inform the community colleges about the changes, if and when they occur," Palmer said. "Ideally, a year would be great, however we could handle nine months if needed."

If a transfer student who did not have 24 hours applied to the university, he or she would be reviewed by admissions and would have to meet freshman standards in order to be admitted to the university. ♦

Dancing the night away



Photo by Seth Holland | Staff Photographer

Students boogie Thursday night at MTTV's annual dance party. The event was simulcast on WMTS 88.3.

Pond: Proposal in early stages

Continued from 1

game day, you'll come to the game."

Graham has many ideas for the pond. She says the chemicals that keep the water clean also turn it blue. She also suggested filling it with bass fish and having a fishing contest at homecoming.

According to Miller, the proposal is "not feasible from an engineering standpoint."

"It would look nice, but [the detention pond] would not be effective to be a large water feature," Miller said.

The pond proposal is still in the early stages and Graham has not yet secured funding. However, according to Graham, the university's award-winning engineering department has expressed interest in making it a class project.

"One of my beliefs is that when more people take ownership of a problem and solution, they're more likely to take part in the outcome," Graham said. ♦



Photo by Megan Allender | Staff Photographer

Mark Anthony Neal, Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr. and Ron Wynn discuss the roots of rock 'n' roll and hip hop during a panel discussion Thursday afternoon on campus.

Music: Nashville's hip hop scene dependent on venues

Continued from 1

longer than 50 years.

"The Beatles and Elvis Presley did not create rock 'n' roll," Wynn said.

They ended their discussion on Nashville and its importance to the creation of hip hop. Many artists in Nashville moved

to Atlanta because there are more opportunities down there. Nashville does have an emerging hip hop scene, but there are not enough venues for it to grow, Wynn said.

The John Seigenthaler Chair of Excellence and the Country Music Hall of Fame sponsored the discussion. ♦

Group to collect books for Africa

Staff Reports

MTSU's chapter of Golden Key International Honour Society is partnering with Campus Community Outreach to collect books during finals week to benefit Books for Africa.

The chapter hopes to collect older editions of books that the university faculty will no longer be teaching with and that the bookstores are not buying back.

"Since the bookstores won't buy these books back, many students throw them away," said Golden Key President Brandon

Hanson. "Instead of throwing the books away, we can send them to countries where up to seven students share such books."

Collection boxes will be stationed in the Keathley University Center near the bookstore and at the main entrances to most of the major classroom buildings on campus, Hanson said.

There are also distribution boxes at the Midlander office in the James Union Building, Room 306, and at the Student Government Association office, KUC, Room 208A.

CCO collects books during buy back to benefit Books for Africa, Room to Read or St. Vincent de Paul. They partner with over 200 colleges and universities nationwide.

BFA supplies books to the third world country of Africa and RTR builds libraries and supplies books to Indonesia, Nepal, Cambodia and other countries. St. Vincent de Paul helps individuals and families in crisis here in the United States.

CCO is a self-sustaining organization that gives 100 percent of its profit, after expenses, to one of these three organiza-

tions.

Instead of throwing away or recycling literally hundreds of thousands of books throughout the nation, it becomes a valuable resource for thousands of others in need. Each university that they partner with decides which one of the three designated agencies they would prefer the books and profits from the books to go to. The MTSU chapter decided on Books for Africa.

If you have books you would like to donate to this drive, contact Hanson or chapter adviser Jenny Crouch at 898-2815. ♦

SACS: 'Portfolio of real experience' important, Phillips says

Continued from 1

slogans and posters."

Phillips said that her classes were divided into 11 groups, and the presentations were on tables located all around the Alumni Center. The faculty, staff and students who attended the reception were each given six tickets and asked to vote for their favorite campaign.

"They could award one group all six tickets or they could split them up," Phillips said.

The voting resulted in a tie between two groups from Phillips' undergraduate classes.

Phillips said that the seven members of the two winning groups were awarded \$50 each for their efforts.

Phillips said the groups had

less than 3 weeks to put together their presentations, but that the results were impressive.

"There were so many people who were so pleased and thought the campaigns were so well-done in such a short time," Phillips said.

University president Sidney McPhee offered opening remarks for the reception, which also featured four student speakers who discussed the value of experiential learning.

Recording industry management major Alan Slone told the group about his experience last summer working for a music distributor in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

"It was really great hands-on experience," Slone said. "I think that when you try to put 'hands-on' in a book, it fails.

Internships let you see that angle."

Slone said that his work last summer, which he described as "three months of slave labor," was worth it in what he carried back to the classroom this year.

"It was amazing," Slone said, "and I think it's the best thing that people can do."

He also said he will be going back to work for the same company after graduation this month.

Phillips agrees that experiential learning should be a focus for college students.

"What good is it going to do to go to an employer and say 'I can select from A, B or C on an exam?'" Phillips asked, "but if you can develop a portfolio or have real experience to offer, you will look better [to a

prospective employer] than just being able to say 'I got an A in this class.'"

Austin said that the other students who recounted their experiential learning were English major Teresa Pickering, graduate student Tracy Mintz and engineering major Aaron Dudley.

Austin said that their will be an entertainment event planned this fall to officially kick-off the SACS project and to raise awareness for QEP and experiential learning.

"We will be planning something that appeals to students," Austin said, and committees will be meeting to plan specific activities for the event. She said that the event would probably be planned for midterm of the fall semester. ♦

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STATE AND LOCAL

Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Monday, May 3, 2004

SIDELINES ♦ 3

Smyrna teacher suspended from teaching

Tommy McCrary discovered to be under investigation for previous job in Shelby County

By Jason Cox
State and Local News Editor

A Smyrna Middle School teacher was suspended without pay when it was learned he was under investigation for inappropriate conduct with a student at his previous place of employment.

Tommy McCrary, a history and government teacher, as well as the girls' basketball coach, received a letter from Director of Schools Harry Gill notifying McCrary of his suspension due to a "pending licensure proceeding before the State Board of Education" for "conduct of a sexual nature" while McCrary

was employed at Houston High School in Shelby County. This letter was dated April 23.

According to Gail Tune, assistant superintendent of human resources and student services, the attorney representing the state in the licensure proceeding called Gill as a courtesy to inform him of the situation. Tune said the board was not aware of the investigation of McCrary's actions in Shelby County prior to the call.

Tune said a new system put in place since McCrary was

hired would greatly cut the chances of someone else being hired without the board knowing about a pending investigation or complaint.

Principals will have to contact references at every place an employee has worked and ask both the reference and the applicant a "very lengthy" list of questions, Tune said, including whether the applicant had ever been suspended, had a complaint filed against him or her, had been reprimanded or had been fired.

In addition, principals will ask whether they had been punished or admonished for inappropriate use of school computers or inappropriate socializing with students. In addition, the principal will ask the reference whether the applicant had been allowed to resign in lieu of termination or an investigation and whether the reference would recommend the applicant for re-employment.

"We're showing that we're making an effort," Tune said.

She said that a mere com-

plaint on someone's record would not automatically disqualify the applicant, but that inconsistencies between an applicant's answers and the reference's responses would raise a red flag.

"It depends on what the situation was," Tune said, adding that she would be interested in knowing both why the complaint was filed and how it had been resolved.

Prior to the implementation

See Teacher, 4

Main Street JazzFest



Photos by Micah Miller | Staff Photographer

(Above) The Don Aliquo Quartet plays at the Main Street JazzFest Saturday. Aliquo plays saxophone. (Left) A JazzFest patron plays a game on an inflatable jazzman. Rain did not dampen the spirits of fans. Many still showed up to see Mario Andretti, eat some good food and enjoy some good music. Performances included local high school jazz bands as well as saxophonist Kenny Garrett and his quartet.

Higher taxes create surplus of \$2 million

By Nona Kempton
Staff Writer

Area growth and a recovering economy are the reasons that the Rutherford County school system found itself with a \$2 million dollar budget surplus this year, a school official said.

Jeff Sandvig, assistant superintendent for budget and finance, said that revenue from property taxes and local sales taxes exceeded the projection made last fall by the county finance department.

"When the economy went south in 2001, we experienced a major drop [in tax revenue]," Sandvig said. "This year we had an increase. Our revenue from the local sales option tax increased by 11 percent."

He said that all accounts had been audited and the surplus was the direct result of revenue exceeding expected expenses.

Sandvig said approximately half the revenue generated from local sales tax is used for the school system.

Rutherford County's local sales tax, at 2.75 percent, is the highest local rate allowed by state law.

The unexpected budget surplus caused controversy this past week, especially among school board members who felt that Rutherford County taxpayers were asked to contribute too much with a .16 increase in property taxes last year.

"I think we've overcharged the taxpayers," school board member Gary Patton was quoted in the *Daily News Journal* last week.

Patton was also quoted as saying that he thought the property tax increase was twice as high as it needed to be.

Sandvig said that about \$400,000 of the surplus was due to the property tax increase, which he said may have been overestimated when it was passed last year.

"A .12 increase [per \$100 assessed value of property] would probably have been right," Sandvig said.

The school system's budget has been described as strained in numerous news reports throughout the school year.

Low teacher pay, school overcrowding and a shortage of school resource officers and nurses have all been blamed on the tight budget in the 2003-2004 school year.

"If we had perfect knowledge of our needs each year," Sandvig said, "we would know exactly what to budget for."

Sandvig said the school board, at a meeting last Thursday, decided to follow suggestion that Harry Gill's superintendent the \$2 million surplus be applied to the purchase price of land for a new elementary school in Almadale.

"State law does not allow us to roll over a surplus from one year to the next," Sandvig explained.

Sandvig pointed out that using the surplus to supplement the purchase of land in Almadale would decrease the amount the county will have to borrow to build the school, and thus lower the amount of interest payment from the operating budget. ♦

Methodist court upholds church law

By Joe Mandak
Associated Press Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — United Methodist law clearly teaches that the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, the highest court in the denomination ruled Saturday.

The Judicial Council, which met during the denomination's General Conference, said violating that church law could be cause for removal from church office.

A delegate from Arkansas had asked the council to rule on the matter following a case in Washington in which a lesbian minister told her bishop she was in a committed relationship with a woman.

The Rev. Karen Damann of Washington state had been charged with practices declared "incompatible with Christian teaching" under Methodist law.

A jury of 13 pastors from her region effectively ruled in March that church law did not, however, make it a chargeable offense for homosexual clergy to be sexually active. They found Damann innocent.

Bishop Lawrence McCleskey, who heads the Columbia Area Annual Conference in South Carolina, said Saturday's decision will not affect the Damann case.

He said church law does not allow the General Conference or any other church body to appeal a decision made by another part of the church.

However, McCleskey said the decision clarifies that somebody in Damann's position could be subject to church discipline in the future.

"I think the decision clarified the issue that was in everybody's mind," McCleskey said.

The breakdown of Saturday's judicial council decision was not released, but it included two dissenting opinions from members who believe that the language is unclear and is not law.

Conservatives praised the decision by the nine-member court.

