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WEATHER

PARTLY CLOUDY
26°F | 12°F

THIS ISSUE



Photo by Jay Bailey, Artistic Manager
Students sled on the north side of the Murphy Center on Jan. 10, 2011. A winter storm blew into the Southeast, beginning the night before, resulting in more than 2 inches of snow throughout the Murfreesboro area.

Murfrees-'burr'-o chills

Spring semester begins without delay despite weather

By RICHARD LOWE
Multimedia Manager

Snow-covered dorms and slippery sidewalks were the welcome mat for students who returned to MTSU this week for the start of the spring semester. Close to 4 inches of snow blanketed Murfreesboro earlier this week, with light snow still falling on occasion.

Temperatures in the Middle Tennessee area have been above freezing for only one hour since Sunday evening, according to the National Weather Service. Because of this, ice has hardened on the streets of Murfreesboro causing hazardous conditions for anybody trying to walk on campus. These conditions may be inconvenient for some, but the campus administration has taken what it feels are the necessary steps.

"It has not been an inconvenience for the [university] other than staff not expecting to have to shovel snow or salt sidewalks," said Andrew Bickers, director of Housing and Residential Life. "That's not something they typically have to do at MTSU."

Monday and Tuesday were the only days where the weather directly impacted operations at the university. MTSU opened on a two-hour delay and closed an hour early. Several events were postponed because of the conditions as well.

"We were supposed to have a late-night activity for students on Tuesday night at Lanes, Trains, and Automobiles," said Debra Sells, vice president for Student Affairs and vice provost for Academic and Enrollment Services. "We did postpone that because the roads were still pretty awful, and it wasn't going to start until late. Other than that, we postponed a movie. We just didn't want anybody out on the sidewalks or the streets."

Even with the university operating under a shortened time span, there were anywhere between 1200-1300 students already checked in to the residential dormitories.

"We continued to provide programs in the [residential] halls; we continued to feed people at McCallie [Dining Hall]," Sells said. "Even though the university shuts down when we have students living with us, we take care of those students."

The winter storm did not just affect the Middle Tennessee area, but also the entire country. Students who would have normally arrived on campus by now are busy trying to leave their hometowns.

"At this point, all offices are open during our regular office hours, and we are ready for classes to start," Sells said.

Several major thoroughways in Atlanta, Ga., were shut down due to snow and sheets of ice blocking passage. Some areas in the Northeast are expected to reach snow accumulation of more than 25 inches. Even states like California and Hawaii have dealt with snow this week.

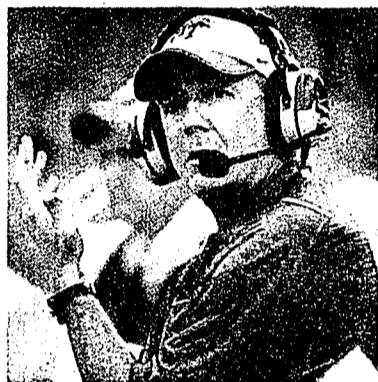
Housing and Residential Life has had to change some of their procedures due to the circumstances.

"We typically start to count folks as 'no-shows' the evening before classes start," Bickers said. "Ordinarily [the department] would count people as 'no-shows' if they haven't arrived [the evening before classes begin], but we have pushed that back. We're not going to start counting people as 'no-shows' until Monday."

The weather did not scare away students from coming to campus earlier in the week. Bickers stated that close to 1200 students were checked in as of Monday afternoon.

For those families who have not been able to make the trip to Murfreesboro yet, Sells offers some advice.

"What we're telling students is that if you believe you are going to be delayed in coming up here then you should be e-mailing their instructors prior to your absence to talk about what to do with your assignments," Sells said.



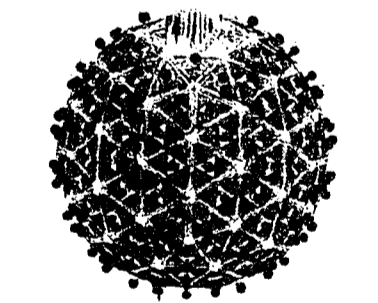
Stockstill announces football changes
Page 9



Black Swan amazes audiences
Page 7



Student overcomes challenges
Page 4



A look back at 2010
Page 3

SIDEFACTS

FACT:
On this day, 91 years ago, The New York Times dismissed the notion that a rocket could travel into outer space - only to print a correction 49 years later when the Apollo crew landed on the Moon.

FACT:
A sneeze can travel outside of the human mouth at speeds of over 100 mph.

FACT:
The English word "onion" is comes from the Latin word "unio" meaning a large pearl.

FACT:
The 1896 war between Zanzibar and England is the shortest war recorded in history. After an astonishing 38 minutes at war, Zanzibar surrendered to the English.

FACT:
No English words rhyme with the word "month."



Photo by Jay Bailey, Artistic Manager
Drivers navigate the slippery roads on campus on Jan. 12, 2011.

More parking changes ahead

By BECCA ANDREWS
News Editor

MTSU has begun its final stage of a three-part parking and transportation plan aiming to make students' lives much easier as they park on campus and rush to their classes.

Although Ron Malone, assistant vice president of Events and Transportation, says that the plan itself is more about transportation than parking, he also credited the plan with

steadily improving the parking situation.

Malone called the subject "a self-perpetuating issue" and said that parking is not as big of a deal as students make it out to be.

"Everyone wants that parking spot that is really close to their class," Malone said. "With 10,000 students trying to park at peak times, that's just not realistic."

The plans for spring semester improvements include a traffic light, a new roundabout, the widening of MTSU Boulevard, and a small new parking lot, Malone said.

The traffic light will be located at the intersection of Wiles Court and Greenland Drive. The new roundabout will be directly north of the current roundabout in the curve west of Scarlett Commons. A small parking lot will be added near the Recreation Center's intramural fields.

"The parking lot is being put in place in order to keep students who are involved in sports at night safe," Malone said.

"We have had complaints from students who do not feel safe walking back to their cars late at night, especially those

parking, page 2

Armed robbers hold up Campus Pub

By ROZALIND RUTH
Creative Design Director

Two bar patrons of Campus Pub were accosted, held-up by gunpoint, and robbed late last night while in and around their vehicle outside of the bar.

The victims, Benjamin Smith, 26, and Ciara Boothe, 25, were looking at Boothe's car sound system recently installed by Smith earlier in the week when two men approached them in the Gunnerson Avenue and demanded them to hand over their belongings.

"We were out there and we were working on my sound system and two fellas came up and one guy came up on the right side and the one came up on the left side," Boothe said.

The victims said the assailants held a gun to the Smith's head and threatened Boothe.

"He came up around my door," Boothe said, "and he pointed a gun at me and cocked it and said, 'Give me your shit.'"

The victims said they were alone in the

parking lot between the bars of Gentleman Jims and Campus Pub off of Greenland Drive just north of campus, and no one saw the alleged crime take place.

"When he pulled the hammer and I saw the shell pop in the chamber, I was like, 'it's actually loaded,'" Smith said, adding he believes some robber attempt their crimes with unloaded weapons.

The robbers made off with both victims' wallets and cell phones.

"He got my cell phone and my wallet," Smith said. "I had about five dollars in there - I ain't worried about five dollars."

MTSU police described the assailants in an MTSU Alert as "a light-skinned black male wearing a dark jacket armed with a black handgun. Another possible suspect is a white male wearing a white hoodie."

Amanda Haggard, associate news editor, contributed to this report.

On-campus parking plan enters third phase

PARKING FROM PAGE 1

Malone's team also plans to widen MTSU Boulevard west of the roundabout "all the way to Normal Way." SGA is also influencing the traffic decision of Parking and Transportation Services. It passed bills in the fall semester to double the speed limit on Alumni Drive and to put in a new bus stop at the gravel parking lot beside Scarlett Commons across from the Recreation Center. "We are currently doing a study with a traffic consultant in order to see what can be done about the speed limit on Alumni Drive," Malone said. "Our main concern is with the fami-

lies that live in Womack Lane apartments and in the houses across the street." He said that he is still waiting on the final report, which should be finished by the end of the month. Malone said that there is already a stop in place that is meant for the parking lot that SGA is concerned with. "We already have a stop there," Malone said. "Students get frustrated with it because the bus is out-bound at that point to go to the lot across from Greek Row - they also must cross the street to get to the bus in order for it to load from the right side." Students have also expressed concern over the new parking garage that is

slated to open in 2013. This concern stems from the fact that the garage was voted down by a student referendum in the fall of 2009, but is being built anyway. "The parking garage will be built along with a one-stop shop that will include housing, admissions, financial aid and the bursar's office," Malone said, smiling. "It will be located near the new student union center that will hopefully be finished around the same time." Malone also said he hopes that the garage will help out with some of the traffic that will occur because of the new student union and the one-stop shop. Students who have been worried about in-

flated tuition need not fret, Malone said. "Prices will not go up more than it already has," Malone said. "We recognize that our students are money-conscious, and we wish to respect that." It does not appear that parking improvements will end with this plan. Malone said that there are as many as five parking garages in the master MTSU parking plan. Malone said that parking and transportation is something that will always evolve with the university. "Theshuttleswerebrought in about 15 years ago, when I was a student here," Malone said. "Things are constantly changing to accommodate the students."

Gas prices on the rise

Staff Report

On Jan. 20, gas prices in Tennessee were 30.5 cents higher than they were one year previously, and according to GasBuddy.com, analysts predict the average price of a tank of gas will continue to rise. The average price increase was 0.7 cents on Jan. 10 and has since increased to 1.2 cents, with the overall price coming to \$2.96 per gallon as of Jan. 12, according to the website. Despite this price increase, Tennessee is behind the national average. According to the press release, the average rate of increase on Jan. 10 across the U.S. was 1.7 cents per gallon.

