

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

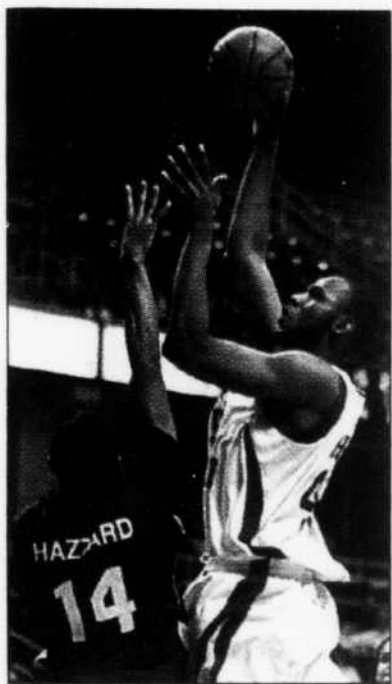
EDITORALLY INDEPENDENT

MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2008

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Men advance in SBC tournament



MTSU's mens basketball team advances to the semifinals in Mobile after defeating Troy 65-59.

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COMMUTE

Beginning on Friday, March 7, MTSU Blvd. will be closed from Rutherford Blvd. to Blue Raider Drive due to construction. You will be able to enter the campus off Rutherford Blvd. at Alumni Drive (the newly opened road by Greek Row). The 4-way stop at MTSU Blvd. and Blue Raider Drive will also be closed for construction. Please follow detour signs.

The gravel lot on the corner of Rutherford Blvd. and MTSU Blvd. will also be closed during this time. We recommend parking in the Rutherford Blvd. lot across from Greek Row and riding the shuttle.

online

MTSUSIDELINES.COM

Road closure expected to inconvenience many

Daniel Potter
COMMUNITY NEWS EDITOR

The section of MTSU Boulevard that runs from Rutherford Boulevard to Blue Raider Drive will close today due to construction.

Traffic to and from Rutherford Boulevard will divert to the newly-opened Alumni Drive.

"This is to widen MTSU Boulevard," said Nancy Weatherly, manager at Parking and Transportation Services. "It will be widened to make room for a dedicated bus lane so the buses will be able to travel through the traffic."

In addition to the road closure, the adjacent gravel parking lot is closed as well.

"We recommend parking in the Rutherford Boulevard lot across from Greek Row and riding the shuttle," Weatherly said, citing other construction projects on campus such as the new softball field, as well as increased traffic this week as MTSU hosts the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association for Boys State Basketball Championships.

"It's going to be hard moving around campus this week," Weatherly said. The bus schedule has been adjusted in conjunction with the road closure, she said, and "I've put that route on our Web site."

The construction on MTSU Boulevard is expected to continue through the middle of August.

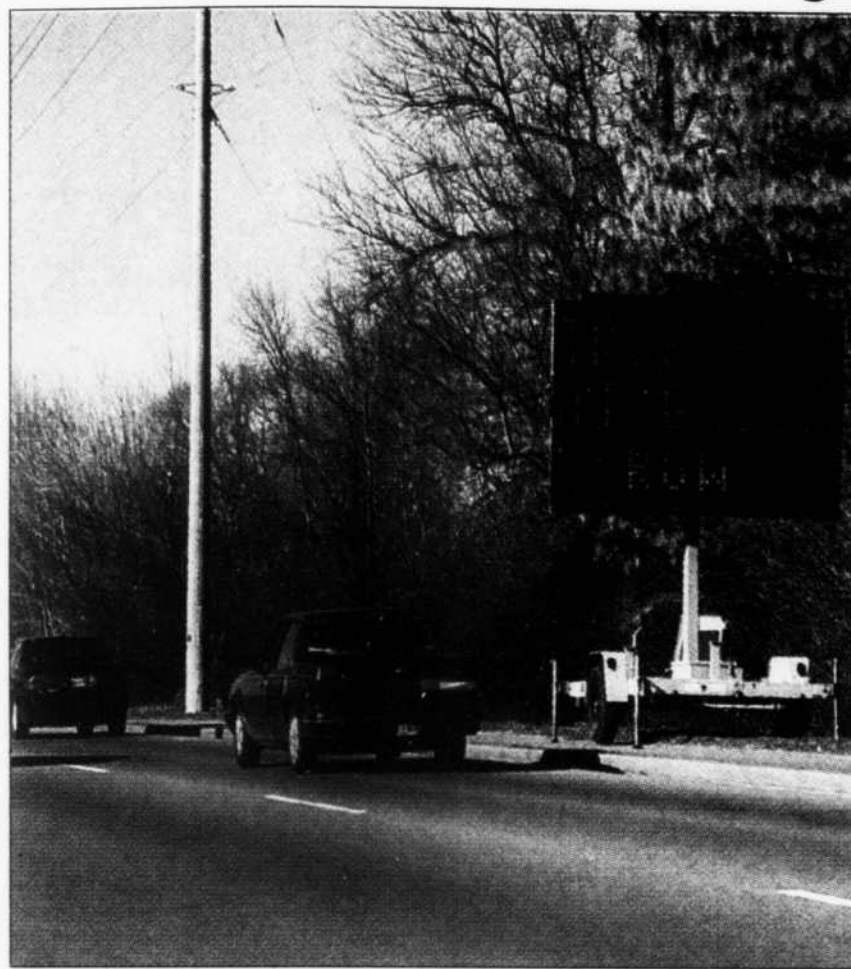
Growing pains

"I'd like to highlight that this is going to be a very difficult project in the sense that it's going to be a nuisance," said Patti Miller, architect and assistant vice president in Campus Planning.

Still this road closure is a growing pain as the master plan works toward its main plan for parking accommodations.

"The master plan, recently updated and approved, focused on creating a pedestrian-focused campus. As a part of that plan, the university has been continuing to develop plans for improvements to the transportation system," Miller said.

Ultimately the university aims to construct "six parking decks at the perimeter of campus," connected via shuttle bus. "The widening of MTSU Boulevard and the creation of the Alumni Drive connection are really the first step to creating"



With MTSU Boulevard closed, students entering campus from Rutherford Boulevard will instead take Alumni Drive.

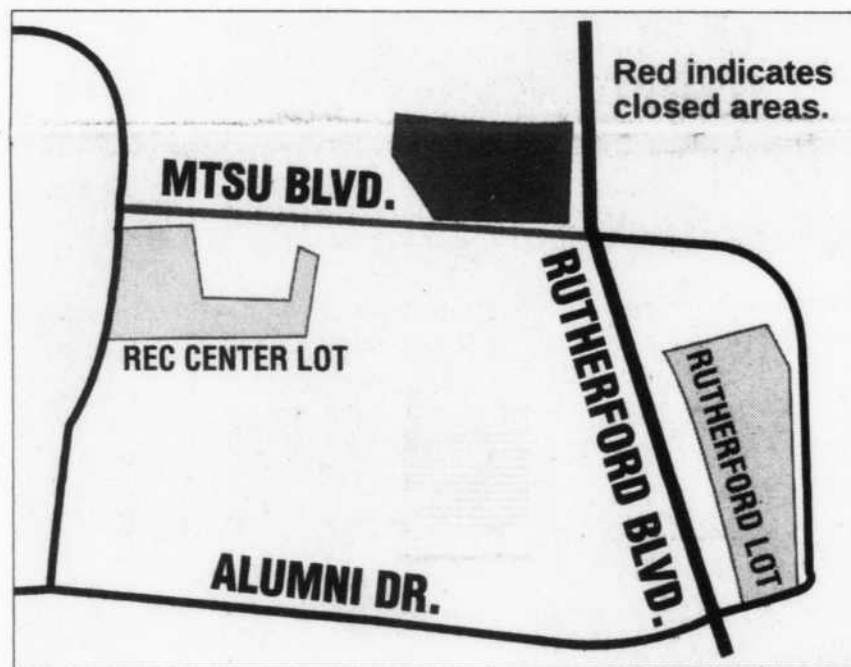


IMAGE BY ERIC SHUFF, PRODUCTION MANAGER

such a network, Miller said.

"It's going to take a long time for that to happen," Miller said. "The first deck is going to be the most difficult," she said, because it will not be funded by the state.

Further, "as the campus develops, it's a land-use question," Miller said. "About one fifth of the cam-

pus is dedicated to surface lots."