"Church law has been unchanging for three decades, but increasingly certain local or regional

See Methodist, 4

Rutherford teachers hold differing opinions on national No Child Left Behind program

By B.J. Chaplin
Staff Writer

Even three years after being signed into law, Rutherford County educators and principals still hold starkly contrasting beliefs about the effectiveness of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

President George W. Bush, NCLB's most prominent proponent, described NCLB as "the cornerstone of my administration," adding, "too many of our neediest children are being left behind."

Under NCLB, each state is required to measure public students' progress in reading and math in grades 3-8 and at least once during grades 10-12. By the 2007-2008 school year, according to NCLB's official Web site, assessments in science will also be underway.

The results of these tests must be provided "to give parents easy-to-read, detailed reports on schools and districts, telling them which ones are succeeding and why," the Web site explains. The data is then broken down by race, ethnicity, sex, English-language proficiency, migrant status, disability status and lower-income status.

"In the event of a school's continued poor performance," the Web site explains, "parents have options to ensure that their

"It's caused teachers to teach more test-taking skills instead of life skills. We focus more on numbers than we do [on] the kids."

— Noelle Bleecker

Cedar Grove Elementary third-grade teacher

children receive the high-quality education to which they are entitled.

"That might mean that children get to higher-performing schools in the area or receive supplemental educational services in the community such as tutoring, after-school programs or remedial classes."

According to the Web site, under NCLB states and local districts are now receiving more federal funding (\$23.7 billion) than ever before for all programs under NCLB. The program, the Web site purports, also gives teachers and local education agencies more flexibility in the use of their federal education funding.

"As a result, principals and administrators spend less time filling out forms and dealing with federal red tape," the Web site says. "They have more time

to devote to students' needs."

Not everyone agrees that this is the case, however. Third-grade teacher Noelle Bleecker of Cedar Grove Elementary in Smyrna said NCLB has actually caused more paperwork for teachers and has raised other problems.

"It's caused teachers to teach more test-taking skills instead of life skills," she said. "We focus more on numbers than we do [on] the kids."

Bleecker said she agrees that something needs to be done to hold more students accountable for grades, but as far as NCLB goes, it is "way too much and way too fast."

A seventh-grade middle school reading teacher in Murfreesboro who asked not to be named agreed that students must be held accountable as well, but she also added she

believes others share responsibility.

"When are you going to hold parents accountable?" she asked. She said other factors must be addressed before focusing strictly on test scores.

"We've got kids that don't know when their next meal is coming," she said. "I don't know how we're going to raise test scores while that's the precedence in their life."

Teachers being reassigned or fired due to new stricter credential requirements under NCLB is also a concern, she said.

"It's really hard to find teachers that want to teach middle school," she said. "We've got teachers that are going to work out of MTSU ... and [will] be more qualified to teach than teachers who have been teaching for years."

Smyrna Elementary Principal Richard Zago said that losing teachers is not a problem at his school.

"All of our teachers are quality teachers," he said, but added that other schools may have other "issues" to deal with. NCLB, he said, has "its positive points and its negative points."

"When you start looking at schools that haven't cared and now they care because they're forced to care," he said, "then

See NCLB, 4

Teacher: McCrary hired at last minute

Continued from 3

of the new policy, principals only had to call two references per applicant.

McCrary had been hired on August 5, 2003 – two days before teachers were required to report. Tune said that such last-minute comings and goings are not that uncommon.

“Generally, principals are hiring right up to the first day of school” and for the first few days of the year, Tune said. She added that Gill has to sign off on all new employees.

McCrary would not have been returning to SMS that year because his contract was not renewed. The letter informing him of this was dated April 1.

McCrary was employed at HHS from 1999 to 2003. He resigned on July 31, 2003, citing his family’s relocation to Middle Tennessee.

The teacher had come highly

recommended from at least one faculty member. Julia Barredo Willhite, now employed at Bilingual Integrated Services, strongly recommended McCrary as “a team player” and “a welcomed addition” to any school faculty.

In addition, Linda Kennedy, principal of Smyrna Middle School and the person responsible for contacting references, evaluating applicants and making many of the hiring decisions, recommended McCrary as having an “excellent” quality of work.

After graduating MTSU in 1995, McCrary was employed by Bedford County Schools from 1995 to 1998, then moved on to DeKalb County for the 1998-1999 school year prior to being hired on at HHS. ♦

Erica Rodefer contributed to this story.

NCLB: Causing changes in schools

Continued from 3

that’s a positive.”

Ivan Duggin, principal of Holloway High School in Murfreesboro, also said that NCLB has been helpful.

“With NCLB, because it is so inclusive, we’ve looked at these subgroups in the total school population to make sure we haven’t missed anyone,” he said. “The big thing it’s really helped us focus on is making sure every student is a target to pass.”

Although Duggin said many changes in his school preceded NCLB, when it was implemented, teachers still had concerns.

“There would be a feeling [of] ‘how are we ever going to get certain students to pass?’” he said.

Readjusting under NCLB meant that teachers had to use different strategies, he said. He likened the process to a football or basketball game.

Teachers were able to take a “look at the game plan” and “make some changes,” he said.

Rutherford County Schools spokesperson Jim Mahanes was away from his office for several days last week and thus unavailable for comment on NCLB,

but Metro Schools Coordinator of Public Information Craig Owensby commented on how Nashville is adjusting.

The big question being raised, he said, was how are requirements going to be met.

“I would say the teachers and the principals in general agree with the goals,” he said, but added that “some of the requirements are difficult to comply with.”

Controversy over NCLB, Owensby said, was very present between the school board’s nine elected officials.

“Definitely there have been some strongly felt opinions,” he said. “We’ve had them both ways.”

He added that NCLB is still in its infancy, and its effects – whether they will be successes or failures – may not be apparent until a later date.

“Teachers and principals understand that it’s a living document and it will be changing as it progresses,” he said.

“It’s definitely caused a change in the way we look at our operations in general,” he said. “It’s caused a lot of thought ... a lot of change.” ♦

Methodist: Issue still unresolved

Continued from 3

jurisdictions have been unwilling to enforce church law,” said Mark Tooley, a spokesman for the United Methodist Action Program of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, a conservative advocacy group.

Still, Tooley said the question of homosexual clergy will remain unresolved until the General Conference or Judicial Council passes legislation to enforce church law.

The Rev. Elaine Stanovsky, head of the Pacific Northwest Conference delegation, which ruled on Dammann’s case, said the decision could influence Dammann’s situation.

Dammann is currently on family leave and awaiting a new appointment by her bishop, a process that could be affected by the clarified interpretation, she said.

“And the fact that there were two dissenting opinions continues to affirm the fact that the church is not of one mind about these matters,” she said.

Saturday’s decision does not seek to define what is meant by “practice of homosexuality,” only whether it can be used as the basis for excluding someone from ministry.

Traditionalists said the jury in the Dammann case knowingly ignored church law out of sympathy for homosexual pas-

tors. Conservatives came to the national meeting intent on finding a way to enforce the gay ordination ban.

The debate over homosexuality is expected to dominate the agenda of the conference, which is held every four years and runs through May 7.

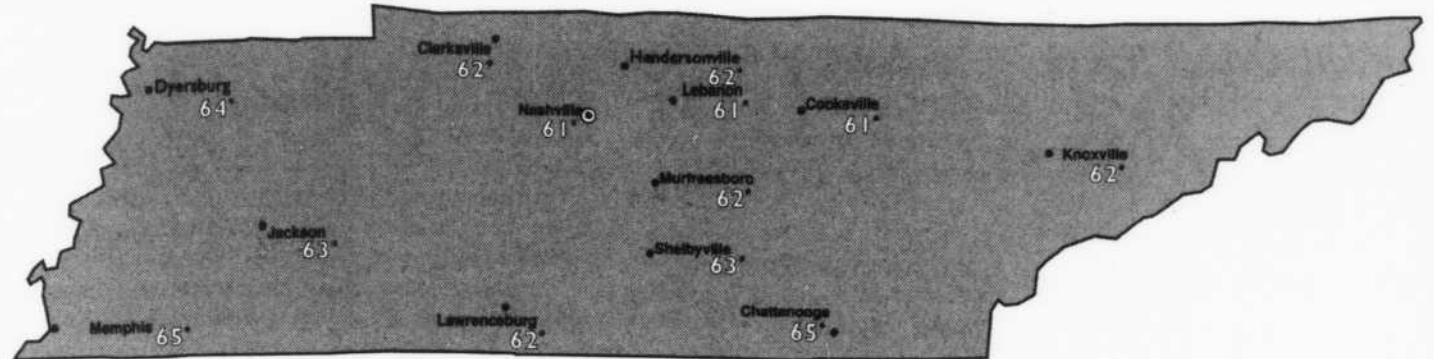
No one believes that the 8.3 million-member denomination is about to break apart.

Delegates have rejected proposals more accepting of sexually active gays by about 60 percent to 40 percent over the years.

That voting trend is expected to continue among this year’s 1,000 delegates. ♦

Tennessee Weather – Monday’s Highs

From the Associated Press



Tuesday



Wednesday



Thursday



Friday



Saturday



Tax Commission looks at income tax

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) – The Tennessee tax study commission, established to take a thorough look at the state’s tax structure after four years of bitter and divisive fights in the Legislature, has agreed on at least one thing: The sales tax is too high.

But members say they haven’t yet decided how to lower it, given the commission’s charge to produce a “revenue neutral” recommendation.

The Tax Structure Study Commission is supposed to deliver its official recommendation in two months. A bill pending in the Legislature would extend the deadline to Dec. 31.

“I don’t think any legislators want to have the report come out on July 1 and then be in an election campaign in August,” said Nashville businessman Nelson Andrews, chairman of the 24-member commission that has been studying state taxes since February 2003.

At a two-day meeting last week, the commission members for the first time began debating whether a state income tax should be part of the solution they recommend to the Legislature.

In prior meetings, many members and presenters have talked about an income tax – both advocates and opponents – but commission members have generally been noncommittal, Andrews said.

After long debates in the Legislature over what to do about taxes, the state’s sales tax rate was raised from 6 percent to 7 percent on July of 2002. Local governments can add as much as 2.75 percent on top of that, meaning a maximum rate of 9.75 percent – one of the highest rates in the nation.

The 2002 tax bill, which raised other taxes besides the sales tax, has meant almost \$1 billion per year in new state revenue. The study commission was set up at the same time, though some conservative legislators argued it would predictably recommend a state income tax.

That idea was central to the long tax debates in the second term of Gov. Don Sundquist. Former Sen. Bob Rochelle of Lebanon, sponsor of an income tax plan, is among the tax commission members. Andrews said Rochelle had not advocated an income tax in prior meetings, but did so to some extent in last week’s sessions.

Tennesseans with a decided anti-state income tax attitude, Rochelle told the group, amount to only 13 percent of the population, according to past polls. “That’s not very much,” he said. “But it looks like a lot when they’re all driving around the state capitol,” a reference to the favorite mode of tax protesters during the protracted legislative debate.

The panel’s charge in the law that created it is to come up with a “revenue neutral” recommendation that would make the state tax system more equitable and competitive with other states in recruiting business.