The release compared Tennessee's 0.7 cents to the gallon increase. The national average on Jan. 10 was \$3.07 per gallon, which made it 32.3 cents higher than it was on the same day last year. According to the website, these numbers have nearly doubled from six years ago when the average national price was \$1.78 per gallon and \$1.72 per gallon in Tennessee. Across the nation, the majority of states and major cities show trends of either increasing or stagnating prices - some by as much as 6 cents to the gallon - suggesting that gas prices are not going to fall significantly any time in the near future.



File photo
Cars line up in the cramped parking lots outside of the Reese Smith Jr. Field on Sept. 14, 2010.

Fewer New Year's traffic fatalities reported statewide

Staff Report

Three deaths were logged in a preliminary report showing a decline in traffic fatalities statewide during the New Year's holiday weekend, according to a press release issued by the Tennessee Department of Safety. Two involved single-vehicle crashes in which one of the victims was not wearing a safety restraint. None of the accidents this year were alcohol-related, a substantial decline from four alcohol-related incidents last year, according to a press release from the Department of Safety. This New Year's period marks the fewest number of deaths since 1982-83, when eight people were killed. The 1970-71 holiday had the most deaths reported when 19 people were killed, averaging one death per 4.1 hours. Law enforcement agencies from Williamson County, as well as 30 officers from the cities of Franklin and Brentwood, took part in the initiative dubbed "Operation DUI Blitz." The Blitz resulted in 194 citations, 30 bar checks, 21 arrests and two DUI arrests in addition to the three worked crashes. The enforcement campaign lasted from 4 p.m., Dec. 31 through 4 a.m., Jan. 1.

Tabled fall legislation to be addressed

SGA FROM PAGE 1

All legislation has been sent for final approval, except for the name change, which was returned to the SGA to conduct more research. Resolution 08-10-F, a bill to inspire discussion of changing MTSU's name, will be discussed regularly at SGA's upcoming meetings regarding At-Large Sen. Gavin Mosley's committee research, Executive Vice President Samantha Cobb said. "They will begin meeting when school starts back and are planning on having something new to report at each formal meeting," Cobb said. However, SGA's biggest accomplishment last semester was their ability to communicate with students and raise awareness about the

SGA, Batts said. "We try to get everybody involved, and let everybody know what SGA is, and what we're about, letting them know we represent the students," Batts said. "So, as far as us getting the word out about SGA so people can know we're a resource for them is probably the greatest accomplishment we had last semester." This semester, SGA will continue to implement passed fall legislation, while working on new legislation for the spring, which is in its early stages of research, Batts said. The SGA elections for senate and executive positions will be held Mar. 1-3, during which Batts said he might consider running again for president. Additionally, SGA hosts events to encourage Blue Raider spirit, like Road Rallies and "Student Ap-

preciation Week." Although Road Rallies are a fall event, SGA has plenty in store for the student body in the spring, Vice President of Administration & Public Affairs Sarah Ayache said. Spring events include "Make a Difference Week," "Student Appreciation Week" and "The BIG Event," which will be a lot of fun for students, Ayache said while expressing her excitement for the spring semester. "Last semester SGA brought it, and I'm excited for this semester because we're [planning] to keep it going," Ayache said. Cobb has some advice for students when tackling the new spring semester. "Let's all begin this semester with a positive mental attitude and see what we can accomplish," Cobb said.

CRIME BRIEFS

Theft

Jan. 4, 3:58 p.m.
Murphy Center
An iPod was stolen from the men's basketball team bus on January 3rd.

Theft

Jan. 4, 3:52
Murphy Center
Property was stolen from the men's basketball team locker room on December 26th, 2010.

Harassment

Jan. 6, 12:10 p.m.
Recreation Center
Complainant reported that she received phone calls that she believed to be pranks.

Harassment

Jan. 6, 2:38 p.m.
MTSU Campus
Student reported that a male subject had harassed her.

Vandalism

Jan. 7, 11:35 a.m.
Sigma Alpha Epsilon House-Greek Row
Complainants reported that a window had been broken on Wednesday night.

Vandalism

Jan. 7, 4:48 p.m.
Peck Hall
Complainant reported vandalism to a computer case in Peck Hall.

Theft

Jan. 10, 1:35 p.m.
Lyon Hall
Victim reported the theft of his backpack and its contents from Walnut Grove

Vagrancy

Jan. 11, 1:44 a.m.
Beasley Hall
Addison DePauw, 18, was arrested for underage

LOCAL EVENTS

On Campus

Performing Arts

12x12: A Biennial Juried Exhibition of Small Scale Works of Art
Jan 13- Feb 10, 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.
Todd Art Building
Tickets: FREE

Tronya Lawson Faculty Clarinet Recital

Jan 14, 7:30 p.m.
Wright Music Building
Tickets: FREE

Greenbrook Ensemble

Jan 18, 8 p.m.
Wright Music Building
Tickets: FREE

MT Idol Tryouts

Jan 25-28, 4-6 p.m.
KUC Theater
Tickets: FREE

Sports

Men's Basketball vs. Florida Atlantic

Jan 13, 7 p.m.
Murphy Center
Tickets: FREE

Women's Basketball vs. Troy

Jan 19, 7 p.m.
Murphy Center
Tickets: FREE

Student Life

The Hangover

Jan 13-14, 7 p.m.
KUC Theater
Tickets: FREE

Video Game Night

Jan 14, 4-7 p.m.
KUC 2nd Floor Lounge
Tickets: FREE

Lectures

Study Abroad Presentations

Jan. 24, 3 p.m.
Honors Building
Tickets: FREE

"The Mother Goddess Figurine Problem of the European Paleolithic" Presented by Brad Bartel

Jan. 31, 3 p.m.
Honors Building
Tickets: FREE

Off Campus

Concerts

Against Me! feat. Cheap Girls & Fences
Jan 20, 9 p.m.
Exit/In
Tickets: \$13

Casey Jones feat. Death Before Dishonor/ The Mongoloids/ Hundredth
Jan 15, 6 p.m.
Rockettown
Tickets: \$12

Rodney Atkins

Jan 14, 7 p.m.
Ryman Auditorium
Tickets: \$42-\$54

Guided By Voices w/ Times New Viking

Jan 14, 9 p.m.
Mercy Lounge/ Cannery Ballroom
Tickets: \$25

ZOSO: The Ultimate Led Zeppelin Tribute

Jan 13, 8 p.m.
Exit/In
Tickets: \$12

Andrew Beile

Jan 16, 8 p.m.
3rd & Lindsley Bar and Grill

Tickets: \$10

Performing Arts

Laugh With Us
Jan 16, 6-8 p.m.
Cathedral of Praise Church
Tickets: \$5-\$10

Israeli Folk Dancing

Jan 17, 7:30- 10 p.m.
Vanderbilt University
Tickets: FREE

Events Policy

Sidelines welcomes current campus and community events submitted by all readers. Please e-mail events to slcampus@mtsu.edu or slnews@mtsu.edu, and include the name, date, time and location of the event, as well as your name and a phone number for verification. We reserve the right to refuse events at our discretion as our space is limited.

Sidelines is the editorially independent, nonprofit student-produced newspaper of Middle Tennessee State University. Sidelines publishes Monday and Thursday during the fall and spring semesters and online during June and July. The events listed are not necessarily associated with Sidelines or MTSU.

CRIME STOPPERS

Theft

A cash reward of up to \$300 is being offered for information that leads to the arrest of the person or persons who stole a black iPhone 3GS in a black rubber case from a bench at the picnic tables outside the Family Student Housing Clubhouse. This crime was committed between 2:45 p.m. and 3 p.m. on Mon., Nov. 22.

Hit and Run

A cash reward of up to \$300 is being offered for information that leads to the arrest of the person or persons who struck a silver 2000 GMC Sierra pickup truck on its front bumper and passenger side light assembly causing over \$400 worth of damage. The incident occurred between 10:55 a.m. and 12:28 p.m. on Tues., Nov. 23 in the Woodfins lot.

Anyone with information about these incidents should contact the MTSU Office of Public Safety at 615-898-2424. All callers will remain anonymous.

2010 Year in Review

January 24 | Administration disregards student voice

MTSU administrators announced to members of the Student Government Association they plan to enact a student fee increase to pay for a new parking garage, which is estimated to cost \$34 million, and eventually cost students an extra \$32 a semester.

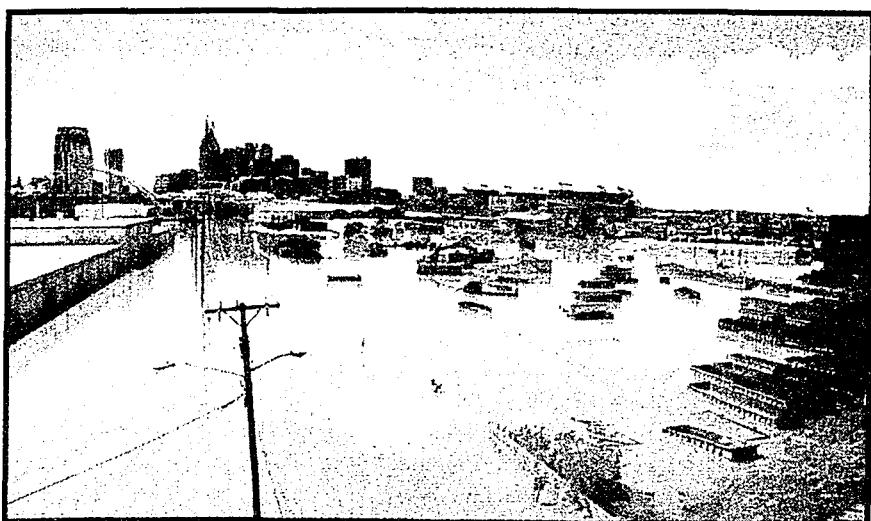


August 30 | Mosque Vigil



More than 100 supporters of the new Islamic Center in Murfreesboro gathered for a candlelight vigil Monday night in response to the recent vandalism of construction vehicles at the future mosque site.

