

# STUDENT TIMES

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2009

EDITORIALLY INDEPENDENT

VOLUME 85, NO. 35

## Student slashing trial concludes Tarlett Custer found not guilty of attempted murder

By DUSTIN EVANS  
Assistant News Editor

A jury of her peers found Starlett Custer, the defendant in the Bell Lot dispute over a parking spot, guilty of reckless endangerment and reckless aggravated assault.

The defendant was originally charged with two counts, one of attempted murder and the second of aggravated assault.

Hon. Judge David Bragg said the attempted murder charge came with a series of lesser charges including reckless endangerment, just as aggravated assault comes with the lesser charge of reckless aggravated assault.

"I think the question that we all have is what happened on August 27, 2008 at the Bell Street Parking Lot at MTSU," said William Whitesell, Rutherford County District Attorney. "We will never know all the answers, nor will you — does that mean that nothing happened — absolutely not."

The trial centered on the dispute over a parking spot that left both the defendant and the victim, Ashley Ramsay, cut from an unknown weapon — that has yet to be found.

"I am satisfied that justice was served," Ramsay said. "I have been scared over the past year, and I am happy I'll be able to sleep at night again."

The three-day trial concluded with the jury's deliberations and the delivery of the verdict, which Assistant District Attorney Paul Newman said could leave the defendant sentenced with two to four years in jail.

"On the reckless aggravated assault, that is a felony charge and she is looking at anywhere between two and four years either on probation or in jail," Newman said. "The judge will make that sentencing determination as to what, [if] any amount of time she will actually spend incarcerated."

Newman said that while they always respect the jury's verdict, the District Attorney's office would have liked to see Custer convicted of aggravated assault. He said the difference between the aggravated assault charge and the actual charges Custer now faces is that she could only see two to four years as opposed to the three to six that she could have.

"The state has not put on proof that would let your mind rest easily that you [the jury] know what happened," said Joe Brandon Jr., the attorney for the defense. "Within three to five minutes of their [MTSU Police] investigation, they had decided to make an arrest."

Custer will return to court on Sept. 4 to hear final sentencing. The Associated Press reported that Brandon has filed an appeal.