The plan aims to preserve some green space in the heart of campus, which in turn forces parking toward the perimeter.

"The desire will be to create and dedicate those green spaces in the academic core," Miller said.

Legislators close to an agreement on lottery

By Lucas L. Johnson II
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) - Legislative leaders from both parties say they're nearing agreement on a key piece of lottery scholarship legislation that would allow more students to graduate here.

Last year's end of session was delayed because lawmakers couldn't agree on changes to the rules for keeping a lottery-funded HOPE scholarship. At the center of the conflict was a proposal to lower the grade point average needed to keep the merit-based scholarship.

The measure passed the House 94-1, but Senate leaders ultimately decided against a Senate vote.

Lawmakers now say they're hammering out their differences and hope to soon have legislation that will pass the Senate.

"I feel there's a better degree of understanding of each other's position," said House Education Committee Chairman Les Winstead, D-Huntsville. "We're going to make it work."

Under current rules, a student must be enrolled full time in college with a GPA of at least 2.75 after the freshman year and a cumulative 3.0 GPA for subsequent years to keep the scholarship.

Democrats, including Gov. Phil Bredesen, believe reducing the required cumulative GPA to 2.75 would allow more students to keep the scholarships.

"It will keep them in school and they will be able to graduate," said Rep. Willy Jones, a Memphis Democrat and member of the House Education Committee. "With a 3.0, we have a lot of kids that are not graduating."

But opponents argue dropping the GPA would lower standards and reflect badly on a state that perennially ranks in the lower percent of states in education.

However, figures released this year by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission are changing some minds. THEC reported that 50 percent of students lost their HOPE scholarships after their first year in college and 68 percent by their fourth year.

Lawmakers and education of-

LOTTERY, PAGE 2

Professor releases collection of piano works

Faith Franklin
COPY EDITOR

A CD-release concert featuring Joseph Akins, a local pianist and associate recording-industry professor here, will be held on Saturday March 29 at 7:30 p.m.

The Murfreesboro/Rutherford County Center for the Arts is presenting this first music concert to mark the beginning of a series of concerts to be held in the future.

The mission of the Center for the Arts is to promote and enhance the quality of life in Murfreesboro and Rutherford County.

"This CD release concert will be their first music concert, and they are wanting to have more," Akins said. This is "creating an outlet for more music concerts. It gives artists such as myself an outlet to [perform] their music."

The upcoming concert also gives piano lovers an opportunity to hear people who can play, Akins added.

"This is not going to be a classi-

cal concert," Akins said. The music performed will be "music that anybody can enjoy; it's for the people."

The concert will feature music from Akins' latest CD "Masterpeace" which was released last October. The music from the CD is original music composed by Akins over a period of two to three years.

"Masterpeace" is a collection of peaceful solo piano compositions. "Most people say my music is relaxing," Akins said.

I have heard people say they use it in many different situations: to cool the children down in day care, nursing homes, massage therapists in spas, churches, in the office, or while driving because it [soothes] and calms," Akins explained.

Akins style of music has been compared to that of Jim Brickman and George Winston. The music composed by Akins is receiving increased airplay by popular Internet and public radio stations.

Akins has three CDs from his latest artistic phase. He refers to this



PHOTO BY ANDY HARPER, EDITOR IN CHIEF
Professor Joseph Akins operates a board in the College of Mass Communication.

music as spiritual.

For more than 30 years Akins has been composing, performing and recording music. "I was raised in a musical family," Akins explained. "From a kid, I was expected to play

an instrument."

Akins childhood was very different from most. At the age of twelve

PIANO, PAGE 2

Lottery: Agreement

Continued from page 1

cials say part of the reason students don't always meet the mark is because they're faced with other tasks — such as working full time — in addition to going to school.

"At first I wasn't in favor of it," said Sen. Bill Ketron of reducing the retention GPA. But the Murfreesboro Republican and Senate Education Committee member said he now realizes that students should be helped on the front end rather than "throwing cold water on them and trying to defeat them before they even get a foot hold."

Among working-age adults here, 29.9 percent have an associate's degree or more, compared to a national rate of 37.2 percent.

Most lawmakers agree on doing what's necessary to help more students graduate here, but they also want to stay within the state's budget.

Donald Heller, director of the Center for the Study of Higher Education at Penn State University, said lowering the retention GPA would likely cost more state money.

"Now, instead of 50 percent losing it, you've got more students keeping their scholarships," he said.

Lawmakers have about \$37 million available without dipping into the state's nearly \$410 million in lottery reserves, according to THEC officials. They estimate it will cost some \$17 million to lower the retention GPA.

"There are different ways to come to a compromise on it, but they could afford a 2.75," said David Wright, THEC's chief policy officer. "It would just limit other options."

One retention proposal would let students with a B-minus average keep their grants with a small reduction in the scholarship amount as an incentive to work back to a B — a proposal Senate Speaker Ron Ramsey has said he supports.

"I'd like to see an incentive for people to go back to a 3.0," said the Blountville Republican. "But at the same time, they don't have to drop out of school because of it."

Lawmakers are reviewing a slew of other lottery-related proposals, including one by Bredesen that would set aside \$200 million from lottery reserves to create an endowment to help pay for college education for 15,000 more Tennesseans each year.

Piano: Professors Concert

Continued from page 1

Akins was ready to perform professionally. He began composing music at 15 and toured with a rock 'n' roll band, Blaze, right after high school.

Unsure if he wanted to continue on the rock 'n' roll track, Akins went to college and explored a different genre of music — jazz.

"Once I got to college and started studying different kinds of music, jazz became more interesting, more of a challenge for me," Akins explained. "It was more important for me to grow as a musician."

"You learn your lessons from life," he said. "My priorities changed, I started getting more into church and performing in churches, so that had an effect on my music." The music that Akins is writing and performing comes from that experience.

Akins teaches electronic music and musicianship. His professional experience in the field carries over into the classroom.

"All of the experience that I get, from playing in the band to making CDs and [performing] at concerts, now all carries over to the class," Akins explained.

Although being a professional musician and professor keeps Akins busy, it works out best for him and his students. "It is a lot of work. I love it, so it's not really like work," Akins said.

"If I just taught, I would get depressed and probably be a boring teacher, but doing something creative like making the CDs and touring along with the teaching keeps me alive and it keeps everything interesting," Akins explained.

This will be the first opportunity for Akins' students to see him perform professionally.

The concert will take place at 110 West College Street. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors/students, and \$8 for children 12 and under. Tickets may be purchased by calling (615) 904-2787.



Student Government posts results for 2008 elections

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Vice President of Administration and Public Affairs
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Do you consider MTSU a politically active campus?

- a) Yes
b) No
c) Somewhat

Go to mtsusidelines.com to answer

FEATURES

Student gets a head start in politics

By Sarah Lavery
FEATURES EDITOR

A few years ago, senior history major Edward Phillips walked into the Republican Party Headquarters in Murfreesboro's square and asked for a job.

It wasn't an election year, and things at the office were a little slow. But Phillips was so determined to become involved, he wouldn't take no for an answer.

So he vacuumed every day. He cleaned the windows. He took every opportunity he could to talk to his fellow party-mates. He refused to sit on the sidelines.

Phillips' janitorial work finally paid off.

At 22 years old, he became the campaign manager for Joe Carr, a position he will repeat in the upcoming local elections.

This past semester, he was elected president of the Raider Republicans.

And, now, he's campaigning to be a delegate at the Republican National Convention, among the youngest to do so.

Sitting in the office of the Republican Party Headquarters, Phillips looks every bit the part of an aspiring politician. At two o'clock in the afternoon on a school day, he's dressed in a carefully pressed business suit. His eyes are glued to the news playing on the office's TV.

But he wasn't always so politically active. His family, although dutiful voters, didn't really have ambitions to take their involvement any further.

Phillips remembers the turning point. He remembers when he went from blissfully unaware teenager to someone who felt a deep urge to do more.

It started in 2000, he says, with the showdown between George W. Bush and Al Gore. He started looking a little closer.

"During my senior year of high school, Sept. 11 happened, and it made me pay attention a lot more," he says.

It is difficult, Phillips points out, for a young generation to connect with people who are decades to nearly half-a-century older—the people who control the political arena. And, often, the assumed interests of college students are put on the backburner.