May 2 | Flood water hits Middle Tennessee



May 14 | Education focus of governor debate



Candidates vying to be Tennessee's next governor focused on the economy and higher education during an MTSU gubernatorial forum April 29 in the Murphy Center.

August 27 | Dasher faces Multi-game suspension



Tabled fall resolutions to be addressed during semester

SGA

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Cobb has some advice for students when tackling the new spring semester.

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THROUGH THE SIDELINES LENS

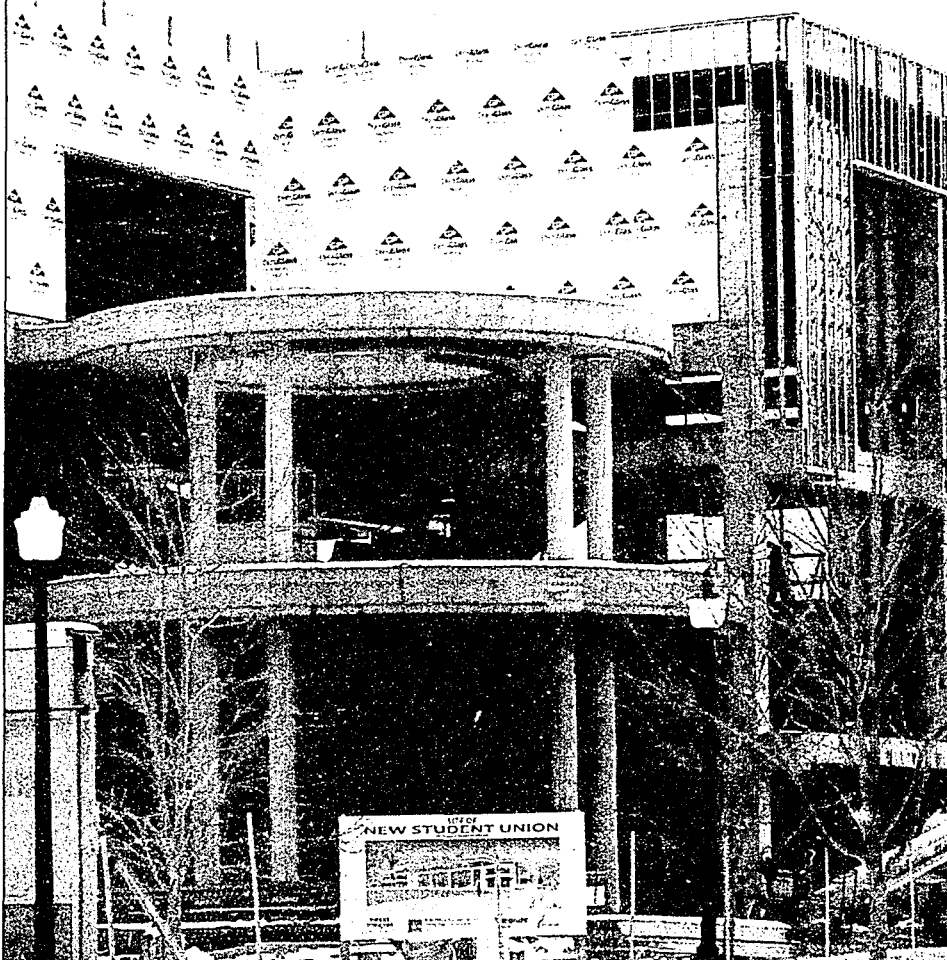
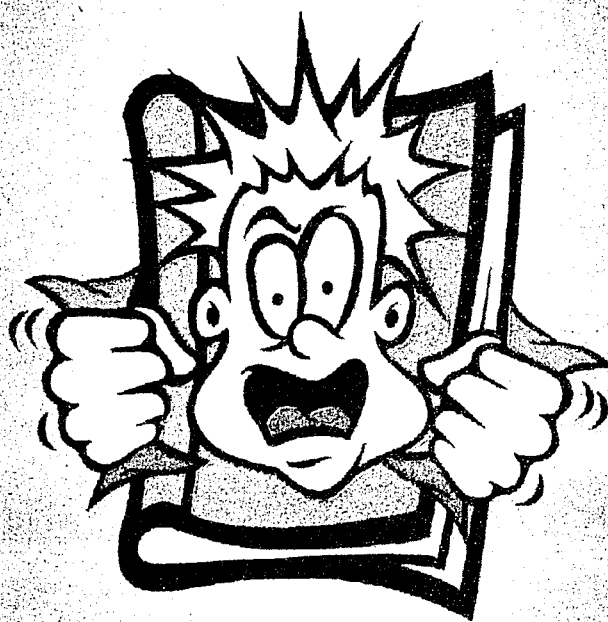


Photo by Jay Bailey, Artistic Manager
The sun rises as workers start on the new student union building beside the honors college on the morning of Jan. 13, 2011.



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FEATURES

By LAURA AIKEN
Managing Editor

Nick Sharp is a bit of a jokester. He laughs at his own expense — not yours — in a comedic voice that's slightly high pitched, laced with a scruffy edge, and topped with a smidgen of "totally dude" Valley Boy. You're in for a treat when he launches into a spot-on impersonation of public figures as diverse as Bill Clinton and George Carlin.

When he laughs, deep dimples accentuate the many curves of his face, and you can't help but chuckle with him. His crippling fits of giggles erupt at random. Sometimes, he's laughing at someone else's joke, or one he's told, and sometimes, the laughter comes from all the "inside" jokes rolling around his cranium like marbles on a linoleum floor.

Nick, 29, has a youthful, jolly face that is round and red like an Irish garden gnome, flaming orange hair and Kriss Kringle eyes. One is brown and one blue, both expressive yet shrouded by a thin layer of white. Rather than wishing he weren't blind, he wishes both of his eyes were blue, which are, in his opinion, the quintessential forget-me-nots. To Nick, blue equals benevolence.

"Your eyes are the windows to your soul," he says dramatically and then bursts out laughing at his clichéd expression.

He dresses fairly preppy: collared shirts, khaki shorts and boat shoes, which he seems to trip over constantly. The ringlets on his head are always properly combed and placed, very orderly, and his apartment reflects the same kind of neatness and attention to detail.

Nothing extravagant adorns the walls in his one-bedroom apartment, just the basics. There's a lamp, a love seat, a bed and a table. On the table is a boxy, old-style 32-inch television. His movies, a small collection of videocassettes and DVDs, are organized in an orderly fashion, with an acoustic guitar resting in the corner between the couch and the table.

He is organized, but every time he walks out of his student-housing apartment you'll notice he wears a clashing pair of socks: one navy blue and one white.

On a daily basis, his boat shoes and mismatched socks follow the same route on campus. Each crack and incline in the sidewalk is like a bread crumb illustrating the path clearly in his mind.

After six years on this campus, he's currently completing his second bachelor's degree at MTSU and pretty much memorized the entire layout of the campus. Two or three times and he'd had it down. "I like stickin' to my routes," he says.

And often, his guitar goes with him.

Persnickety

Nick admits to being the most politically incorrect person on the planet. He makes wisecracks about school: teachers and such. One class in particular really amuses him and sparks a long string of comedic relief — Survey of the Exceptional Child.

"I think that's a horrible name. I think they should call it 'a class about kids who have shit wrong with them.' Eyes don't work, legs don't work, ears don't work, [and] your brains don't work. It's something wrong with you," he laughs.

To him, Garth Brooks is more of a hero than Helen Keller.

"I want to impact the world on a grand scale — just like him," Nick announces before diving into Garth Brooks' "Learnin' to Live" at the top of his lungs.

That's the message he is teaching the students at Riverdale High School and Overton Middle School, where he is completing his student teaching. Recently, he sang "Hotel California" for his students and then asked the students to interpret the meaning behind the lyrics as part of an English assignment.

"In middle school, there's an energy. There's a fire in their bellies that you don't see in high school. I think I do like teaching middle school better, but in high school there was a guy who wrote me a parody of the song 'Blackbird.' I got it framed. That's the proof of a successful teacher," he says.

At the end of the day, teaching is teaching. He knows he's not in a position to be "persnickety." Two years before, he hadn't known where his life was headed at all.

Yeah, those were Nick's dark days.

Natural Noise

"I wanted to be Garth Brooks in some capacity, playing drums and singing and playing guitar in front of 20,000 people. I wanted people to say this guy's music saved my life. The music dream will always be there. If it were a perfect world and God asked, 'What would your ideal situation be?' I'd play for 20,000 people. I don't necessarily watch Hannah Montana on a regular basis, but that's what I want ideally. Normal life by day, star by night. Whatever," he rambles.

Success in the music industry was fleeting for Nick. He and his sister Jamie, who was one year younger, performed in Nashville when Nick was 15 and booked a fairly decent

gig: an appearance on the "Regis and Kathy Lee Show," which was the height of the country duo's career.

"Plus, I sucked at sports, so I had to do something to get myself noticed, especially by the ladies," he says with a wink.

Since then, at Zion Christian Ministries and various venues in Murfreesboro and Nashville, Nick strums his guitar and sings along to the country tunes he grew up listening to in his hometown of Mattoon, Ill.

While performing, his voice stays perfectly on pitch, barely deviating from the songs' original versions. His acumen for understanding the mechanics of music rests with his reliance on sound and natural noise.

But for Nick, not everything came quite as easy.

"It was a real challenge to get him to take off his shoes and let his feet touch the grass. He acted like he was walking into the abyss. He had to have faith to walk forward and let go of any fear," recalls Kay Noeth, Nick's mother.