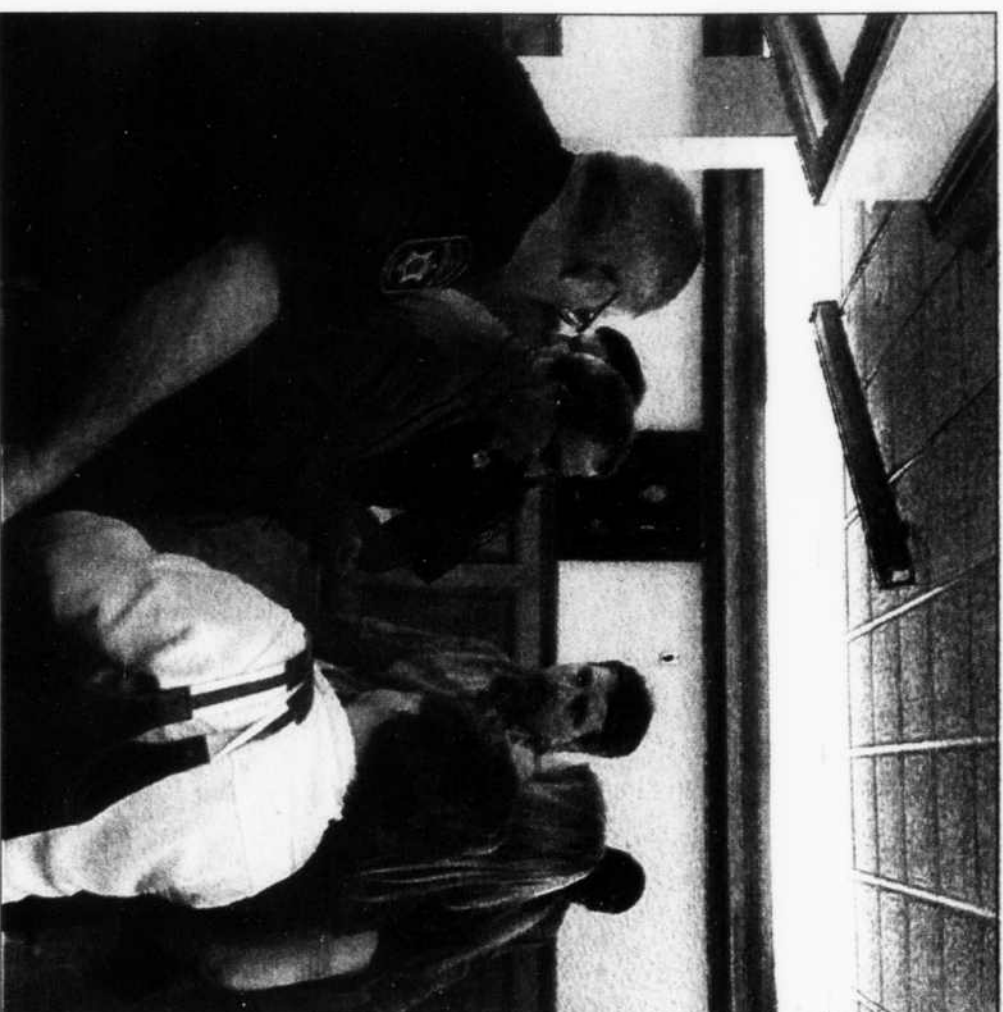


Photo by Dustin Evans, assistant news editor  
Rutherford County District Attorney William Whitesell speaks to Ashley Ramsay and her family following the verdict.

## Greek Affairs find full-time director

By DUSTIN EVANS  
Assistant News Editor

Angela Nicole King is joining the MTSU community as the new director of Greek Affairs on August 3.

King is currently employed at Tennessee State University where she works as an academic adviser in the College of Education and Academic Enrichment.

"I'm extremely excited to be working with the community and MTSU," King said. "I really think that the Greek community at MTSU is at a place where they are prepared for great things."

The position of Greek Affairs director has not been filled since Gentry McCreary vacated the position in July 2007. Carrie Youell served as the inter-

im Greek Affairs director until she left the university in 2008.

"I have been here for 12 years, [and] we've had a significant amount of searches for a Greek life director," said Gene Fitch, associate vice president for Student Affairs and dean of Student Life. "We are just ready to start moving forward with our programs and

getting someone in there on a regular basis [who] will help us to do that."

Prior to her work at TSU, King served as the assistant director for fraternity and sorority life and the Student Involvement and Leadership Center at the University of Kansas.



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# Construction continues until 2010

By BEN UNDERWOOD  
Staff Writer

The multiple construction projects scattered around campus are all on schedule, school officials said.

There are currently renovations underway in Jim Cummings Residence Hall, Corlew Residence Hall and the Keathley University Center, in addition to the large-scale construction project for the new Student Union Building.

The university broke ground for the new Student Union Building during the spring 2009 semester. Construction crews shut down part of Blue Raider Drive near the roundabout for part of June and into July in order to lay underground pipes leading to the new site.

Andrea Nourse, senior public relations major, said the closing of the roundabout made it "a pain" to make it to her summer class. She said she had to park further away after additional construction closed the parking lot close to the Davis Science Building.

"I've never had trouble finding parking before," Nourse said. "Seems like every year they take another parking lot away."

In addition to the closure of the staff

parking lot near the science building, the student lot adjoining the Student Union Building worksite is closed until the building is finished.

Cindy Brown, supervisor of Parking and Transportation Services, said the lot should remain closed until the project is completed. She said the former student lot adjoining the Honors College will remain a white faculty lot.

"We haven't been told to change it back to student parking yet," Brown said.

She said she could not say for certain when the lot will reopen to students.

"When the construction people tell us, we'll change it back to green," Brown said.

Another parking change is the addition of around 50 new student motorcycle parking spaces set to be completed this fall in the same white faculty lot.