Commission members have approached the idea of an income tax rather gingerly. Andrews said he and staff members have already had “a few callers jumping down our throat” because they believe an income tax recommendation is at hand.

Andrews, a former chairman of the state Board of Education who once supported an income tax proposal by former Gov. Ned McWherter, said such a recommendation is not necessarily forthcoming and that “I’ve tried to keep an open mind” on the subject.

But the commission mem-

bers are unanimous in believing the sales tax rate is too high, he said.

“We are all agreed on that,” said Joe Huddleston, a former state revenue commissioner who serves on the panel. But reducing the sales tax would require raising the lost revenue elsewhere in order for the proposal to be “revenue neutral,” and so far the commission hasn’t decided how that would be best done.

“I personally think it comes down to either an income tax or some other tax on wealth,” said Andrews, who said all taxes basically are levied on either consumption – as with the sales tax – or wealth.

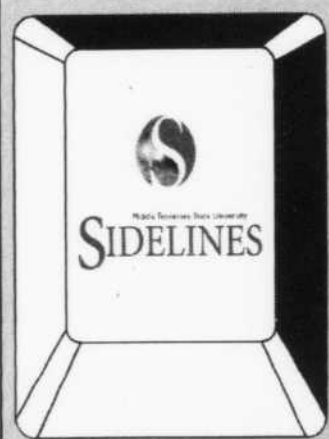
Besides an income tax, Andrews said, options on taxing wealth include a statewide property tax, or a vehicle tax structured so those with higher value pay a higher tax.

Huddleston said the current tax system also hits businesses hard enough that it is difficult for Tennessee to compete with other states. Businesses pay the high sales tax rate on most of their purchases, he said, and the state franchise tax – which amounts to a tax on business property – is higher than in other states. ♦

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From the Editorial Board

New screening policy enough, but too late

What is more surprising: that Rutherford County has had to again suspend a teacher for sexual misconduct or that the school board didn't know about a pending teaching licensure proceeding against one of its own from his previous gig?

There's no doubt the school board has been hit with more and more bad publicity for suspension after suspension of teachers accused of a misdeed. Indeed, Tommy McCrary — who was suspended after the county learned of an investigation into his conduct while he was a teacher at Houston High School — is at least the sixth Rutherford County teacher to either be suspended this school year or to go to court for offenses related to inappropriate actions.

At long last and after much embarrassment, the school board finally put together a comprehensive plan to improve screening of applicants so that problem teachers — such as those who have been taken to court over sexual misconduct allegations or those who have been investigated — are recognized before they are hired.

This isn't to say that a single complaint against a teacher should be sufficient cause not to hire or to terminate the employee. These complaints should be fully investigated as to their legitimacy.

However, it is a huge problem when a school district fails to learn of an investigation into sexual misconduct by a teacher until seven months after the teacher is hired.

It's nice that the school board has finally decided to develop and implement the new policy, but the fact that McCrary was hired without the board's knowledge of the investigation is inexcusable.

The new policy — which will both ask applicants and their previous employers comprehensive questions about the applicant's career and whether they had been in trouble in the past — is a good thing, but it could have easily been too little, too late for students, parents and a community who expect more of their teachers. ♦

From the Opinions Editor

Liberal media 'bias' unfounded, until now

It's the last issue. We've been through a lot this year, and now my reign of terror has come to a close.

But first, a few final witticisms and some wisdom to impart for those who read my writing and send me angry letters.

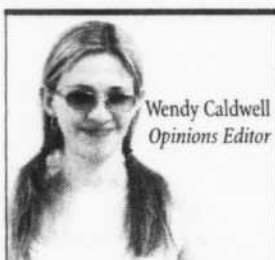
God bless the liberal media and their so-called "bias." And God bless the conservatives who repeatedly use this as the basis for defending their beloved right-wing leaders whenever the media discovers one of their screw-ups or flaws in reasoning.

When George W. Bush's motives for war came into question with the perpetual lack of weapons of mass destruction, it wasn't Bush's fault. No. Damn the liberal media and their anti-Republican masterminds.

Running around screaming, "The terrorists are coming," isn't going to make a whole nation forget that they only came once, and there isn't solid proof that anyone else is coming to get us.

The media isn't out to get anybody. We're not the press terrorists. We have a job to do, and we do it.

When people in positions of power repeatedly remind us of why they shouldn't hold that posi-



Wendy Caldwell
Opinions Editor

tion, it makes for good news. It also makes for good joke fodder.

My theory: The liberals are just more creative.

I've heard countless anti-Bush jokes, all of which are very amusing. The best John Kerry joke any right-leader can come up with is Botox, and that's only funny the first 10 or 12 times.

News coverage may not be the kiss-ass job many people expect it to be, but not all news is that way.

Instead of attempting to hold the media responsible for our leaders' shortcomings, it's time we held those individuals accountable for their actions.

There are no weapons of mass destruction, unless you count the way we seem to roll over whatever is in our path to greatness.

There is no liberal media bias. There just happens to be an abundance of conservative nimrods in positions of power. If Republicans want what they see as anti-Bush coverage to stop, they shouldn't reelect him this year. ♦

One last thing: This school's got problems

For the past year, I've been doing my best to guide *Sidelines* in a more professional direction, and I have to say I'm pleased with how things have turned out. We've investigated claims, covered hard news and taken stands that other Rutherford County papers were too scared — or perhaps too embedded with local powers — to report.

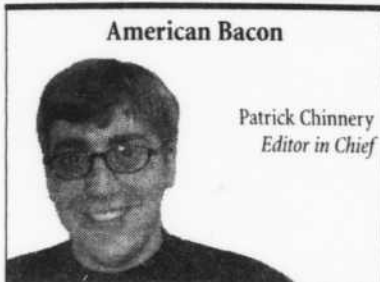
Of course, success comes with a price, and many in the MTSU community, including *Sidelines*' staff, paid for it with our naivete. Or, for you optimists out there, we finally lost our blinders.

This year, we've exposed more than a few school officials and community members for who they really are, as opposed to their public, phony smiles and demeanors.

Who could forget the 8,000 disappearing papers the day we ran a story about two fraternities owing the university \$160,000?

This still goes down as one of the biggest bonehead maneuvers in the history of fraternity hijinks; it even earned a 2003 *Nashville Scene* Boner Award. Within six hours of the papers magically walking away, three newspapers and two television stations were on campus looking for interviews.

That's what happens when you pick on the media — everyone else picks up the story.



American Bacon

Patrick Chinnery
Editor in Chief

Rutherford County's esteemed sheriff, Truman Jones, could stand to learn the same lesson. Jones, who must have the thinnest skin and worst sense of humor of any elected official ever, got his undergarments in a twist over a throw-away line in an editorial.

Having his general counsel threaten the paper with a libel suit wasn't the smartest move, but trying to intimidate the staff with background checks was just asinine, because courageous journalists love to point out abuse of power in their weekly columns read by thousands of voters.

It wasn't just law enforcement who didn't like our characterization. After we ran the story "Faculty, staff shushed by administrators" in November, one vice president demanded a meeting to deny that he had ever "shushed" any of his staff.

But as one faculty member remarked later, "Pigs squeal loudest when they're stuck." Not being

entirely familiar with Southern colloquialisms, I can only assume the faculty member believed the vice president to be protesting so loudly because he had been caught.

Whether or not that vice president did enact a silence rule, there was far too little serious discussion on campus about the biggest crisis this university has faced in recent memory. There was certainly some talk, and most people on campus now know that the president, after trying to commit suicide, received a joke of a punishment from the Tennessee Board of Regents for sexually harassing his administrative assistant. However, it was always the exception, rather than the rule, that people were willing to take a stand.

Look at the Faculty Senate. While discussing whether to hold a vote of no confidence, most senators took the ignoble route of burying their heads in the sand, hoping the problem would pass them by without having to make their opinions known. Here's the kicker, though. While a vote may have been delayed, The Problem is around for months to come. With a trial date in February 2005, it's inevitable that discussion about what should've been done will continue.

As well it should. Despite the

pleadings of MTSU ostriches, it's not in the best interests of this university to forget everything that's happened simply because the president remains in office. To do so would not only excuse his immoral behavior, but also corrupt the very soul of this institution. So long as that man sits behind a desk in the Cope Administration Building, MTSU will be viewed as the university where sexual harassment is tolerated at the highest level.

Bottom line — for this university to grow, McPhee needs to go.

Sixteen hundred of us won't be back in the fall, but as alumni, we can still have a voice in how this school's run. I'm taking my stand by refusing to donate a dime while the harasser remains president, and I encourage others to do the same. TBR members obviously haven't listened to reason, logic or their consciences during this whole affair, but a drop in alumni giving should turn their heads.

I love this school and am thrilled I spent four years of my life here. But until the administration undergoes at least one fundamental change, I won't be back. ♦

Patrick Chinnery is a graduating political science major and can be reached via e-mail at pwc2c@mtsu.edu.

Political correctness not nice

I've never considered myself politically correct. Then again, I've never strove to be politically incorrect either. But when someone recently stated that I misunderstood the term "politically correct," I was surprised.

In a book review, I stated that a writer had attempted to avoid arguments based in political correctness. My professor seemed greatly disturbed by this statement. I'd used the term politically correct to refer to cultural views that could influence or discourage debate. He stated that it was no more than the choice to not use particular words thought to be offensive and had nothing to do with ideas, having no power to influence thinking.

Obviously, certain words are indeed politically incorrect, but if political correctness is simply based on offensive words rather than ideas, then why is the term needed at all?

Using offensive words is a matter of manners. Do we really need the term politically correct to tell us when we're rude?

The problem is that political correctness is something easier felt than defined. Without a concrete definition, it seems that politically correct means whatever is considered acceptable in the politics of society.

But considering the divisions within American political thought, concepts of what is politically correct can vary.

Many think that being politically correct is to be liberal. Often politically correct views are seen as liberal, but it certainly wasn't a liberal crowd that cost Bill Maher his *Politically Incorrect* show after he was, well, politically incorrect, in speaking



Cave Canem

David Cotton
Staff Columnist

about U.S. military policy soon after Sept. 11, 2001.

All politics involve issues of power. The politics in political correctness are no different. The power of political correctness is to punish someone for a point of view. Without the use of any individual offensive words, Bill Maher, and later Rush Limbaugh, two men from opposite sides of the political spectrum, lost jobs for their politically incorrect ideas.

When I said I thought my professor was assuming I held a point of view beyond what I literally said, he said he was offended by my suggesting that. That's political correctness as well, the turning of simple statements or disagreements into cause for offense.

Declaring that one is offended asserts the right to ignore another's view and forces the considerate or fearful to discontinue sharing opinions.

For the narrow-minded, claiming offense is a cheap path to elevate one's own unsubstantiated views above reproach. It also further insulates insecure opinions from intelligent questioning.

It's the debating equivalent of pleading the Fifth Amendment. Someone using the Fifth Amendment effectively halts questioning by refusing to offer answers, shutting down the discussion. Claiming offense effectively shuts down a debate.