Between 2006 and 2009, Nick experienced a new kind of fear — like what to do with the rest of his life. After receiving his degree in recording industry management at MTSU in 2005, he decided to try his luck in the music business and pursue a career in Nashville as a songwriter. After all, that is what he majored in, but the roller coaster ride of living life as a musician came crashing down on him.

"I went to the doctor for a physical, and they said my

blood pressure was 160 over 100. They put me on blood pressure meds. I was upset and I knew I had to do something to stay physically up to par. I wanted to get a decent job. Dreams don't pay your bills. I'd gone to publishers, but that didn't help much," he says.

John Harris, the director of disabled student services, recommended Nick go to the Tennessee Rehabilitation Center, a well-renown rehabilitation facility offering specialized programs like vending. Harris told Nick he could possibly make \$40,000 a year.

I'll give it shot, Nick thought, even though his friends were voicing concerns: "You didn't get your RIM degree to sell hot dogs," they told him.

Nick was living with his dad, Gene Sharp, who was upset because Nick needed to get a job and find some direction, but Nick was less than enthusiastic. "Why can't I do something with music?" he thought.

His dad thought vending was the best thing for him — the ultimate American dream.

He thought wrong.

They try to make me go to rehab...

He started out in the Tennessee Vocational Rehabilitation Center's food services program, and he lasted for three months.

SHARP, PAGE 5



Fearless

Photo by Jay Bailey, Artistic Manager
Nick Sharp plays guitar during a photo shoot Dec. 7, 2010.

Despite all odds, he proved them wrong.

Sharp FROM PAGE 4

"It was so demoralizing. I was sitting there with a bachelor's degree. They treated me like a 3 year old. I couldn't go anywhere. We had bed times. I think it is geared more for people who are mentally handicapped. But, I'm a regular dude with a bachelor's degree. The highlight of my day would be eating lunch and dinner because I didn't leave my room.

"I listened to The Beatles, and I missed the music of my youth. But, it was bulimic learning. Learn it and binge - purge it out on the test. That's how we all do it. I wanted [to be a vendor] like I want a hole in my head. I was avoiding the vending thing like the Bubonic plague," he says with a cringe.

He failed the mechanical part of the vending test, which meant he'd have to be reevaluated again to be considered for the program. No way, he says. "I hate hot dog school."

"Nicholas, you need to think about what you're going to do," his father told him.

Problem was, he didn't have a clue.

A poet who didn't know it

"What am I good at?" he pondered.

He'd always done well in English. He had written his own lyrics for songs since he was 9. Maybe, just maybe, he could pursue a teaching degree and integrate music into the classroom setting as some sort of innovative teaching technique.

There was another problem.

Nick couldn't afford to pay for another degree. So, he met with a new vocational rehabilitation counselor. She told him, "Write a letter saying why you need to be refunded and list all the things you plan on doing for the future. List your short term goals."

Well, let's see. "I basically wanted to be the drummer in Garth Brook's band," he says. Other than that, he wasn't sure where teaching would take him, but he knew he'd better get a job in the meantime.

He attempted to get gainful employment at Walmart, but the position called for a stock boy, which involved lifting boxes and operating a forklift.

"Nobody called me back. I never even got an interview. [The vocational rehabilitation center] called me back a week later, and she told me her supervisor said: 'He could go back to that vending program. He should try that again.' This person who knew nothing about me, this supervisor, I was just a name to him, maybe a number. He was trying to control my life. People like me keep him in his job," he says.

He wrote the same letter to the person above him. This time, there were no obstacles standing in the way. Nick's request was approved.

"I felt like I needed a second bachelor's degree. The ethics in me was saying, 'You need to earn your stripes. You have more to learn.' If I am going to teach about something, I need to have as much content knowledge as possible. Spanish was my minor. I did it for marketability's sake. I don't love it - I can't speak my way out of a paper bag," he admits.

Dark days

Students who don't score at least a 22 on the ACT must do well on another comprehensive test, the Praxis exam. If they do well on the Praxis they are permitted to take the education courses leading to student teaching.

Nick took the Praxis six times - failing each one.

He met with Harris for career advice in attempts to salvage a career in education. Picking his brain was a last resort.

Harris suggested the vending program.

"I would rather be chased by a hive of yellowjackets," Nick recalls.

He felt that the whole world was singling him out on some sort of spiteful vendetta. I can kiss graduate school goodbye, he thought.

"I've never understood how people can just sit and collect social security and then throw in the towel and give up. But, during this time I knew," Nick confesses.

At this point, he was writing letters to local congressmen. Nick was desperately seeking a loophole, a beacon of hope, or a well-deserved break. OK, so he wasn't an exceptional test taker.

Still, he figured Bart Gordon probably wouldn't come through.

"It comes down to the Praxis exam, or I'm done," he croaks.

"Ironically, God works in mysterious ways. I'm not the most

exam for an hour. Just checking to make sure they're telling the truth. Weeks turned to days and days to hours.

"You're hoping to God that the same questions you studied are on the exam," he says.

Three days before, he was exhausted.



Photo by Jay Bailey, artistic manager

It is easy to see the passion and talent Nick Sharp emits as he strums and sings in the Dec. 7, 2010, photoshoot.



Photo by Jay Bailey, artistic manager

Nick Sharp safeguards one of his most important possessions as he plays, his walking stick, Dec. 7, 2010.

religious person in the world, but I don't doubt Jesus and God's capabilities."

Finally, after months of no response from the government pool, Nick got a bite. He heard of someone who couldn't pass the math portion of the Praxis exam and had been exempt from having to take it.

He went into James Huffman's office and told him "game over," unless there was a something that could replace the Praxis exam. Huffman, who is Nick's graduate studies adviser, had the golden ticket - Nick's recording industry degree finally came into play.

Nick could take the MAT, Miller Analogies Test. According to Huffman, Tennessee had recently enacted a new policy of allowing students to take the MAT in lieu of the Praxis exam.

Fear turned to elation.

He called Gordon's office. He let them know. He called his friends. He let them know. He shouted it from the rooftops.

Passing the MAT would replace of all the Praxis exams that he had failed.

Luckily, the test consisted of mostly analogies and vocabulary, like jeopardy. Students were required to know a little bit about everything. Nick utilized his brail machine to transcribe the 700 words and definitions in his study book, all of which he began memorizing.

There were 120 questions, timed for two hours after weeks of bulimic learning. Students also needed an eye

He prayed that God would pull him out of this.

"I'm a control freak. I need to have some idea of where things are going. How was I going to tell everyone that I failed ... again? I'd already failed the practice exams six times. This test was the only thing standing in the way of me and my teaching license," he says with a grimace.

The night before the exam, he considered packing his "shit" up and leaving. "How much does a U-Haul cost?" he wonders.

The day of the exam arrives. He did what most students do before a test: pray; plead; beg; gravel; sob.

"God, your will be done. Hopefully, it's me passing," he prays.

On Nov. 3, 2009, at 3 p.m., Nick took the MAT.

He needed a 385 to pass.

He needed 385 to become a teacher. He scored a 401.

Never a doubting Tom again

The opaque veil that shields his eyes doesn't seem to bother him quite as much as other things do.

Once, he and his three friends were eating ice cream at Marble Slab, and a woman approached them and said, "Wow - I've never seen four of you before." Four of you, Nick thought. Who is you?

"Where are your dogs?" they always ask.

"You don't trust an animal to do a man or woman's job. If it sees a squirrel, it's going to go after it and then you're screwed. I don't want to clean up animal crap and messes and animal hair. I know some buddies who have seeing-eye dogs.

"Yeah, you can get around faster, but I'm a fast walker. I get around. There's a label people have for people who have seeing-eye dogs. I mean, who gives a shit. I use my head, gut and heart. You can have a guide dog that has the social skills of an amoeba," he says.

In fact, he believes that it helps him distinguish personalities more accurately. Changes in pitch, insinuations, implications, various connotations, or derogatory slang - nothing goes unnoticed.

Except for sign language, Nick says before erupting into a fit of giggles.

However, there are some worldly wonders that he thinks should never be unseen - a sunset, an ocean or a mountain, but is it worth it?

Not for Nick.

"Not seeing is sort of peripheral to his being. Growing up, he never let anything stop him. When it came to swimming and roller skating, he swam and he skated," Kay remembers.

Nick doesn't seem himself as someone who is missing out on anything - well, he doesn't actually know what he's missing in the first place. In his opinion, ignorance is bliss, and that's all there is to it.

"The thing I really fear other than being 'average' is being the guy that society throws a giant pity party for everyday, like I am wearing some sort of badge of honor. What is a hero anyway? It isn't people who simply defy the odds - a hero is someone who changes the world. I want to be that guy. This is why I think teaching would be the best job, instead of pursuing a hard-core music career. I would be giving back instead of doing something purely for my own personal gain," he admits.

Above average

Recently accepted into MTSU's masters program to study education, his plan for the future is to teach his two passions: English and music.

"I'm genuinely surprised. Never in a million years did I think that I would be a teacher. When my little sister and I played school, she was always the teacher and I was always the student - the class clown, of course," he chuckles.

The classroom at Riverdale High School is divided into three sections. Juniors, fresh off their lunch break, stroll into Edie Pondillo's English class where Nick waits to greet them. He looks exceptionally preppy and collegiate on this sunny day: khaki pants and a long-sleeve button-down shirt, bearing no sign of a wrinkle or a crease.

"How was everyone's weekend? OK guys, today we are going to identify the difference between pathos, ethos and logos in well-known speeches," Nick begins his lecture.

He distributes copies of speeches. He has a natural ebb and flow when speaking to the class. He enunciates and repeats things, pausing from time to time so students can keep up. His students appear engaged.

Every now and then he bumps into a desk or two, but the students lead him in the right direction.