"A big part of it is the question of which came first, the chicken or egg?" he asks. "Do politicians not cam-

paign to college students because they think we don't get involved, or do we not get involved because they don't campaign for us?"

As the reigning president of the Raider Republicans, Phillips hopes that his growing group portrays a different image of college students. There are more Republicans on campus than most would assume, he says.

"People think that most college students are liberal," Phillips says. "But there are a whole lot more conservatives on campus than those people realize."

Political science professor Sekou Franklin says that, after taking into consideration the demands of work, family and full course loads, students are politically involved on campus.

"What's missing, however, is student involvement in social justice initiatives that seek to address systemic inequalities such as racism, poverty, the lack of affordable housing and education," Franklin says. "This requires students to move beyond the confines of the campus and to engage communities that may be foreign to them."

Throughout his experience with the Raider Republicans, Phillips also says he hopes to change the perception that Republicans don't get involved in the community. He says the group has participated in Habitat for Humanity and will contribute to Murfreesboro's "Room in the Inn" homeless shelter.

"And, of course, around Veteran's Day we always have a 'feed the troops' barbecue," Phillips says.

Now in his senior year, Phillips is looking past his graduation date to a future in politics. But, at 24 years old, a head start he already has.

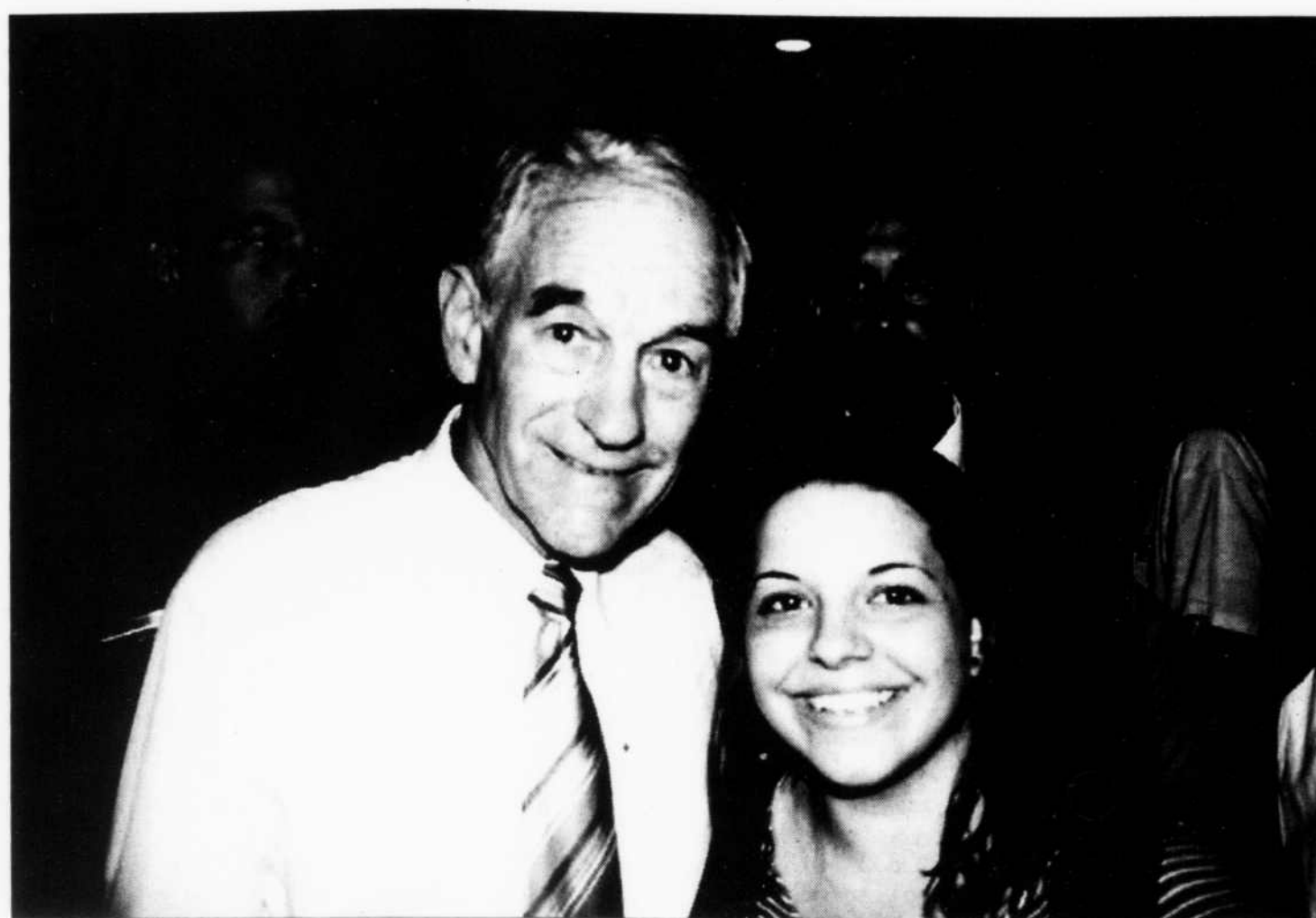
His campaign to be a delegate at the Republican National Convention is a first step. In order to be considered for the job, Phillips had to get 100 ballot signatures. He filled up the whole page.

With all that is said and stereotyped about apathetic youth, people like Phillips demand a different perspective.

Phillips says that he sees on a daily basis just how active the student population is in politics.

"I always try to engage [my peers] to see how they think about politics," he says. "We care more than a lot of people give us credit for."

MTSU'S POLITICAL PULSE



Electronic media communications major Alex Blackwelder poses with presidential hopeful Ron Paul in 2007.

Fighting for a 'revolution'

Murfreesboro college students give the presidential hopeful an unlikely voice

By Christopher Barkley
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Dexter Johnson, an MTSU sophomore, was flipping through the cable channels on television in his apartment one fall evening in 2007 and decided to watch a few minutes of a presidential debate.

Utterly bored, and expecting the usual political blithering and double-talk akin to over-produced political debates, the 19-year-old student heard one of the men portray something he says he found delightfully provocative, without agenda, that seemed pure to his ears. The man spoke of small government, legalizing the U.S. Constitution and unabashedly denouncing the IRS.

That man was Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul, and from that moment, Dexter has been one of the hundreds of foot soldiers in Murfreesboro who help spread the ideas of the Ron Paul "revolution."

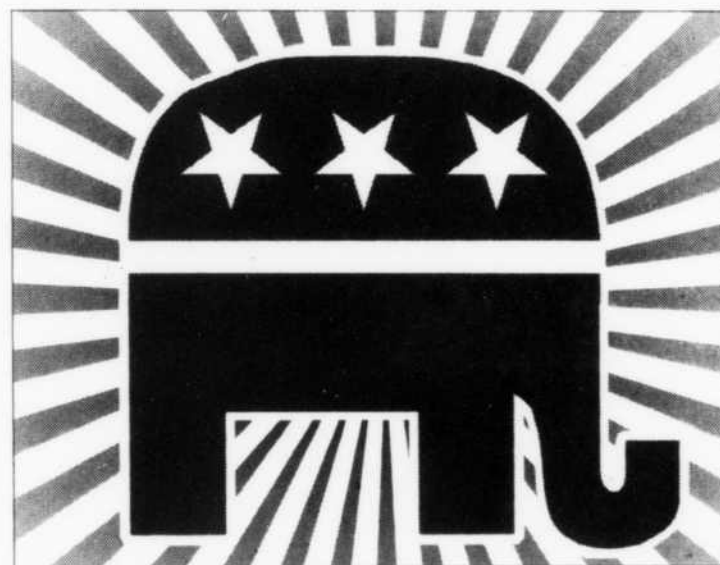
"As soon as the debate ended, I spoke with my cousin and asked him if he had heard of Ron Paul," Dexter says. "He knew more than I did, and since then we have gone to rallies, written articles and begun having political conversations with friends."

However, Dexter has had trouble spreading the word to others who haven't previously heard of Paul.

"When I make comments in class [about Paul] people just laugh," he says. "People don't see his message, they just see him as another Ralph Nader."

Yet, some who have been exposed to Paul's message of personal liberty and freedom take the 10-term congressman very seriously.

