

MTSU uses student funds to push parking garage.
Opinions, page 4

THURS 39°/21° FRI 43°/32° SAT 37°/21°

Lady Raiders win 90-64 against South Alabama.
Sports, page 7

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

EDITORIALLY INDEPENDENT

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2009

VOL. 85 NO. 10

Student acquitted of rape

Sophomore accused of rape last year has charges dropped

By TIFFANY GIBSON
Managing Editor

Tuesday, Judge Ben Hall McFarlin dismissed the rape case of an MTSU male student Hock accused of raping a female in the Alpha Tau Omega house on campus in September 2008.

Garrick Hock, a sophomore mass communication major and member of ATO, has been acquitted of all charges. The alleged victim approved of these circumstances.

In September, campus police Chief Buddy Peaster said that both parties might have consumed alcohol; however, a blood alcohol test was not performed on Hock.

Hock chose not to comment.



MTTV wins award at SEJC

By ALEX MOORMAN
Campus News Editor

MTTV won third place at the South Eastern Journalism Conference for best college television station at Belmont University.

MTTV is a student-run television station located on MTSU's campus. It is a 24/7 television station.

Richard Lowe, general manager of MTTV, said that this year they had put more focus on enhancing programming for the station.

"It got to a point that we went through the motions but didn't focus on quality of the programming," Lowe said. "This year we started putting focus on correcting our mistakes as apposed to just putting on a show."

SEJC tries to encourage greater interest in student journalism and to create closer ties among journalism schools in the Southeast United States, according to the Web site.

"Winning this award is being motivated the wonderful cast at MTTV, it makes them feel like all their hard work is helping notivice but it also gets the station recognized by the people around us," Lowe said. "It will make people start paying more attention to the station and maybe even get more people involved."

SEJC judges critiqued each entry and returned them at the conference Lowe said they hope to learn from the judges' suggestions and continue to improve by the next conference.



Graphic by Alicia Wilson, production manager

MTSU stays 'Up 'til Dawn'

Students deprive themselves from sleep to fight for a cure.

STAFF REPORT

MTSU is celebrating its 10th year of "Up 'til Dawn" in an effort to raise funds for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital on Friday at 7 p.m. in the Murphy Center.

"Fight the yawn – stay awake to cure childhood cancer," is the motto of Up 'til Dawn, according to the Up 'til Dawn Web site.

Up 'til Dawn is a student-led, student-run philanthropic program that is hosted by colleges and universities across the nation.

Activities for the event include St. Jude patient speech, a special guest star, the band Gino, blow up games and karaoke.

The cost for students is \$5 with MTSU Blue ID, \$10 for community members and children younger than three are free.

All-Access Improvement Plan becomes more concrete

By BRYCE HARMON
Contributing Writer

University officials held open forums this week pertaining to the "All-Access Improvement Plan" referendum at the Keathley University Center.

At the forums, Patti Miller, assistant vice president of Campus Planning, told attendees that this plan is "what the MTSU community wants." However, some students disagree with Miller and are voicing their concerns about the referendum.

"It's a horrible economic time to be doing this," said Caleb Wahl, a senior finance major. "I don't think students should pay for the university's gain."

The plan includes the construction of a parking garage, a restructuring of MTSU Boulevard, additions to the Raider Xpress shuttle service, new bike lanes and a campus entrance from Wiles Court

off Greenland Drive.

The proposed groundbreaking date for the parking garage is during the spring 2011 semester.

Brittney Shaifer, a sophomore pre-med major, said she doesn't like the plan's proposed construction dates.

"If I want to put my money into something, I want to actually see it," Shaifer said.

If the referendum passes through a simple-majority vote by the student body, students will be required to pay increased fees to MTSU. Over the next five academic school years, tuition would be raised \$5, \$15, \$20, \$40 and \$60 respectively.

Preston Deanhardt, a junior aerospace major, said he doesn't agree with these fee increases.

"They don't need to be increasing tuition," Deanhardt said. "It's all ridiculous. We as students pay enough as it is."



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

Administration littered the MTSU campus with Vote yes All-Access Campus Improvement Plan to raise awareness of new parking garage plan.

Students will be permitted to vote on the plan Feb. 24-26 on Pipeline MT.

Brent Drewery, a senior aerospace major, said he will probably vote against the plan.

"I think a parking garage would be madness," Drewery said. "There would be

just too many cars, and it would create a lot of traffic."

The five-story garage is one of five in the MTSU Master Plan. Its design includes 830 parking spaces.

Jareth Swanson, a sophomore pre-med major, said he feels the garage will help with parking on campus

because of the size of the student body.

"If you leave campus for 10 minutes, you can't find parking when you come back," Swanson said. "Parking is just going to get worse."

Miller said that she expects the size of the student body to increase by thou-

sands of students.

Additional reporting by Michael Stone.

To read more, visit us online.



www.mtsusidelines.com

Budget cuts throw a curve ball to athletics

PROPOSED NUMBERS FOR ATHLETIC CUTS ON CAMPUS	
Athletics-BRAA	\$100,000 reduction
Sports Information - Marketing	\$175,000 consolidation
Academic Advising/ Athlete Enhancement	\$150,000 consolidation

By ZACH REVES
Assistant Sports Editor

In a time of economic instability, Blue Raider athletics are being faced with proposed budget cuts that may alter MT's athletic structure.



In late January, President Sidney McPhee and the Steering Committee composed a list of college programs for possible

reconstruction to alleviate the school's economic troubles. According to the plan, certain athletic programs could experience a

reduction in their capabilities.

The Blue Raider Athletic Association, which stages large-scale fundraisers for MT athletics,

is one such department that could be changed.

"The Blue Raiders Athletic Association helps make this college recognized all across the country," said Alan Farley, an associate director and fundraising chairman for the BRAA. "Through our athletic fundraising, we raise up the school as if it were a front porch, and we help turn that welcoming light on."

According to the Steering Committee's suggestions, Farley and the

BRAA would face a reduction of \$100,000, or the equivalent salary of two employees.

"If this reduction were to go through, we would lose two of our five fundraising employees," Farley said. "They'd be cutting some of the people who raised \$6.7 million for this school last year."

"We'd drastically lose the ability to create future donations for this school."

Graphic by Alicia Wilson, production manager

Candidates debate policy

Students on ballot for Student Government Association offices talk about future plans if elected, take questions from audience

By EMMA EGLI
Assistant News Editor

Hopeful candidates gathered for the 2009-2010 Student Government Association officer debate on Monday to discuss their qualifications and goals for helping the student body during a budget crisis.

Questions were moderated by Debra Sells, vice president for Student Affairs and vice provost for Enrollment and Academic Services.

"This is a really important election," Sells said. "The students who become officers are really going to have a great opportunity to influence the decisions that are going to be made."

Patrick Mertes, a junior recording industry major and candidate for the election commissioner, said students should participate more in student government.

"I think it's vital that every student gets an e-mail about voting when it comes to referendums or elections," Mertes said. "I think SGA should try harder to get students to care about things they are able to vote on."

Candidates talked about reaching out to students during a time when the cost of tuition could possibly rise and cutting student services is an option.