To suggest political correctness is just a general

consensus to agree to disavow certain terms in the hopes of not offending anyone is naive. Someone's always offended, so it comes down to the choice of whose offense concerns you more.

I could've found my professor's condescending language and unwillingness to hear my point of view offensive, but because I have no political power, my offense need not concern him. However, the risks to a professor are indeed reason for concern. My professor suggested that if I planned to seriously continue my studies, I'd best change my views on this issue.

He didn't seem to find it hypocritical to say I needed to adopt his views for the good of my academic career while assuring me that political correctness didn't discourage individual viewpoints. Considering my professor's poorly formed argument, it was better advice politically than intellectually.

A student's successful advancement in the university system can certainly be affected by opinions of the faculty. The politics behind political correctness demand that I watch what I say.

Do I feel I have a valid point about the strong-arm aspect of the politically correct? Sure. Considering the negative emotional response I received from my professor, should I keep it to myself? Probably.

That would be the politically correct thing to do. ♦

David Cotton is a graduate student and can be reached via e-mail at dpc2b@mtsu.edu.

WHAT A SCHMUCK!!!

Sidelines' occasional watch for mutton-heads.

Quick — what's a bigger threat to American security today: bin Laden's millions of dollars in hidden bank accounts or an imported box of Cuban cigars?

Call us crazy, but millions of dollars that can be channeled into the hands of bomb-wielding, American-killing terrorists is a little scarier than whether some rich guy wants to puff on the finest fatty money can buy.

But if facts and admissions are any indication, the Treasury Department thinks Fidel's island poses more danger.

A letter sent to Congress by the Office of Foreign Assets Control late last year revealed that the Feds have 21 agents actively investigating violations of the United States' long-standing embargo against Cuba, but only four — count 'em, four — agents tracking down accounts used to fund terrorism.

Furthermore, between 1993 and 2003, only 93 terrorism account investigations were conducted, yielding only \$9,425 in fines.

For 10 years of work, they collected only \$9,000. Think that's ridiculous? Get ready for this.

In the same time period, the department has collected more than \$8 million in fines, "mostly from people who send

money to, did business with or traveled to Cuba without permission," according to a story by the Associated Press.

They collected \$8 million. And in how many investigations? Try 10,683 since 1990.

So we have less than 100 terrorism investigations to more than 10,000 island inquiries. Is it any wonder that terrorism is such a threat?

It seems to us that OFAC is still stuck in a Cold War mindset; the Communists are the most evil people ever, and all resources must be deployed to stop them immediately. Bin who? Oh, you mean the nice fellow in Asia who tried to defeat the Red threat in Afghanistan?

We have a lot less to fear from a 78-year-old, crusty-bearded dictator of an irrelevant island than a 47-year-old, crusty-fanatic jihadist who controls a world-wide terrorism network. ♦

Original article from the Associated Press, posted April 29, via www.sfgate.com.



It's over until June. We'll miss you.

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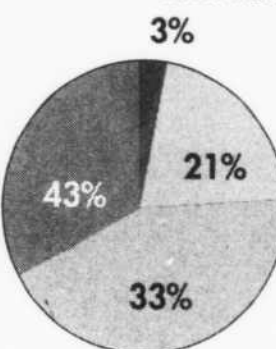
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Sidelines welcomes letters to the editor from all readers. Please e-mail letters to slopinio@mtsu.edu, and include your name and a phone number for verification. *Sidelines* will not publish anonymous letters. We reserve the right to edit for grammar,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

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Sidelines online poll results

Last week we asked readers, "Is it time to reinstate the draft?" Here's what you had to say:



- ☒ Yes, America needs soldiers to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- ☐ Yes, it's time young people learn about their obligation to their country.
- ☐ No, soldiers who are drafted are ineffective anyway.
- ☐ They can reinstate the draft all they want, I ain't going.

139 people voted in this poll.

Poll results are not scientific.

Celebrate

the

Great Outdoors

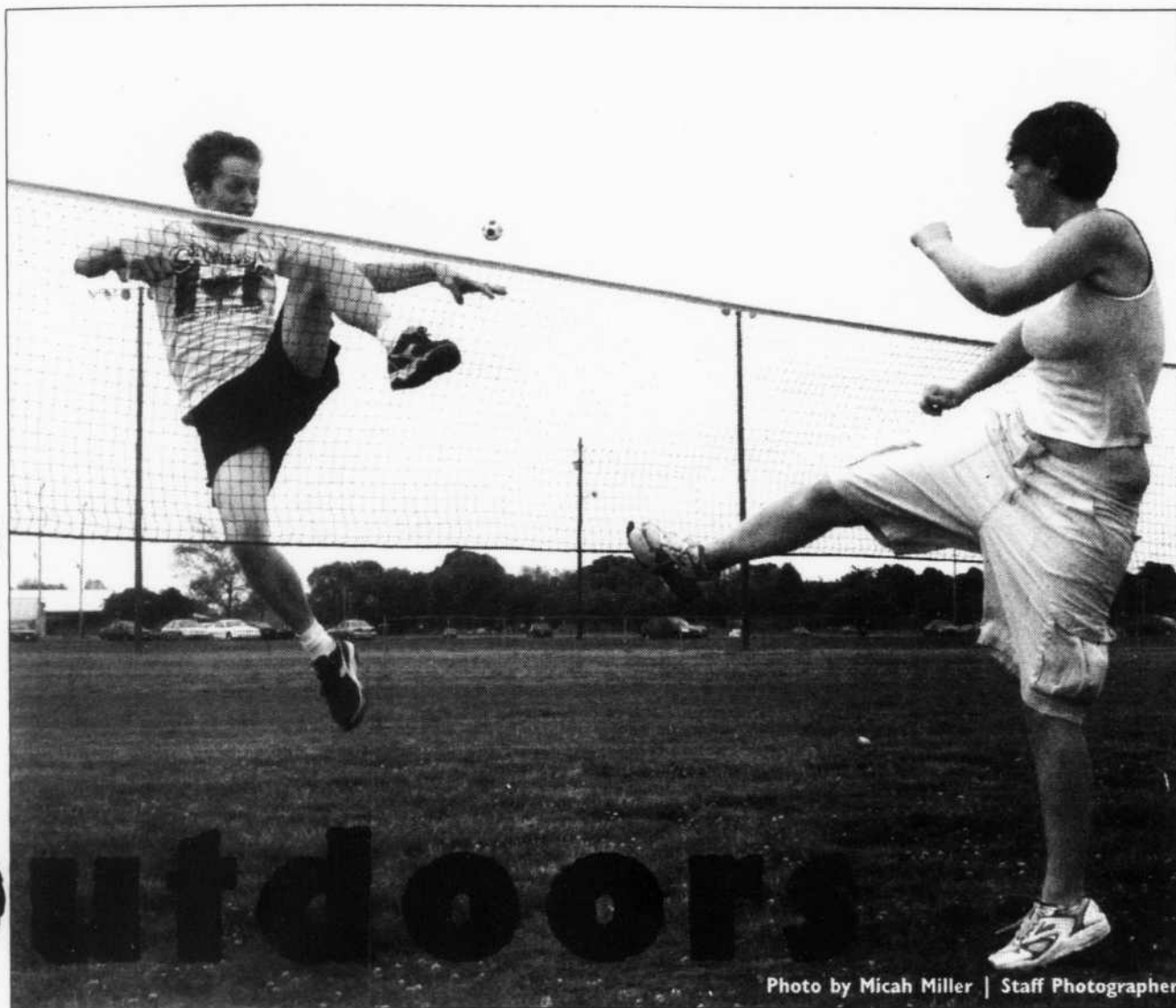


Photo by Micah Miller | Staff Photographer

Students take advantage of sunny weather

By Laura Taylor
Staff Writer

The temperature is climbing, the sun is shining and as spring classes come to a close, there's no better way to celebrate than to be outside.

MTSU's campus is a great place to get together with friends to throw a Frisbee, take a dip in the pool, toss a football or just relax under the shade of a tree.

Although we still have finals ahead of us, many students have decided to take advantage of the nice weather by spending time outdoors. Sophomores Mike Flatt and Adam Swann like to spend their afternoons playing Frisbee on the lawn in front of Peck Hall.

"It's something to do and it's good to be outside," Flatt says, "and it's a lot better than class."

Since the semester is not over yet, a lot of students also like to sit outside to study for their finals.

Erin Blasingame, a freshman criminal justice major, stretches out on a blanket in the grass to study.

"If I have to study, at least I can do it out here where it's nice," she says.

Other students enjoy spending time outside with their

canine companions. Senior Kelly Roberts likes to play fetch with her dogs, Sativa and Capone, on the expansive lawn in front of the Murphy Center. She says that it is good exercise for both her and her dogs.

Gary Hawkins and his Chihuahua, Chance, like to move at a slower pace. They meander around campus taking in the sights and sounds of student life.

"Chance really likes people; he wants to meet everyone that passes by," Hawkins says.

For students who want to meet new people while participating in outdoor activities, there are several student organizations that offer just that.

The newest is the Capture the Flag Club, which is currently being formed. The organization's president, Reggie Miller, plans to hold a meeting soon. The group will meet on a weekly basis on campus to play capture the flag.

The Ultimate Frisbee Club is another option. Ultimate Frisbee combines sports like football, basketball and Frisbee. The disc is passed up the field from player to player until it is eventually caught in the end zone, president Paul Lindhardt says.

"The club currently has a

roster of 14 students and practices Monday, Wednesday and Sunday from 7 until 10 p.m. on the old intramural fields next to the new honors building," Lindhardt says.

While many students enjoy a high level of activity, others like to just sit back and relax. There are a variety of ways that students can idly spend their time while hanging out on campus.

Now that the weather has warmed up, the most obvious suggestion is the pool. It's open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday. That allows a lot of time for lounging around and soaking up some sun.

"That's where I'll be all summer," says sophomore Ashley Richardson. "It's so relaxing to lay out by the pool all day."

Another way to enjoy the outdoors at MTSU without breaking a sweat is to watch someone else do it. The baseball team still has some games left to play at Reese Smith Field, and there are also a lot of intramural sports teams that would be interesting to watch.

