

LOCAL FORECAST

**Monday**

Hi: 60°  
Lo: 35°

**Tuesday**

Hi: 62°  
Lo: 48°



Professor echoes  
Iraqi voices  
page 5



MT easily defeats  
Arkansas State  
page 6

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MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

# SIDELINES

Monday, Nov. 13, 2006  
Editorially independent

## More freshmen stick around at MTSU

### Retention rates for first-year student rise as grad rates climb

By DeAndra Mack  
Staff Writer

In the last two years, MTSU has experienced a 2 percent increase in freshman retention from their first to second year. However, in spite of this increase, less

than half of those who enroll graduate. The percentage in freshman retention rose from 80 percent in 2003 to 82 percent in 2005, according to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. In 2004, MTSU had the highest retention rate of all schools under the Tennessee Board of Regents.

Some of the reasons for the increase have to do with opportunities MTSU has provided its students, said Bob Glenn, vice president for Student Affairs and vice provost for Enrollment Management.

"We've been working hard to improve services students receive," Glenn said. Some of these services are student advising at the Academic Support Center and

financial aid through the Lottery Scholarships.

Additionally, Glenn said that since MTSU raised its admission requirements the university now welcomes "a larger group of better-prepared students, [and these] students are more selective about the classes they take."

For this reason, more students remain at MTSU and go on to graduate. The rate of freshmen who stay at MT through their senior year, though, is significantly lower than those who remain through their sophomore year.

"Our current 6-year graduate rate is 44 percent," Glenn said.

The reasons why students leave MTSU

are not easy to determine, according to Debra Sells, associate vice provost for Academic Support Services.

"We are in the midst right now of doing some research about that with regards specifically to MTSU," said Sells. "Students give us reasons why they leave but that's not always the underlying cause for it."

Some students enroll at MTSU with the intention of attending a more specialized institution after receiving a general education. In such cases, students are not counted as graduates, but as dropouts, Glenn said. Other students experience personal and financial difficulties and are forced to leave.

Student retention is more than offering programs designed to support students in their academics, Sells said.

"Retention is a lot broader than that," she added. "What we know is most important is that students find an academic connection to the institution and a social or personal connection to the institution."

For the fall 2006 semester, it is estimated that there was a 3 percent increase in enrollment from last year, totaling approximately 23,200 students, according to releases from the Office of News and Public Affairs. Information on student retention for the current school year will not be available until next year.

## Pressing your



By Jacob Z. Smith  
Contributing Writer

Traditions can play a significant part in defining the atmosphere of a college campus; unfortunately, traditional monuments are sometimes subject to desecration.

For MTSU, a recent tradition has been the lucky blue horseshoe. The horseshoe, which was made by the concrete management department, is located between Peck Hall and the Cope Administration Building and was put in place last spring semester.

In late August, the horseshoe was painted bright green.

There have been mixed feelings toward the horseshoe from the student body since its placement. Some see it as a half-hearted attempt at creating a community amongst the student body.

"I think it's the plaque that bothers me the most, how it says that anyone who touches it will be lucky," said Davis Cox, senior recording industry major. "How could it be lucky? They

Photo Illustration by Blake Arnold | Art Director

### Blue Horseshoe

A symbol of tradition and good fortune for Middle Tennessee State University.

THOSE WHO TOUCH THE BLUE HORSESHOE WILL BE GRANTED GOOD LUCK.

Idea created by the MTSU Student Ambassadors. Guidance, installation and support provided by MTSU Concrete Industry Management and the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration.

Dedicated October 22, 2005

### Painting MTSU's giant horseshoe could become a new, if unintended, tradition

just built the thing like a year ago."

Below the horseshoe, a plaque reads, "A symbol of tradition and good fortune for Middle Tennessee State University... Those who touch the blue horseshoe will be granted good luck."

While the plaque states that the horseshoe is already a tradition, some feel otherwise. Some students feel that painting the horseshoe could become a tradition that brings the student body together.

"Honestly, I didn't care for the horse shoe until now," Cox said. "I thought it was pointless, kind of a waste, but I think that maybe this could be kind of like a tradition thing."

Like MTSU, other schools have similar traditions. The University of Tennessee has a giant rock that is painted every year by senior students.

Other universities have traditions that are less bent towards vandalism, such as Black Cat at Agnes Scott College in Georgia, where students dress as their school's mascot.

Dartmouth College in New Hampshire has a Homecoming bonfire. Every year Dartmouth's freshmen build the bonfire then run around it a set number of times based on their year of graduation—the class of 2009 did 109 laps.

MTSU students, however, feel the university lacks a similar type of community spirit.

"There's not much of a community here," said Manda Saylor, senior mathematical science major. "There's not really anything that brings the students together. We couldn't even fill the Floyd. It's kind of funny I guess, and it didn't hurt anything. And it makes you wonder what they could do next, like stripes or something."

Removing the paint does damage the horseshoe, though. The horseshoe originally was not painted blue but was made with a technique that causes the concrete to actually be blue.

Shortly after the horseshoe was put in place, red stripes were painted on the back of the horseshoe.

See Luck, 3

## Higher minimum wage equals happy students

By Ben Dongarra  
Contributing Writer

As a result of the November election, there has been a shift in power in Washington, D.C. The Democrats now have majority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Of the many changes that will inevitably follow the shift in power, one that could affect students on campus is a rise in minimum wage.

Of the 40,000 people in Tennessee making minimum wage, most are teenagers or college students working for spending money.

According to the Tennessee government Web site, Tennessee employees must be paid at least the national statutory minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour.

However, there is a movement in Congress to raise the national minimum wage to \$6.15 an hour.

Many students on campus are in favor of raising minimum wage, though several voiced opposition.

Sophomore Bailey Ryan works at the

MTSU airport and said she is happy making \$5.15 an hour.

"I love my job even though it's minimum wage," Ryan said. "I know I could be making more money somewhere else, but I get to hang out with my friends and be around planes all day."

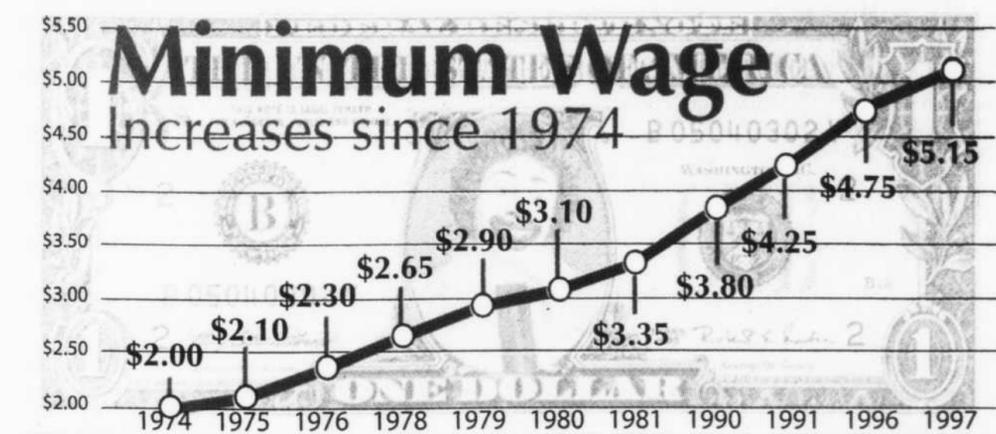
Other students on campus do not share Ryan's point of view.

Senior psychology major Angela Hooten works at the library and said she believes the minimum wage should be increased.

"It should be at least \$6.50 an hour—something you can live off of," she said.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, a person working full-time and making minimum wage could earn \$10,712 a year. The average cost of living in Tennessee is just over \$18,000. These statistics show that in Tennessee, it would be extremely difficult to support a family making only \$5.15 an hour.

On campus, different departments pay their staff at their own discretion, and can pay larger or smaller wages based on the



job requirements and circumstances, according to MTSU's Financial Aid Office.

For the most part, students working on campus make slightly more than minimum wage with an average starting salary of \$5.75 an hour.

If congress did pass the law, these students would be making an extra 40 cents an hour.

Sophomore economics major Kyle Crawford was one few students who objected to increasing minimum wage.