The candidates running for the position of vice president of administration and public affairs are Sarah

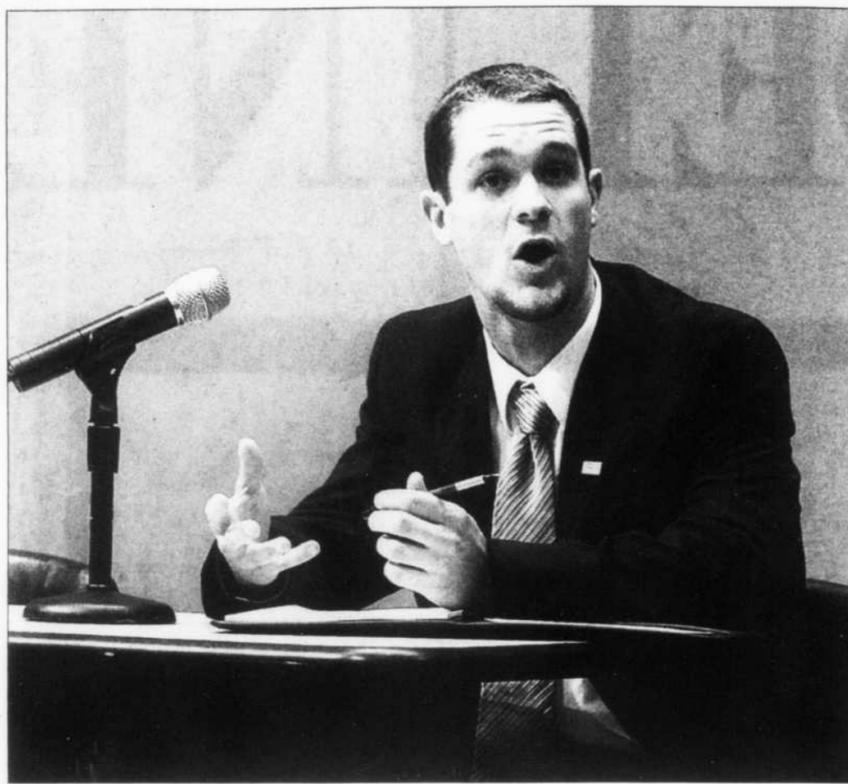


Photo by Erin O'Leary staff photographer
Brandon McNary makes closing remarks on why he should be chosen for student body president.

Ayache, a sophomore public relations major, and Erin Johnson, a junior public relations major.

"I believe SGA is a critical organization on campus," Ayache said "I think it's critical we reach out to students and get their voices, opinions and ideas heard, and I believe I have the qualifications to help."

Johnson said that she is also qualified to help because she has experience with writing bills and pass-

ing legislation.

"I have SGA experience as well as leadership and public relations experience," Johnson said.

Michael Borella, a junior concrete industry management major, and Heather Rawson, a senior business marketing major, are both running for the position of executive vice president and speaker of the house.

"You need to know what students actually want," Rawson said. "You also

need to talk to senators you are working with as well as do more research on the legislation."

Brandon McNary, a senior education and behavioral science major, and Steven Altum, a senior political science major, are running for the position of student body president.

To read more, visit us online.

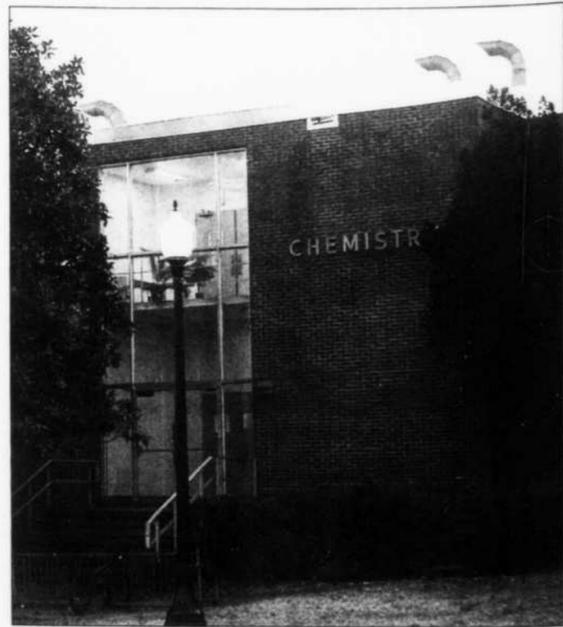


Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor
Davis Science Building is not being funded by Stimulus Package.

Stimulus leaves science unfunded

Obama's package will not cover MTSU's construction planning

STAFF REPORT

Although President Barack Obama signed the \$787 billion stimulus package bill Tuesday, funds from the bill cannot be used toward the construction of MTSU's new science building.

"I have kept up with progress of the bill through Congress," said George Murphy, chair of the biology department. "I know the house approved \$3.5 billion for higher education construction, but the senate removed it."

The stimulus package in-

cludes provisions for the renovation and rehabilitation of educational buildings, but not new construction.

Murphy said that he still remains hopeful for state funding, but the department is still in need of a new building.

"We have the same space we had when we had 10,000 students at MTSU, when I came here," Murphy said. "We have had a big change in the discipline and need modern facilities to do modern-day science."

Murphy has been at MTSU for 40 years and is in his 29th year as biology chair.

Do you want better parking, faster shuttles, more bike lanes and a safer campus?

Here is your chance, MTSU students, to make all of the above happen.

MTSU has long needed a parking garage, bigger shuttle buses and roadway improvements along MTSU Boulevard to add more lighting, bike lanes and better pedestrian facilities. And it can't be done in these tough economic times without your help.

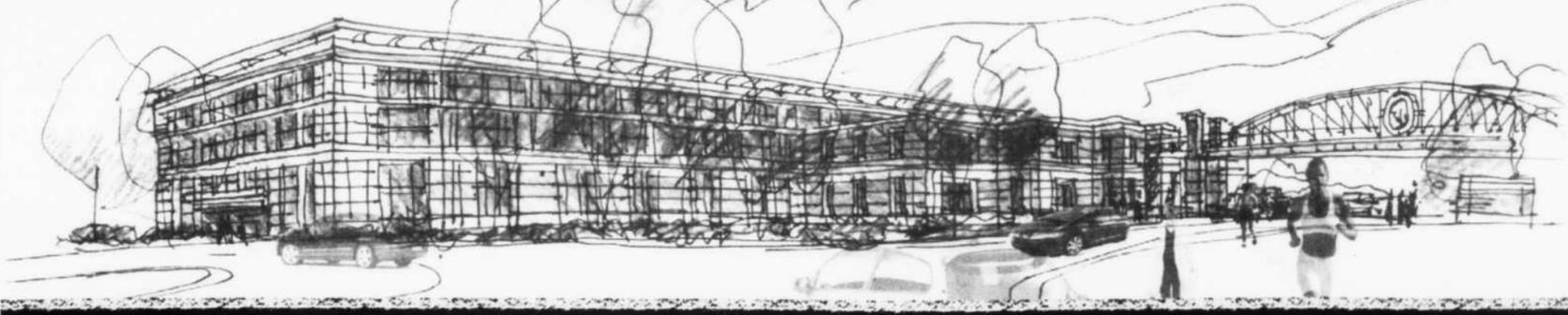
We have developed a plan that allows current and future students to invest in the future for future generations---at the lowest possible cost. After hearing from you and your SGA leaders, we went back to the drawing board and developed a long range plan with smaller per-semester increases to the

Program Services Fee. The first year the increase is \$5, second year \$15, third year \$20, fourth year \$40 and capped at \$60 the fifth and final year.

We can't keep putting off the future. Let's start in small steps NOW to create a better MTSU for you-to get you where you need go to-FASTER and EASIER.

**Thank you for your support, Blue Raiders!
We can't do it without YOU!**

VOTE YES ALL-ACCESS CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN



Visit allaccessmtsu.net for more information.



Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photographer
Librarian Heather Lanier (right) assists Jean Shawver (left) with checking out library books from the Linebaugh Library.

Residents unplug, unwind at library

Local organizations join together raising awareness about illiteracy

By DUSTIN EVANS
Staff Writer

The Linebaugh Library is partnering with the Read to Succeed program of Rutherford County to tackle illiteracy with "Unplug and Read" and the "Literacy Matters Library Card Challenge."

Unplug and Read closes this weekend with an open-air night for teens and young adults on Saturday, Feb. 21 at noon.

"The idea behind Unplug and Read is we all need to take time off from electronics and enjoy reading," said Ronnie Shaw, the executive director of the Read to Succeed program.

Shaw said that the Unplug and Read program can give residents an opportunity to "be more relaxed" in their daily lives.

"Many of us, especially in academia, run around with our iPods and computers," Shaw said. "We all work hard, but we need to take an opportunity to enjoy a book, a newspaper or a magazine - whatever it is that we enjoy."

Shaw said there are numerous programs that unite Read to Succeed, MTSU and the Linebaugh Library.