Ron Malone, assistant vice president for Events and Transportation Services, said the old student motorcycle spots in front of the Business and Aerospace Building will change to faculty only, in order to avoid excess traffic near the building.

"More and more students are utilizing motorcycles to save on fuel and we had to identify another location for them," Ma-



Photo by Michael Stone, staff photographer

[From left to right] Facundo Perez, Eugenio Baretta and Roberto Rodriguez, of Southern Creations Landscaping put the final touches on the area surrounding Jim Cummings Residence Hall, which is scheduled to open in the fall.

lone said.

Campus renovations continue for student housing as well.

Tom Tozer, the director of News and Public Affairs, said Jim Cummings Residence Hall will reopen for student housing by the beginning of the fall 2009 semester. The dormitory renovation began before

fall 2008 and is scheduled to finish by next month.



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## GREEK FROM PAGE 1

She was also a graduate assistant for Greek Life and Leadership at Old Dominion University where she received her Masters in higher education administration. King also interned at the National Orientation Directors Association and the Office of New Student Programs and Orientation at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

"At the University of Kansas, I had the opportunity to observe four councils," King said. "I think my experience with the [Greek] community will take the university to new heights."

King said that she was able to work with the Interfraternity Council, the Panhellenic Association, the National Pan-Hellenic Council and the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations while at the University of Kansas. She said that UK had a Greek community of around 3,500 students.

"Our biggest thing is that we believe that with a campus this size our Greek community should be larger," Fitch said.

Fitch said that he wants to work with King to determine "what it takes to increase the quality and quantity of our Greek population."

"It's been kind of rough not having anyone directing us," said Brittany Davidson, who handles public relations for the MTSU chapter of the National Panhellenic Council. "We are glad she is coming now, [and] we are hoping for some stability."

Fitch said he is not expecting any immediate changes in Greek Life from the arrival of King, however, he would like to work with her to see if there is anything that may need to be developed.

"The first thing that we will ask her to do is to reconvene our task force that was actually charged to determine what changes, if any, need to be made in Greek Affairs," Fitch said.

King will be placed into the current Office of Greek Affairs, which has been handled

by Byron Lightsy, the coordinator of Greek Affairs. Fitch said that the employees of the Office of Greek Affairs are already including King in the daily correspondence to slowly assimilate her into the organization.

Davidson said that there have been meetings over the summer for the Greek

students, so that they can meet with King and get better acquainted with her.

"I have been in offices where we have experienced change," King said. "I think it is positive because myself and the Greek students can build the Greek community into something spectacular."

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# SPORTS



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## Summer Football P

### Western Kentucky, South Alabama anxious

By RICHARD LOWE  
Sports Editor

Many football coaches wish they were in the position that David Elson found himself in six years ago. Western Kentucky University won the 2002 Division I-AA National Championship with Elson serving as defensive coordinator. After the season, Elson was promoted to the head coach position. Now after two seasons as an independent, Western Kentucky becomes eligible for the Sun Belt Conference championship and gains the opportunity to accept bowl bids.

"It is always exciting when you have something to shoot for," Elson said. "Our guys did a great job the last two years giving great effort when they knew the postseason was not an option, but having that [opportunity] as a goal is a great thing."

The Hilltoppers have been able to generate excitement on campus and in Bowling Green, Ky. Across campus, school spirit has reached new heights with student attendance up 80 percent since 2006.

"There is a buzz and a level of excitement during game weeks and on game day that we have not had before," Elson said. "Our students are really excited about it."

About eight hours down the road, one observer will be heavily interested in what success can come to Western Kentucky's transition to the FBS level.

Last year, the University of South Alabama announced that it would develop a football program that will begin play this season. The Jaguars will play a 7-game schedule this season with all of their games taking place at home. The team's first full schedule will be next season with the NCAA transitional period starting the following season.

South Alabama will play its home games at Ladd-Peebles Stadium, which is already home to the Senior Bowl and the GMAC Bowl.

Leading the program is Joey Jones, who is already a well-known figure in the state. He played college football at the University of Alabama before playing professionally in the USFL and NFL.