Murfreesboro Ron Paul meet-up coordinator John Freeman wrote on his profile page: "I've never been so excited about a political



candidate, and I want to be actively involved in what is truly a modern revolution. I am hoping to meet a vast and diverse group of people who share the same interests in personal liberty and [want] to support Ron Paul."

So what is creating the disconnect between those who hear Paul's ideas and those who don't feel as if Paul deserves to have his ideas considered and heard on a legitimate, visible platform?

Walking around campus, you see "Ron Paul 2008, Hope For America" bumper stickers on trashcans, walls, doors and message boards about every 100 feet. But if you watch the news on major media outlets like CNN, Fox News and MSNBC, you might not even know Paul was running for office.

This fervent support for Paul, some think, is consistent off campus, as well, where it sometimes seems that you can drive down any street in Murfreesboro and see the signs of Ron Paul supporters. Yet it could be argued that the grassroots attention Paul has garnered has not translated into mainstream media attention.

Hillary Clinton, John McCain, Mitt Romney or Barack Obama signs and bumper stickers are not as ubiquitous on MTSU's campus and, per-

haps, beyond, but they are the frontrunners in each party; they get votes without the rabid grassroots support that Paul backers have exerted.

The answer, Dexter says he believes, lies in the lack of media support locally and nationally for Paul, and the constant barrage of media coverage the frontrunners receive on a daily basis.

"Most people [my age] either don't care to vote or will just vote for the most popular candidate, the one with the most [media] coverage," he says.

Paul has broken the presidential campaign fundraising record for a single day with \$6.3 million raised on-line, has more than 17,000 precinct leaders, is the most searched candidate on the internet and out-raised all other Republicans in the third quarter with more than \$22 million. Yet, when Paul took second place in the Nevada primary, Fox News seemed to focus on third place finisher John McCain.

John McCain has now become the likely Republican nominee. Of the three former frontrunners—McCain, Mitt Romney and Mike Huckabee—Paul has nearly \$8 million of campaign funds on hand, \$5 million more than the closest candidate, McCain.

Ron Paul's presidential bid

has aroused many grassroots supporters in Murfreesboro and across the country, and continues to raise money each day.

Dexter says he wonders if the popularity of the Ron Paul campaign is about Ron Paul at all, or rather the seemingly new idea of freedom and personal liberties.

"You see a guy like Paul, who has fought for these principles for 30 years, and you say [to yourself], I need to do this, too. It's my civil duty to do this," says Brian Comer, an MTSU graduate and Paul meet-up member.

Brian sharply disagrees with the idea that Paul is simply the flavor of the month, rather than a legitimate movement.

"It's more so a revolution than a presidential campaign," he says. "The people who support Paul see him as a cog on the wheel. Ron Paul has a great message, don't get me wrong, he just has a hard time saying it. People are not worshipping the man; they're worshipping the message."

Ron Paul's campaign has received contributions from more than 400,000 individuals and the numbers are growing everyday. As it stands currently, Paul's presidential bid is in doubt, but has been at least in some effective in exercising the power of underground support and engaging the minds and passion of young people across the nation.

"Paul is concerned with his constituents, the people," Brian says. "Other candidates are concerned with their constituents, as well, except their constituents are corporations and lobbyists. [Paul] actually votes for conservative issues, while McCain has flip-flopped."

I plan on fighting for this message everyday of my life. [I will] teach my children this message. After all, freedom is popular."

Ron Paul reconsiders candidacy

WASHINGTON (AP)—GOP presidential candidate Ron Paul is hinting to supporters that he is ending his long-shot campaign for the presidency.

The Texas Republican congressman addressed supporters in a video on

his campaign Web site Thursday night and did not specifically say he was quitting the race.

He said that he and his supporters could look back and say his campaign was a significant first step that signaled a change in direction for the country.

Paul said their job now was to plan for the next phase of their effort.

OPINIONS

Letters Policy:

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

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

From the Editorial Board:

Work for an informed campus; it's our civic duty

The days of college sit-ins and protests have long since passed. No longer is it a common sight to see flower-toting, love-activist students wandering around campus barefooted and supporting handmade political rally signs.

While the above is an embellished stereotype of '70s political activism, it seems we can barely bolster enough support to vote in the Student Government Association elections.

This does not mean that college students are not politically inclined, we may just lack the proper motivation or means to express our opinions. We don't lack awareness, only activism.

This can be juxtaposed with the poor focus on political issues that affect us, which is often coupled with the "cold shoulder" by politicians towards our demographic. Because really, who cares what college students think?

The problems between the "everyman" college student and political "bigwigs" create an extreme disharmony and cause political apathy among college students.

But like many solutions, the answer is easier in theory than practice. Communication and availability are the keys to an increase in political activism.

Whether we like it or not, MTSU is a suitcase campus. It seems students are on campus for one reason alone: class.

This becomes very inconve-

nient in communicating important issues and events to students whose soul focus is class, because if we don't know about it, we don't care about it.

Finding events on campus is a very difficult task. Looking at the garbage pile of fliers in the Business and Aerospace Building is frustrating, the campus Web site is darn near impossible to navigate and many organizations tend to advertise among their own circle of friends.

Governmental bodies, whether on a campus, state or national level, have to properly communicate access to their political venues. If you call us, we will come.

This, of course, requires availability on our part. It is time to stop coming to MTSU just for class and time to start participating in our political systems.

We must make a stronger effort to be conscious of our surroundings and involve ourselves in the programs, clubs, lectures and events at MTSU and our community offers.

From SGA to Rutherford County political parties, any college student can and should become involved on some level of politics.

Only when the harmony of politically active college students and governmental bodies is restored can we return to the glory days of college student political activism.

The 70s, however, can keep the flowers, bare feet and tie-dye.

Candidates ignore real issue

The nation lost 63,000 jobs in February, the Labor Department estimated Friday, but America's bleak economic forecast has its silver lining, at least for some.

Take for instance the European tourists who now enjoy phenomenal savings when they visit here, thanks to the ailing dollar.

Consider also the Democratic presidential candidates. A weak economy plays to their advantage, as it's almost always a liability for the incumbent party. Just ask the first President Bush, who lost the White House to a Clinton riding a wave of economic frustration in the wake of a recession. Déjà vu, no?

Even the current President Bush has something to smile about: Recessions can't be verified overnight, so he can go on pretending it's just a slowdown for two whole quarters before the numbers definitively prove otherwise. Not long after that he too will be unemployed, but I doubt he minds.

As a student, keep in mind that if you graduate into double-digit unemployment, maybe you won't be able to find a job, but at least it won't be your fault. Grad school applications, go!

China

Meanwhile, China's economy continues to astonish, with an 11.4 percent growth rate in 2007, according to CIA estimates. Boy, if only we could be like them, right? Actually, no.

"In June 2006, an official at China's State Council said environmental damage (everything from crop loss to health care costs) was costing 10 percent of its gross domestic product — in other words, all of the economy's celebrated growth." This from Jacques Leslie in last month's *Mother Jones*.

The article goes on to report that due to China's rapid industrializa-



Better an ivory tower than a White Castle

Daniel Potter

tion, "more than three-fourths of its forests have disappeared," with grim consequences in terms of accelerated climate change.

"Not only do cut trees no longer absorb carbon," writes Leslie, "they release the carbon they'd sequestered. Thus, deforestation accounts for 18 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions — a rate higher than the global transportation sector's."

This problem is hardly confined to China's borders. As much of the land turns to desert, dust storms there are increasing in frequency and severity. One such storm in 2001 dumped some 55,000 tons of dust on the United States — "two and a half times as much as all U.S. sources typically produce in a day," Leslie writes.

Indeed, this is a huge issue for the United States, in part because much of the work done in China is at the behest of the dollar, and in part because China is following, if not outright eclipsing, the example we set as a global power.

Back at the ranch

However important the environment may be to the long-range survivability of our species, you wouldn't know it from the talk on the 2008 campaign trail, recently

preoccupied not with impending disaster but with a hypothetical threat by way of a Strangelovian phone call.

Regrettably, the best we've gotten out of Washington lately is a mandate to increase biofuel use over the next decade, part of the energy bill passed in December.

Expanding our use of ethanol is good news for corn farmers and any candidate who hopes to be elected for appearing to care, but such alternative fuels pollute more overall, according to research published last month in *Science*.

"Most of the biofuel that people are using or planning to use would probably increase greenhouse gases substantially," *The New York Times* quoted Timothy Searchinger, a Princeton researcher who authored one of the *Science* studies.