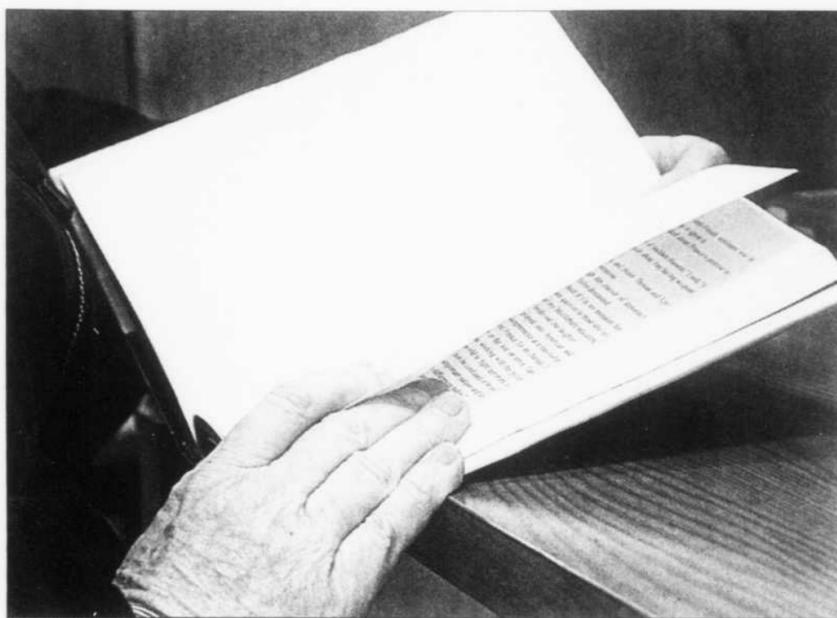


Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photographer
Linebaugh Library is challenging residents to increase library card holders by 75 percent by the end of April.

"We work collaboratively as much as we can," said Rita Shacklett, director of the Linebaugh Library.

Shacklett, who also serves on the Read to Succeed Council and the Lon Nuell Family Literacy Advisory Council, said that in addition to Unplug and Read, there is a reading rally in September and the Literacy Matters Library Card Challenge, which runs until April 18.

"We've set a goal to have

75 percent of Rutherford County residents to be active card holders - not just card holders but active ones," Shacklett said.

David O'Flaherty, an active employee of the Linebaugh Library, said that with the library-card challenge, the book-mobile will be out at public events giving people a chance to get their library card.

Shaw said that there are many ways that Rutherford County residents can par-

ticipate to keep these programs thriving.

"I don't expect students to provide financial support," Shaw said.

Shaw said that students could volunteer to tutor adult learners or find a way that their talents would be most helpful. She also said that hopeful participants could visit the Web site, readtosucceed.org, for information about the different programs, or to sign up to volunteer.

CURRENT EVENTS

Twilight
Feb. 16-20
Monday-Thursday 7 & 10 p.m.
Friday 7p.m.
Admission: \$2
Location: KUC Theater

Bolt
Feb. 23-27
Monday-Thursday 7 & 10 p.m.
Friday 7p.m.
Admission: \$2
Location: KUC Theatre

Save-the-Music Battle of the Bands Round II Fundraiser
Hosted by Omega Delta Psi Recording Industry Fraternity
Feb. 19, 2009 at 8 p.m.
Admission: \$8, all proceeds go to Save the Music
Location: Club 527

The Quest for Black Citizenship
with Jeff Johnson from BET's "The Truth"
Tuesday, Feb. 24 at 7 p.m.
Admission: free
Location: Murphy Center
More Information: contact Sekou Franklin at franklin@mtsu.edu

Spoken-Word: Poetry and Liberation
with speaker Saul Williams, Spoken-Word artist and actor
Monday, Feb. 23 at 7 p.m.
Admission: free
Location: Murphy Center
More Information: contact Rich Kershaw at rkershaw@mtsu.edu

Augustana
Wednesday, Feb. 25 at 7 p.m.
Admission: \$5 for students \$10 for public
Location: MTSU Tucker Theater
More Information: visit MTSU.edu/~EVENTS.

CRIME BRIEFS

Feb. 14, 1:07 a.m.

Drug Possession
Greenland Drive
Daniel Eversole was issued a state citation for simple possession of marijuana.

student refused medical transport.

Feb. 17, 9:31 a.m.

Theft
Jones Hall
Subject requested to speak with an officer in reference to the theft of a DVD player.

Feb. 14, 2:44 a.m.

Underage Drinking
Rutledge Hall
Ryan Counts was issued a citation for underage consumption of alcohol.

Feb. 17, 9:55 p.m.

Drug Possession
Felder Hall
Erik Olsen was issued a citation for possession of drug paraphernalia.

Feb. 15, 1:48 a.m.

Underage Drinking
Off Campus
Joshua Duncan, Lauren Raney and Kristen Coole were issued citations for underage consumption of alcohol.

Feb. 18, 3:11 a.m.

DUI
Middle Tennessee Blvd.
Rebecca Henson and Joshua Claunch were both issued a DUI of the first offense.

Feb. 15, 4:33 p.m.

Harassment
Scarlett Commons
Victims reported being harassed by a neighbor.

Feb. 18, 9:02 a.m.

Theft
Library
Report of a backpack stolen from the library.

Feb. 15, 10:06 p.m.

Medical Assistance
Woodmore Cafeteria
Officers responded to a complaint of a student who passed out. The

Feb. 18, 12:01 p.m.

Traffic
Alma Mater Drive
Subject called and reported that someone had hit their vehicle.

Hard hitting drums, heavy guitar riffs, vocals that go from sexy and melodic to "I need anger management"

Atomic Blonde
with
NOVEMBER HALO STEREO SWAGGER
SAT FEB 21 • CLUB 527 • 8PM
527 W. MAIN STREET • MURFREESBORO, TN 37129

BIG POPPA www.myspace.com/AtomicBlonde www.AtomicBlonde.net **ICONIC ROCKWEAR**

Bands battle for kids

MTSU fraternity holds battle to save music

STAFF REPORT

Omega Delta Psi will be holding a Battle of the Bands fundraiser show tonight at Club 527.

All proceeds will go to VH1's Save the Music to help provide instruments to kids who can't afford them.

"All the music goes to Save the Music; we don't keep any of it," said Cassia Davidson, a senior recording industry major. "We will take all the money that we earn throughout the semester and give it to VH1."

ODP is the only professional fraternity for the

recording industry in the nation.

"Our fraternity is brand new; we are only about three years old," Davidson said. "We have just been passing out flyers and trying to get people to know about us and the events we are holding."

The Battle of the Bands show is the sec-

vidson said. "We have judges for each panel at each show and the final winners will receive a grand prize."

Bands playing at the show include The Bluzbyrds, Awsom ShRRT, The Josh Phiffer Band, The Compromise, Anathens and Thief. Winners will receive prizes from the show's sponsors.

"Grimey's, Chili's and Johnny Guitar's are some of our sponsors awarding the winners prizes," Davidson said.

Admission for the show is \$8 and will be donated to Save the Music. The final show will be March 27 at Club 527.

All the music goes to Save the Music, we don't keep any of it."

CASSIA DAVIDSON
SENIOR RECORDING INDUSTRY MAJOR

ond of three shows being held that will include local bands competing to win prizes.

"The top three bands from each show will play at the final battle," Da-

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OPINIONS

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Students should vote on SGA candidates

With higher education on the chopping block and students questioning the quality of academic programs, the Student Government Association election is now more important than ever.

If students want to be heard and work with SGA leaders to save MTSU from losing its main focus of quality over quantity, then perhaps students should learn what each candidate represents before they cast an uneducated vote just to say they did.

Election Commissioner candidate Patrick Mertes said in the debate that he would like to see SGA try harder to get more students involved. We're not even trying to get your vote and we still want more students to participate.

While student body presidential candidates Brandon McNary and Steven Altum agree that education needs to be highlighted and spared from budget cuts, each take a different perspective as to how they will deal with them.