He made his name in the coaching circles by guiding Mountain Brook High School to a state championship game, two semifinal appearances, three quarterfinal appearances and four region titles. He was hired by Birmingham-Southern College to be their head coach before leaving a year later to become the head coach at South Alabama. In his short time at



Photo courtesy USA Media Relations

South Alabama will be playing an 7-game schedule in its inaugural season. Practice has been taking place since last year. South Alabama, Jones said he has already noticed the excitement building in Mobile, Ala.

"Anywhere you go here in Mobile, it seems like someone is always asking you about the season," Jones said. "You see a lot of South Alabama Football t-shirts everywhere you go."

Just recently, South Alabama just hired a new athletics director. Joel Erdmann will be taking over for Joe Gottfried, who announced his retirement earlier this summer. Erdmann will be

expected to not only but also keep the bama "top-notch."

"We have to be extremely and execute a tremendous product of."

When making a decision cannot be made. Western Kentucky's seasons as an independent period, the Hilltoppers 38 percent win record was the football program's 1995 seasons in 33 percent win record.

Coach Elson consistently cautions.

"Our program is used to win. One has been to be successful as far as be microwaved."

"The vast majority of the program from recruiting class announcement."

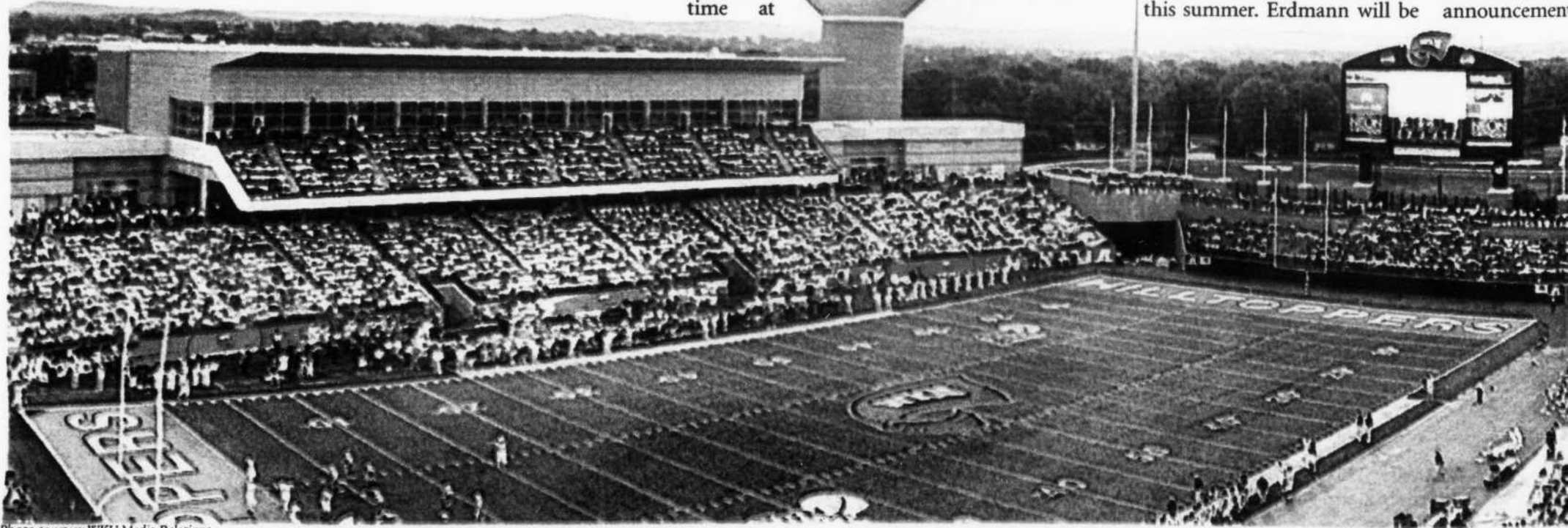


Photo courtesy WKU Media Relations

Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium was renovated in anticipation for Western Kentucky's transition into FBS competition. The Hilltoppers' first home game as a member of the Sun Belt Conference.