So, to celebrate the beginning of summer, get outside and experience all that MTSU has to offer. ♦

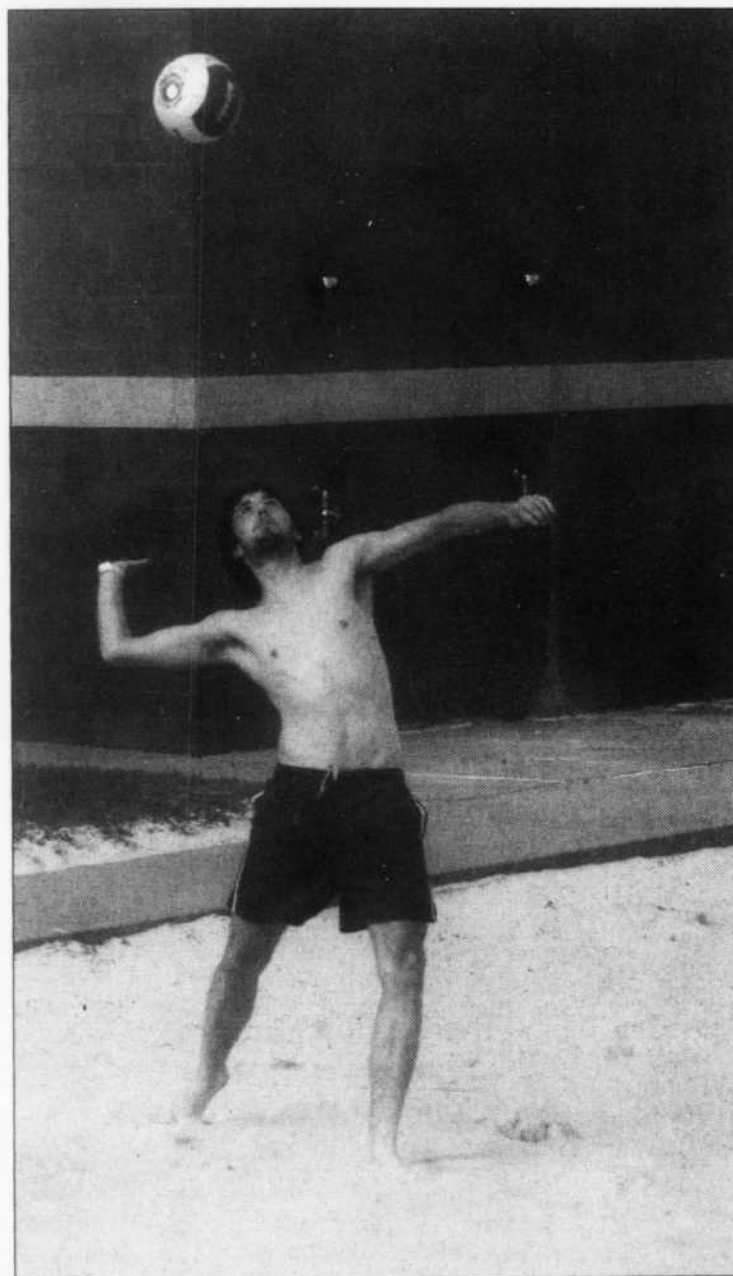


Photo by Seth Holland | Staff Photographer

Above, Matthew Johns and Emily Thweatt practice on campus Friday for an upcoming footbag net match in Memphis. Left, Tyler Trout plays volleyball at a Campus Crusade for Christ party.

Annual festival offers diverse musical lineup

By Erica Rodefer
Features Editor

At this year's Bonnaroo festival, officials expect 90,000 excited fans to gather for the sake of good music and good times.

"I'm all about seeing some Willie Nelson and Bob Dylan," sophomore history major Paul McKnight, who plans on

attending Bonnaroo for the second time this year, says.

"I want to get away from town for a while, see some good music and be entertained," he adds.

The third annual three-day camping and music festival will be June 11-13, 2004, on a 700-acre farm in Manchester, Tenn., 30 miles south of Murfreesboro.

"Last year I had to wait in traffic for three hours – which is a lot shorter than a lot of people had to wait," McKnight recalls.

For thousands, the music makes the inconveniences of sitting in traffic, sleeping on the ground and three days without showering worthwhile to thousands of fans each year.

Bonnaroo organizers are

working on making the festival more enjoyable for fans with each year.

"We always try to improve things. We learn how to improve services every year from the one before," Ken Weinstein of Big Hassel media, says. "We will be having new activities, and traffic will be improved."

"The most important thing that will be different will be yet another amazing lineup we have planned," Weinstein says.

With notable acts like veteran artists The Dead, Trey Anastasio, Bob Dylan and Dave Matthews, and fresh performers Damien Rice, Burning Spear and David Byrne, the festival promises a little something

that should appeal to everyone.

Willie Nelson and Gillian Welch, Kings of Leon, Primus, Galactic, Gov't Mule, String Cheese Incident, Medeski Martin & Wood, North Mississippi Allstars and My Morning Jacket will also be featured at this year's festival.

"Bonnaroo fans appreciate great music of all kinds," Ashley Capps, who works for one of the festival's sponsors, A.C. Entertainment, says in a press release about the event. "We want to reinforce that sentiment with adventurous booking that builds on a solid foundation of grass-roots

rock."

According to those who have been, Bonnaroo definitely attracts a diverse group of people.

"It's a strange environment – a very diverse crowd," McKnight points out. "You see a lot of people on substances and some that are oddly dressed."

This year, however, there should be a reduced number of people using "substances."

"Security will be tight. Nothing illicit or illegal can come through," Weinstein says.

Everyone that passes through the gates will be searched.

For more information or tickets to the 2004 Bonnaroo Festival, go to www.bonnaroo.com. ♦



Photo provided by bonnaroo.com

Officials predict 90,000 concert goers at this year's Bonnaroo music festival.



Logo courtesy of bonnaroo.com

Professor publishes book about former sharecropper

By Michaela Jackson
Staff Writer

Seeing someone who has suffered great hardship and loss triumph over their circumstances and still find contentment and joy in life can be one of the most rewarding experiences a person can have.

Lucas Johnson, a professor of journalism at MTSU, was given that opportunity several years ago when he met and connected with a black 87-year-old former sharecropper, Fred Montgomery.

Johnson and Montgomery first crossed paths when Johnson, who was then a reporter for the Associated Press, was assigned to write a story on the Alex Haley museum in Henning, Tenn.

Haley is famous for writing the book *Roots*.

As curator and a life-long friend of Haley, Montgomery had quite a story to tell.

Johnson easily understood why Haley chose to center his next literary project on Montgomery, but more importantly, Johnson understood the significance of Montgomery's life.

Mutual respect immediately resulted between the two men. The relationship, like a surrogate grandfather-grandson relationship, was deep and heartfelt.

Haley had intended to write the story of Montgomery's life, but after his death, Montgomery asked Johnson to take up the project.

The result was Johnson's first book, *Finding the Good: Two Men - One Old, One Young* -

"I didn't have any role models. [Montgomery] has given me a blueprint on how to be a man and how to deal with life's problems and grow stronger."

Lucas Johnson
Journalism Professor

Forever Changed by the Transforming Power of Faith and Love.

The book, which is centered around Montgomery's life, is a triumphant story of overcoming the bad in life to truly find the good.

Johnson also writes of some of his own struggles in life, such as growing up in a disadvantaged neighborhood in Memphis.

The unifying theme of the book is the special relationship that Montgomery and Johnson have shared over the years.

Johnson acknowledges his relationship with Montgomery as a "treasure," and is grateful for the influence that Montgomery has had on his life.

Johnson, who had 10 of his near relatives become victims of substance abuse over the years, was in need of direction.

"I didn't have any role models," he admits. "[Montgomery] has given me a blueprint on how to be a man and how to deal with life's problems and grow stronger."

As Johnson shows in *Finding the Good*, dealing with life is rarely easy.

The book soulfully tells of many of the uphill battles that Montgomery has faced. He overcame poverty and racial barriers to receive an education (even when it was self-administered) and at 71 became the first black mayor of his town.

Montgomery's rise to victory is an inspiring story for the fighter in everyone.

Apparently, Hollywood has faith in the power of this story, too, because film there has been discussion that Montgomery's life could be made into a television poignancy.

The poignancy in this story comes from its relevance to every person who reads it: no matter the situation or circumstances, everyone needs to take time to find the good in their life if they want to be truly fulfilled.

In the words of Montgomery, quoted from the *Knoxville News Sentinel*, "You have to have faith, my child."

Finding the Good is available at major bookstores, as well as at www.amazon.com, and directly from the publisher at www.routledgehillpress.com. ♦

Campus Calendar

Monday, May 3
Paul W. Martin Sr.
Honors Building Dedication
Tents outside, 2 p.m.
For information, call:
898-2152

Women's Chorale
Wright Music Building
Music Hall, 7:30 p.m.
For information, call:
898-2493

Tuesday, May 4
June Anderson Women's Center
Brown Bag Series
"Can Your Career Fit You?,"
Josh Burdette, coordinator,
residential life
Business and Aerospace Building
SunTrust Room, noon
For information, call:
898-2193

"American Tall Tales"
Through May 5
Tucker Theater
For information, call:
898-5916