The Times explained: "Plant-based fuels were originally billed as better than fossil fuels because the carbon released when they were burned was balanced by the carbon absorbed when the plants grew. But even that equation proved overly simplistic because the process of turning plants into fuels causes its own emissions — for refining and transport, for example." Oops.

This pitiful excuse for a solution may be all we should expect from a system that defines utility strictly by profit. As long as invention remains the mother of necessity though, it seems we'll have to wait for the apocalypse to actually occur before anyone can effectively market a means of averting it.

Until then, it might be prudent to invest in bottled air. Some friends just returned from a vacation in Colorado and insist this is already a real product.

Daniel Potter is a senior journalism major and can be reached at slstate@mtsu.edu.

Faces in the Crowd



Oketch

What are your thoughts on the road closure on campus and MTSU's plan to accommodate commuters with parking at the perimeters on campus?



Harvey

"What I really think is if they have a long term plan that will help everybody in the long run, we should bear with it right now and let them do their job."

Daniel Oketch, sophomore computer science



Jacobs

"If this will make the traffic worse it is bad news. I inconvenience myself already because in order to get on campus I have to get here really early. This is the worst traffic I've ever seen."

Ethan Harvey, graduate history



Kashef

"I live off that side of town, so this is going to be a major factor. It blows."

Jake Jacobs, freshman pre-med

"Traffic is the least of my worries. Parking is going to get a lot worse. I already get here 40 minutes [early] to find a parking space and get to my classes."

Arash Kashef, freshman pre-med

Movies no longer quality

The writer's strike has ended in time for the Academy Awards to avoid the fate that befell the Golden Globes ceremony. Does anyone care?

It is well known that the motion picture industry is struggling. What insiders do not seem to want to acknowledge is that the quality of the product is on the downswing. Note to studio executives: focus-group driven remakes, prequels and sequels, regardless of production extravaganzas, are not likely to become classics. Cookie-cutter plot scenarios quickly wear thin as well.

What makes a motion picture compelling? It has to give the audience a reason to care about what is happening to the people on the screen. Fifty explosions won't hold my attention if the film has not sold me on a connection with those who are portrayed as being in the midst of the chaos.

In order to accomplish this, a movie must bring something new to the table. For example, I left Steven Spielberg's "War of the Worlds" disappointed. In spite of all its pizzazz, it had nothing to say that was not put just as effectively in the classic 1953 version.

"Rollerball" is another example of Hollywood turning a sublime work of art into a putrid remake. See the 1975 original.

I would like to discuss some films that were successful in this regard.



Philosophers and Ploughmen

Benjamin Harris

I am partial to science-fiction, but the basic quality criteria can be applied to whatever flavor you favor.

It is difficult for today's consumers to relate to the colossal impact "Star Wars" made at the time. It may seem quaint today, but make no mistake: in one fell swoop George Lucas revolutionized cinematic storytelling. "Star Wars" did establish science-fiction as a mainstream genre, but it also stretched beyond those boundaries in the way it influenced moviegoers' expectations overall.

For many viewers the experience went something like this: You arrived at the theatre and got in a line that stretched around the block. You bought your ticket. You bought your popcorn. You sat down. You watched the trailers. You watched the feature. You left the theatre. Then, you immediately got back in line again, no matter how long

it was, maybe more than once. Of course not everyone did this, but many did, enough to redefine the concept of "blockbuster." Audience reaction of that nature would be virtually unthinkable in today's market. Bear in mind that the VCR had not yet even made its way into a majority of households at that time. Be that as it may, "Star Wars" was phenomenal.

What made "Star Wars" so enticing? For one thing, it took concepts that were essentially familiar, but presented them in the context of a mysterious, intriguing environment. One could conceivably write a whole dissertation on the relevance and influence of "Star Wars" but the gist of the effect can be summed up in two words: cantina scene.

For instance, "Alien" was directly influenced by "Star Wars." At the beginning of "Alien," the viewer is struck with the strange circumstance of ordinary conversation being conducted by people that happen to work in outer space. The adventure unfolds as a fairly standard monster suspense thriller, but with a few important twists. Carrie Fisher's portrayal of Princess Leia helped pave the way for the idea of a female lead that can take care of herself in a major action feature, which we get in "Alien" as well. Also, if you've seen this film you know that the "dinner

MOVIES, PAGE 5

SIDELINES

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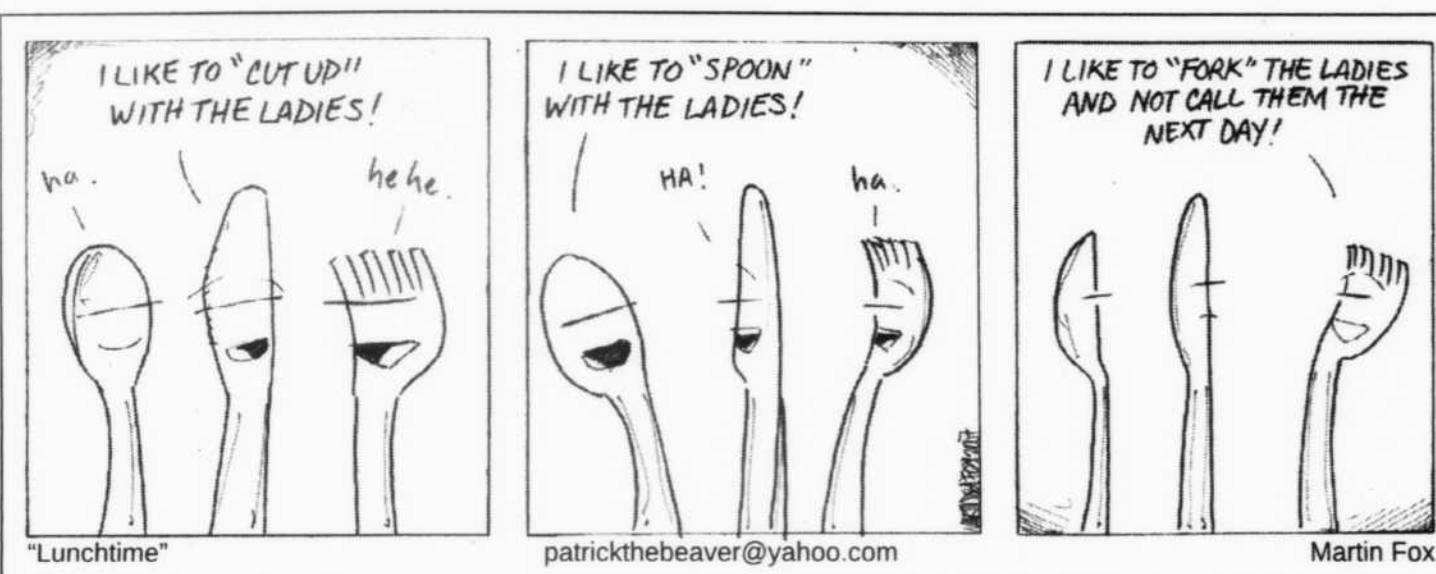
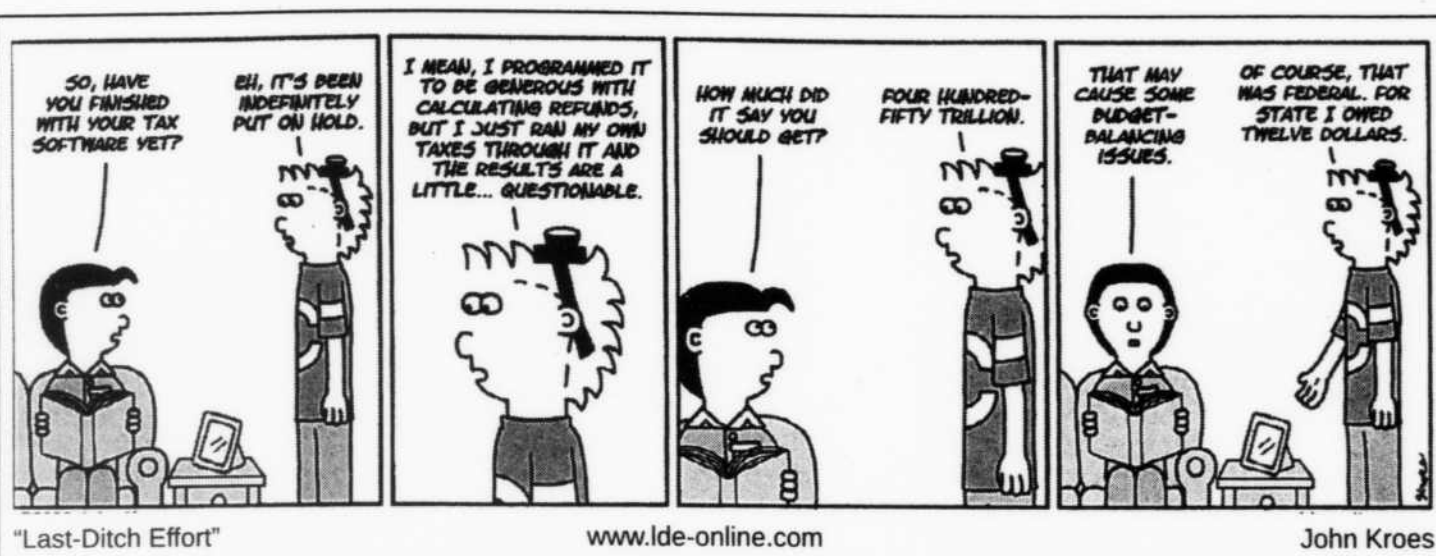
Lack of smoking is not a killer