"The students enjoyed Nick's sense of humor and enthusiasm for teaching. They were especially thrilled when he brought his guitar and sang for them; he wrote a song from John Proctor's point of view for the play 'The Crucible' by Arthur Miller.

"His resilience and fearlessness are his best qualities. Students felt he connected with them and tried to reach them personally, as well as professionally. He is one of the most optimistic and enthusiastic people I've met," Pondillo says admiringly.

Roy Vick, who is Nick's supervisor for student teaching placements, has also been impressed with Nick's determined spirit.

"If you met Nick, spent time with him, you would come away a better person - I have," Vick says.

The students in the classroom respond to their teacher. He's an effective communicator, the student teacher supervisor notes. He seems to challenge them, daring them to perform exceptionally, accepting nothing less than what they are capable of.

For Nick, he's confident in his teaching abilities. Determined to have that blue-eyed personality.

"I'm not doing anything that anyone else isn't doing," he says.

But when he considers how far he's come in the past few years, well, even he can't believe it.

"If 10 years ago you had told me that I would be student teaching, I would have told you you're nuts. Nick Sharp, a teacher?"

The jokester, the blind man with a guitar strapped to his back, ready to command a classroom with his booming voice and piercing eyes, laughs

SIDELINES

AND THE SEARCH FOR NEW CONTRIBUTING STAFF

A

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Coming Soon: TV, Games, and Film of 2011

By DIETRICH STOGNER
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Films

"Hugo Cabret"

Not a lot is known about this new project by Martin Scorsese. We know that it marks the first time this celebrated director has done a family film. We know that it's based on the award-winning book "The Invention of Hugo Cabret" by Brian Selznick, and that it stars Ben Kingsley, Jude Law, Christopher Lee and Sacha Baron Cohen. We know it's the first time that Scorsese has filmed in 3D.

That's about the extent of what has been officially announced. But it's more than enough to leave Scorsese fans salivating. Scheduled for a December 2011 release, critics are sure "Hugo Cabret" will generate an avid group of moviegoers due to its star-studded cast.



"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2"

Whatever your feelings on the Harry Potter phenomenon, there's no arguing that J.K. Rowling's epic storyline has fueled

the films' success throughout the last decade. This summer, the last installment hits movie theaters, ultimately ending the Harry Potter reign.

The decision to split the final book into two installments was met with mixed reactions, but it allowed director David Yates to fully explore the detailed plot of the last book. The penultimate Harry Potter film opened in November of 2010 and was a colossal success, generating nearly a billion in worldwide sales. There's little doubt that fans will be lining up on July 15 to see the conclusion of this epic series.

Video Games

"L.A. Noire"

RockStar Games has established itself as one of the most successful and controversial game publishers in the world. While it is best known for its long running "Grand Theft Auto" series, last year's release of "Red Dead Redemption" showed off its creative muscles. "L.A. Noire" seems to be the perfect fusion of the polish RockStar Games brings to open-world games.

"L.A. Noire" is a murder mystery set in a remarkably detailed recreation of Los Angeles in 1947. As the title suggests, the themes, music and visuals of the game borrow heavily from the stylistic film noir of the 1940s and 1950s, with dark shadows and smoky jazz lighting. With voice talent provided by actors like Aaron Stanton from "Mad Men," RockStar Games seems determined to produce a game like never before.

"Batman: Arkham City"

While video games have come a long way in the last 30 years, one area that kept coming up woefully short was the depiction of comic book superheroes. This all changed in 2009 with the release of "Batman: Arkham Asylum" from Rocksteady Studios. The Dark Knight returns to the streets of Gotham with the upcoming sequel "Batman: Arkham City."

In the second installment of the series,

Batman leaves the confines of Arkham Asylum to roam the slums of Gotham. Kevin Conroy and Mark Hamill both return as the voices of Batman and the Joker, but the cast of villains grows with the addition of favorites like Catwoman. With enhanced graphics and more user flexibility, Rocksteady Studios seems determined to improve the game in every way. "Batman: Arkham City" is quickly shaping up to be the standout game of 2011.

Television



"Game of Thrones"

HBO has made a habit of creating innovative and unique shows. "The Sopranos", "Deadwood", and "Six Feet Under" are just a few of the programs that have garnered both commercial success and critical acclaim. This year, HBO is releasing "Game of Thrones", a series based on the bestselling fantasy series "A Song of Fire and Ice" by George R.R. Martin.

A complex combination of political intrigue and fantasy, "Game of Thrones" follows the conflict of the royal houses in

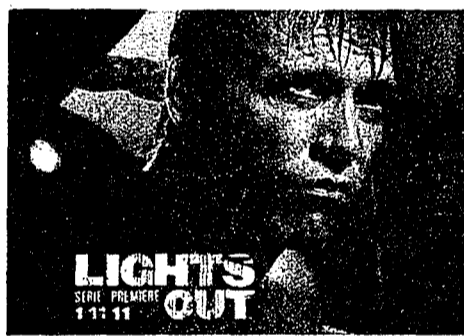
the kingdom of Westeros. Starring Sean Bean, Mark Addy, Peter Dinklage and Lena Headey, the show appears to be a more grounded version of fantasy, particularly compared to "Harry Potter" or "The Lord of the Rings". Regardless, fans are thrilled to see what HBO can do with these epic tales.



"Lights Out"

The success of movies like "Rocky," "Million Dollar Baby" and "The Fighter" prove that there is a high level of fascination with men who choose to climb into a ring and get their butts kicked. FX is hoping that fascination will draw people to its new drama "Lights Out," which follows a veteran boxer named Patrick "Lights" Leary who has Dementia pugilistica, a neurological disorder caused by frequent concussions.

Starring Holt McCallany, this new series promises to view the world of boxing from the perspective of a fighter looking at the end of his career. More about the choices Leary makes after his diagnosis and prognosis, "Lights Out" has the potential to be one of the biggest breakout hits on FX.



Images courtesy of Warner Brothers (Left), HBO (center), HBO (top right), FX (bottom right)



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STUDENT LIFE CALENDAR

The Hangover
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KUC Theater
Tickets: Free

Video Game Night
Jan 14, 4-7 p.m.
KUC 2nd Floor Lounge
Tickets: Free

Jackass 3
Jan 18-21, 7 & 10 p.m.
Kuc Theater
Tickets: \$2

Karaoke Night
Jan 23, 10-12 p.m.
Cyber Cafe
Tickets: Free

'Black Swan' pirouettes into thriller royalty

By ROZALIND RUTH
Creative Design Director

Ballet is one of the most difficult styles of dance. Yet, it must look the most effortless and carefree. The grace and beauty of the celebrated art form has been brought to the silver screen with "Black Swan," in a macabre not seen since Dario Argento's 1977 horror flick "Suspiria," with Darren Aronofsky's "Black Swan."

The film is being hailed by the press as a "psycho-sexual thriller," and boy, is it both. The provocative nature of the film is sure to thrill anyone with the expectations of the "psycho" and the "sexual" components of the genre.

In other words: It's crazy hot.

Fox Searchlight's latest film chronicles Nina, the newest prima ballerina at a famous New York City ballet company. She lands the role of a lifetime, the Swan Queen, but this is where the trauma unfolds.

In the original ballet, the White Swan is a princess who is turned into a majestic animal by a dark magician. Only by finding her true love will she once again be human. She finds her true love, only he has been seduced by an evil look-alike, the Black Swan. When the White Swan realizes her true love is gone and she will never be human again, she commits suicide.

Nina's chronicle parallels with that of the White Swan's. She is perfect, demure and innocent. Her mother and ballet instructors have groomed her to be the perfect White Swan. When Nina lands both roles, her identity is shifted, and her downfall ensues.

As Nina battles the emotional and psychological turmoil of the dual role, so does the color scheme, cinematography and characterization of the movie. Everything and everyone become green and blue, with a sickly caricature.

Every scene in this film is precise and creative, executed as a great ballet should be. The balance of the ballet and the soberness of the main character are offset by the harsh camera angles, edgy movements and sickly color pallet of the movie.

The smartest element to "Black Swan" is its terrific use of opposition. Every aspect of the film explores the good vs. evil theme. The dance is fluid and rhythmic, despite the staccato camera angles that are edgy and frantic. The same is seen with the characters, each one showing different qualities at different times. This uneasy smoke and mirrors effect makes each actor seem deliciously bipolar.

Every aspect of the film is saturated with this idea. Aronofsky manages to implement this motif to its full potential without wearing it out.