Altum said that the cuts aren't as drastic as people are making them out to be. McNary didn't comment on the severity of the cuts, but said he thinks students should know exactly what is going on through his connections with student media.

It's things like these that make students stop and base their decision on who they will vote for, but if students don't know the candidates' stances then what's the point of even voting?

A debate was held Monday in the Business and Aerospace building where candidates were given the opportunity to voice their opinions and aspirations if elected.

One of our reporters at the debate said that while many people attended, it wasn't even close to half of the student body. This is just sad, considering most people will vote solely based on Greek affiliation or which candidate for which their friends voted.

Student Affairs is being restructured, students are losing the career experience of working at WMOT, and many unpopular academic programs are up for discussion.

As students, we realize the severity of the state our economy. We're looking for student leaders that will fight for our education. It's not about telling students what they want to hear to make the administration happy; it's about being real and standing up for issues the people you represent believe in.

No spot for parking garage

It's one thing for students to be voting on fee increases for the "All-Access Campus Improvement Plan" referendum Feb. 24-26 on PipelineMT.

Now, Parking and Transportation Services is trying to sway the student body to vote yes on the referendum's fee increases by buying advertising with student payments and placing it all over campus.

Student payments, you ask?

Yes, the advertising money is coming from the "access fee" portion of tuition and parking-ticket payments; that money has bought the plethora of "Vote Yes" signs around campus, a very professional-looking Web site and ad-



From the Editor
Michael Stone

vertising in *Sidelines*.

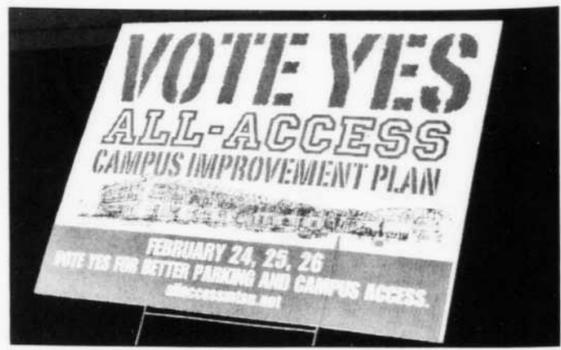
This isn't counting all the money Events and Transportation Services and Campus Planning has spent on research. Did I mention the tacky white bus sitting in the parking lot beside the Campus Recreation Center?

But this is a very good idea, right? Who wouldn't

want to vote for a parking garage and improvements to the shuttle-bus system and bike lanes?

It's all well and good that students are being allowed to vote on it, but university employees shouldn't be permitted to waste money to try to subconsciously make students feel that the referendum is going to directly benefit them. University funds should not be used on "Vote Yes" advertising when so many departments, programs and other features of MTSU are on the verge of getting axed.

Dozens of people are working around the clock to keep MTSU's jazz station, WMOT 89.5, running during this time of economic downturn and bud-



get crunches in education. Meanwhile, university officials are squandering away money on advertising toward something that many students don't support.

Not a single student attending MTSU right now — unless he or she plans on staying in college for an extended amount of time — will see the benefits of this

project. In fact, if the student body passes the parking referendum, it will have to endure the increased costs of tuition and the con-

To read more, visit us online.



Men should be feminists, too

During a recent conversation with a friend, the subject of feminism was brought up. She questioned why I called myself a feminist, to which I gave her a response that went something like "Sexism is still prevalent in the world today, and you need to have people out there who are fighting for equal rights."

Now, I love discussions about this subject because I end up learning something new every time, and I would like for the other person to feel the same way. But there is one statement that almost always comes up, and it's something I would like to discuss.

"Men and women are



Tales From a Feminist
MacKenzie Fox

equal now, so what is the need for feminism?" or "I'm a man, so I can't be a feminist." It's because of statements like these that I've decided to show you why feminism is still alive and well today.

I'm sure the statistic that women's pay is about 74 cents to a man's dollar isn't

new yet it's not just blatant forms of sexism like this that are dangerous not only to women but also men.

That's right, guys, you face many slaps from the sexist monster just like we do. Women are supposed to be quiet and dainty.

And men? You should be testosterone-driven and sex-crazed. If not? Well you're just a sissy, aren't you? The answer to that is no. And you know what makes it worse for you men out there? You can't stand up and say, "Hey that's sexist and that offends me."

I mean, you can, but once again, you would be labeled a sissy. That's just not fair to either gender and everyone needs to be part of the fight

to stop it.

It doesn't stop with silly name-calling.

Much like there are plenty of sane mothers who aren't the best at parenting, there are plenty of amazing fathers who want to take care of their children. But because women are supposed to be the caring ones, men are examined as defendants during custody trials in most cases.

Think of it this way — men are more likely to be convicted of violent crime than women, and when they are convicted, men will receive harsher sentences. This goes back to what I was saying earlier about women being quiet

and society not thinking a woman in her right mind would do something violent — but men can. Why is that?

Seeing that not only women but men are being held up to these crazy standards should get you all worked up; I hope it does.

So the next time guys, when someone ask you if you're a feminist, really think about what that person is asking you — maybe you'll consider saying yes.

Because any woman will tell you that a self-proclaimed feminist is as sexy as they get.

Fox is a sophomore in sociology and can be reached at mdf3c@mtsu.edu

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Silent Majority

I also used to be a member of the silent majority. Think about the phrase. You're clearly in the majority and yet, you remain silent. What has this resulted in?

You, the majority, have remained silent and allowed the very vocal minority to take over pretty much every aspect of our government.

The so-called "right to choose" minority has been able to change our society into one that has no problem killing unborn babies.

The "peace at any price"

minority has been able to almost destroy our ability to collect valuable information about our enemies.

And, the "tax-and-spend" minority has put our country into a deficit that even our grandchildren won't be able to repay.

Our elected officials in Washington have ignored the majority and catered to these minorities for too long. Please join me in a pledge to refuse to remain silent, to contact every government official and let them know that the majority has had enough. Let's take our country back!

Say it with me, "I will not

be silent any longer!

Jim Robinson can be reached at jim_robinson@comcast.net

ARAMARK's cruelty

It's great to read about the empowering actions of the student group Solidarity. The Humane League has also been protesting ARAMARK.

Despite other options, ARAMARK knowingly chooses to use eggs from caged hens. Cages for egg-laying chickens are a cruel method of confinement that prevents hens from

ever leading a natural life.

With battery cages, each hen has less space than a standard sheet of paper. Birds spend their lives without ever seeing the sun or feeling solid ground beneath their feet, and have their feathers torn off from constantly rubbing against cage bars.

ARAMARK's competitors, like Compass Group, already made the socially responsible decision to switch to cage-free eggs. More than 350 colleges and universities have also switched to cage-free eggs.

Eggs from chickens contained in battery cages are

a cruel practice that has no place in today's sustainable market. ARAMARK should go cage-free.