Kenny Torella
Murfreesboro, TN

Courtney Crane, junior
mass communication

Marc Hall, junior
mass communication

COMICS



Continued from page 4

scene" is the mother of all attention grabbers.

Interestingly, the true antagonist in "Alien" is the corporation, rather than the monster. This point is developed in the sequel, "Aliens." This is a rare example of a sequel surpassing the original in quality. "Aliens" was not released until seven years after "Alien." This was in large part because it was produced in accordance with certain quality standards, rather than rushed out as a "cash in" project. No comment on the other sequels.

"The Terminator" was another movie that capitalized on the female heroine concept. Of course, this movie broke Arnold Schwarzenegger into stardom, but the real star is Linda Hamilton. The fact that she was able to pull off the "waitress-turned-warrior" Sarah Connor.

with any believability at all is amazing enough to forgive the shortcomings.

Despite its far-fetched premise, this B-movie is a classic. It has a mood all its own, propelled by the fact that much of the movie is staged in the night, which serves to good effect. Also, the noticeably low-quality stop-motion animation actually helps to make the terminator himself seem surreal and even more menacing.

What these movies have in common is that they bring a unique element of one kind or another in order to connect the audience with the characters. This can only be achieved through genuine creativity. In order for Hollywood to salvage the franchise studios must relearn to put their trust in creative minds rather than business

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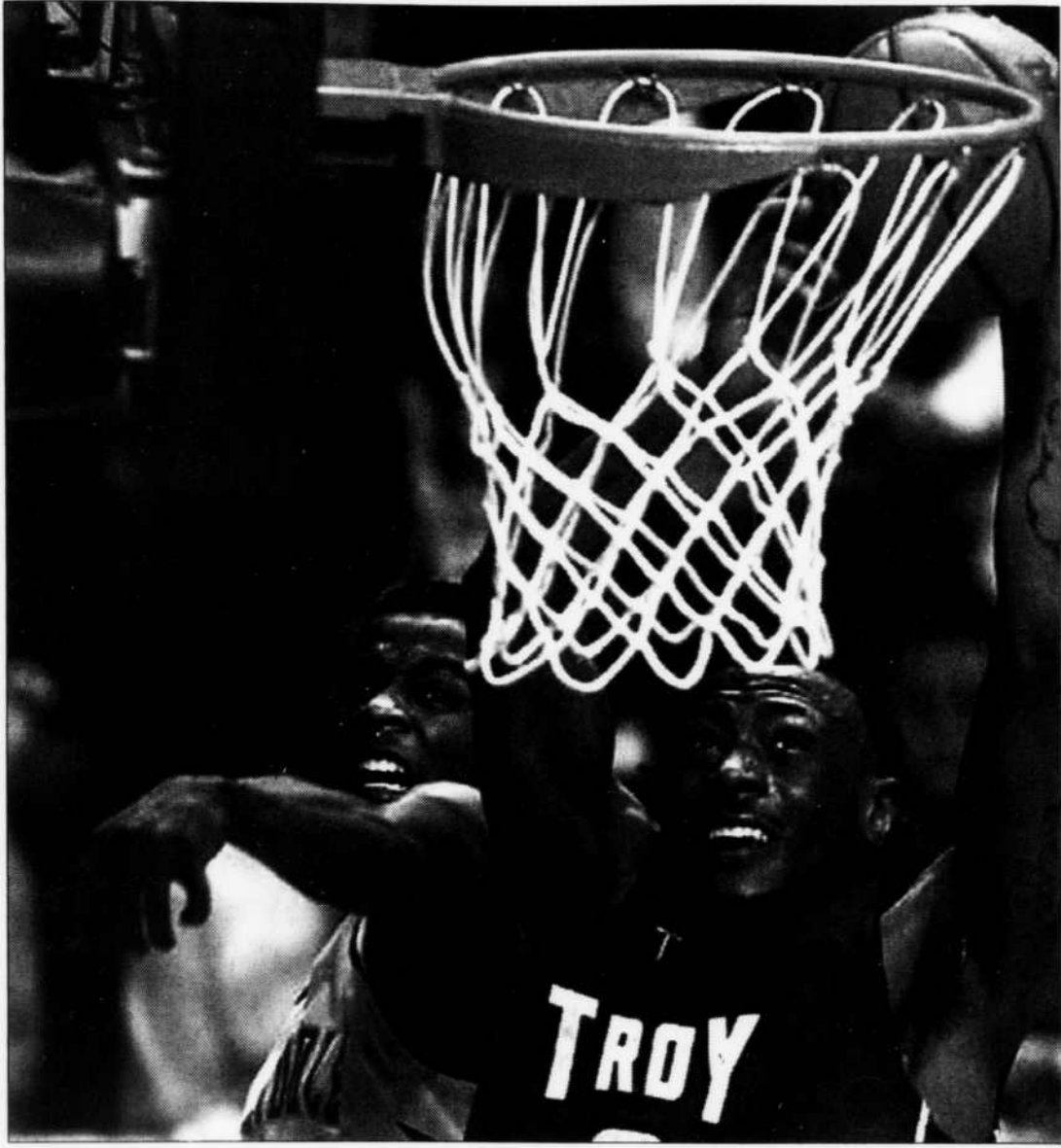
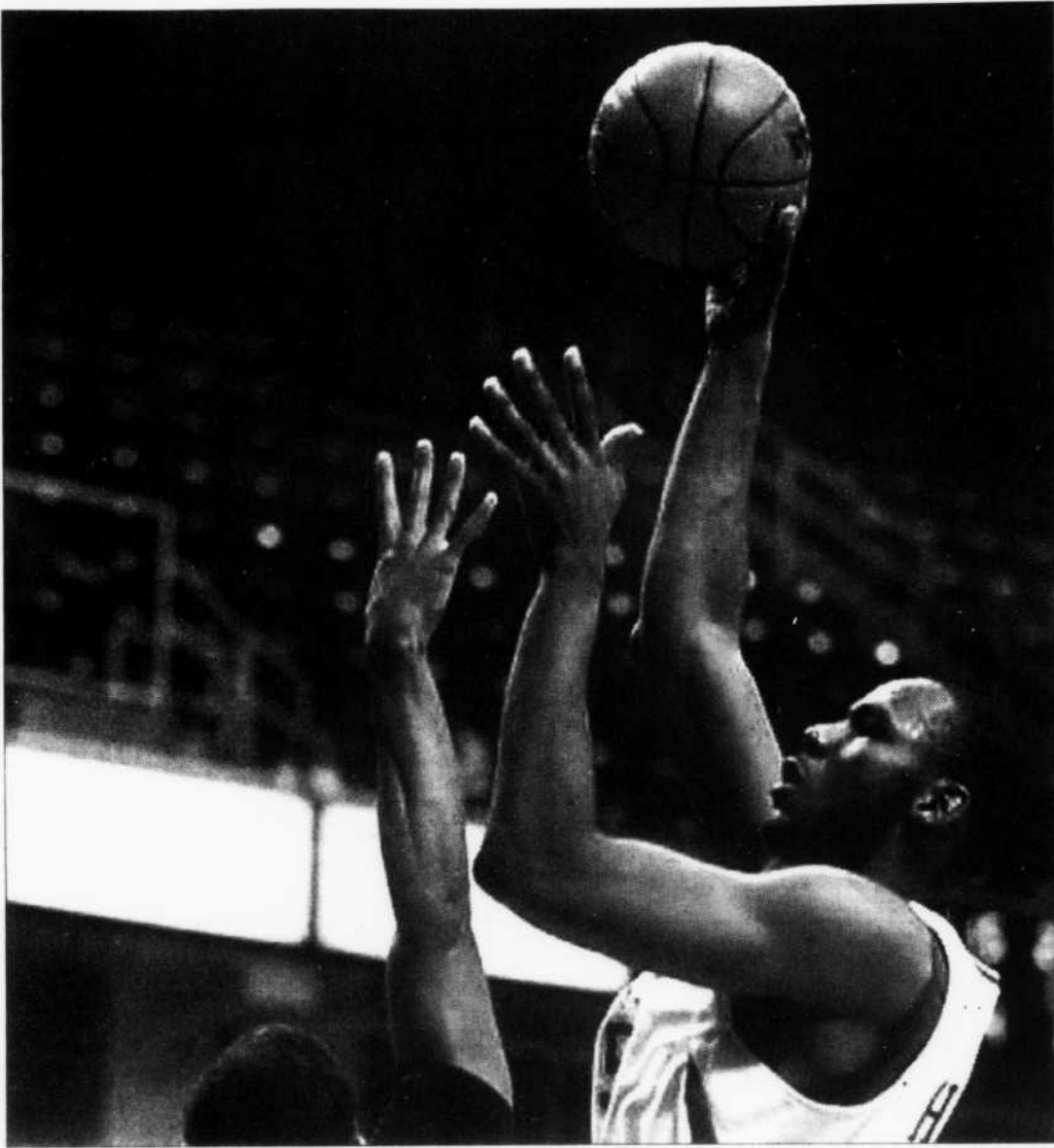
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Theryn Hudson shoots over Troy guard Brandon Hazzard. He made four of five shots to score nine points.