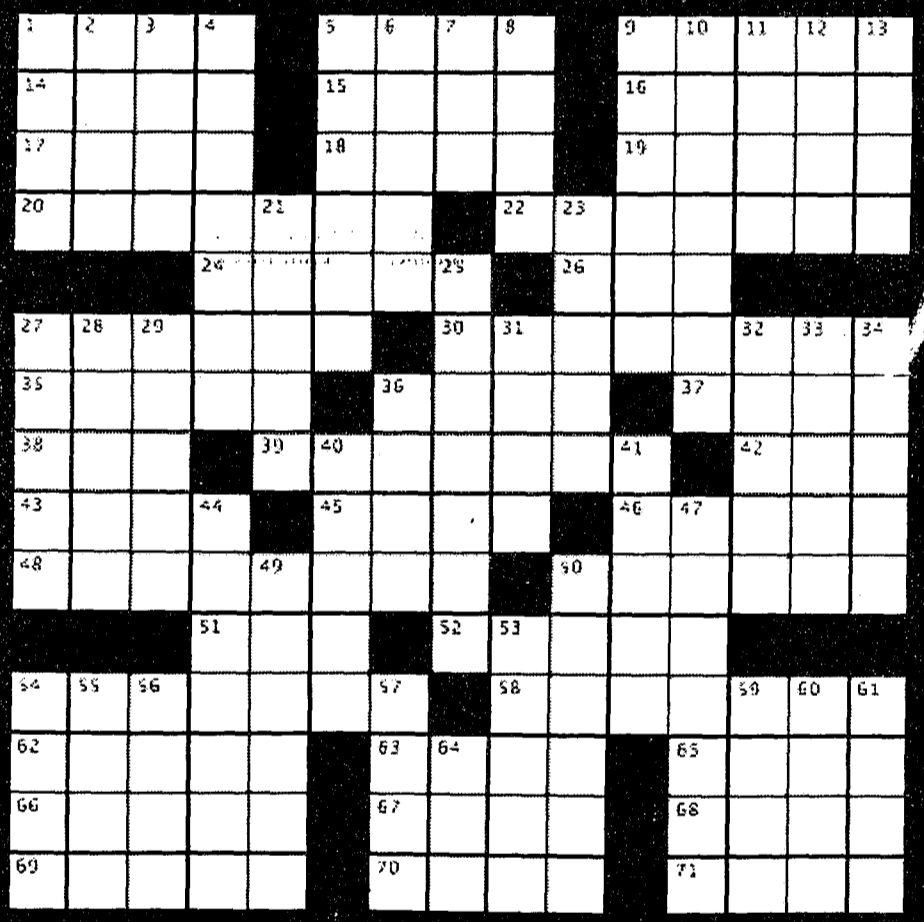
While the themes are immediately identifiable, Aronofsky and his team remain artful in their ability to execute the intricate aspects of the film.

The original ballet tunes the audience into which film character will ultimately meet his or her end. However, the suspense of the cinematography and the terrific characterization of the writing leave even the last scenes thrilling.

If artsy yet suspenseful is the name of the game this weekend, "Black Swan" is the ticket. First dates need not apply, unless you really want to get to know your date on a deeper level.



SIDEWORDS



Across

1- Not fem.; 5- Brownish purple; 9- Oohed and ___; 14- Banned apple spray; 15- Energy source; 16- Climb; 17- Farm structure; 18- Riga resident; 19- Take hold; 20- Nominal; 22- Ogle; 24- Teacher; 26- ___ Grande; 27- Chant; 30- An amorous glance; 35- "Cheers" waitress; 36- Ambience; 37- Ancient Athens's Temple of ___; 38- Cabinet dept.; 39- Swipple; 42- Affirmative answer; 43- Pianist Myra; 45- Contributes; 46- South American ruminant; 48- Eastern; 50- Tiny; 51- Bring civil action against; 52- Tall tales; 54- Conductor; 58- Small animal; 62- Month of showers; 63- Mideast gulf; 65- Kiln for drying hops; 66- Blackbird; 67- Grasp; 68- Final Four org.; 69- It's a good thing; 70- Salt Lake City hoopsters; 71- Smoke deposit;

Down

1- Pole; 2- Et ___; 3- Cure, in a way; 4- Sippet; 5- Roof of the mouth; 6- In ___ (unborn); 7- Portable bed; 8- CPR experts; 9- Beset; 10- Cherrylike fruit; 11- Detest; 12- "East of Eden" director Kazan; 13- Depression in a surface; 21- Crescents; 23- Experiment; 25- Unsparingly; 27- Spud state; 28- Chad neighbor; 29- Foot bones; 31- Energy units; 32- Of Nordic stock; 33- Considers; 34- Composition; 36- Verdi heroine; 40- Faucet stuff; 41- Actress Verdugo; 44- Permanently attached, to a zoologist; 47- Teachings; 49- Squirrel food; 50- General tendencies; 53- White poplar tree; 54- Baby's cry; 55- Gorillas, chimpanzees and orangutans; 56- Goes astray; 57- Island of Hawaii; 59- Snack in a shell; 60- Golfer Aoki; 61- Coup d' ___; 64- Speck;

Sudoku:

A numbers game as simple as counting

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, simply make each line, column, and separate box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

Be cautious though, because no number can repeat itself in any line, column and separate box.

7	5		9		3			6
			4	5				3
6	2			9		8		
	1	5				2	3	
		9		1			7	5
3				8	4			
9			6		1		5	7

Clancy returns to his roots

By DIETRICH STOGNER
Arts & Entertainment Editor

In his first book since 2003, Tom Clancy continues his popular Jack Ryan series with a story following "The Campus," a covert group of assassins. While Clancy's previous titles set the gold standard for political thrillers, "Dead or Alive" is a weak and uninspiring book that may leave longtime fans feeling underwhelmed.

"Dead or Alive" picks up where "The Teeth of the Tiger" left off and feels like a reunion of Clancy's most popular characters. In addition to the newer Caruso brothers, "Dead or Alive" sees the return of John Clark and Jack Ryan Sr. to the mix. The story follows the group as it chases down a thinly veiled representation of Osama Bin Laden referred to as the "Emir."

Clancy wrote this book with the assistance of Grant Blackwood, a ghost writer who has previously worked with other best-selling authors, including Clive Cussler. This collaboration has managed to improve some of the weaker aspects of Clancy's writing. If anything, the writing is tighter and more fluid, allowing the plot to flow smoothly from one scene to another.

The dialogue, always a stumbling point for Clancy, now feels more natural. But while these aspects have improved, others have weakened. Clancy's traditionally strong storytelling and pacing are where "Dead or Alive" falters, and not in a minor way. The chase after the Emir meanders from one location to the other, and the bloated cast of characters demand multiple storylines that weave in and out of the plot. Clancy proves

unable to keep these individual storylines separate from one another, with frequent moments of confusion. The story itself holds very few surprises and feels flat, limping from one scene to the next with no real sense of urgency.

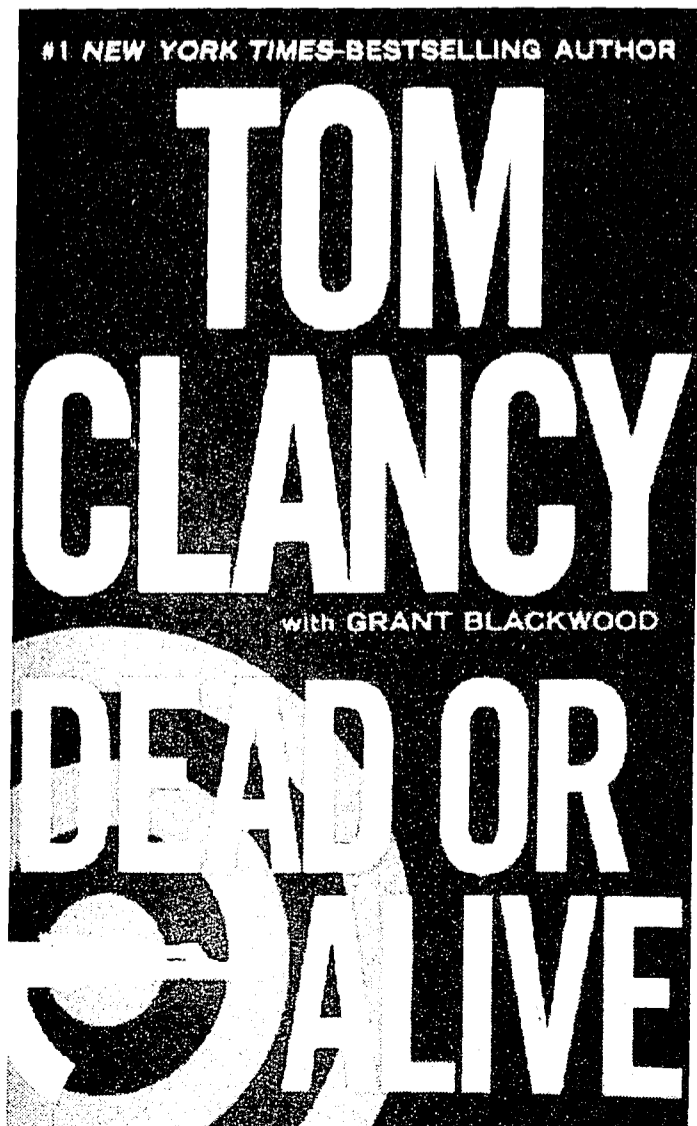
Clancy's depictions of the enemy in "Dead or Alive" are another stumbling point. While his previous antagonists were fleshed out, the Emir and his associates are cookie-cutter enemies with no depth or substance. We're told we should hate them, but the only reason we can comply is Clancy's assurance that they are bad people out to kill us all. Without any sense of why these men are deserving of the Campus's lethal attention, it transforms the intended heroes of the story into a group of thugs, targeting anyone they perceive as a threat.

Clancy's books always

seemed to be a collection of brilliantly written action sequences, neatly tied together by a plot that propels the reader forward.

However, "Dead or Alive" stops the reader dead in his or her tracks with lackluster plot sequences, weakly formulated from one scene to the next. Even the ending, which should be triumphant, feels lifeless and uninspiring. Indeed, what should be a moment of righteous retribution simply translates as a group of angry men torturing a bound prisoner.

Tom Clancy quickly managed to establish himself as one of the best thriller writers in the world, and we know how good Clancy can be when he's on his game. After a seven-year hiatus, we can only hope that "Dead or Alive" was simply him working out the kinks after a long vacation and not an indicator of things to come.



Letters Policy

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

OPINIONS

Sidelines is the editorially independent, student-produced newspaper affiliated with Middle Tennessee State University and the College of Mass Communication. Sidelines publishes Monday and Thursday during the fall and spring semesters and online during June and July. The opinions expressed herein are those of individual writers and not necessarily Sidelines or the university.

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

In the wake of the fatal shooting that happened at a U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords of Arizona's meet and greet with her constituents, debate has sparked about whether the political environment in which the shooting took place had any effect on the suspect's actions.

Not only were six people killed, 14 people sustained gunshot injuries when 22-year-old Jared Loughner shot bullets into a Safeway grocery store, as well as outside of the building in Tucson during his ambush. Giffords is recovering in the hospital after she was shot in the head at close range.