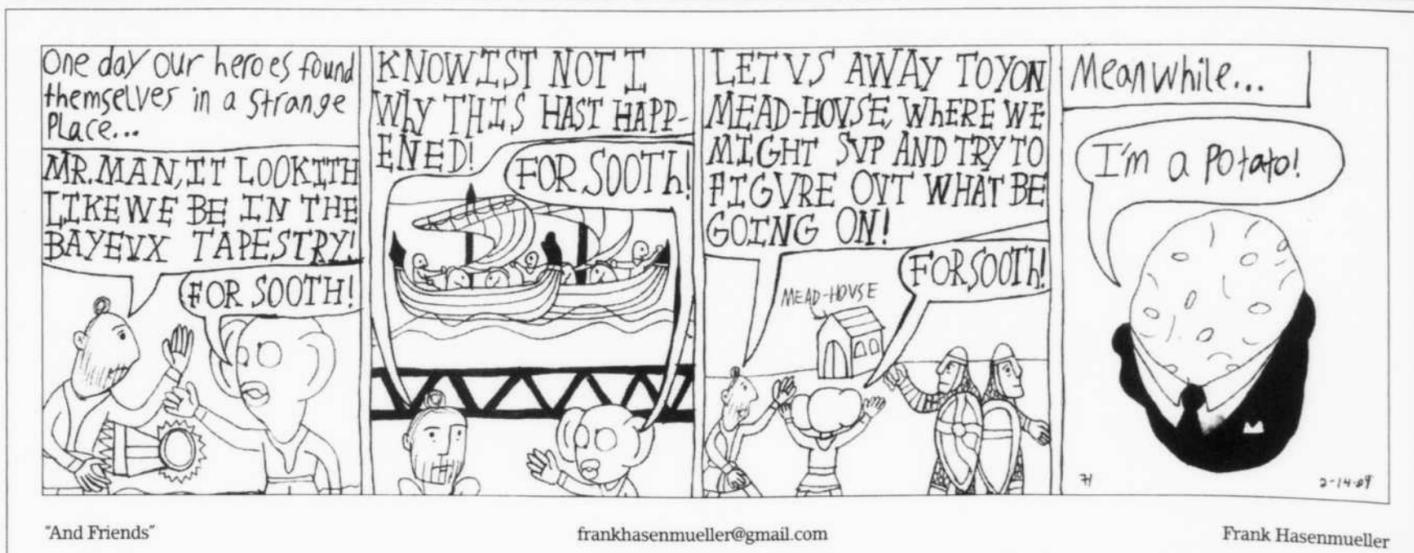
Sally Andersen can be reached at sally@thehumanleague.com

Letters Policy

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

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COMICS



"And Friends"

frankhasenmueller@gmail.com

Frank Hasenmueller

DO YOU WATCH MTTV?

online TELL US ONLINE AT MTSUSIDELINES.COM

FEATURES



ARE YOU VOTING IN THE SGA ELECTIONS?

BASED ON VOTES FROM MTSUSIDELINES.COM.

Bringing back the rock Modoc plays good old-fashioned rock 'n' roll

By JESSICA PACE
Staff Writer

It is a rare thing today to stumble upon music that can be pegged as plain rock 'n' roll without over-produced electronic or saccharine indie additives. Modoc is one of the few rarities during the last year that has been able to add nothing more than an updated spin on an old sound.

Imagine if Kings of Leon learned to play guitar from Led Zeppelin and grew up with Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers reading stories to them. The result would be Indiana-based band Modoc, who uprooted and moved to Nashville two years ago in search of an audience more receptive of their roots rock.

"We didn't get that great of a response [from the audience in Indiana]," says Clint Culberson, the guitarist and lead vocalist. "They either wanted to hear Skynyrd or country."

Prior to the formation of Modoc, named after the city in which Culberson grew up, the group was working on separate "pop projects."

Culberson, drummer and keyboardist Johnny Carlson and guitarist Kyle Addison had all been playing individually since their teen years. Preferring to play loud, they soon got tired of blending into the acoustic rock college scene and formed Modoc in 2005.

"It was just not our heart," says Culberson, referring to the Indiana music scene. "We're not very pretty as far as wanting to

be like everyone else. We all grew up listening to rock 'n' roll. It's got a different soul, and we're a different breed of people."

The first 10 songs the band wrote were recorded in six months and released under the title *Rock*. Culberson remarks that the first collection of songs is



funny to listen to in retrospect and that their newest EP, *Passive Aggressive*, is probably closer to rock than *Rock* actually is.

"We kind of grew into rock 'n' roll a little bit," Carlson adds, "We weren't kicking ass from day one.

Who:
Modoc
Where:
The Mercy Lounge-Nashville
When:
Feb. 23, 9 p.m.

It started as retro-pop kind of stuff and just got harder and harder."

As one of the only few rock 'n' roll groups in the band's town, Modoc dubbed Indiana as a "lost cause" musically speaking, and moved to Music City in August 2007.

They left behind a bass player, but the stars aligned for the band when Asher Moss, an Indiana friend and Modoc fan who had moved to Nashville a year before, learned bass at age

28 to join the band.

"There are three cities to live in for music," says Carlson. "New York, L.A. or Nashville, and Nashville was closer. And warmer."

Modoc has too much heart and soul for L.A. or New York anyway.

Passive Aggressive, a five-song compilation, was released unceremoniously last December but boldly reflects Modoc's developing writing ability and musicianship.

"I'd like to think I've gotten a little more knowledgeable on how to write a song as far as words go," Culberson humbly puts it.

Moss is a little less modest.

"It's got more balls," he says. "Large balls."

Large balls, indeed.

New bands often lack a distinguished sound, always falling into the category of "sounds like." Though it is clear when listening to *Passive Aggressive* where the influences came from, Modoc has enough originality melded with classic rock to have carved their own niche.

"We had a lot more going on with this EP," Carlson says. "We all lived pretty easy lives in Indiana and we wrote songs kind of like we were living. But you know it's tough to move somewhere and have a job and try to scrape by and be in the band at the same time."

"We were struggling, like the song 'The Struggler,'" Culberson adds, referring to the EP's first contemplative track.

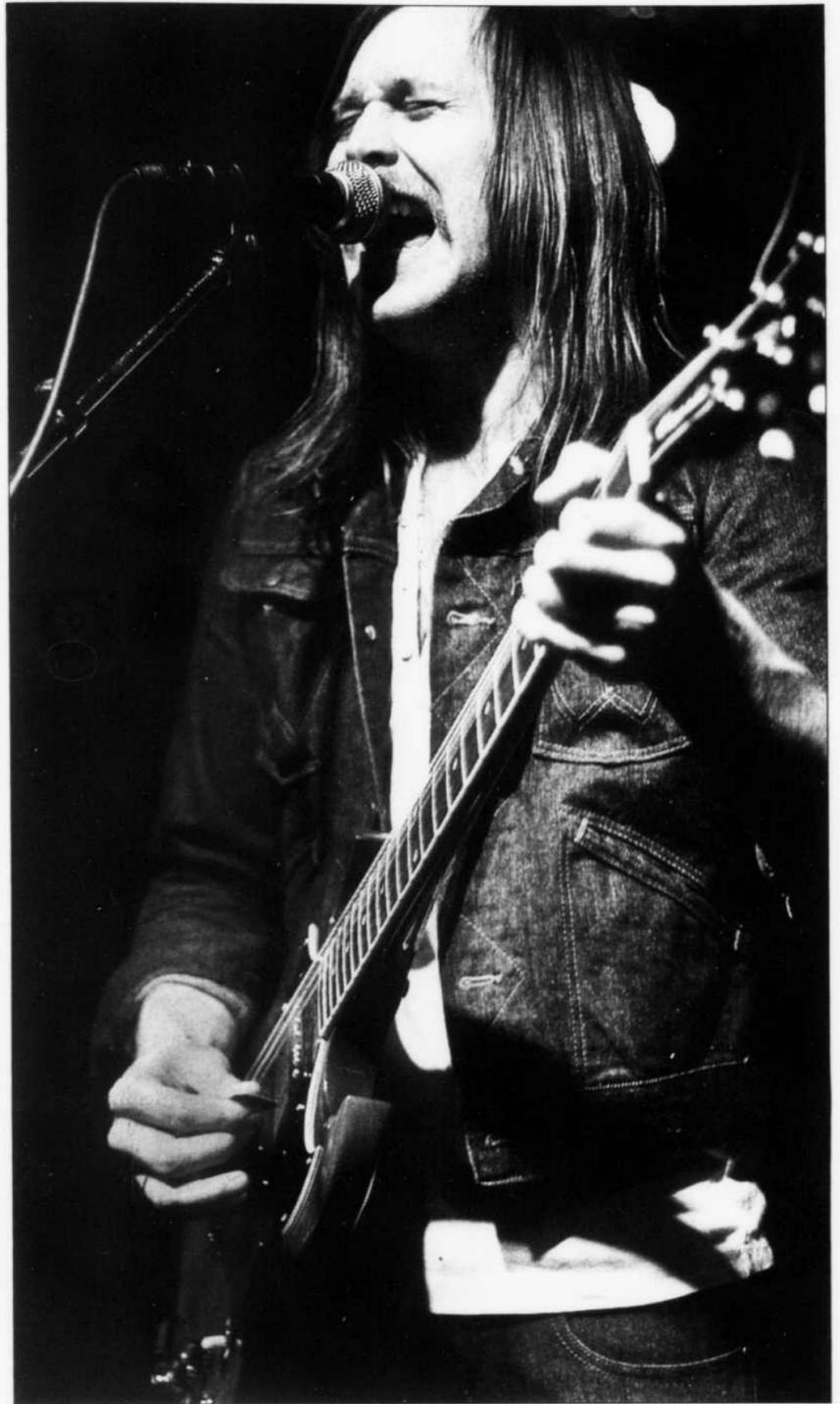


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Clint Culberson, Modoc's lead guitarist and vocalist, performs at Exit/In in Nashville Monday.