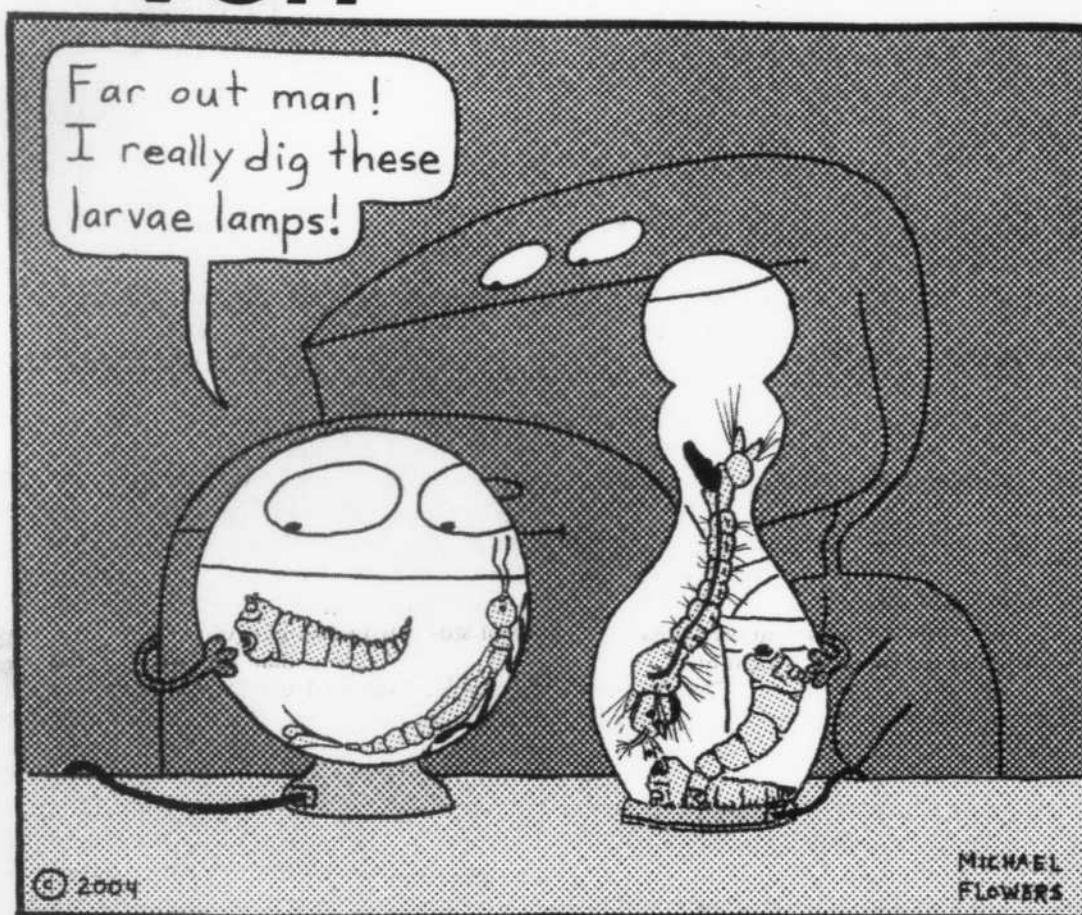
Mass Communication Awards
Bragg Mass Communication Building's
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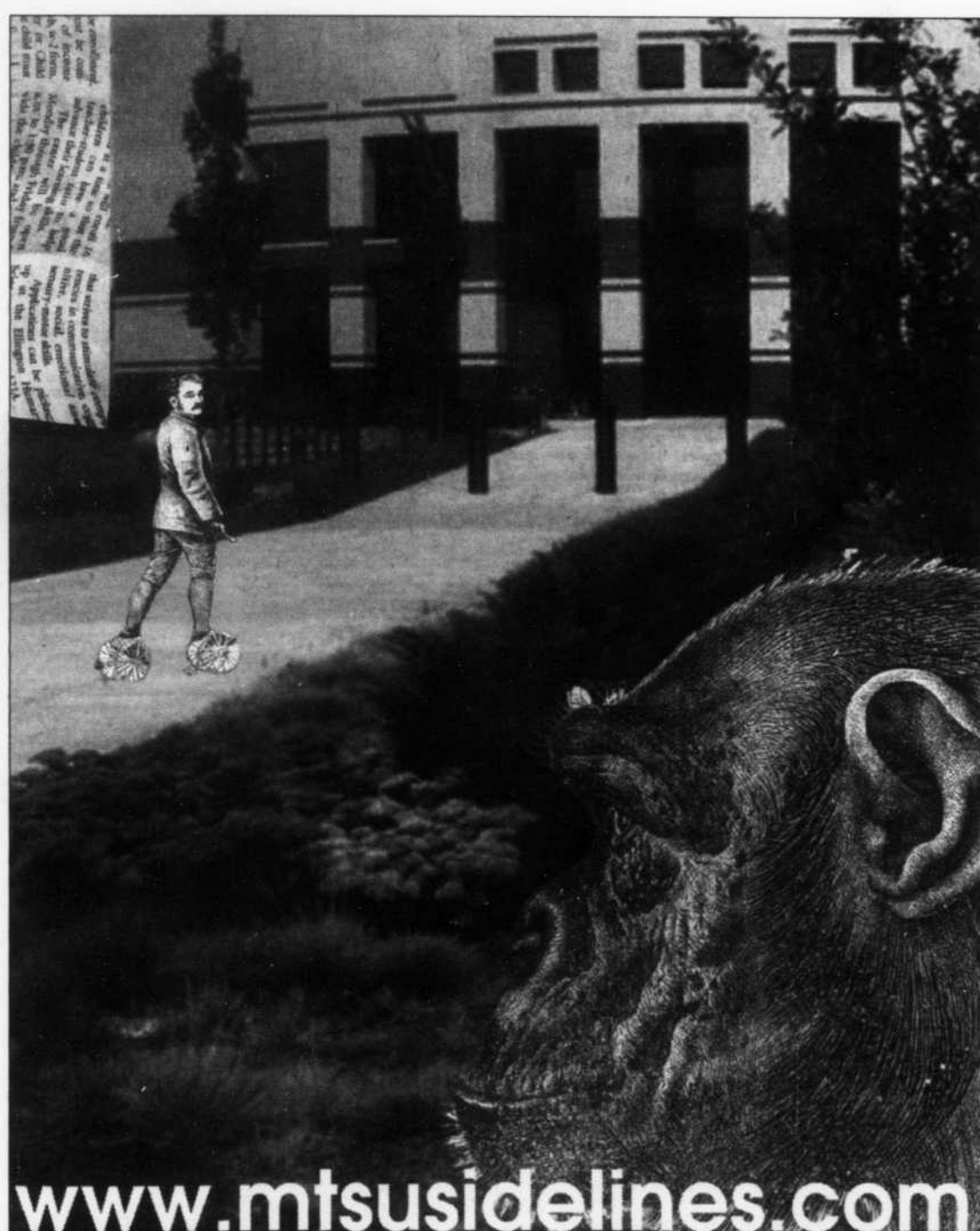
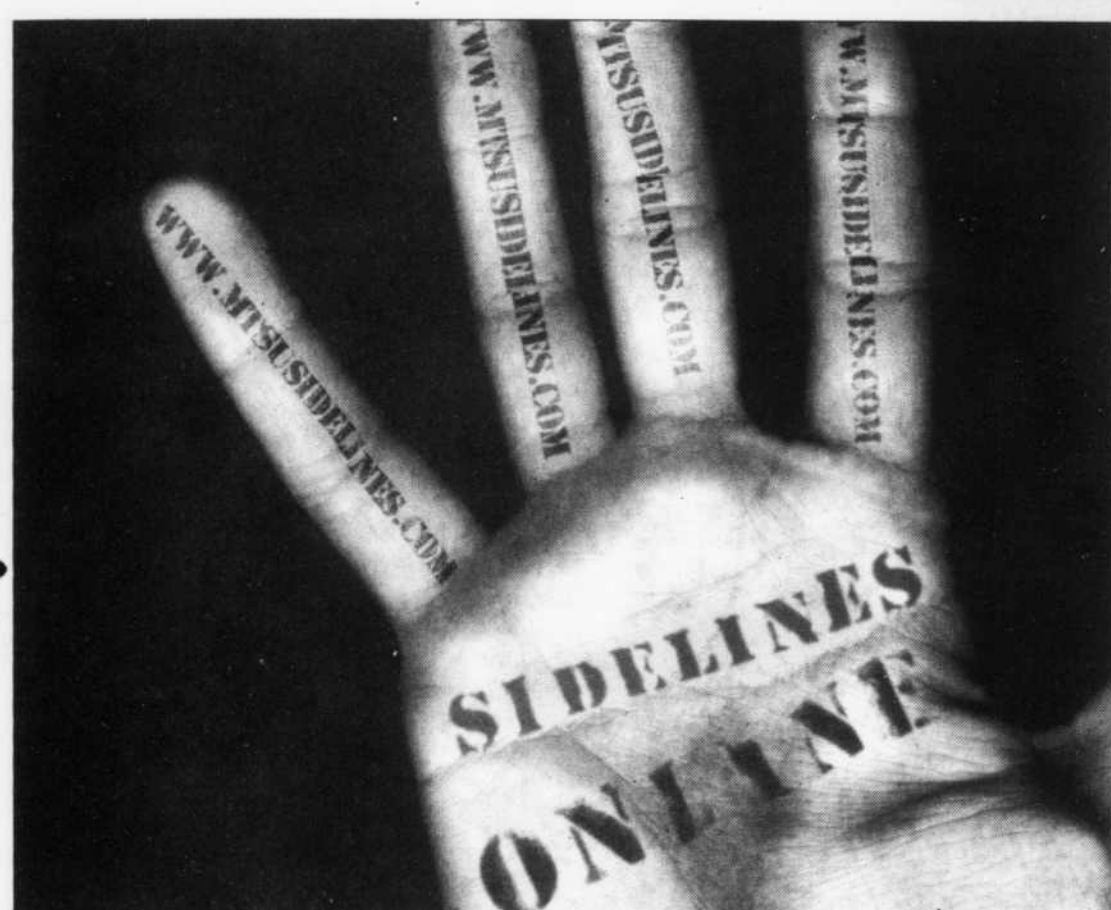
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8 ♦ SIDELINES

Monday, May 3, 2004

Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Golden Panthers snap Lady Raiders' streak

By Jon Leffew
Staff Writer

The Middle Tennessee Lady Raider softball team traveled to Miami over the weekend, looking to extend their nine-game win streak during a four-game series with the Florida International Golden Panthers.

On Saturday, however, the Lady Raiders dropped both games of the first doubleheader. In the first game, the Golden Panthers took advantage of three runs in the bottom of the seventh to escape with the 5-4 victory.

In the second game, the Lady Raiders were defeated in a 1-0 pitcher's duel, dropping the Lady Raiders to 30-16 overall and 10-4 in Sun Belt Conference play and marking the first time the team suffered consecutive losses since March 22.

Despite the losses, the Lady Raiders can still set up a conference regular-season championship showdown (against the University of Louisiana-Lafayette next weekend) with two wins on Sunday.

"These were two tough losses for our team, but our players are focused and realize what has to be done when we come back [on Sunday]," MT head coach Cindy Connelly told MT Media relations. "Our

team has been on a good run, and we have to regroup and try to start another streak."

In the first game of Saturday's doubleheader, the Golden Panthers took a 1-0 lead in the bottom of the first after an RBI single from Marleah Stapf. The Lady Raiders battled back, scoring four runs in the top of the second thanks to a leadoff single from Angie Huebner, three walks, an error and a hit batsman.

FIU pitcher Kendra Laminack settled down after the second, however, allowing just four hits for the rest of the game. MT threatened again in the sixth, but a flyout and groundout ended the rally and stranded two runners.

The Golden Panthers then rallied in the final frame, getting two walks and a fielder's choice before senior first baseman Cindy Turek ripped a double to left field that tied the game at 4.

After two more walks and an MT pitching change, Turek scored the game-winning run on a single from Brittany Witherow.

For FIU, Laminack improved her record to .500 (14-14) with the win by allowing six hits and four runs in seven innings of work. Trish White was given the loss for MT, her first in three decisions, after coming on to relieve Crystal Bobo in the seventh.

Offensively for the Blue Raiders, Kristina Heib was two-for-three on the day, and Muriel Ledbetter had two runs batted in.

In the nightcap, fans were treated to less offense and two brilliant pitching performances.

FIU's Amanda Nealer tossed a two-hit shutout to outduel MT freshman pitcher Ashley Frizzell, who gave up one hit and struck out six. The only run of the game came in the fourth, when Murray reached base on a walk and eventually stole home with two outs.

Despite the tough loss, Connelly was impressed with Frizzell's performance on the mound.

"[Frizzell] was outstanding out there, and she deserved a better outcome," Connelly told MT Media Relations. "She pitched a great game and has continuously improved with each outing. Unfortunately, we couldn't put together enough offense to get a win out of it."

The Lady Raiders will look to earn a series split during Sunday's doubleheader in Miami before returning home for their season finale against Louisiana-Lafayette next weekend. ♦



Photo by Steve Cross | Chief Photographer

MT pitcher Crystal Bobo delivers as NMSU outfielder Princess Moore squares to bunt in MT's 4-1 win April 24.

MT takes two of three against WKU

Rebounds from 15-3 debacle in first game

By Mark Emery and Colby Sledge
Staff Writer and Sports Editor

Seniors Derek Phillips and John Williams helped lead the Middle Tennessee baseball team past Western Kentucky 8-5 Saturday on Senior Day.

Phillips continued his outstanding play on the year by going 3-4, with two home runs and a career-high five runs batted in. The two home runs were the fourth and fifth of the season for Phillips, who is second in the Sun Belt Conference in batting average at .395. Fellow senior Williams had one of his best performances of the year, going 7 1/3 innings with six strikeouts.