The political atmosphere, while agreed that it is overheated, should not be the main concern of this tragedy, nor should the dispute surrounding gun control laws. The problem lies with the ease in which individuals who are

mentally unstable can obtain guns.

Not only had Loughner been suspended from Pima Community College in Tucson after five criminal encounters with campus police, his return from suspension was contingent on a letter from a mental health facility stating he was in good mental health. There are also claims he was an extremely violent child with a history of frightening his classmates.

If he was in such a poor mental state, why should he have been allowed to purchase a gun to begin with? Regardless of whether gun control laws are right or wrong, it should be agreed that people like Loughner should not have the right to carry weapons anywhere or for any reason.

The most off-putting thing, nay, disgusting thing about the whole ordeal

is that Westboro Baptist Church, the organization responsible for picketing military funerals and political events with their anti-gay rhetoric, was planning to protest the funerals of the victims of the shooting.

The State Legislature in Arizona hastily prepared and passed an emergency law to block the out-of-control church away from the victim's funerals. The law keeps protesters 300 feet back from funerals, and was initiated to push members of the Westboro Baptist Church, who have actually dared to commend the shooter. What message are they trying to get across?

One of the victims is a 9-year-old girl and the other five also deserve, at the very least, reverence at their funeral. While the members of Westboro Baptist have called off their protest in lieu

of taking airtime on a national radio show, the idea that they would picket the funeral of victims of an insane man's ambush is absolutely ridiculous. Phoenix radio host Steve Sanchez has given 30 minutes of air time this Saturday to the Westboro Baptist Church on station KXXT-AM, and for that he is also receiving backlash.

In a political climate that is so arid, sometimes it takes a minute to cool down and see what is really happening. However, in an event with such a tragic ending, it is essential to keep our cool from the very beginning and remember what's really important. The six people who died were not new policies, laws or metaphors for society. They were human beings who lost their lives at the hands of an unstable young man who made poor choices.

FACES IN THE CROWD

DO YOU FEEL THE TRAGEDY IN TUCSON WAS CAUSED BY POLITICS? OR, DO YOU FEEL THE SHOOTER WAS JUST MENTALLY UNSTABLE?



Mackenbach
"It was a little political, but obviously he's a little crazy, that's not the correct way you voice an opinion"

Paul Mackenbach, music business major



Mounier
"I think he was just a nut job who got a hold of a gun. I think it was sad but these types of events are happening all over the world."

Sam Mounier, journalism major



Matthis
"I think it was definitely politically driven. I don't want to blame anyone for the mishap, but people should be careful about the words and symbols they use when they make a statement."

Shannon Matthis, exercise science major



Adair
"I think he just lost it. I don't think that politics were involved with it at all."

Raven Adair, political science major



Falconer
"It could go either way, but if someone is shooting someone else they have to be a little unstable. There are always nonviolent ways of solving problems. It's possibly a degree of both."

Joseph Falconer, music education major

Arizona shooting not left, right issue



Michael Finch
Columnist

On the morning of Jan. 8, U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords was outside a Safeway grocery store in Tucson, Ariz., meeting with her constituents.

At 10:10 a.m., a man opened fire, first on Giffords and then on the crowd, killing six people and injuring 14. As a political science major and former Washington, D.C. intern, I was floored by the news and immediately sought out as much information as possible.

I watched my friends' outrage, as well the famous and semi-famous folks I follow on my Twitter and Facebook feeds. Some started to speculate on the shooter's motives. Others immediately assumed his motive and moved on from there, calling for more gun control and an end to violent political rhetoric.

Now, I'm in favor of both of these things, but something didn't sit right with me. Then, a "tweet" popped up from musician and video blogger Rhett McLaughlin. It said, "If your political affiliation even slightly affects your perspective on the Giffords shooting, you are part of the problem."

My immediate response to the "tweet" was visceral and defensive. Expecting people to completely detach their political views from their view of this situation was ridiculous, wasn't it? A political representative's shooting must be innately political. When I recognized my defensiveness and was able to back away from it, I realized McLaughlin was right.

My assumption that this tragedy had to be political was, in some small way, part of the problem. People were shot. Some died. A 9-year-old girl died.

Saying now isn't the time is hard, because gun control and toning down violent rhetoric are incredibly important issues that need to be discussed. This shooting, however, should not be used as the lens through which we view those issues. This sort of tragedy would ordinarily be intensely personal for the loved ones of the victims, but Giffords' involvement has thrust their grief into the public sphere. This should not be co-opted for any political gain, no matter how worthy the cause.

Shortly after coming to this conclusion, I started to wonder if maybe I was only able to feel this way because gun control is not one of my "pet issues." Then, I read about Daniel Hernandez, Jr., Giffords' openly gay intern who is credited with saving Gifford's life.

LGBT issues are incredibly important to me, but I'm still uncomfortable with the idea of using Hernandez's actions as fodder in the fight to gain rights for LGBT individuals. The idea that this should be done seems to come from the same culture that tells us that anything is fair game as long as it leads to a political win. The issues that politicians are working to solve are often extremely important, sometimes even a matter of life or death. Some situations, including this tragedy, simply deserve basic human compassion and shouldn't be exploited, even for the "greater, political good."

Michael Finch is a junior majoring in political science and can be reached at mfinch13@gmail.com.

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

MARIE KEMPH

For almost two years, I have had the pleasure of working for Sidelines. I've learned more about myself as a journalist than I could have ever imagined, but most importantly, I've become friends with people who I thought I would never have anything in common with.

As I begin this semester as the new editor-in-chief of Sidelines, I feel blessed to know that many of these same people will share this experience with me. I believe it is an honor to represent the School of Journalism during the 2011 spring semester.

For those of you who don't know me, I'm a senior journalism major, and I'm in the process of completing my minors in political science and economics. As such, I hope to offer a unique perspective to the position, given the current political, social and economic landscape of the country.

In order to evolve as an organization and remain relevant to the student body, Sidelines must converge its efforts with other on-campus media outlets, so that

it continues to capture the zeitgeist of the university, as well as the local community. In addition, I believe it is important to have as much participation from students who are not journalism majors as possible. Without a diverse staff, we at Sidelines will be unable to represent the student body well.

So, I invite you to check out our organization. And for those of you who may have preconceived notions regarding Sidelines: Take a

second look. You may be surprised.

Sidelines is more than just a student-run publication: It's the tangible evidence of what each generation of Blue Raiders experiences while attending college here. It's the product of hours of hard work and dedication by a small team of journalism students - all of whom strive on a daily basis to meet the needs and expectations of the student body, faculty and staff.

We may not always get this right, but we at Sidelines we always strive for perfection.

Things That Still Make Me Laugh

- Farts
- Dick Jokes
- The Planet Uranus
- The words Oral, Butt and Duty (doody)
- Any Video Involving Someone getting punched in the crotch
- Poop Jokes
- Any euphemism for genitalia (e.g. "pee-pee", "vajayjay", "Ham Wallet", etc.)



MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

Middle Tennessee State University
1301 East Main Street P.O. Box 8
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Editor-in-Chief
Marie Kempf
sleditor@mtsu.edu

Editorial: 615-904-8357
Fax: 615-494-7648

www.mtsusidelines.com

Creative Design Director
Rozalind Ruth*
slcreative@mtsu.edu

Production Manager
Josh Fields
slsdesign@mtsu.edu

Artistic Manager
Jay Bailey
slart@mtsu.edu

Multimedia Manager
Richard Lowe
slmedia@mtsu.edu

Photography Assistant
Sarah Finchum
sphoto@mtsu.edu

Managing Editor
Laura Aiken*
slmanage@mtsu.edu

News
Becca Andrews
slnews@mtsu.edu

Associate News Editor
Amanda Haggard
slcampus@mtsu.edu

Assistant News Editor
Charlie Bateman
slassistant@mtsu.edu

Features Editor
Emma Egli
slfeatures@mtsu.edu

Associate Features Editor
Todd Barnes
slassociate@mtsu.edu

Arts & Entertainment Editor
Dietrich Stogner
slentertainment@mtsu.edu

Opinions Editor
Brandon Thomas*
slopinions@mtsu.edu

Sports Editor
Will Trusler
slsports@mtsu.edu

Adviser
Leon Alligood
alligood@mtsu.edu

Business Manager
Eveon Corl
ecorl@mtsu.edu

On-Campus Advertising

Advertising Manager
Becca Brown
sladmanager@mtsu.edu

Advertising: 615-898-5240
Fax: 615-904-8193

Off-Campus Advertising

Shelbyville Times-Gazette
Hugh Jones
Sissy Smith

adsforsidelines@gmail.com

*denotes member of editorial board

SPORTS

Football loses two coordinators

Search begins to fill vacant defensive, offensive coordinator positions

By RICHARD LOWE
Multimedia Manager

Defensive coordinator Randall McCray and offensive coordinator Mike Schultz will not return to the Middle Tennessee football staff for the 2011 season, according to a press release from the school's athletic department.

"I appreciate the contributions both Mike and Randall made to our staff and university," Rick Stockstill said in a statement included in the release.

McCray and Schultz were hired before the 2010 season to fill vacancies left by Manny Diaz and Tony Franklin, respectively. Diaz was hired

by Mississippi State as a defensive coordinator but was recently hired for the same position at the University of Texas. Franklin is coaching at Louisiana Tech as their offensive coordinator.

McCray spent the past four seasons before coming to MT as a position coach for the University of Wisconsin. Schultz spent 11 years as the offensive coordinator of the TCU Horned Frogs before spending one season at Illinois in the same position.

The 2010 season was filled with many highs and lows for the Blue Raiders. The team finished the season at 6-7 and third place



Mike Schultz



Randall McCray

"I appreciate the contributions both Mike and Randall made to our staff and university."