MODOC, PAGE 6

Playing solely with his soul

MTSU senior doesn't let disability get in way of his dreams

By MICHAEL STONE
Editor-in-Chief

Nick is a simple guy. He has big dreams with more realistic backups. He wants to get married, have kids and earn a steady job to support his family.

Nick is a simple guy. He likes hanging out with friends, listening to music and receiving a college education.

Nick is a simple guy - at least he may seem like one before you get to know him. Born on Oct. 9, 1981, Nick Eugene Sharp has a welcoming personality accentuated by the guitar he usually wields at his side.

In his 28 years of life, Nick has recorded three studio albums, opened for performers such as Tim McGraw and Billy Ray Cyrus, appeared on "Live with Regis and Kathie Lee" and the Grand Ole Opry, and plans to audition for the next season of "American Idol."

And he has done it all

without being able to see.

But Nick says he doesn't want this to be the reason that people admire him as a musician or as a person.

"I don't like me being blind as reason to get what I want," Nick says.

Growing up in Mattoon, Ill., Nick took an early cling to the country music scene that he heard blaring from the South. One of his favorite artists, Billy Ray Cyrus, produced much of the sound he filtered into his ears.

The first time he saw his southern idol was on June 4, 1993 along with his sister, Jamey, and father, Gene. And thanks to Nick's dad, the three got to personally meet Cyrus that night.

"My dad was an excellent salesman," Nick says with the widest possible smile. "He could sell a fridge to an Eskimo."

Nick says that he and Cyrus talked for what



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Nick Sharp sings during lunchtime at the KUC Grill Feb. 11.

seemed like forever.

"Anyone can get backstage and you're lucky to get a handshake and maybe a picture," Nick describes. "But this guy, I actually got to go back there and meet him."

At the end of the night, Cyrus offered Nick, his sister and his father free tickets to his show in St. Louis

the following night. Nick would go on to hear Billy Ray eight more times.

Between concerts and receiving his education at the Illinois School for the Blind, Nick and his sister began to practice music of their own. Nick would sing and play guitar while Jamey would sing back-up vocals.

Nick had been taking guitar lessons since 1992, when he was 11. He says he has overwhelming respect for the instructors that taught him the art of the six-string sword.

"I couldn't teach a blind guy to play guitar - I don't have the patience," Nick laughs. "You gotta have patience."

The Sharp siblings began to play local gigs around Illinois. At one of their shows, a local promoter saw the brother-sister combo performing. Thanks to the promoter and the Children's Miracle Network, Nick and Jamey were invited to open for Tim McGraw.

"I've never been so scared in my life," Nick says with a shudder of reminiscent fear.

The venue: the Prairie Capital Convention Center. The crowd size: around 10,000.

"I was Garth Brooks, I was Billy Ray Cyrus," Nick says describing his performance. "I was the embodiment of who I want to be as an entertainer."

The mid-'90s was a time of prosperity for the Sharp

siblings. Through the same swaying salesmanship that got Nick and Jamey backstage with Cyrus two years prior, Gene Sharp helped his children land some major gigs.

Nick and Jamey appeared on the Grand Ole Opry and "Live with Regis and Kathie Lee" alongside a young and budding Will Smith.

"I didn't know who [Will Smith] was, but my sister sure did," Nick chuckles.

The two even got to open up for Nick's childhood idol, Billy Ray Cyrus.

It was after these performances that Nick and Jamey decided that they had a strong desire to "pursue this music thing."

So on March 5, 1995, the two, along with their father, made a "pilgrimage" to the South to try and "break into the inner-circle of Nashville," Nick describes.

But Nick says it was during the mid-'90s that the country music that had influenced his life so much began to move away from his soul.

TALENTED, PAGE 6

**MODOC
FROM PAGE 5**

"I'm not going to say everything I write in there is the absolute truth; it's a song - you've got to have some fairy tale in there, but it's based along those lines," Culberson says.

Carlson describes the record as generally "frustrated."

"When you're making an EP and you're having a [expletive] time in your life, it's going to turn out in a different way than if everything is glorious and you're using the ukulele or something," Carlson says.

Similarly raised on their parents' Beatles and Rolling Stones records, the band all had different interests in '90s rock bands like Weezer, Pearl Jam, The Smashing Pumpkins and The Toadies. Apart from Culberson's love for Zeppelin, there is no strong link between Modoc's sound and their listening background.

"I think the music we grew up with affects the way that we individually play more than it does how we play as a band," Carlson says. "I definitely play the stuff I listen to. And I think Clint does and Kyle and Asher and then it molds together into something almost unrecognizable."

The EP does have a recognizable theme running throughout, love, in both a positive and negative sense.

"Whether it's love or heartbreak or lack of love, every one of those songs [on the EP] have to do with some form of love," Culberson says. "There's other influences throughout those songs, but love is the biggest one. I don't want to sound like a big hippie, but



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Modoc bassist Asher Moss plays at Exit/In in Nashville Monday.

love can be rock and roll," Carlson adds. "There's a lot about love that sucks."

Love may be a tired subject for music, but Modoc puts enough bite into it to maintain Nashville's interest. In 2008, the band was picked for Next Big Nashville, a showcase to promote the city's non-country artists.

Based on their show at Exit/In last Monday, Modoc's live performances are just like the EP: revved-up and red-hot. All the songs from the album are standouts, but the combined sweetness and grit in the bluesy lust-anthem "I Want You" especially hits the mark, as well as "The Struggler."

They seem to be less concerned with breaking new and innovative ground, which can too often result in overly intricate indie or generic rock, and more dedicated to reviving a genre that has been broken down for the past 30 years.

"Rock 'n' roll's not dead, but it sure as hell ain't thriving," says Culberson. "It's become about 'American Idol.' A lot

of people think that rock 'n' roll just has to do with what you're singing about, but I can listen to a Nickelback song and know that's not rock 'n' roll. But that's just me. You may be singing about sex and drugs and drinking, but it isn't deep. It's surface-level [expletive]."

"What does rock even mean anymore?" Carlson asks. "It's an overused term. I think it's a time period more than anything else."

But the band is hopeful about rock's comeback, and while it works on molding its sound, Modoc just wants people to hear its music in the way it perceives music to be.

"I'm not saying that we don't sound like anybody else, but I think we're doing some things that some people wouldn't," Culberson says.

Does *Passive Aggressive* explore uncharted territory in rock? Not necessarily. But the energy stretches for miles, and the familiarity combined with a brash approach is simultaneously romantic and rocks hard.

**TALENTED
FROM PAGE 6**

"It stopped speaking to me," Nick recalls. "I started to not believe in it."

Nick's musical arms began to reach out for more than the country that had turned its back on him.

"I started to get into bands like Nirvana," Nick says. "Now that spoke to me."

It was not just Nick's taste in music that widened but also his skills as a musician. He began to write songs in 1997.

It was this craft that carried him through 1998 - the year his sister Jamey died.

"She died in a car wreck on the same day we had met Billy Ray five years earlier," Nick remembers. "If I didn't write during that time, I don't know what would have happened."

It would take two years of coping with his sister's death before Nick would return to the stage in 2000. That same year, he began his career at MTSU to pursue a recording industry degree.