Phillips' homers came in the first and third innings and gave the Blue Raiders a 2-1 lead. In the bottom half of the fourth, MT opened up the game with four runs off starter Daniel Faulkner. Marcus Taylor drew a one-out walk and moved to second on a wild pitch. Troy Harp then got a two-out single to score Taylor.

After Taylor's single, Eric McNamee walked, and Chuck Akers singled to load the bases. Phillips again came up with a big hit as he got a bases-clearing double to put the Blue Raiders up 6-1.

The lead held strong until the eighth when the Hilltoppers put up four runs of their own. After a double by Matt Ransdell and a one-out walk to Tim Grogan, head coach Steve Peterson went to the bullpen. Williams left the game after throwing more than 120 pitches.

Danny Borne gave up a three-run homer to Matt Gunning that cut the lead to 6-4. After a hit batsman and a two-out throwing error by Jeff Beachum, WKU scored another run, making it 6-5.

In the bottom of the eighth, MT got a couple of insurance runs. Taylor led off the inning with a home run off reliever Greg Durr. Beachum singled later in the inning and scored after a triple by Akers to give the Blue Raiders an 8-5 lead.

After reliever Eric Blevins hit the first batter he faced in the ninth, Peterson brought in Steve Kline, who got Matt Johnston to ground into a double play and then struck out Grogan to end the game. Kline picked up his fourth save of the year.

The win was a complete turnaround for the Blue Raiders from Friday, when the



Photo by Steve Cross | Chief Photographer

MT junior Nate Jagers connects in the Blue Raiders' 8-5 win over WKU Saturday.

Hilltoppers scored 12 unanswered runs over the last five innings to crush MT 15-3. Cary Page hit a three-run home run in a six-run fifth inning, as WKU took advantage of Blue Raider Chris Mobley's lack of control to take the first game of the season.

Mobley (6-4) had three wild pitches and three hit batsmen on his way to giving up a career-high eight runs on four hits. WKU's Grady Hinchman (4-4) also had control problems in walking six, but he allowed just three runs on four hits in seven innings.

In the final contest of the three-game series yesterday, the Blue Raiders scored six runs in the second and three runs in the

seventh en route to an 11-7 victory. MT (29-17, 10-8 SBC) knocked starter Curtis Morrison out early and held on for the Blue Raiders' fourth consecutive series win.

"The game was not out of reach [after the second inning]," MT head coach Steve Peterson told the Blue Raider Network after the game. "It was never out of reach. I felt like Western was going to make another run once their left-handers got up."

The game was far from pretty, as the teams combined for seven errors and a strong wind played havoc with fly balls throughout the game. WKU (23-22, 6-9) attempted to rally in the ninth, but the game

ended on a deep fly ball to center field that settled in Chuck Akers' glove.

"I know in our dugout nobody was breathing easy until that last fly ball hit to Chuck," Peterson told the Blue Raider Network.

BJ Church picked up his third win of the year, giving up seven runs (three earned) on nine hits in 5 2/3 innings. Steve Kline came on for the final 3 1/3 innings for his fifth save.

Morrison (1-2) took the loss for the Hilltoppers after giving up seven runs in 1 2/3 innings.

The Blue Raiders travel to New Orleans next weekend for their final road conference series of the season. Friday's game begins at 6:30 p.m. ♦

Rhoden, squad ready to improve on strong spring

By Michael Bailey
Staff Writer

After setting the school record for wins, going undefeated in the spring season and earning multiple individual honors, the Middle Tennessee soccer team could easily become complacent.

According to head coach Aston Rhoden, however, the Blue Raiders will enter the 2004 season hungrier than ever.

"We are happy with the strides we have made, but we are not satisfied," Rhoden said last week. "We know the [2003] season could have been better for us."

Rhoden, the reigning Sun Belt Conference Coach of the Year, went on to say the burning desire comes after losing some games the team "had no business losing" and knowing how much his players and staff have committed to the program.

"Nothing surprises me when I think about all the time and hard work the players and coaches devote to achieving our goals," he said. "What surprises me are the inconsistencies within the team."

The disappointments in the fall spurred Rhoden to apply all energies in spring practices and scrimmages toward maintaining their exceptional efforts while also elevating less paramount performances. The result was an unblemished spring record (10-0-1) and progress from several key players.

"Claire Ward, Rachel Holmes and Danielle [Perreault] improved much

more," Rhoden noted. "Not that anyone else did not improve, but they seemed more confident and relaxed."

Nevertheless, he warned that not one of the 21 returning members of the record-setting 2003 club should get too comfortable.

"We return a lot of starters, but in our world what you did last year has little bearing on the upcoming year," Rhoden said. "Competition is a given for us. We don't bring in people to develop; we bring in athletes to challenge our players."

Courtney Dunlap, a four-time All-State honoree from Donelson Christian Academy, headlines the five newcomers. The All-American forward/midfielder set the state career goals record last season

with 184 and ranks 11th all-time in the nation in career goals.

Kayley Forrest rejoins Franklin High School alumnae and current Blue Raiders Sara Wohlhueter and Katy Rayburn on defense. Forrest earned All-State honors while leading the Lady Rebels to back-to-back state titles in her junior and senior campaigns.

Halley Dawe, an all-district performer for Westwood High School in Austin, Texas, and Jenny Manis, a goalkeeper from Pensacola, Fla., will add depth to the Blue Raider bench.

Rounding out the geographically-diverse group is well-traveled Debs Brereton, who hails from Middlesbrough, England, and comes to MT via Northeastern State University

See Soccer, 9



File Photo

MT forward Rebecca Rodriguez looks to pass to Laura Miguez in a 6-1 win over Birmingham Southern Sept. 21.

Soccer: Team to visit London

Continued from 8

in Tahlequah, Okla.

Although competition can sometimes create division or contempt within a group, the Blue Raiders are taking steps to avoid such growing pains. MT will begin fall practice in London, England, where everyone will be exposed to comparable levels of stress, not just the newcomers.

Rhoden wants to use the nine-day trip, over which his team will train eight days and play during four, as a bonding experience in which the girls will enter from heterogeneous backgrounds and emerge as a unified team.

The stiff competition against top club teams from London, Manchester and Birmingham should also help the Blue Raiders prepare for their journey through the 2004 schedule, which begins Aug. 27 at Southeastern Conference foe Mississippi State.

"We know there are two ways for us to get into the NCAA tournament: win the conference tournament or get an at-large berth," Rhoden said. "To get an at-large berth, you have to play the SEC, ACC and Conference USA, but our sights are set on winning the regular season championship and the conference tournament. That's our mission." ♦

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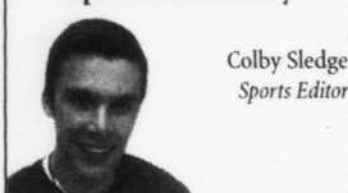
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YEAR-END SPORTS REVIEW

Track, basketball squads highlight ho-hum season

Sports commentary



Colby Sledge
Sports Editor

While Middle Tennessee's women's athletics enjoyed unprecedented success this season, the men finished the year decidedly average.

Kermit Davis' young basketball team enjoyed a memorable night at Murphy Center, but the football team had an entirely forgettable campaign.

Mardy Scales and the men's track squad continued to set school records and compete in national events, while the country club sports-tennis and golf never found their identities in sub-par seasons.

Now, after much consideration, deliberation and procrastination, here are my men's athletics superlatives and lowlights for the 2003-2004 season.

Best Individual Athlete: Scales. In a sport that garners attention only at the Olympics and various other multinational events, Scales is this school's best hope for a world-class athlete. After becoming the 2003 NCAA 100-meter Outdoor National Champion last spring and winning a gold medal in the 400-meter relay at the Pan-Am Games over the summer, Scales led the men's team to its fourth consecutive Sun Belt Conference Indoor title, setting school and conference records in the 200-meter dash along the way.

Scales then finished second in the nation in the 60-meter dash, finishing two one-hundredths of a second behind the winner. Scales, a native of Franklin, Tenn., and a graduate of Centennial High School, has earned five All-American honors during his time at MT and will easily leave as one of the most decorated athletes in school history. Here's wishing good luck to him at the Olympic trials in Sacramento, Calif., this summer.

Coach of the Year: Davis. After leading the Blue Raiders to their first winning season in four years, Davis coached this year's squad to 17 wins, the most victories since the 1997-1998 season. After losing lead-

ing scorer Mike Dean to a broken hand just two days before the SBC Tournament, the Blue Raiders defeated host Western Kentucky 76-62 and almost upset eventual champion Louisiana-Lafayette before falling 70-66.

Davis' greatest effort this year, however, has come after the season. After landing a top-25 recruiting class last year that included starting point guard Bryan Smithson, Davis has signed three junior college stars and two local high school standouts over the past three weeks. Add those players to 6-foot-8-inch behemoth Steve Thomas, who sat out last year after transferring from Georgia, and the Blue Raiders have a legitimate chance at making their first NCAA Tournament since 1989.

Goat of the Year: Former defensive coordinator Steve Davis. After the incredible debacle against D-II opponent Florida Atlantic, MT fans should have known not to expect much from the defense for the rest of the season. The group finished the season next-to-last in the conference in total yards allowed, including allowing more than 254 yards passing per game, worst in the SBC. After the loss to Louisiana-Lafayette (more on that later), Davis' fate was sealed. On a positive note, new defensive coordinator Mike Collins' use of multiple defensive backs has already received good reviews this spring.

Best Moment: Operation: Full House on Feb. 26. Aaron Todd's dream was easily the highest point for MT athletics in recent history, as 11,807 fans watched the Blue Raiders wallop WKU 73-59. Fans sat in the aisles as the fire marshal looked the other way. The month-long efforts of Todd, who was diagnosed with cancer a few months earlier, did not go unfulfilled as the entire community rallied around its university. The crowd broke the all-time attendance record at Murphy Center set in 1974 and hopefully gave a glimpse of the future of MT athletics.

Worst Moment: While the football team's last-second season-opening loss to Florida Atlantic was gut-wrenching, at least it wasn't raining. The Blue

Raiders' 57-51 four-overtime loss to Louisiana-Lafayette on Nov. 15 may have been the worst game since the team entered the Sun Belt in 2000. Less than 2,500 fans (no matter what the box score may tell you) watched in a cold drizzle as ULL's Jerry Babb, the lowest-rated passer in the conference coming into the game, threw for 435 yards in a game that featured three MT quarterbacks, a receiving clinic by Fred Stamps and a straight-faced lie by the SBC commissioner's office in order to proceed with a give-away celebrating the conference's new attendance "record." After the game, Babb was ecstatic, Andy McCollum was fuming and Steve Davis was all but fired.

The "Who Are These Guys?" Award: The golf and cross-country teams in a tie. Dismal finishes (seventh and eighth in the conference, respectively), zero fan base and a lack of outstanding individual performers has at least one editor wondering if a cash-strapped Title-IX school really needs these sports. The tennis team gets a bye for past success.