ARTICLE  
MTU voted fourth in  
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# review **Next Week**

## to join conference play

t only help build the football program  
he athletics department at South Ala-  
ch."

make sure we are planning appropri-  
ately to put a tremen-  
on the field," Erdmann said.

ng the jump to the FBS level, prior suc-  
expected to carry over easily. In West-  
s case, while competing these last two  
ndependent in the NCAA transitional  
lltoppers were a combined 9-15. The  
ning percentage in that two-year span  
ll program's worst since the 1994 and  
n which the Hilltoppers went 7-14 for a  
ning percentage.

n notes that getting back to winning  
n take a while.

m has 511 all-time victories so our fans  
aning," Elson said. "Our plan from day  
o do this the right way; we want to be  
ast as possible, but this process cannot  
l.

majority of our players are coming to our  
high school, and only three of our five  
ses have been signed since we made the  
t that we were going to I-A football. It

takes time, but we are headed in the right direction."

While Elson's team prepares to take their field to  
compete for a conference championship, Jones will  
be preparing for the program's first game. Jones ex-  
plains that long-term goals have already been set for  
the program.

"My goal is to be the No. 3 team in [Alabama],"  
Jones said. "Alabama and Auburn are the top dogs in  
the state, and I'm sure they always will be."

Jones is also well aware of his nearest competition  
once he joins the league.

"[Troy University's head coach] Larry Blakeney has  
done a tremendous job," Jones said. "Troy is one of  
those programs in this country that has gone from  
playing I-AA ball to being a force in Division I; they  
have done a great job against other schools as well so  
it's going to be great competition. I can promise you  
that."

Western Kentucky opens its season on the road  
against the University of Tennessee, while South Ala-  
bama will play its program's first-ever game against  
Hargrove Military Academy. Both games are sched-  
uled to take place  
Sept. 5.



is during the second week of the season against the University of South Florida.

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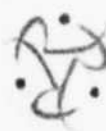


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# OPINIONS

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# Spanking isn't always bad

We've all seen them – the tired, nerve-racked parents wading through Wal-Mart and Kroger with their children.

We've all seen them – the children screaming at their parents, throwing tantrums and tearing through the store like a hurricane.

And we've probably seen those parents delivering a swift smack to the butt of those misbehaving children.

This past Sunday, "The Tennessean" ran an article looking at the long-standing, "Southern" tradition of spanking. In addition to reviewing spanking at home, the article also examined corporal punishment.

Out of 21 states that have at least one school system that allows corporal punishment, Tennessee ranks No. 6 in the 2006-07 school year. A poll by the ACLU shows 14,868 children were paddled during that year. A side note – Rutherford County is included in Tennessee school systems that allow corporal punishment.



## Yeah, Whatever

Andy Harper

ishment.

Brian Hinote, assistant professor of sociology, told "The Tennessean" that spanking has been a tradition form of discipline in the South.

"Spanking is viewed as a way of delivering children from hell," Hinote said. "The passage that's cited most is from King Solomon in the book of Proverbs that basically says, 'Spare the rod and spoil the child.'"

Another side note – the actual phrase "spare the rod and spoil the child" does not appear anywhere in the Bible.

In the same article, Alice Farmer from the ACLU and Human Rights Watch said that "corporal punishment is abusive, but it's also not effective."

But the best "insight" into spanking comes from Nashville psychologist Ken Lass, who does not advocate spanking when counseling parents. However, if a parent wishes to spank their child, Lass said he does honor their cultural practices.

"Cultural norms are very powerful things. How you were raised is what you know."

But Lass continued to say that spanking in the South is probably more common because people are less educated. He told "The Tennessean," "educated people are more enlightened from a scientific point of view about what works."

SPANKING, PAGE 7

## Quotes about spanking



"Tired mothers find that spanking takes less time than reasoning and penetrates sooner to the seat of the memory."

- Will Durant



"Rossini would have been a great composer if his teacher had spanked him enough on the backside."