Nick started his major with a concentration in audio production. But he soon figured out that wasn't the career path for him.

"I figured out early that I don't get along with a console full of buttons," Nick says jokingly.

So Nick changed his recording concentration to the management aspect of the degree. But upon graduation, the inhabitants of the recording industry house left Nick, his guitar and his passion for music outside in the rain.

He needed work, though.

And he needed money.

So Nick started working in the dreary life of the concession-stand life of the selling plump franks and soggy nachos. He had stopped doing gigs, stopped playing music and stopped pursuing his dream. Well, at least the recording industry dream.

Nick dreamt a new dream, though, and that dream was teaching. And to pursue that dream, he left concessions and returned to MTSU in the fall of 2007 to work toward his bachelor's in English.

And to Nick, the transition from music to teaching wasn't that different.

"Whether you're performing or teaching, you always have to capture the attention of the audience," Nick describes. "Every time you take the stage and every time you're in front of kids, there's the chance to improve."

But before he graduates in December, he is going to give the music biz one last shot in August as he plans to audition for "American

Idol." And thanks to his dad's influence on his life, he says he'll be ready for the audition.

"Gene Sharp makes Simon Cowell look like a walk in the park," Nick says with a smile I have now grown to know quite well.

Nick is involved in the Experiential Learning Program, which allows him to get a hands-on teaching experience at Central Middle School. And there, he is beginning to form what he calls a "non-traditional" approach to teaching.

"I'm not going to be your typical English teacher," Nick describes. "I can't quote John Milton, but I can sure quote some Johnny Rzeznik [from the Goo Goo Dolls]."

And Nick says that he is going to do everything he can to be successful in his teaching career.

"I don't jump into things assuming failure," Nick says. "You don't have to be tough because the world is out to get you. You have to be tough because that's the way life is."

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SPORTS

Lady Raiders earn 90-64 victory

Women's Basketball wins 15th straight in Sun Belt Conference with success over South Alabama



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Junior guard Jackie Pickel brings the ball up the court against South Alabama on Wednesday night. Pickel scored five points to help the Lady Raiders earn a 90-64 victory.

STAFF REPORT

The MT women's basketball team continued their streak of Sun Belt wins last night in the Murphy Center, as the South Alabama Jaguars fell in a 90-64 decision.

The Lady Raiders entered into the game as the 25th ranked team in the nation, according to the USA Today/ESPN poll.

Junior forward Alysha Clark led the team scoring, shooting for 30 points in her 36 minutes on the court.

Junior guard Chelsia Lymon helped Clark. Lymon shot for 20 points in the night, a season high.

The Lady Raiders had four players who scored in the double digits. In addition to Clark and Lymon,

sophomore guard Anne Marie Lanning scored 16 points and junior forward Brandi Brown tallied 12 points.

Sophomore forward Emily Queen did not play against USA due to an ankle injury sustained during the "Pink Zone" game against North Texas.

MT had nine players come off the bench. Of those nine, eight added to the total MT points.

MT led throughout the entirety of the game, concluding with a 26 point advantage.

South Alabama scored 21 3-pointers, compared to the 30 scored by MT.

The Lady Raiders have an record of 23-4, with a 15-0 conference record. The team heads next to Florida Atlantic on Feb. 21.

Softball drops doubleheader at home against Memphis

By RYLEE PATRICK
Contributing Writer

The Blue Raiders softball team faced stiff competition as they fell to the Memphis Tigers in a doubleheader Tuesday.

The Middle Tennessee softball team (0-6, 0-0), led by head coach Sue Nevar, dropped the opener, 10-2, and the second game, 12-5. In the contests, MT opened Blue Raider Field for the first time this season to play its in-state rival. Before their most recent losses, the Blue Raiders were 1-4 all-time against the Tigers.

"I am excited to open this season's home schedule against Memphis," Nevar said prior to Tuesday's games. "They are a very good team in a tough conference and returned a lot of their starters from last season. I expect a very competitive two games."

This was the first time Nevar had faced the Tigers in her coaching career. Before Tuesday's games, the Blue Raiders and the Tigers

had not met since April 4, 2007 when the MT lost to Memphis 2-1 at Blue Raider Field.

During Tuesday's doubleheader, MT senior Martha Davis slammed two homeruns and had five RBIs while going a combined 3-for-6, but her efforts weren't enough to stop the Tigers.

The Blue Raiders handed over a total of 15 runs in the first two innings of each game as Memphis (5-3, 0-0) cruised to a pair of victories.

Junior Lindsey Vander Lugt (0-3) pitched vander for the Blue Raiders and gave up six earned runs on six hits before sophomore Kelly Head came in relief and gave up two earned runs on five hits. Head struck out three in her four innings of work.

In her five-inning performance, Tiger's starter Vanessa Walle (2-0) gave up two runs on five hits. Walle also struck out one and walked two in her second start of the season.

The Tigers took a 5-0

lead in the first inning before adding another five runs in the second to bring the score to 10-0.

In the third inning, the Blue Raiders put their first runs on the board as Davis nailed her first homerun to bring Corrie Abel home, updating the score to 10-2 in favor of the away team.

The Raiders had the possibility to score again with runners at second and third with two outs before Kelsey Dortch grounded out to end the third inning.

Memphis got another head start in the second game, scoring two runs in the first inning and three runs in the second. MT's Caitlin McLure responded with the first run for the Blue Raiders in the first.

Freshman Caty Jutson (0-3) toed the rubber and gave up nine runs on 10 hits while walking two in her three-inning appearance.

Head then hit the mound in relief for her second appearance of the day to pitch



Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photographer
Freshman outfielder Shelby Barrett waits for a pitch in the batter's box at Tuesday's game against Memphis. The Blue Raiders dropped the first game, 10-2, and the second game, 12-5.

the final four innings of the game.

The Tigers scored another four runs in the third inning and added three more in the fourth to lead the

Blue Raiders 12-2.

In the bottom of the fifth inning, Davis smashed her first homerun of the game and her second of the day to bring in three runs, ending

the game 12-5 in favor of the Tigers.

Next, the Blue Raiders will hit the field to face Auburn at the Auburn Invitational at 5 p.m. Friday.

Blue Raider men's basketball looking for Sun Belt victory

Team looks to reverse current losing streak against South Alabama

By ZACH REVES
Assistant Sports Editor

After losing their last three Sun Belt Conference games, the Blue Raider men's basketball team is looking for a change in its current fortune against South Alabama tonight at 7 p.m.

Successive losses on the road to Denver and Troy followed by a home loss against North Texas have set the Blue Raiders back into a large hole in the conference. At four-and-a-half games back in the division, MT needs every win it can get.

Enter South Alabama—the next obstacle in the Blue Raiders path. South Alabama, at 8-7 in the Sun

Belt, is almost a mirror image of the Blue Raiders. Both teams are 15-11 overall and are a half game of each other inside the conference.

Similarities continue to show in how the teams play the game. South Alabama scores 71.7 points a game compared to MT's 71.3. Both teams have nine wins at home and five on the road. However, the biggest difference can be found in the direction the teams are going.

South Alabama is on a two-game win streak while the Blue Raiders are experiencing a two-game losing streak.

In its last contest, MT dropped an 89-78 decision to North Texas in a

rare Murphy Center loss. The Blue Raiders were plagued by poor shooting and fouls by players that put the game out of reach for the home team.

For a victory, the Blue Raiders will hope to get production out of certain key players. The team's leading scorer, junior forward Desmond "Boogie" Yates, records an average 18 points per game. Senior guard Kevin Kanaskie specializes in distributing the ball to players like Yates with his team-high 4.2 assists per game. Junior guard/forward Montarrio Haddock continues to control the boards for MT with a team-high 5.5 rebounds per game.

The Jaguars of South

Alabama are coming off a 91-70 home victory over Florida Atlantic. In the contest, five different players scored in double-figures, and the team shot 66 percent from the field.