Troy forward Mario Telfair gets past MT's Nigel Johnson. The Trojans shot 42.4 percent from the field.

Blue Raiders spoil Trojans tournament run

By Tony Stinnett
MT MEDIA RELATIONS

Two down, two to go.

Middle Tennessee (16-14) turned back Troy, 65-59, in the quarterfinals of the Sun Belt Conference Championships Sunday night to reach the semifinals for the fourth time in six seasons under Head Coach Kermit Davis.

With two tournament wins under their belt the Blue Raiders are two away from securing the Sun Belt's automatic bid into the NCAA Tournament, but first thing's first. MT will now turn its attention to No. 1 seed South

Alabama in today's first semi-final at 6:30 p.m.

"I know we are playing an at-large NCAA team, and regardless of what happens tomorrow night [South Alabama] will be in the NCAA Tournament," Davis said. "They have had an unbelievable year. They have been fantastic at home. They have a great environment. Our guys are really, really looking forward to playing them. I think they will have confidence against us and we certainly feel we can win the game as well."

MT won for the ninth time

in 12 games but the contest was not decided until the waning seconds. Desmond Yates led the Blue Raiders with a game-high 19 points on 7-of-11 shooting. Kevin Kanaskie and Demetrius Green each tallied 17 points and Theryn Hudson finished with nine but the game's most valuable player was Nigel Johnson, who was 1-of-7 from the field.

Even though Johnson only connected for one field goal, it was one of the biggest of the game. Johnson was listed as a game-time decision after suffering a sprained ankle and

missing the entire second half of the first-round win against Louisiana-Monroe.

Johnson played the entire 40 minutes, yanked a career-high 12 rebounds and dished out a game-high seven assists with no turnovers. And then there was the only shot he hit in seven attempts.

Leading 60-59 with the shot clock running down, Johnson nailed a 21-footer with one minute remaining to stake the Blue Raiders to a 63-59 advantage.

"I was in a slump all game," Johnson said. "I just had to keep shooting to keep my

confidence level up. I knew I would make the shot when the game was on the line. It was either win or go home."

Early on it appeared the game was going to be a laughter as MT raced to a 17-6 lead and Troy did not connect on its first field goal until O'Darien Bassett hit a 3-pointer with 9:52 remaining.

That 3-pointer proved to be the springboard for Troy, which outscored MT 23-14 and carried a 35-33 lead into the half.

MT regained the lead on Green's 3-pointer on the first

possession of the second half and maintained a narrow cushion until Jonus' two free throws put Troy on top, 52-51, with 4:32 remaining.

It set the stage for a riveting finish.

"The game was exactly what we expected from Troy," Davis said. "Troy was outstanding when they beat UL-Lafayette. The team had a renewed confidence level. We made some big shots down the stretch. We got timely stops. It was just a hard-fought quarter-final game. You have to play your tail off and hope you are there at the end."

Men's Sun Belt Conference Tournament



SUN BELT CHAMPION
Recieves automatic bid into NCAA tournament

Women's Sun Belt Conference Tournament



SUN BELT CHAMPION
Recieves automatic bid into NCAA tournament

Women's Sun Belt tournament weekend recap

By Richard Lowe
SPORTS EDITOR

Western Kentucky 61, North Texas 53

The top-seeded Western Kentucky University women's basketball team held No. 8 North Texas to just two points in the final 7:33, and closed the game on a 15-2 run to advance to the semifinals of the 2008 Sun Belt Conference Tournament with a 61-53 win in Saturday's quarterfinal game at the Mitchell Center on the campus of the University of South Alabama.

The win moves the Lady Toppers in to today's first semifinal game, where they will meet Arkansas State at 12:30 p.m.

Despite being in foul trouble for much of the game, Crystal Kelly notched her 18th double-double of the season with a game-high

18 points and 14 rebounds. She was one of three Lady Toppers in double figures as Duck tossed in 15 points and Arnika Brown finished with 10 points and nine rebounds in her first start of the season. Howard paced the Mean Green with 15 points, while Escalera and Jo Hall finished with 11 and 10 points, respectively.

Arkansas - Little Rock 57, Florida International 52

The UALR women's basketball team advances to the school's first ever Sun Belt Conference semi-finals with a 57-52 win over Florida International Saturday. The Trojans improve to 23-7 overall.

Nikya Hughes led the team overall recording her fourth double-double of the season leading all scorers with 24 points and all rebounders with 11.

Andrea Keys recorded ten points, while Anshel Cooper contributed nine.

After FIU won the tip, the Golden Panthers started the game on a 6-0 run scoring their first field goal at the 17:41 mark on a three-point-er by Monika Bosilj.

UALR scored their first field goal at the 13:49 mark on a layup and one by Cooper. Keys backed that up with a free throw to bring the score to 6-4.

FIU knocked down four straight points, before Asriel Rolfe knocked down a fast break layup to bring UALR back within four with 9:46 until the half.

With 4:11 remaining in the contest, Ciglar knocked down a three-pointer to regain a 47-46 advantage.

UALR and FIU knocked down points, before Keys scored on a jumper and one

with 1:19 on the clock.

Over the remaining 24.8 seconds, UALR scored on four free throws to FIU's one for the win.

UALR will be taking on Middle Tennessee in the semifinals of the tournament. Game time is 3 p.m.

Arkansas State 53, South Alabama 52

Sophomore Lyndsay Schlup scored back-to-back baskets, the second with 1:07 remaining, to erase a 49-48 South Alabama (20-10) lead and help the Arkansas State Lady Indians (20-10) advance to the semifinals of the Sun Belt Conference Tournament with a 53-52 win over the Lady Jaguars Saturday afternoon at the Mitchell Center.

Schlup finished with six points and a team-high nine rebounds, while freshman

Shay Scott added 10 points to notch her 18th double-figure scoring game of the year.

After trailing early, the Lady Indians put together a 22-8 run to take a 28-15 lead with five minutes remaining in the first half. A three-pointer from junior Caroline Starr gave the Tribe its first double-digit lead at 26-15 with 6:33 remaining in the half, and a put back from Schlup at just over five minutes remaining pushed the Arkansas State lead to 28-15, but the Lady Indians went cold from the field and stayed stuck on 28 for the rest of the half, taking a 28-23 lead into the locker room at the break.