The Last Great Hope Award: The baseball team, who went to the NCAA Tournament last year but has endured an up-and-down season so far. While setting an attendance record was nice (mostly because of the unabashed bribes of airline tickets and free T-shirts), the team will most likely have to win at least seven of its remaining nine games in order to earn an at-large berth if they don't win the SBC title. This weekend served as a microcosm of the season, in which MT was blown out 15-3 at home Friday before winning 8-5 Saturday. Will the real Blue Raiders please stand up?

All in all, the year wasn't that bad for men's athletics at Middle Tennessee. Men's track maintained its standard of excellence, the basketball program steadily improved and the baseball team still has a good chance to make the postseason. But when we look back in 10 years on this season in Blue Raider men's athletics, this year will likely be considered simply average.

We hope. ♦

MT women delight fans with records, SBC titles

Sports commentary



Matthew Adair
Assistant Sports Editor

Well, we're at the end of the road at last, aren't we? Another year at Middle Tennessee has come to a close, and what a year it's been.

MT's women's athletics have struck their share of high notes this year, demonstrating impressive athletic talent collectively and individually to bring the university to new heights in sports.

Highest on anyone's list of best women's performances this year are easily the Lady Raiders' basketball team's dynamite victory in the Sun Belt Championship, seizing a 79-57 win over Western Kentucky to take the conference title as well as a spot in the NCAA women's tournament their first time to do so since 1998.

The team further amazed fans by upsetting 12th-ranked North Carolina 67-62 in the first round of the NCAA tournament, marking their first advance to the second round of tournament play in 21 years.

The fact that the Lady Raiders were defeated in their next match against Notre Dame didn't matter to the fans. They had done something that only two other women's basketball squads in school history have done, and that's easily enough to make them the best MT women's team of 2003-2004.

The ladies' tennis team had

its own share of championship play, although they were defeated by UALR in the first round and had to settle for two consolation victories to end in fifth place.

Many of the team's victories came with the help of Manon Kruse and Carien Venter, who climbed their way to the No. 8 doubles pair in the nation as of April 27 with a 25-3 record for the season, with only one of those losses coming during the regular season.

Jennifer Klaschka and Laura McNamara also proved to be a power to be contended with this season, taking a win percentage of 77.7 with a record of 21-6. The two climbed as high as 48th in the nation in doubles play, which they achieved on March 23 after MT beat Bowling Green 4-3 two days before.

From power hitters in tennis, we switch over to power hitters in softball, where Courtney Mitchell is proving herself to be best over-all slugger for the Lady Raiders.

Mitchell was recently awarded the distinction of Sun Belt Hitter of the Week for the third time this season, and for good reason. As of April 26, Mitchell was hitting an average .473, the third best average in the league and one which includes 46 runs scored and 40 runs batted in, both new school records.

Mitchell ranks third in slugging percentage (.890), seventh in runs per game (1.05) and second in home runs (10) this season, putting her in contention for an All-America title.

For the distinction of MT's fastest woman, we turn to the track and field team and

Rosemary Okafor, three-time SBC Performer of the Week for the outdoor track and field season.

Okafor shattered Nadia Graham's 1996 record time of 55.56 seconds in the 400-meter dash, running in 52.41 during the NCAA Championships during the weekend of March 12-13, a personal best for her for the indoor track season. She also came within one second of breaking Dionne Rose's 1994 record of 6.89 in the 55-meter dash during the Jan. 24 Blue Raider Invitational.

Outdoors, Okafor set school records in the 200-meter dash (23.61) and 800 meters (2:10.03), while helping her teammates to beat the NCAA regional mark in the 400-meter and 1600-meter relays.

Rounding things out is the MT soccer team, which concluded an unbeaten spring season of 10-0-1, including eight shutouts, making them the only unbeaten team on the campus for the season.

The newest side of the Blue Raiders, the soccer team was formed in 1996. Coach Aston Rhoden credited the squad's resounding success to their pool of veteran talent an experience in playing together as a team, and it looks as though the Blue Raiders will continue to play as strongly for the fall as 21 members of the team return for play.

With the season winding down, all of MT's women athletes can look back on the past year with pride. 2003-2004 has been packed with plenty to be loud and be proud about, and one can only hope that the coming year will be even better. ♦

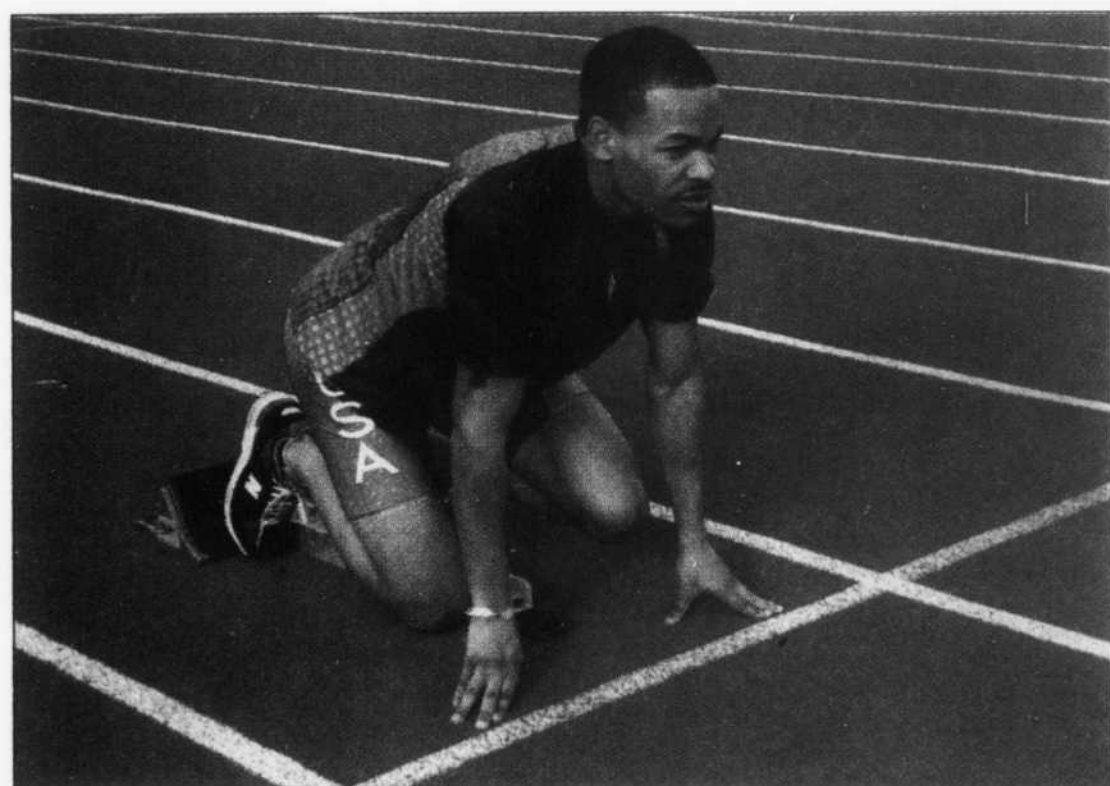
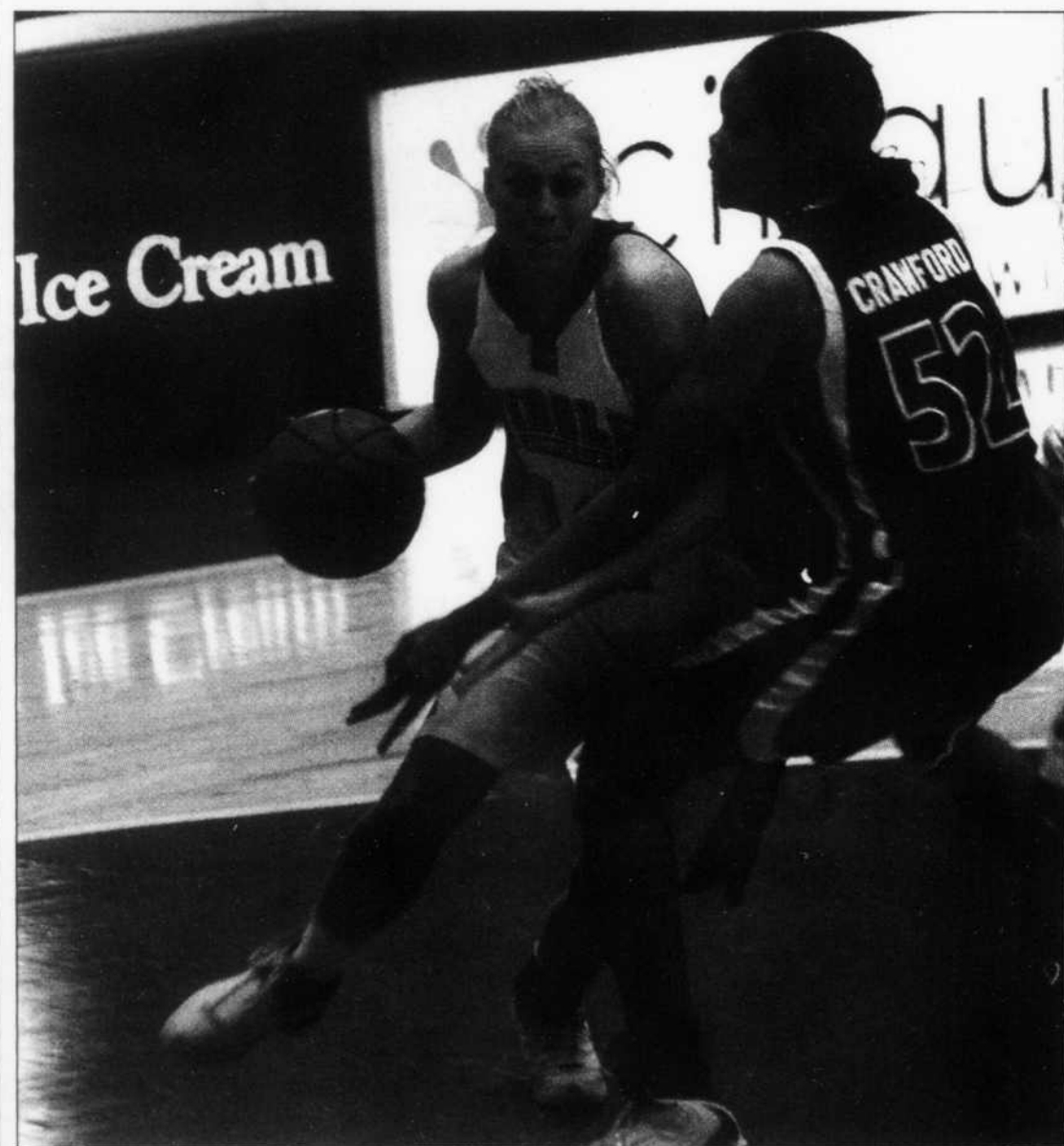


Photo by Julie Madewell | Staff Photographer

MT sprinter Mardy Scales is the defending 100-meter outdoor national champion.



File Photo

MT junior Ditte Jakobsen and the Lady Raiders were 2003-04 Sun Belt champions.

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