"The problem would be that it only helps those people actually on minimum wage, and it would hurt everyone else," he said.

See Wages, 3

## Roundtable discussion focuses on poverty

Professor said he hopes to raise issue awareness

By Josh Cross  
Staff Writer

Most people in the United States will experience poverty at some point in their lives, according to participants in a roundtable discussion held last Thursday in the James Union Building.

"There is a 60 percent chance that Americans between the ages of 20 and 75 will experience at least one year of poverty in their lifetime," said Robert Rucker, associate professor in the MTSU social work department and organizer of the event. "It affects us all in that we end up paying for the fallout."

Students can help fight poverty by being educated on the issues and talking with others about them, said Mark Robert Rank, a professor at George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis and author of three books on the subject.

While poverty continues to exist, there is a continual debate on what is the best answer to



Photo courtesy of yotophoto.com

bringing about the end of poverty.

"It doesn't make sense to raise the minimum wage when the cost of living doesn't change," said Jacqueline Wade, associate professor in the MTSU Social Work Department.

There needs to be a redistribution of the wealth because only two percent of the society controls 90 percent of the wealth, Wade said.

According to Wade there is also a problem with where Americans put their priorities, with professional football coaches making so much money and teachers making so little.

The day-long event, entitled "American Poverty and Children's Health Issues," filled Dining Room C and played host to a wide range of topics relating to poverty, such as immigration, education reform, crime, tax reform, jobs and the minimum wage.

Rank said that he participated in the discussion in order to raise awareness of the growing problem of poverty in America.

"It serves as a reminder that we cannot

always depend on the government and politicians to evoke change," said Linda Pintye, social work student. "Sometimes the most important reform comes from ourselves evolving and making our own efforts to fight injustice."

Among those present were John Seigenthaler, founder of the Seigenthaler Chair of First Amendment Studies at MTSU, who moderated the first question and answer session.

"I wanted to have a forum to address American poverty and its impact on children," Rank said. "I wanted it to be a forum to educate the people."

Rucker said that he looked at the different issues and put himself in the shoes of a student to see what he would want to gain from a discussion like this.

With the success of this year's roundtable discussion, Rucker plans on hosting another one.

"My goal is to have this every other year."

## Faculty nervous about background checks

By Alan Laidlaw  
Staff Writer

In January, MTSU began administering background checks on new employees through Kroll Background America Inc., an independent contractor with the Tennessee Board of Regents.

The first paragraph of the release form that new hires are required to sign gives the contractor permission "to procure a consumer report and/or investigative consumer report on [the employee]."

The faculty is having some reservations about the background checks. They don't like the way the background check authorization form is worded, and are concerned with too much personal data getting back to the administration.

"Once you give this release they can get into a lot of information," said Rebecca Fischer, Faculty Senate officer.

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee met Monday, Nov. 4 to discuss the background check because "eventually all faculty will

be asked to sign the form."

The Senate isn't concerned about background checks regarding felonies or misdemeanors, she said. They are "concerned about giving somebody full access to [our] background."

Fischer and other faculty members would rather sign a document that stated the limits and frequency of background checks.

"It's not a background check," Executive Vice President and Provost Kaylene Gebert said. "Depending on your occupational category, we do a different kind of background check."

For faculty members, the administration only looks at felony and misdemeanor convictions for the last five years.

"We are very, very careful with that data. Only myself and one other staff member [have] access to that information," Gebert said.

But the document strikes a chord with professors who are used to teaching about government infringements on personal freedoms. Though the background checks appear harmless, the ability to peruse the details of a person's history is real.

A resolution is being drawn up by the Faculty Senate to express precisely their grievance over the background checks. When asked if the administration would be willing to re-word and limit the scope of the faculty background check to only felonies and misdemeanors, Gebert was hesitant.

The problem with the faculty's request is that it will generate a lot of paper and more work, because there are so many different categories of employment at MTSU that each one would require its own specialized report to match the appropriate language.

"I don't see what their problem is," Gebert said. "It's not very efficient."

This issue has not yet come before the entire Faculty Senate, as the Steering Committee merely determines what the Faculty Senate will talk about.

According to TBR policy, the background checks are optional, but if a university intends to administer them the administration must first design a process and then send it in for approval, said Mary Morgan, spokeswoman for TBR.

## Honor's Lecture to explore new global business

By Josh Hudson  
Staff Writer

The way leaps in technology affect everyday life, specifically the economy, will be the topic of discussion at Monday's Honor's Lecture.

The Honors Lectures Series will host guest speaker H. Lee Martin, who will speak on his book "Technomics: The Theory of Industrial Evolution."

Martin's book addresses advancing technology in terms of an economic filter, he said. It tries to develop a worldview through which to filter the potential future of society.

"I want to help create a thought process for observing the world," Martin said.

The steam engine was the first time in history that employers "had machines that were cheaper than bureaucratic labor," Martin said. Now computers have reached a point that they are able to replace jobs that traditionally required human interaction, such as financial advisors and call centers.

"The lunar module that completed the first moon landing in 1969 had less computational power than most cell phones today," Martin said.

With these developments, Martin said he believes we are in danger of eliminating the middle class.

"It is an extreme possibility that this could happen within the next 20-25 years," Martin said. "I want to make people aware of the rapid changes occurring around us. If we do not get control of the situation, our economy will not look anything like it does today in 50 years."

With advancing technology creating cheaper alternatives for jobs, large corporations' profits are reaching astronomical levels.

According to Martin, if one were to look at Wal-Mart as a country of its own and treat its

yearly revenues as a gross national product, Wal-Mart would rank as the 18th wealthiest country in the world.

"The line between country and corporation is beginning to blur," Martin said. "People think of Wal-Mart as an American company, but the bottom line is that it does not matter where they get their products from as long as they are of decent quality and the cheapest available."

Martin will also address business practices, pulling from a concept seen on any bag of Purina dog food - the checker board logo.

"The four-square logo next to the Purina name was a concept found in a book titled 'I Dare You,' which says the only way to be successful is to lead a balanced life," said Martin.

When applied to a business, Martin explained that each of the four squares represents an area within the organization. For example, one square represents community, or the vision and unity shared by those involved in the company.

Another square represents communication, while another represents computation, or a strategy to accomplishing the business' goals. The final square stands for energy, or the resources the business has to run effectively.

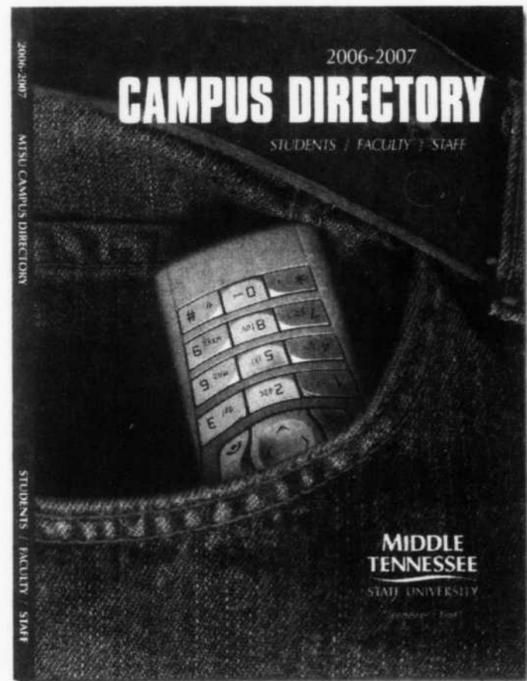
Looking at the balance between these four areas, one can accurately predict the success or failure of a company.

Martin has earned three degrees in mechanical engineering, including a Doctorate from the University of Tennessee. He also holds 20 United States patents in various fields including robotics, image processing and electric vehicles. He is currently a managing partner of the Knoxville business firm Clarity Resources.

The lecture will be held at 3 p.m. Monday in the Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building.

# ATTENTION:

## Students who do NOT live on campus:



Pick up your FREE campus phone book Monday through Thursday November 13-16, 2006 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. KUC lower level, next to the Post Office.

Books for faculty, staff, and residential students have been distributed through Telecommunications and Housing and Residential Life.