South Alabama boasts three strong scoring options in guard Domonic Tilford, Brandon Davis and DeAndre Coleman. Tilford heads the group with 16.9 points per game, and leads the team with 3.3 assists per game. Coleman and Davis are rebounding forces in the paint with 8.0 and 7.5 rebounds per game, respectively.

Next, the Blue Raiders will travel to Florida Atlantic (2-13 SBC) for a 6 p.m. tip-off Saturday.

Sports FROM PAGE 1

The application of the new turf to Floyd Field and the baseball team's renovated Reese Smith Jr. Stadium are two of the big projects the BRAA has raised funds for in the past, said Farley.

The Steering Committee also directed budget cuts towards the MT Student Athlete Enhancement Center. The plan would merge this program, which tutors and encourages academic success in MT athletes, and the Academic Advising program on campus, for a savings of \$150,000.

"Our program and Academic Advising are already generally linked," said Jim Rost, director of the Student Athlete Enhancement Center. "We don't know how any proposed cut would affect us right now, but the NCAA requires a program like ours to be available to the students."

A third proposed budget cut is the consolidation of Sports Information, which

generates free media for the school's athletics, with Athletic Marketing, which is the main seller of MT sports tickets, for an estimated savings of \$175,000. Members of the departments declined to comment on the plan.

"We understand cuts have to be made in this current climate, but it doesn't feel like [the Steering Committee] understands what it is that's being affected," Farley said. "Nobody has sat down with us to ask how best to cut the program."

"The BRAA has steadily increased its generated revenue every year. It doesn't make sense to cut something that's creating money."

Similarly, the Student Athlete Enhancement Center was also unaware of the details. "We haven't been contacted by anyone about the specifics," Rost said. "All we know is what's written in the report. Until then, we'll just keep going like normal until they make a decision on what to change."

Baseball breaks ground on new season

Newly renovated Reese Smith Jr. Field hosts refreshed MT baseball club for season opener

By CHRIS WELCH
Sports Editor

The MT baseball team is looking forward to an eventful new season, starting with the opening of the recently renovated Reese Smith Jr. Field and hopefully, ending with a Sun Belt Conference championship bid.

Friday's game against Missouri State will be the first played in the new stadium, a milestone not lost on head coach Steve Peterson.

"This is a special moment for my team, my coaching staff and me," Peterson said. "It will also be a special moment for everyone that is here, because it will never happen again."

After the construction of the stadium began in 2008, the MT baseball team played more away games and moved home games to a home stadium. With the field completed, the Blue Raiders will play more home games, opening the season with nine of the first 10 games at home.

Commemorative keepsakes are being given to all who attend Friday's game. The administration has issued a certificate and card with the stadium's history to every Blue Raider fan in attendance.

"You have to realize Friday will never happen again," Peterson said. "The opening day of the new stadium which people have been contributing to, and [that] I have been running my mouth about for the last 10 years...it is finally happening."

The Blue Raiders are celebrating the new stadium with a veteran team. MT has seven seniors, 12 juniors and nine pitchers returning who have experience on the collegiate

level.

MT has just seven new players, two of which are transfer students, one redshirt and four freshmen.

The pitching staff has another year under its belt and is more seasoned, compared to starting its 2008 season untested. Sophomore Brice Brentz, who was named to the Sun Belt preseason team this year, will start on Friday.

"Our rotation will be [Brentz] on Friday, Kenny Roberts on Saturday and PJ Francescon on Sunday," Peterson said. "On the mound, we have to force the opposition to hit our pitches.

"Throw strikes and don't be afraid of our pitch, which is not right down the middle of the plate. If we do these things, we will be a good ball club."

Francescon and Jud Stoltz both performed well in summer ball and both competed for starting positions last season. Junior Tyler Hyde also being vying for a spot.

Junior college transfer Coty Woods will also see some playing time this season, said Peterson. In from Walters State, Woods is already an established pitcher and will add depth to the closer and relief roles.

The Blue Raiders also return senior Rawley Bishop, who along with Brentz, was named to the Ping!Baseball 2009 Preseason Team as a first baseman.

Bishop was an offensive powerhouse in the 2008 season, batting .372 with 18 home runs. He also totaled 34 RBI and 36 runs in the season.

Bishop and Brentz tied for fifth in single-season home runs, and will help to lead the team in an

already power-heavy returning staff.

Junior outfielder Zach Hudson was third on the team in 2008 batting average with a .366. With great performances in the summer and fall, Hudson has worked his way into the mix as a consistent threat in the outfield.

Junior Drew Robertson and sophomore Justin Miller both performed well in the fall and will

The Blue Raider team posted a 27-29-1 record overall last season. Peterson begins his 22nd season as head coach with a 663-531-3 record at the helm.

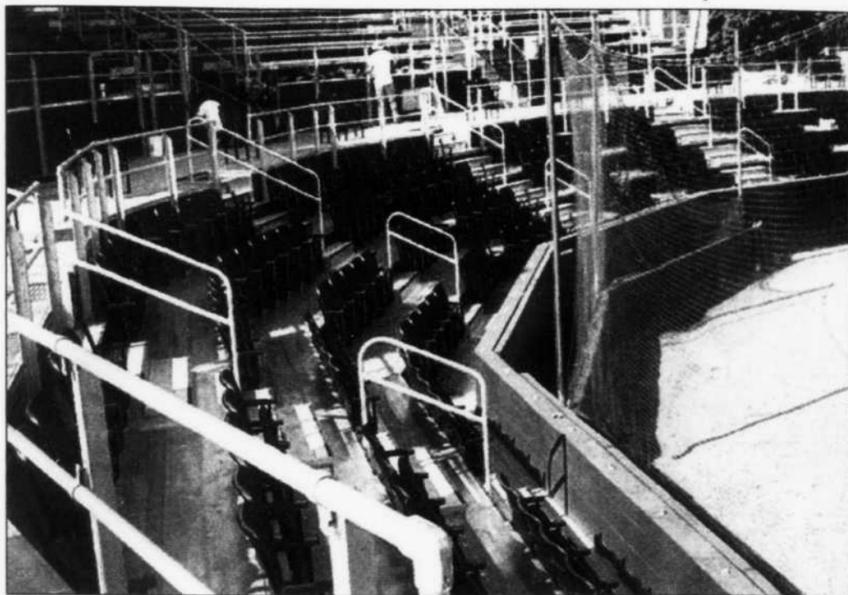


Photo courtesy MT Athletic Communications

Reese Smith Jr. Field is quickly being recognized as one of the finest collegiate stadiums in the nation. The recently renovated stadium hosts its first game on Friday.

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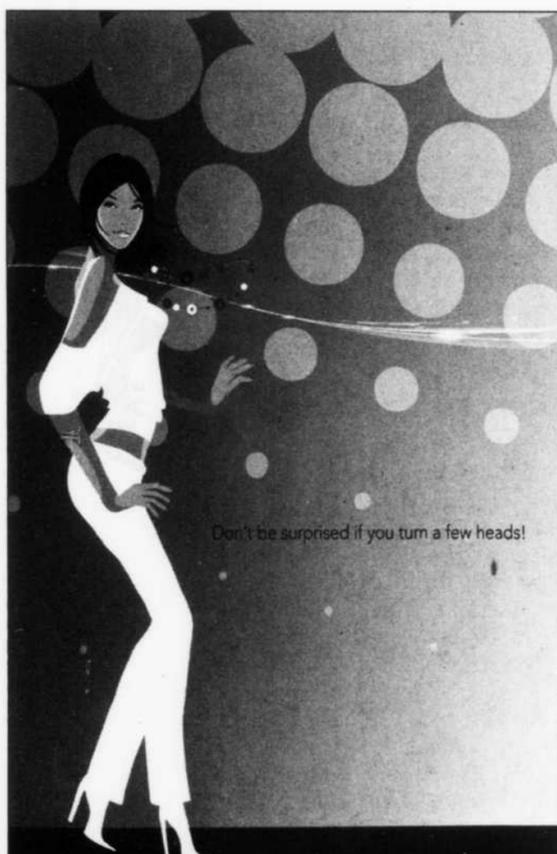
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