RICK STOCKSTILL
HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

in the Sun Belt Conference after being picked to win the conference in the preseason.

Starting QB Dwight Dasher was ruled ineligible for the first four games of the season for accept-

ing benefits that violate the NCAA's amateur rules after being picked as the Sun Belt Conference's preseason player of the year.

The team earned a bid to the GoDaddy.com Bowl in Mobile, Ala., but was defeated by Miami (Ohio), 35-21.

Several of MTSU's statistical numbers got worse from the 2009 season, when the team went 10-3 with a win in the R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl. The team's turnover margin went from being ranked eighth in the nation (.92) to being 120th in the nation (-1.46). MTSU's total offense fell from 27th in the nation (421.7 yards

per game) to 69th in the nation (371.9 yards per game) while their total defense fell from 50th in the nation (354.9 yards allowed per game) to 72nd in the nation (386.9 yards allowed per game).

After going 3-6 to begin the year, the Blue Raiders won their final three games to earn bowl eligibility.

Although nothing official has been announced as of Wednesday evening, it looks like Schultz will be taking a job with another university. Nothing has been reported on what McCray's next move may be.

A search has begun to fill the vacant positions.

College hockey showcases hopes to spark interest in South

Schools square off in the first collegiate hockey games in state history

By ALEX HUBBARD
Staff Writer

With few exceptions, college hockey is barely on the sports radar in the South. It is most often relegated to cable channels in the triple digits. Newspaper coverage is virtually nonexistent.

College hockey, however, will make history this weekend in Nashville as the University of Alabama in Huntsville and Merrimack College in Massachusetts are set to play a pair of regular-season games at the Bridgestone Arena. The games will mark the first NCAA Division I college hockey contests to be played in Tennessee.

In the United States, college hockey is confined to the backwaters of the American sporting consciousness, as well as dominated by players from Canada. But in a handful of northern states, the sport seems to be breaking out on a regular basis these days.

Penn State, a Big Ten Conference participant and an institution with significant credibility, recently announced that it would become the 59th school to sponsor Division I hockey, making it one of the few schools of note outside the big hockey states of Michigan, Minnesota and Massachusetts. Beyond that, obvious development is something greater.

Spurred by the growth of NHL in cities like Nashville, Dallas and Los Angeles, youth hockey is also growing at a rapid pace. Players from California, Texas and Florida now appear on the rosters of many colleges and Canadian junior teams — even a few

NHL teams. However, this is a trend that is not without opposition.

Paul Kelly is a lawyer, well known in hockey circles for his past work as the head of the National Hockey League Players Association. He is now the executive director of College Hockey, Inc., an organization designed to promote college hockey through recruitment and promotion. He points to California as the state where hockey has grown, largely due to the influence of the NHL.

"Because there are three NHL teams in the state of California, and no college teams by the way, but three NHL teams, they have begun to develop some real talent," Kelly said. "Part of it is families and kids following the sport. Part of it is NHL players retire, they like living in the areas, they remain behind, they have their own kids, they get involved in coaching, and suddenly you see some talented kids start coming out of there."

It's a pattern beginning to repeat itself all over the country, yet the difficulty for college hockey is the lack of progress in expansion of the college games relative to that of the NHL.

Chris Luongo, Alabama-Huntsville's head hockey coach, has seen his recruiting paths change throughout the years, but he believes there is much room for growth in NCAA hockey.

"There's these areas of the country that have these NHL teams present with no college teams around," Luongo said. "What we see in those areas is a lot

of good players coming up that aren't exposed to college hockey."

Luongo points mainly to the three Canadian junior leagues that have used the lack of local college appeal to land some of the South's best hockey talent. While The Canadian Junior Hockey League offers a chance to complete a high school education and offers a popular route to the professional ranks, it disqualifies players from playing NCAA hockey any time after the player participates in a single junior game.

Kelly said that four or five schools, in addition to Penn State, are actively weighing the viability of a Division One hockey program, but the economics remain the largest obstacle.

"Funding is very tight," Kelly said. "Unless there's a benefactor who can donate money to help get a program started, or unless they have a rink already in existence or unless they are fairly well convinced that they can bring in enough in terms of ticket sales to cover their costs, no one wants to start an athletic program that's going to cost them money."

Alabama-Huntsville has stood as college hockey's exception for more than 30 years, using its position as a center of scientific research to bring in players from all around the world, even before the NHL put roots down in the region.

Though no other area teams participate in NCAA hockey, club level hockey is present at almost every Southeastern Conference, including Vanderbilt and

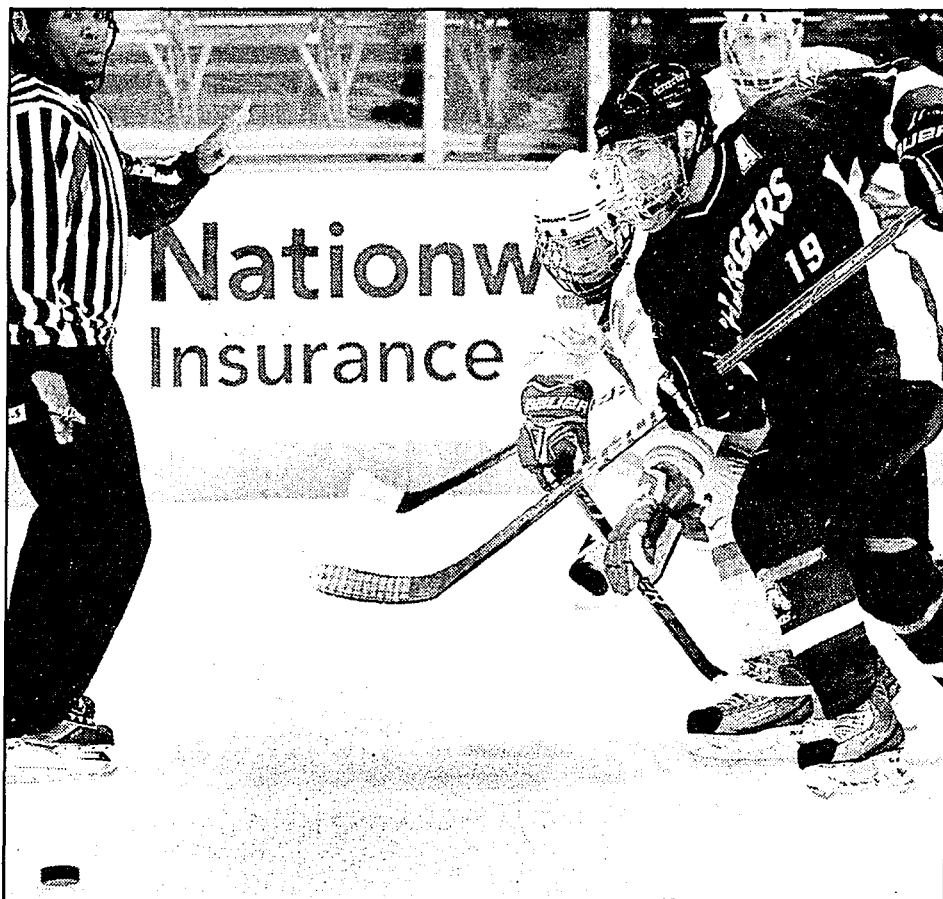


Photo courtesy of University of Alabama-Huntsville Sports Information Department

UAH senior forward Chris Fairbanks (19) battles Ohio State junior Corey Schneider for the puck in their Nov. 5 match in Columbus, OH.

Tennessee. Should these areas decide to adopt a hockey program, Coach Luongo believes he knows the secret to bringing the skilled players in.

"It's kind of neat to put a light jacket on in the middle of January ... it's not something that's possible to do in many places up North," Luongo said. "We

certainly sell that aspect of the weather."

UAH and Merrimack will play Friday, Jan. 14 at 7:05 p.m. and Saturday, Jan. 15 at 1:05 p.m.


VS




Jan. 14 at 7:05pm
Jan. 15 at 1:05pm

HOME GAMES

Men's Basketball
1/13 7 p.m.
Murphy Center
vs. Florida Atlantic

Women's Basketball
1/19 7 p.m.
Murphy Center
vs. Troy

Men's Basketball
1/20 7 p.m.
Murphy Center
vs. Troy

Men's Basketball
1/22 7 p.m.
Murphy Center
vs. Denver

Men's Tennis
1/22 1 p.m.
Nashboro Village
vs. UT-Chattanooga

Men's Tennis
1/23 12 p.m.
Nashboro Village
vs. Tennessee Tech

Women's Basketball
1/23 12 p.m.
Murphy Center
vs. Denver

Men's Tennis
1/29 12 p.m.
Nashboro Village
vs. Morehead State

Women's Basketball
2/2 7 p.m.
Murphy Center
vs. Louisiana-Monroe

Events Policy

Sidelines welcomes current campus and community events submitted by all readers. Please e-mail events to slsports@mtsu.edu, and include the name, date, time and location of the event, as well as your name and a phone number for verification. We reserve the right to refuse events at our discretion as our space is limited.

Sidelines is the editorially independent, non-profit student-produced newspaper of Middle Tennessee State University. Sidelines publishes Monday and Thursday during the fall and spring semesters and Wednesday during June and July. The events listed are not necessarily associated with Sidelines or MTSU.

Submit sports events at slsports@mtsu.edu or at mtsusidelines.com



University Gables



Woods at Greenland

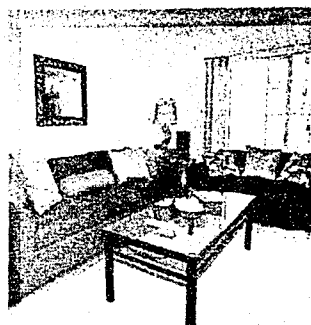


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