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# Whispering Black

code talk for whites

**Molly Secours**  
Writer, speaker and anti-racist activist

confronts the unfair and unearned advantages of being white in

When: November 13<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm

Where: MTSU/James Union Bldg/Tennessee Room  
(Meet and Greet from 5:30-6:30 in Hazelwood Dining Room. Light refreshments provided.)

Sponsored by: Distinguished Lectures, Social Work Forum & National Association of Black Social Work Students.



# Writing Center raises money with music

By Erika Davis  
Staff Writer

The University Writing Center held a benefit Saturday night, "Reading Writing, and Rock 'N' Roll," featuring local artists at the Boro Bar & Grill.

The event showcased talent such as the one-man-show Seth Moore, and bands like Bo Daddy Bo, Bent Fur and Cuttlefish. The event was organized by Writing Center tutors and graduate students Collin Olsen and Sarah Hildenbrand, who had been planning the event since August.

The money earned at the rock show will primarily go towards extra curricular organizations.

"The money will be going towards the general pool of the Writing Center, it will be used

for a multitude of purpose like supplies and resources for students," Hildenbrand said.

The Writing Center held two other events earlier this semester. Both were open mic nights, including one with a Halloween theme that was held on campus.

"It was pretty diverse, something that you wouldn't think of when it comes to open mic," Olsen said.

Both open mic nights were a success, and Saturday night's rock show did not break with tradition.

"It was a great success, I was really pleased with it," Hildenbrand said. "We had a really great turnout and people kept coming in the entire night."

There was a \$5 entrance fee with all profits going to the Writing Center.

"The bands were fantastic they did an excel-

lent job - the crowd loved them," Hildenbrand said.

The total profit made was \$500, but after paying the bar and putting money toward the flyers that were made, there was a total of \$325 left at the end of the night for the Center.

"Our main function [at the Writing Center] is to provide free tutoring," said Olsen, first-time event organizer.

"The philosophy of the writing center is to increase the students' comfort in writing and to explore creativity rather than to check grammar," Olsen said. "Our main idea is to encourage writing whether inside the classroom or out."

Next semester there will be more open mic nights and due to the success of Saturday night's show, and the Center is planning on organizing another rock show.

## Faces in the Crowd

Jaki Owan, sophomore education major and Student Coordinator for MTSU CUSTOMS, was sitting at a booth Friday where students could apply for CUSTOMS next summer.



### 1. What does CUSTOMS do?

CUSTOMS puts on an orientation program during the summer for all incoming freshmen. CUSTOMS is made up of 27 SOA's [Student Orientation Assistants] and a clerical staff.

### 2. Why should students get involved?

Involvement makes you want to stay in school. I am from a really small town and I did not know anybody when I came here, and CUSTOMS was a great way to meet new people.

### 3. What is your favorite part about being a SOA?

My favorite part was getting to meet all of the students in my CUSTOMS group, and now seeing them on campus. I see at least one person in my CUSTOMS group every day. It's an amazing experience. I met one of my best friends through CUSTOMS - we were SOA's together.

### 4. What does the clerical staff do?

They work in the all summer long and does all of the paper work. The CUSTOMS office separates all the students into countries, hence CUSTOMS, also separating the students into meetings. That allows students to meet people with the same interests that they have. The clerical staff does all of the behind-the-scenes work that really matters.

### 5. How long have you been apart of CUSTOMS?

I applied this time last year to be an SOA and I lasted a few weeks ago to be Student Coordinator, which is a step up from an SOA and also the liaison between the other SOA's and the graduate assistant.

Compiled By: Faith Franklin

## Retention: Grad rates rise

Continued from 1

The stripes were removed with a pressure washer, but this caused pitting in the concrete. It was decided, to prevent further damage, to repaint the horseshoe rather than pressure-wash the green paint off.

The horseshoe already acts as an icon that everyone throughout the university can be proud of, said Heather Brown, director of the concrete management program. The horseshoe represents a huge investment of both money and time, and involved many people coming together for its creation.

The horseshoe cost about \$6,500, nearly one-third of which came from private donors, and took around 150 man hours to make.

Any publicity for the horseshoe and the university is good, and there should still be a sense of pride toward the horseshoe and respect for those who invested so much to help build it, Brown said.

Along with the money donated, local businesses donated a mold to replicate the horseshoe and crane time to help install it.

According to Brown, the horseshoe is there "to give students a sense of pride that can be represented by a structure" and it represents the university's "unique opportunities, from concrete management, to horse science, to sports."

The horseshoe was commissioned by the Alumni Association to be a focal point on campus, a place where people could come together or have a picture taken.

Residing next to one of the busiest walkways through campus, it is in the perfect position where people can gather, said Ethan French, senior criminal justice major.

"Regardless of how we feel, it's a giant blue horseshoe and it's not going anywhere," French said. "Maybe we don't feel like it's much of a tradition, but it's right in the middle of campus and you can't miss it. Who's to say it won't be a tradition in 20 years?"

## Wages: Minimum could go up

Continued from 1

"If you raise minimum wage, prices will go up and it will end up costing everyone in the long run while only helping a few."

Nick Marley, a senior mathematics major, said there was no way to tell if raising minimum wage would have positive or negative effects on the population.

"You would have to have to do in-depth research to fully understand the ramifications of change in the minimum wage," he said. "Many people believe the raise would result in job loss for businesses to compensate for paying the increased wages. However,

there is no actual proof of this."

Whether minimum wage will be raised by the new Democrat-controlled Congress is not for certain, though potential House Majority Leader Nancy Pelosi has placed it as high-priority on the Democrats' agenda - which is full of many other socially-focused changes.

Other than raising the minimum wage, the Associated Press reports potential changes including easing student loan rates, enacting the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, reducing the dependency on foreign oil, expanding stem cell research and reducing Medicare drug prices.

## SIGMA CHI

### DERBY DAYS 2006

#### NOVEMBER 12 THROUGH 16

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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2006

**Derby Chase**  
Sunrise to 5 p.m. on MTSU Campus ONLY

**Penny Wars Kickoff**  
10 a.m. on 2nd Floor KUC

**Banner Postering**  
1 p.m. at Faulkenberry Drive

**Derby Darling Pageant**  
8 to 10 p.m. in LRC 221

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2006

### DERBY OLYMPICS

**Dodge Ball (6 girls per sorority)**  
1:30 to 4:30 p.m. at REC B-Ball courts

**Relay Race (8 girls per sorority)**  
3 to 5 p.m. at Intramural fields by Cummings

**Tug O'War (15 girls per sorority)**  
Following Relay at Intramural fields

**Mystery Event (4 girls per sorority)**  
3 to 6 p.m. at off campus location TBA

**Pool Tournament (8 girls per sorority)**  
3 to 6 p.m. at Sigma Chi House on Greek Row

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2006

**Derby Days Blood Drive**  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Sigma Chi House and Red Cross Bus next to BAS

**Brother Auction**  
8 p.m. at Sigma Chi House

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2006

**Penny Wars Closes at 4 p.m.**  
Closing Party with Live Band  
Mellow Mashroom with time TBA

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# OPINIONS

## From the Editorial Board

### MT's real time-honored traditions? Apathy of the masses, vandalism

It is a tradition universally accepted that any campus in want of a tradition suffers from apathy of the student body. At least, that seems to be the case here at MTSU in the eyes of the administration.

However, upon closer inspection, one would see that is not necessarily the case. What MTSU lacks is a single, campus-wide tradition and no erected structure or monument will solve this fact.

Within our campus many different groups exist, each with their own set of traditions. Most prominent, of course, are the fraternities and sororities.

Just walking through campus, any student will see T-shirts and jackets adorned with Greek letters and vague symbols and references. Or consider that, most recently, Sigma Chi's tradition of eating Krystal burgers as fast as possible was featured in a commercial on national television.

Here at *Sidelines*, we've made a tradition of our spoof April Fools' edition, *Sideways*.

And though it cannot be attributed to any group specifically, the "J" and the "S" from Jim Cummings Hall – use your imagination – mysteriously disappear every year.

The point is, forced tradition does not work – just look at what happened with the "lucky" horseshoe. If the administration tries to force a tradition, students will just paint it green, or red-striped, or some other color or combination. The new tradition for this horseshoe is not rubbing the concrete monument as the administration intended, but, rather, defacing it.