South Alabama connected on its first three from beyond the arc in the second half to take a 32-30 lead, then stretched the lead to 39-35, but ASU answered with five

straight to regain the lead at 40-39 on a three-pointer from junior Brittney Hiles with 10:07 remaining.

A free throw from Criner with 23 seconds remaining made it a two-possession game at 53-49, and after a South Alabama three-point-er from Monique Jones cut the Lady Indian lead to a single point, ASU missed two chances to put the game away at the free throw line. Taylor and Smith both missed the front end of one-and-ones with less than 10 seconds to play, but Jones 25-footer at the buzzer was off the mark and ASU held on for the win.

The Indians will be taking on Western Kentucky in their semifinal matchup. Game time is 3:00 p.m.

Information gathered from the Sun Belt Conference

Men complete first round of tournament

By Chris Martin
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

New Orleans 65, Denver 60

Sun Belt Conference career-leading scorer, Bo McCalebb had 20 points in UNO's win over Denver. Junior guard Kyndall Dykes also contributed 16 points off the bench for the Privateers.

Sophomore forward Nate Rohnert led the Privateers in scoring with 13 points and was second in rebounds with six. Xander McNally scored nine points and pulled down a game-high seven rebounds.

Middle Tennessee 74, Louisiana-Monroe 69

All but one of Middle Tennessee's starting five finished with double-digit scoring numbers. Desmond Yates scored a game-high 22 points while picking up five rebounds. Junior center Theryn Hudson had 19 points to go along with his eight rebounds.

The Warhawks were out-rebounded 27-16, and had only two players with more than two rebounds. Josh Payne led ULM in scoring with 20 points.

Troy 70, Louisiana-Lafayette 60

No. 12 seed Troy upset the Ragin' Cajuns, the No. 5 seed on Wednesday.

Four players scored at least

13 points for the Trojans. O'Darien Bassett and Jerome Odem chipped in 16 points apiece.

Troy outscored ULL 44-25 in the second half to provide the only upset in the first round.

North Texas 85, Arkansas State 63

The Mean Green had four players in their win over the Indians.

Adam McCoy came off the bench to lead all scorers with 21 points. He was a perfect eight-for-eight from the field, including five-for-five from 3-point range.

The Indians were led by guard Adrian Banks's 17 points.

Florida Atlantic 91, Florida International 64

All-SBC first teamer Carlos Monroe put in a double-double for the Owls, who outrebounded the Panthers 35-18.

Monroe finished with 16 points and 14 rebounds in the Owls decisive victory. Carderro Nwoji helped Monroe out by scoring 20 points and dishing out five assists.

The Panthers were led by junior center Russell Hicks who chipped in 18 points and four boards.

Information gathered from the Sun Belt Conference

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Troy forward Audrey Muse (15) and MT forward Emily Queen (3) fight for the ball during their SBC tournament contest. The Lady Raiders forced 20 turnovers in their SBC quarterfinal win.

Lady Raiders steamroll Troy in Sun Belt tournament

By JoJo Freeman
and Richard Lowe
MT MEDIA RELATIONS, SPORTS
EDITOR

If there was any doubt who the defending Sun Belt Conference champion was before Saturday night then it was put to rest. The Blue Raiders used a 23-2 run in the second half to erase a five-point deficit en route to defeating Troy, 74-51, in the quarterfinals of the Sun Belt Championships Saturday at Mitchell Center. The win moves Middle Tennessee into a semifinal matchup against UALR at 3 p.m. today.

The Blue Raiders (20-10) used a 23-8 run to break open a close game just seven days ago in Murfreesboro against the same Trojans. In Satur-

day's contest, Kylie Morrissy hit a 3-pointer and Laura Lee Holman had a breakaway layup to put Troy ahead 40-35 with 14:25 remaining in the contest.

The Blue Raiders then put together their 23-3 spurt, with Holt starting the run with a bucket before Brandi Brown scored and then Latoya Barclay hit two straight baskets. Holt hit another before a Jackie Pickel 3-pointer from the corner put Middle Tennessee ahead, 56-42.

Holt scored twice more and Chelsia Lymon hit a 3-pointer and another basket to end the run.

Holt led all scorers with 33 points, including 22 in the second half, while Lymon scored 11 and Barclay had 10.

Brown netted nine and Emily Queen posted eight, as the Blue Raiders shot 52 percent from the field, including 58 percent in the second half.

Holt and Queen both grabbed nine rebounds and Brown tied her career-high with six. Queen added four assists, feeding Holt in the low post, while Barclay added five assists in 28 minutes of action.

Middle Tennessee also forced Troy into 13 second-half turnovers and turned those into 14 points, and limited the Trojans to 36 percent shooting and 21 points after intermission.

The first 20 minutes was a half of runs, including a 15-4 spurt that put the Blue Raiders ahead 29-17 with 4:55 re-

maining in the half. Troy did not score for more than three minutes during the stretch until Brittanie Davis hit a baseline jumper with 5:12 left before the break.

Barclay hit a pair of 3-pointers and Queen had two buckets during the run, which included more than four minutes with Holt on the bench.

But Middle Tennessee went cold for the rest of the half, scoring just once, on a Brown layup with 34 seconds remaining. Troy outscored the Blue Raiders 13-2 over the final 4:38 of the half.

Amy Lewis scored seven of her 15 first-half points and Morrissy added two buckets during the run. Larelle Roper hit an 18-footer just before the halftime buzzer, cutting

the Blue Raider lead to 31-30 at the break.

Holt scored 11 points in the half, but only one field goal over the final 14 minutes, while Barclay, Lymon and Queen each netted six.

The win gives the Blue Raiders 20 victories for the fifth straight season and the 16th time in 32 seasons of basketball at Middle Tennessee. It was also the 14th straight win for the Blue Raiders in the Sun Belt Championships.

Middle Tennessee received the SBC Team Academic Award for the Sun Belt Conference for the 2006-07 academic year prior to the game. Brandi Brown and Jackie Pickel were recognized for being members of the Sun Belt Commissioner's List

(grade-point-average of 3.50 or better) and Latoya Barclay and Chelsia Lymon were both honored as part of the SBC Academic Honor Roll (GPA of 3.00-3.49). Amber Holt was recognized for her SBC Defensive Player of the Year and First Team All-SBC awards as well.

The next time the Lady Raiders take the court is today against UALR. Game time is 3 p.m. and can be heard on WMOT (89.5 FM). The winner of that game will take on the winner of the Western Kentucky/Arkansas State game for the Sun Belt Conference tournament championship and the automatic bid in the NCAA tournament. The time for the championship game is 3 p.m. Tuesday.

Sun Belt Weekend Baseball Scores

Friday, March 7

Western Kentucky v. Louisiana-Monroe ppd
Florida International 12 Troy 13
Florida Atlantic v. Arkansas-Little Rock ppd
New Orleans v. Middle Tennessee ppd
Arkansas State v. Louisiana-Lafayette ppd
South Alabama 0 Arizona 18

Saturday, March 8

Troy def. Florida International 8-2 (FIU 12 Troy 8)
Western Kentucky v. Louisiana-Monroe doubleheader
Game 1 WKU 1 ULM 9
Game 2 WKU 16 ULM 5
Arkansas State v. Louisiana-Lafayette double header
Game 1 ASU 3 ULL 0
Game 2 ASU 9 ULL 5
South Alabama 4 Notre Dame 10
Florida Atlantic v. Arkansas-Little Rock ppd
New Orleans v. Middle Tennessee ppd

Sunday, March 9

Arkansas State	9	Louisiana-Lafayette	2
Florida Atlantic	4	Arkansas-Little Rock	3
New Orleans	11	Middle Tennessee	5
Western Kentucky	5	Louisiana-Monroe	9
New Orleans	11	Middle Tennessee	16
Texas A&M	7	South Alabama	4
Florida International	3	Troy	11

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Troy	3-0	12-3
FAU	1-0	7-4
ULM	2-1	7-4
WKU	1-2	6-4
MT	1-1	7-3-1
UNO	1-1	8-3
USA	0-0	8-5
ULL	0-1	4-7
UALR	0-1	2-9
FIU	0-3	5-9