- Ludwig Beethoven



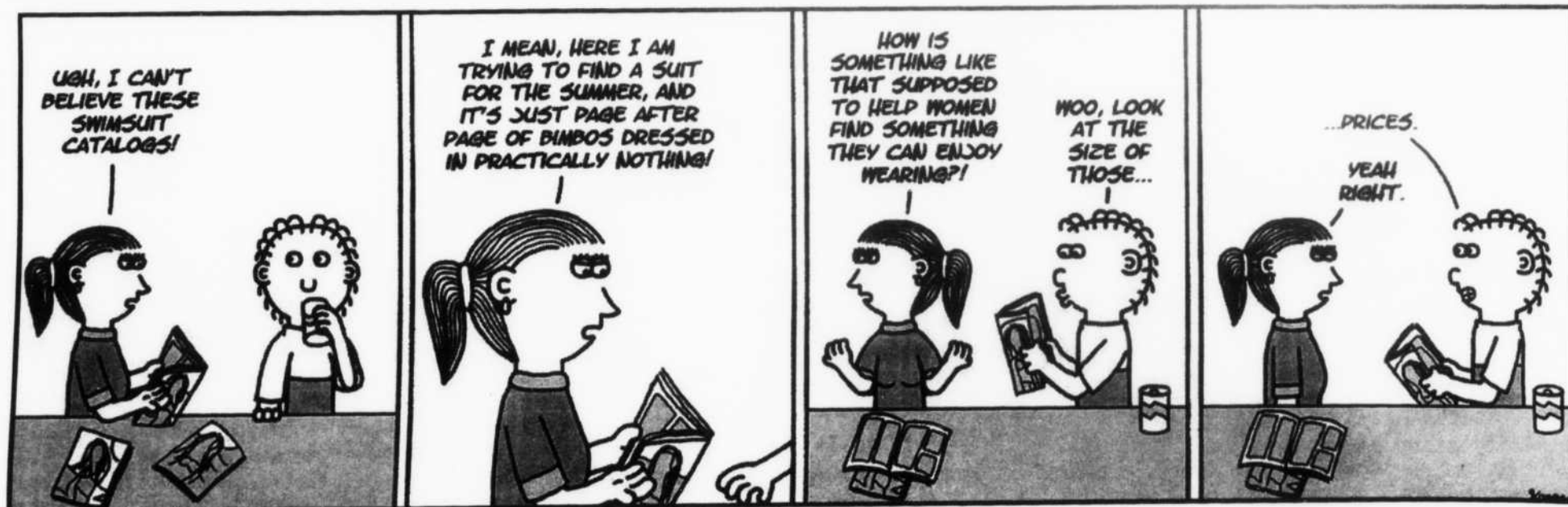
"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."

- Proverbs 13:24

Quotes from [www.thinkexist.com](http://www.thinkexist.com) and [www.ontheissues.org](http://www.ontheissues.org)

Have an opinion? Go online or write a letter to the Editor - [slopinio@mtsu.edu](mailto:slopinio@mtsu.edu)

## COMICS





## FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

### Greek Life finally gets a new director

It's finally happened - MTSU finally managed to hire a director of Greek Life.

Over the past years - and yes, it has been years since a person held the director position - we have commented in numerous editorial boards about the need for a Greek Life leader.

Not to say our constant nagging is the cause of the hire. We're just glad someone is finally taking over the helm of such an influential part of Student Life.

And Angela Nicole King has her work cut out for her. Although our Greek community isn't nearly as big as the University of Kansas, King will still have her hands full.

King says she wants to build MTSU's Greek system into something "spectacular." But with rising tuition - and most likely rising organization dues, a clear lack of participation in formal recruitment and a two-year lack of structure, King is going to have to do a lot of general maintenance before building any additions to the system.

Of the problems mentioned above, a rise in tuition seems the most likely to be problematic for King. When students start shelling out more money for class, we see the idea of paying \$500 plus extra a semester far less desirable than in years past. We're not saying Greeks pay for their friends - we're just noting that being in a fraternity or sorority is inarguably expensive.