Perhaps it could be said that campus officials have succeeded in creating a tradition, after all.

Now, if only they could figure out how to address the lack of school spirit once and for all. Rappers, vehicle giveaways and other incentives, have all been for naught.

One could go so far as to say the only real campus-wide tradition seems to be apathy of the student body. By just looking at the empty seats during any given football game, one can see MTSU's time-honored tradition hard at work.

### Exit polls reveal reason for GOP's "thumping"

In what President George W. Bush called a "thumping," Republicans lost the Senate, House and majority of the Governorships to Democrats last week. Many political analysts have likened this Democrat takeover to the 1994 midterm elections, when Republicans swept the House and Senate during then-President Bill Clinton's first term in office.



**Hurt Pride**  
Matthew Hurtt  
Staff Columnist

Upon examining the similarities and differences of these two monumental elections, one actually realizes that they have very little in common at all.

In fact, the only commonality between the two is that one party took majority in Congress and in the Governorships in both cases.

In the House, the Republicans picked 29 seats and the Democrats lost up 30 seats, while the Independents lost their only seat.

In 1994, Republicans experienced a net gain of 54 seats, almost twice the number of seats the Democrats gained last week. The margin of majority this time is significantly smaller than the margin 12 years ago.

Looking at the numbers reveals a very interesting pattern. Of the 30 House seats the Democrats gained, 22 of them were by margins of less than 5,000 votes – and of those 22 House seats, 18 of them were won by Democrats with a margin of less than 1,000 votes. The Democrat victory in the House is not as significant as most would think.

In the Senate, Republicans lost six seats: Five went to the Democrats and one went to the Independents.

In 1994, Republicans picked up a total of nine seats after Democrat Senator Richard Shelby switched parties the day after the election. Democrats are tied with Republicans with 49 seats in the senate, but Joe Lieberman of Connecticut and Bernie Sanders of Vermont will most likely vote with Democrats on nearly all issues.

The main difference between last week's election and the election in 1994 is that the party out of power actually had a plan to win in 1994.

Republicans devised the "Contract with America," and all Republicans ran on that platform, something that rarely happens in the weak American two-party system. The 2006 midterm elections, though, were not evidence that the Democrats had a plan for America.

What the results and exit polls actually show are two things: Some Republicans voted against Bush because they were dissatisfied with the lack of leadership on key issues like illegal immigration, while still more conservatives stayed home and refrained from voting at all.

Exit polls show 25 percent of evangelicals, a group that has voted straight Republican since 1980, voted for Democratic candidates instead. Though conservative voting numbers were high in Tennessee due to the Corker-Ford Senate Race, Conservatives in other parts of the country stayed home in large numbers because neither the Democrat nor Republican candidate offered conservative solutions.

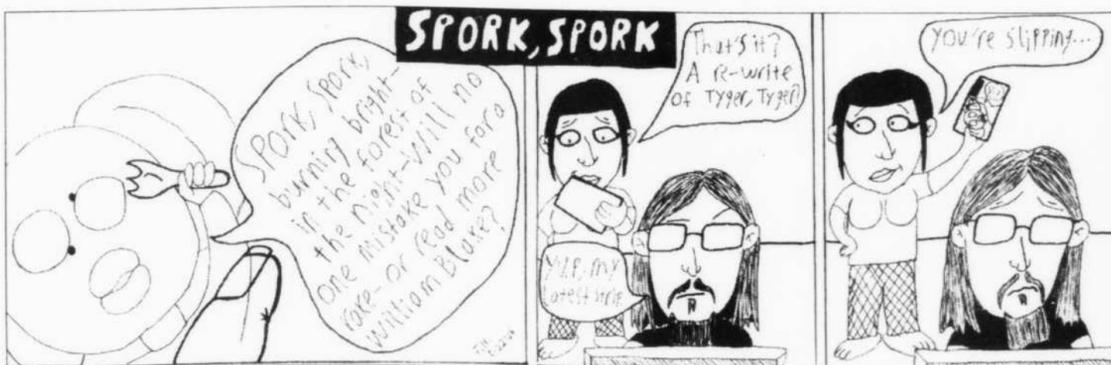
What does all this mean for Democrats?

Representative Nancy Pelosi will most likely become the first female Speaker of the House and Harry Reid will take outgoing Senator Bill Frist's place as Majority Leader in the Senate.

Democrats have two years to prove to Americans they have what it takes to lead the country.

The good thing is that Republicans can now blame all of the United States' troubles on the Democrats.

*Matthew Hurtt is a sophomore liberal arts major and can be reached at mch2x@mtsu.edu*



"And Friends"

Frank Hasenmueller

## Internet viable information source

Next time you visit your doctor, they might reach for their laptop to diagnose what ails you. They won't be using some special reference program, though: They might just type your symptoms into Google.

Sound crazy? Maybe not.

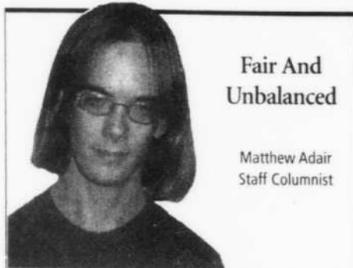
A group of doctors in Australia took a set of 26 cases from the 2005 New England Journal of Medicine with difficult-to-diagnose symptoms, chose between three and five search terms for each, and fed these into the popular search engine, comparing the results to the correct diagnoses.

Their findings? Google was able to identify the correct problem 58 percent of the time, much to their surprise.

We usually think of the Internet as being an unreliable source of information. Members of academia beg us all not to depend on it for gathering material for class work; some will go so far as to prohibit us from using an online source at all in our writing. Use the words "Wikipedia" and "reliable" in the same sentence and you'll either get blank stares or laughs, depending on your audience.

Just how much of this reputation does the Internet really deserve, though? It wasn't too many years ago that the term "information superhighway" was used to describe the online world as the be-all and end-all means for finding out what you needed to know.

The whole system started out as a military project to maintain the flow of information in the event of nuclear catastrophe, after all, while the hypertext links that hold together the



**Fair And Unbalanced**

Matthew Adair  
Staff Columnist

modern World Wide Web came out of the need to make that information easier to get to.

It is only recently, within the past few years, that the Internet became a joke.

As more and more people began to participate in the network, the amount of stuff – the results of what you discovered while fooling with your friend's car at that party you went to, for instance, or stories about your cat – being passed around increased. The message board, the chat room and the blog in turn added more stuff to the pile.

Nobody checks all this stuff, of course, because who cares?

You couldn't find enough people, and you definitely couldn't pay them enough money, to dig through every last page of information online and check it for factual accuracy.

If it can't be edited, then it can't be proven to be true. Since you can't edit the entire Internet, you can't prove that all of it is, beyond a doubt, true. Therefore, it's best not to bother with it at all, or so goes the wisdom of our intellectual

authorities.

That seems like an awful waste of a perfectly good resource, though. There is a great deal of useful information available on the Internet, as the doctors I mentioned earlier discovered for themselves.

While it's true there's a lot of noise and junk out there, there's just as much useful information, information that may be difficult to find elsewhere, especially if you're looking for something uncommon.

We shouldn't rely completely on the Internet, but we should at the very least acknowledge that information published electronically on a server somewhere is no less useful and no more biased than information published in a book, broadcast on television or radio, or stored on compact disc or DVD. Editors and directors can have their own agenda, one that isn't always the factual truth.

The only difference is that it tends to be easier and less costly to publish to the Internet than any other media.

Let's not laugh, then, at the idea of doctors using Google to diagnose their patients, and instead follow suit and use a tool for what it was meant for.

Teach us how to separate the nonsense from the truth, instead, and let us click our way to wisdom.

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

## Casual sex causes depression in women

It's easy to call a girl a slut.

It's even easier, if you're a female, to be called one.

And even though, for years, feminists have been screaming for sexual liberation and for women everywhere to throw away the misogynistic notion that men can have sex with whoever they want while their partners have to tiptoe around a bad reputation, their efforts have become a little misconstrued along the way.

Sure, women and men alike can rack up as many notches in their bedposts as they want. They can even write it off as an exercise of sexual freedom, but does that really make it a good idea?

A study done for the recent publication of the *Journal of Sex Research*, "No Strings Attached: The Nature of Casual Sex in College Students," concluded that college-aged women who have a history of casual sex feel more depressive symptoms after their sexual experiences than men do.

Maybe it is because men have sex for the sake of sex. And women – aside from fictional characters like "Sex and the City's"



**Kvetch A Break**  
Sarah Lavery  
Staff Columnist

Samantha – have it in the hope of a relationship, in the hope of adoration – however fleeting – from their partner.

The study found that 18 percent of women and 3 percent of men thought their most recent casual sex experience was "the beginning of a romance," and this disparity, the authors said, could be the reason for the gender gap in depressive symptoms.

Hm. So, men want sexual conquests; women want roses brought to their doors. Could the findings of this study be any more cliché?

Samantha of "Sex and the City" is the quintessential sexually-liberated female. She has sex like men, with no deep desire for romantic commitment or roman-

tic small-talk, and she is completely frank about her sexual experiences – no cutesy words where explicit ones will do.

Because "Sex and the City" is such a prolific show, since so many college girls watch it religiously and ascribe themselves and their friends to a particular character, it's important to note one thing about Samantha that's often left off the list of what makes her special.

She, like the men in the study, enjoys sex, not the glimmer of romance.

But even Samantha gets her emotions all twisted up in the bedroom. In reality, most newspaper columnists don't make enough money to afford Manolo Blahniks and brownstone Greenwich Village apartments, not to mention that people can scarcely engage in such intimate acts so casually without the tiniest bit of emotions – good or bad – leaking out.

Maybe women and men alike, unless they're some rare breed of human like Samantha, should keep their belts tightly fastened

until they're in full control of what's to come.

Maybe women should realize that, judging by the findings in this study, the majority of college-aged men don't care about romance when they're jumping in the sack. Maybe some women should start having sex for their pleasure, not to hopefully please him so much that he suddenly wants a relationship.

It's not the 1950's anymore – and thank God for that. Couples no longer have to hide behind separate beds, birth control isn't criminal and short skirts and heels are no longer just for your friendly neighborhood hooker.

There is nothing wrong with enjoying sex or safely engaging in it to your heart's content; however, when female college students are responding to studies so negatively, there is obviously something wrong here.

*Sarah Lavery is a sophomore mass communication major and can be reached at scl2s@mtsu.edu.*

**You never write. We never talk anymore...**

**We miss you.**

**slopinio@mtsu.edu**

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# FEATURES

Monday: *Campus & Community*

## Professor echoes Iraqi voices



Photo by Blake Arnold | Art Director

Electronic media communication professor Clare Bratten displays an Iraqi wall decoration in her office after returning from Iraq. Bratten has produced a documentary about the Kurdish people entitled "Kurdish Voices."

By Michelle Willard  
Contributing Writer

Few people actively attempt to challenge their biases, but that's exactly what led Clare Bratten to Kurdish-controlled Northern Iraq in summer 2005.

Bratten, an associate professor in electronic media communication (EMC) at MTSU, is turning her trip of a lifetime into a documentary experience for the rest of America.

"Kurdish Voices" is a documentary on the adjustments and challenges for Kurdish immigrants in the Nashville community," she said. "The documentary is a way to feature the concerns of balancing Kurdish identity with the promise or reality of citizenship."

This small, unassuming woman with blond hair and blue glasses journeyed into the Kurdish-held area of Iraq at the request of Tennessee State University Professor Karmanj Gundi. An ethnic Kurd, Gundi moved to America at 16-years-old, Bratten explained. He told Bratten he wanted to go back to his homeland to see the effects of America's war firsthand.

Bratten met Gundi when she was studying the Kurdish population of Nashville. She said she began her research with the advent of the war with Iraq, because she wanted their views and opinions on the war.

She said she was very much against the use of force in Iraq, but she wanted to challenge her own bias, a skill she encourages in her students. She also wanted to locate "a group that benefited from the removal" of Hussein, she explained. When she was offered the opportunity to go to Iraqi Kurdistan, she said she jumped at the chance.

However, this trip and documentary weren't at all what Bratten imagined when she graduated from college with a degree in history and applied to graduate school.

"I was accepted to graduate school in history, but the acceptance letter said they didn't expect any job openings until, like, 1995," she recalled, laughing, "and this was the late '70s."

She smiles about it now, because it made her rethink her plans for the future, she said, which led her into writing. She explained she stumbled into journalism when she began writing for a woman's group in

California and got published in the Los Angeles Times.

"Some of my friends said, 'How did you get published in there?'" she said, proudly. It was easy for her, she added, which made her decide to go into journalism.

Bratten spent the next few years working for a small newspaper in Brentwood, Tenn. and doing film reviews for National Public Radio. But it was her stint doing public relations for Sinking Creek Film Festival that inspired her love of film.

Her office displays this love on the walls and shelves. She has framed stills from black-and-white movies along the wall next to her computer. Videocassettes crowd every inch of free shelf space, in between academic books on media stereotyping and the techniques of movie and television production.

"I use the David Lynch," she said, referring to a copy of Blue Velvet, "to show students about the use of color when I teach Sight, Sound and Motion."

Bratten recounted her decision to move back to middle Tennessee after spending 11 years in Toronto "living the corporate life" as a speechwriter and working in public relations.

"I wanted to help people be more savvy media consumers," she said. "My goal is to teach students to follow the money or the power — the political power."

She said she had been working with and spinning the media, and had grown tired of corporate politics, which led her back to graduate school.

But she wasn't sure about coming back to Nashville.

"It was too white-bread," she said. But then she found the Kurds.

"The Kurdish community of Nashville has grown ... to become the largest community of Kurdish immigrants in North America," she has said in describing her documentary.

In researching this community, Bratten found the Kurds very warm people with a great sense of humor.

"They are the underdogs, good guerilla fighters. They have a lot of charm. ... I like them. I like the Kurds," she said, smiling, remembering the people she'd met through her research and travels.

"They [the Kurds] feel betrayed by the U.S.," she explained, referenc-

ing U.S. policies after the Gulf War that encouraged them to rebel against the Iraqi government, yet left them with no support. She also said she felt betrayed by the lead up to the current Bush Administration's war in Iraq.

Bratten was against the idea of the war then and the fact of the war now. However, she wanted to challenge her own bias.

"Obviously, Saddam Hussein was a tyrant ... [but] almost every family was impacted by Saddam," she said of her meetings with the Kurds in both Nashville and Iraq.

Subsequently, she flew into Turkey and drove into Iraqi Kurdistan with Gundi. She was struck to see the Kurdish flag first, not the Iraqi flag.

"A curious thing happens when you drive across the border between Turkey and Iraq," she wrote in her paper, "Iraq or Kurdistan? Nation in the Satellite and Internet Age."

"You are greeted by Iraqi Border officials. They are Kurds and speak of the Kurdish north as Kurdistan. The Kurds see themselves as a nation, and yet there is no Kurdish state."

As she spoke, her face transformed passionately before fading back into a smile.