But we wonder how the majority of the Greeks on campus feel about the arrival of King. Have they enjoyed their unsupervised fun or have their organizations really suffered without a stable leader? Will Greek Life even survive if King can't find a way to increase the quantity and quality of fraternities and sororities?

We would hate to see Greek Life disappear from MTSU altogether. They've definitely kept things interesting around campus and have, admittedly, done many good things for the campus and surrounding community.

*Hey members of Greek Life! What do you think about the new director? Is she a much needed addition to MTSU or will she do more harm than good?*

*Let us know! Send us a letter to [slopinio@mtsu.edu](mailto:slopinio@mtsu.edu).*

### SPANKING FROM PAGE 7

Obviously, spanking has increasingly come under scrutiny from childcare professionals, psychologists and parents. But what everyone seems to be forgetting is that there is a significant difference between spanking a child and abusing a child.

A friend told me that parents are raising a child to be an adult. And part of being an adult is learning that actions have consequences. Spanking, if some parents choose to, can be used properly as a ramification for an infraction on the part of the child. It teaches children

not to repeat behavior.

Timeouts and other forms of punishment are also effective, and not every infraction deserves a belt, paddle or willow branch. But I look at the young adults on television shows like CMT's "World's Strictest Parents" and MTV's "Exiled," and wonder what would have happened if their parents had whipped them for misbehaving as children?

I also think about how I was raised and the unintended result of my upbringing. I was spanked, but I was also taught that violence should be reserved as a last resort for the most serious and dangerous violations. Crossing the street without permission resulted in a spank because my mother would have

much rather me learn to fear a swat than get hit by a car.

And while I'm sure that Professor Hinote is an excellent teacher, I think he is a little misguided in his view that only ignorant and uneducated people use spanking as a form of discipline.

Uneducated people use abuse as a form of punishment. But a smart parent is willing to do anything to ensure the health, safety and positive development of their child. And sometimes that means a little tough love.

*Andy Harper is a senior, journalism major and can be reached at [slopinio@mtsu.edu](mailto:slopinio@mtsu.edu).*



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# Mickey Mouse was my boss

By AMANDA LOFTIS  
Contributing Writer

I've loved Disney movies ever since I was a little girl. Growing up, I got a Disney movie for every birthday and holiday occasion. Later, I transferred my love to the parks and visited Disney World whenever I got the opportunity to go.

An opportunity available for college students to work at Disney World is the Walt Disney College Program.

"It is a chance for any college student to be employed by the Walt Disney company, recently dubbed one of the top places to launch a career by BusinessWeek," says Kristi Breen, director of the program.

Lauren Roberts, a former participant in 2004 and a student at the University of Tennessee, says "it's a chance for college

students to live and work in Florida or California in a variety of different roles."

Opportunities include work in custodial, quick service food and beverage, merchandise, entertainment, operations and more.

After learning these details, I did research and discovered that Wayne Hampton, a recruiter for the program, was coming to MTSU to hold an information and interview session.

Hampton described the program as "a chance for college students to have their foot in the door of an outstanding company, as well as an impressive addition to your resume."

He said that since its inception in 1981, more than 80,000 students have participated in the program. I went to the meeting, interviewed and weeks later got a letter in

the mail.

The letter informed me that I had been offered a chance to work in operations for Walt Disney World. Of course, I had no idea what that entailed, but I was eager to learn more. I decided to move to Florida during the spring semester in 2007.

When I arrived in Orlando, I was set up with an apartment and five roommates. I learned I would be working in operations on a roller coaster in the Magic Kingdom. My roommates had positions in custodial, merchandise and quick service food and beverage.

Natasha Sylvia, a student from Idaho, says she was jumping at the chance to work in merchandise.

"Because of my future degree in education, the chance to work at a gift shop for

children is the best job I could have," she enthuses.

For anyone who starts a job with the Walt Disney Company, an in-depth course on the tradition and history of Disney is provided. This gave me the chance to learn about the company and see how magical it all was.

Training began early for my roommates and myself. I was trained on a roller coaster, Big Thunder Mountain Railroad, nicknamed the "wildest ride in the wilderness." Being able to work on a ride in Disney World was so amazing for me.

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