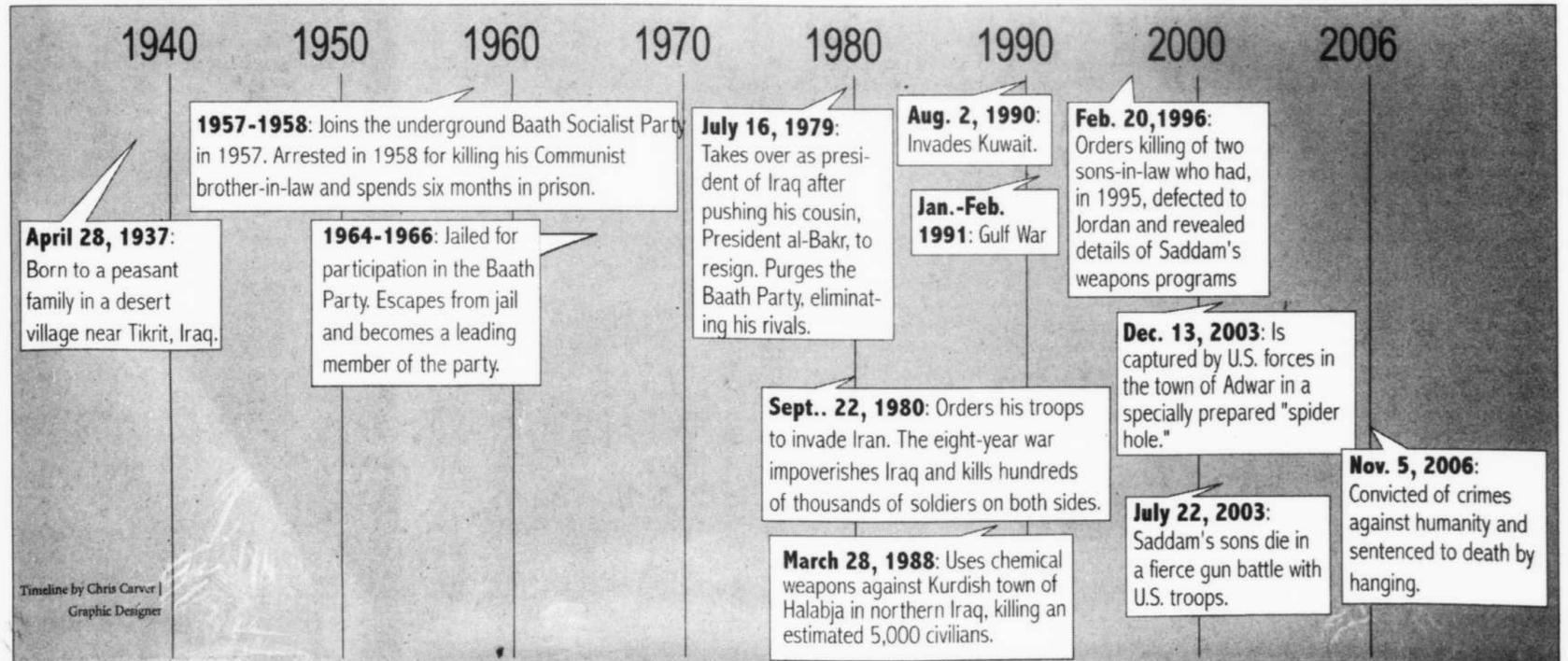
"Right after World War I, Britain, France and, to some extent, the United States chopped up Kurdistan into chunks," she explained. "This makes a lot of governments treat them as renegades. ... They're not interlopers. They want to live without being persecuted where they've lived for generations."

This passion for the Kurdish people led Bratten to travel into Kurdistan and conceive her documentary.

"Clare is one of the most caring and giving individuals," said Jennifer Woodard, a fellow EMC professor at MTSU. "I don't know of many people who would travel through Iraq to collect information and empower a people through video. Her documentary work is more than research."

"The more I know about Kurdistan, the more I want Americans to know," Bratten said. She said she wants them to understand how important the American occupation is to protect Iraqi Kurdistan and the Kurdish people.

## Timeline of Saddam Hussein's rise and fall



# SPORTS

## MT easily defeats Ark State



Junior DeMarco McNair runs the ball into the end zone as Bobby Williams gets ready to block the ASU defender coming from the side. McNair's touchdown helped the Blue Raiders to a 38-10 win over Arkansas State Saturday. Photo by Jay Richardson | Chief Photographer

By Rickey Brooksher  
Staff Writer

Middle Tennessee beat Arkansas State 38-10 Saturday afternoon on the road in Jonesboro, Ark. With the win, MT (7-3, 6-0) remains undefeated in the Sun Belt Conference and the victory puts them one win away from clinching the Sun Belt title.

MT seems to be getting better every week as they draw nearer to the end of the season. The win also marked the 500th win of the Blue Raider football program, and earned the team a vote in the latest USA Today Coaches Top 25 poll. DeMarco McNair had a strong game with 98 yards and two touchdowns.

MT started off the game on the wrong foot offensively by going three-and-out, but the defense worked hard to get the ball back to the offense. They stopped ASU on a fake punt attempt on ASU's side of the field. The offense wasted no time getting the ball in the end zone when Gross took it in from one yard out to give MT the lead.

Later in the first quarter MT drove the ball down to the 12-yard line, but the drive stalled and the Blue Raiders had to settle for a field goal. Colby Smith hit the field goal from 29 yards out to lengthen the MT lead 10-0. The

MT defense stopped ASU again on fourth down to give the ball back to the offense just before the end of the first quarter.

Early in the second quarter MT was forced to punt, and ASU got the ball at their own 16-yard line. From that point on the Indians used up 6:14 seconds of the game clock on an 18-play, 68-yard drive. Yet the defense held the Indians to a field goal, putting the score at 10-3.

On the Blue Raiders' next drive they drove it to the Indian's 26-yard line, and with six seconds left on the clock before halftime they set up a 43-yard field goal attempt. ASU blocked the kick keeping MT within a touchdown going into halftime.

ASU got the ball to begin the second half. The Indians drove the ball down field to the Blue Raiders 15-yard line, but the drive was abruptly ended on a turnover. Bradley Robinson intercepted the ball for the second week in a row, and this time he took it the distance for 88 yards and a touchdown. This was a huge shift in momentum, because it looked as though ASU was going to score, but instead, MT took it away for a score putting ASU two touchdowns behind.

ASU, desperate for momentum, went for it again on fourth down, and again MT held

ASU short of the first down thanks to a forced fumble by Trevor Jenkins. The offense took over near midfield with 5:54 in the third quarter. Seven plays later, Desmond Gee ran it in from seven yards out, putting MT ahead 24-3 going into the fourth quarter.

After the ball exchanged hands between the two teams early in the fourth, MT put the ball in DeMarco McNair's hands and he scored a touchdown from five yards out, extending their lead 31-3. ASU answered back with its first touchdown of the game. ASU attempted an inside kick but the ball went out-of-bounds to MT. One play later, McNair ran 48 yards all the way to the end zone to put the game away 38-10. Clint Marks went 11-of-14 for 134 yards in the game.

MT had the edge in total offense with 345 to 308 and didn't turn over the ball throughout the game. They are undefeated in the Sun Belt Conference at 6-0 for the first time since 1992.

They remain in the driver's seat for the Sun Belt Conference Champs and the automatic bid to the New Orleans Bowl. Next week they are on the road against South Carolina.

### I am Sportacus

J. Owen Shipley  
Staff Columnist



### Sportacus does cartwheels. MT ranked. Holt amazing.

After one of the most exciting weekends in MTSU sports history, I debated which story meant more to the school: the football team's 38-10 win over yet another conference opponent or the close, well-fought hoops loss to National Champions Maryland. I thought hard and decided to push football coverage to Wednesday's paper, and to give the women the go ahead column for Monday.

As the Titans prepared to blow yet another amazing opportunity, I was confident in my decision. The footballers have won six straight conference games, are a locked for a bowl game, a favorite for the one they wanted, and have played as a fierce unit all year. I knew that their success already has been and would continue to be well-documented, but what the Lady Raiders did on Friday night was incredible. Over 10,010 fans filled Murphy Center and the roar was deafening.

See Sportacus, 8

## Troy continues winning streak, now 4-0

By Wesley Mize

Contributing Writer

All eight Sun Belt conference football teams faced each other this weekend. Conference leaders Troy and Middle Tennessee kept their New Orleans Bowl dreams alive by picking up wins over Florida Atlantic and Arkansas State, respectively. Louisiana-Monroe demolished a winless Florida International team, while North Texas pulled out a win over Louisiana-Lafayette.

Troy 24 (4-0), Florida Atlantic 17 (2-3)

Troy's quarterback Omar Haugabook threw for 325 yards and three touchdowns leading the Trojans to a 24-17 victory over FAU. Troy was trailing 10-7 in the second quarter when Haugabook connected with receiver Mykeal Terry for a 67-yard touchdown pass to put Troy ahead by four.

After a Trojan field goal, FAU answered with a 10-play drive resulting in a 14-yard touchdown pass from Rusty Smith to Jamari Grant to tie the game at 17.

However, the game would not stay tied for long as Haugabook once again connected with Terry, this time in a 54-yard touchdown pass just two plays after the ensuing kick off. FAU was driving for the tie late in the fourth quarter, but the drive ended on a Leodis McKelvin interception of Smith to seal the deal and keep Troy undefeated in conference play. Troy will try to stay undefeated next week as they host Arkansas State while FAU will travel to North Texas.

North Texas 16 (2-3), Louisiana-Lafayette 7 (1-3)

North Texas rallied behind their coach to defeat the Ragin' Cajuns 16-7 on Saturday night. ULL coach Darrell Dickey had his team prepared for UNT after being informed Wednesday that his contract would not be renewed at the end of this season. The game was tied 7-7 at halftime and remained tied until the Mean Green offense came up with a long drive that resulted in a Matt Phillips touchdown pass to Casey Fitzgerald with 4:59 remaining in the third quarter. ULL had a snap sail into the end zone on a punt later in the third quarter which resulted in a safety giving UNT their final tally of 16 points. Phillips finished the game passing 5-of-9 for 91 yards. North Texas will host Florida Atlantic next week, while ULL will travel to the sunshine state to take on Florida International.

Louisiana-Monroe 35 (1-4), Florida International 0 (0-4)

Calvin Dawson rushed for 129 yards and two scores to lead ULM past Florida International. FIU turnovers led to three scores for the Warhawks, including a Chaz Williams 26-yard interception return for a TD. The FIU offense was held to 10 total rushing yards despite having their top two running

See Sun Belt, 8



Sophomore linebacker Lonnie Clemons III gets ready as Clint Marks calls the play on offense against ASU. Photo by Jay Richardson | Chief Photographer

# Blue Raiders shake Big Red curse

Peck: 'We have a lot of work to do next week, but what a way to win a match'



Junior Victoria Monasterolo and Alicia Lemau'u dive for the ball during a recent game. MT won the game 3-1 and earned a share of the SBC Eastern title after breaking WKU's 24-match home winning streak.

File Photo

## Sun Belt Conference Volleyball Playoffs Bracket

Thursday, Nov. 16, 2006

Game 1 - #1 Middle Tennessee vs. #8 Florida Atlantic Noon

Game 4 - #3 Florida International vs. #6 Arkansas State 2:30 p.m.

Game 3 - #2 Western Kentucky vs. #7 Denver 5 p.m.

Game 2 - #4 North Texas vs. #5 New Orleans 7:30 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 17, 2006

Game 5 - G1 winner vs. G2 winner 5 p.m.

Game 6 - G3 winner vs. G4 winner 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 18, 2006

Game 7 - G5 winner vs. G6 winner

By Clarence Plank  
Sports Editor

Considering their history, the Blue Raiders entered E.A. Diddle Arena Saturday with little more than a chance against the Hilltoppers.

They left with a No. 1 seed, a regular-season crown and, perhaps, the key to their first Sun Belt title.

The Blue Raider volleyball team beat Western Kentucky 3-1 (23-30, 30-22, 30-22, 30-25) to win the regular-season East Division crown and snap the Hilltoppers' 24-match conference home winning streak.

"We have a lot of work to do next week, but what a way to win a match," MT head coach Matt Peck told MT Media Relations. "It is a match that puts us in first place and in the driver's seat."

The win marked the first time since 2000 that MT has beaten WKU, which entered looking for the outright division crown.

Sophomore Ashley Adams came up with the kill to end Game 4, and the team rushed the court to celebrate with Adams.

"This was one of our goals, to be playing our best volleyball at the end of the season," Peck told MT Media Relations. "This wasn't even one of our best matches this year. I think we can play better."

WKU took an early lead by winning game one and MT struggled offensively as they committed seven errors and hit for .234.

Later, Middle Tennessee rallied to tie the series at one game apiece. The Blue Raiders hit .324 and never looked back as they took the series

3-1.

"We were very aggressive tonight," Peck told MT Media Relations. "Western Kentucky tipped a lot on us early but we were able to pick those balls up. We did a very good job of keeping our composure and following the game plan."

For MT, playing in the third game in a series has been tough for them. With both teams tied at one game each, MT looked to continue its surge after the break to pull ahead 2-0, but WKU came back to tie the score at five all. The Blue Raiders were ahead by a point 12-11, before going 18-11 to end the game.

WKU opened Game 4 2-0 before Middle Tennessee tied the game up at three after WKU's Jenna Gideon's attack error to give MT the lead 4-3.

Adams finished with 26 kills on 42 attacks with two errors. Adams' attacking percentage was .571. Senior Jessica Robinson had 16 kills, while teammate Ashley Asberry finished with 12 kills on 15 attacks. Asberry did not commit any errors in the game and posted a .800 attacking percentage.

Freshman Leslie Clark recorded a double-double with 62 assists and 10 digs and junior Alicia Lemau'u finished with 20 digs.

The Blue Raiders ended the match with an attacking percentage of .325 and a blocking average of 3.5 per game.

MT will face off against Florida Atlantic in the SBC Championships on Thursday in Bowling Green, Ky.

## Men's B League Playoffs MONDAY NIGHT

Hammered Bullets (Winner)	VS.	Ridge Raiders (Forfeit)
Team RamRod 20	VS.	Love inya Mouth 0
UnderWater Basket Weavers 20	VS.	Better Than The Titans 7
Kappa Sigma 12	VS.	Stumpy's 0
Effin All-Stars 26	VS.	Team Extreme 0
Da Bears 35	VS.	Alpha Omega (2) 0
Flying Purple Cobra 14	VS.	Gridiron Men 12
Team Soul Train 19	VS.	The Odoyles 12
Shake n Bake (Winner)	VS.	Free Agents (Forfeit)
Warrior Face 14	VS.	Discombobulators 0
Tha Show (Winner)	VS.	Beer Battered Fish (Forfeit)
BTS 14	VS.	Fire 303 0
Prime Time 28	VS.	Jackhammers 14
Outlaws 25	VS.	Blue Falcons 6
H.C. Tigers 20	VS.	Big Blue Wrecking Crew 7
RUF (2) 28	VS.	Alpha Omega #1 0

## CO-REC

### Semi-Final & Championship

#### Semi-Final

Mean Machine 25 VS. BCM 0

#### Championship

Team Drink 58 VS. Mean Machine 6

## Men's B League Playoffs 2nd Round

The Show	vs.	Hammered Bullets
Kappa Sigma	vs.	Effin All-Stars
Outlaws	vs.	H.C. Tigers
Team Soul Train	vs.	RUF(2)
Shake n Bake	vs.	BTS
Warrior Face	vs.	Da Bears
Team RamRod	vs.	Prime Time
Flying Purple Cobra	vs.	UnderWater Basket Weavers

# Maryland narrowly escapes Middle Tennessee on court

By Cody Gibson

Staff Writer

The Middle Tennessee Lady Raiders basketball team faced one of the toughest teams ever to be placed on the schedule, and they did not disappoint.

In front of a raucous home crowd of 10,010 fans, Middle Tennessee took the Lady Terps to the limit, falling in the final minutes 80-76.

However, optimism was abound after the contest as many of the Lady Raider newcomers contributed solid play in a number of areas. Head coach Rick Insell was especially encouraged by the effort and praised his team, saying he believed the loss prepared them for the tough season ahead.

"We knew we were going to be shaky," he said. "We've got a long way to go. This is a great first game. I'm just in a win-win situation tonight. I've said this all along, we are not that far away. I think people around the country are going to see we have a good basketball team. We are not going to quit, we are not going to surrender."

Leading the charge for the Lady Raiders was Amber Holt, who scored a game-high 28 points. Holt came to Middle Tennessee by way of Southeastern Illinois, where she averaged 20 points per game. Needless to say, Holt is no stranger to putting the ball in the basket. This is a very promising debut for Holt, who was just one of the many players to make an impact. Insell said that this was all part of the plan to get all of his players in to have a chance to contribute.

"We wanted to play all of them to see how they would react," he

explained. "Chelsia Lymon had 13 points. Jackie Pickel had a big three. Brandi Brown was a little shaky, but she's going to be alright. All of our freshmen are going to be alright. I'm real proud of our young ladies."

Lymon had a big game off the bench for the Blue Raiders as she had 13 second-half points to spark the team. Lymon came up with a big steal and hit two three-pointers.

Pickel had a three-pointer in her limited action for the evening. Carden Cobb also logged a minute of action as a new Lady Raider.

Brandi Brown had two blocks and played some solid post defense in her first game as a Blue Raider. Overall, everyone came away with the same positive opinion. Senior Chrissy Givens said she was surprised at how well the players responded in such a hostile environment. Givens said she thought that the loss was a step in the right direction and will make the team better.

"They did a tremendous job," she said. "I didn't expect them to do as well as they did. I thought that the nerves would get to them. But they over exceeded what I thought. Once they got into it, you couldn't tell they were freshmen. Lymons came out and she was gunning. That just shows how much heart we got. I think that coming in they were ready for it."

The 2006-2007 has just begun, and the Lady Raiders have a lot of confidence heading into their next game against South Dakota State. Middle Tennessee has a long way to go, but one thing is certain: The more experience these newcomers get, the more dangerous this team will become.

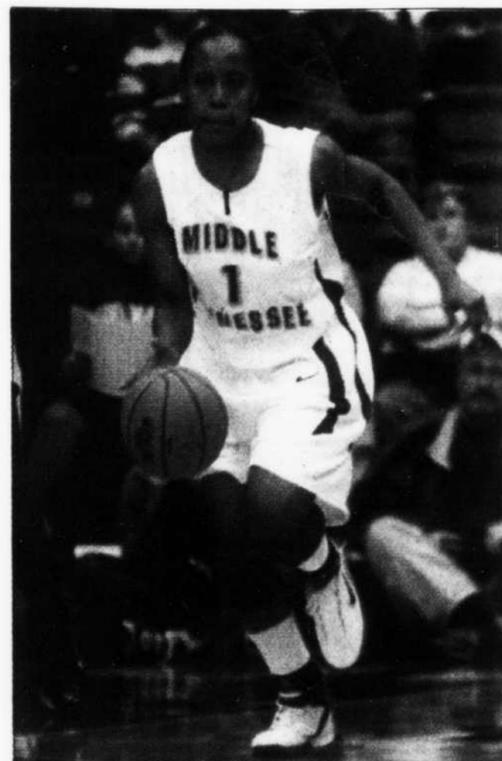


Photo by Jay Richardson | Chief Photographer  
Junior Amber Holt scored a game-high 28 points as MT fell to Maryland 80-76.

## Cross Country runner finishes 63rd in NCAA Regional race

Courtesy of MT Media Relations

Middle Tennessee's William Songock finished 63rd overall as the only Blue Raider competitor at the NCAA South Regional Cross Country Championships at Lambert Acres Golf Club in Maryville, Tenn., Saturday morning.

Songock finished the 10K course in 33:40.6 in the first 6.2-mile race of his career. The weather was in the low 60's, overcast with a slight wind. The forecasted rain did not reach the area until after the men's race was concluded.

"William did a good job and gained a lot of valuable experience," head coach Dean Hayes said. "He has never run a 10K before and they don't compete as much in Kenya as we do here in the U.S. So he's getting used to the training regimen and competing more often, and this was a good experience for next year."

Middle Tennessee now moves on to indoor track season, with the Blue Raider men and women beginning the year December 9 at Murphy Center in the MT Christmas Invitational.

## Sportacus: MT moving up in the sports world

Continued from 6

Maryland's head coach Brenda Freese called it "one of the better college games I've ever been a part of," and said that MT was "a very, very good team."

A big reason for that praise was a shy transfer student Amber Holt. Out of the 800 words of notes I took on the game, one out of every 40 words belonged to Holt. Writing in full sentence, form with an average of at least 10 words per sentence, that means every other sentence was about her amazing performance.

The junior transfer didn't play like Kobe, or D-Wade — she played like Mike, Strong, competitive and unstoppable, she had blocks, steals, assists, rebounds, 28 points and accounted for well over half of Maryland's fouls.

The young girl with the fiery locks (the tips of her braids are so bright red they literally appear to be on fire), was so shy and sweet after the game that she literally hid her face from the cameras and blushed during the entire postgame press conference. I wanted to write about her performance so badly. I thought, what a great story!

And then I sat down and checked [goblueraiders.com](http://goblueraiders.com) for some extra postgame stats ... and what do I see?

MT got a vote in the USA Today Coaches poll!  
The Blue Raiders moved up in the rankings in a HUGE way. I didn't have to use the Sagarin rank-

ings this week, which still list MT as No. 65 in the nation. The USA Today poll has MT's name in every paper in the country. Thirty-six is nearly half the number of last week's ranking of 65. Almost a third of the three-digit ranking they started the season with.

Suddenly, I knew today's column was destined to be hopelessly bi-polar.

Not only did two MT teams play well enough to get recognized on a national level, they did it within 24 hours. I've believed in and wanted to be in this football team all year, no matter what their record was. I saw a poise I had never even dreamed of out of an MT team. And now, now...

I'm actually at a loss for words. I'm trying to type as fast as I can because the fan in me is doing cartwheels. I want to celebrate. Everyone who loves this school, who loves this town, should want to celebrate. As I said last week: Screw the Vols, screw the Titans. Maybe next year, guys: This is MT's year. And under the direction of Chris Massaro, our new athletic director, maybe this is how things are going to be from now on. The Sun Belt is MT's for the taking in both football and basketball.

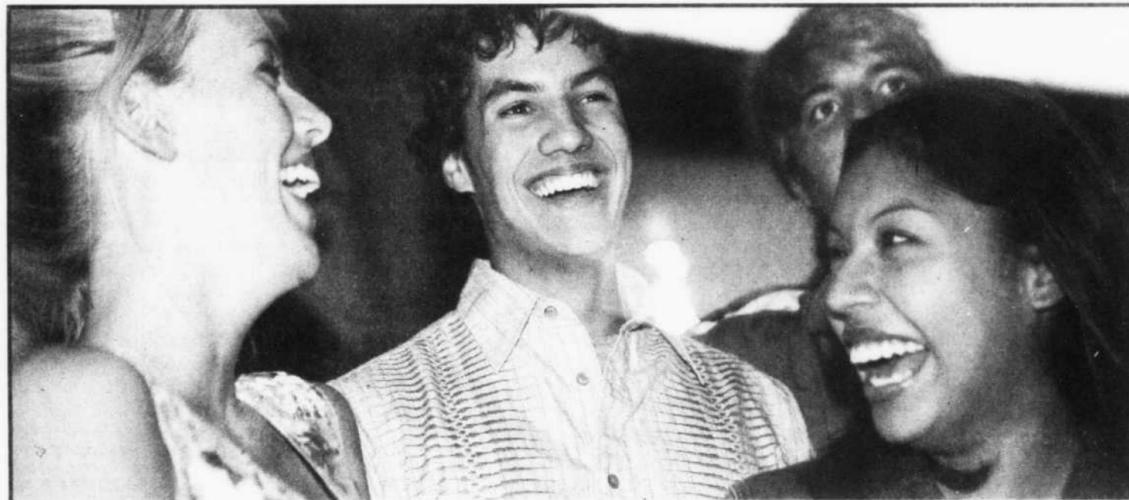
This is a first, Murfreesboro, a one and only opportunity to say, "I don't care if you haven't heard of my school. You'll be hearing about us soon enough." Expect more coverage of the Lady Raiders with actual stats on Wed., but for now, I just want to let this sink in. I have to go call my dad....

## Sun Belt: Troy remains undefeated in Conference

Continued from 6

backs return to a suspension for their involvement in the October 14 brawl with Miami. Already leading 14-0, the Warhawks went on a 13-play, 79-yard drive that resulted in a Chance Payne 3-yard touchdown pass to Mitch Doyle to put ULM

ahead 21-0. After an FIU fumble, Monroe went driving again this time a 10-play, 52-yard drive that ended with a Dawson 2-yard TD run with 4:23 left in the third quarter. Florida International will look to pick up their first win of the season when they host Louisiana-Lafayette next weekend. ULM will travel to Kentucky to take on a red hot Wildcat team next week.



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