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Bill will protect athletes

By Hillary Robson
Staff Writer

The Sports Agency Responsibility Trust Act, or SPARTA, has passed both House and Senate approval and now awaits the signature of the president to pass into law. The legislation, written and proposed in part by Tennessee Congressman and MTSU alumnus Bart Gordon, protects student athletes from unscrupulous sports agents.

Gordon began his work on the SPARTA legislation four years ago. The bipartisan effort included Republican Congressman Tom Osborne and Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon.

The legislation serves to protect student athletes from being misled by sports agents and orally agreeing to or signing contracts without being aware of the consequences. Signing a professional contract can result in the revoking of a student athlete's NCAA eligibility, their educational scholarships and can result in fines against the schools that they play for.

Gordon was approached by Ken Shipp, a Murfreesboro resident and coach of several college and NFL teams, who expressed the need for a national law. He had witnessed firsthand the manipulation of young players.

"Too often I saw kids leave school early to pursue that dream and never make it. Then they would be out of luck with no college degree to fall back on. That's such a shame," Shipp said.

The legislation prohibits actions committed by a sports agent that are unethical. Enticement of student athletes through gifts of monetary value to either the individual player or that player's organization and false or misleading promises regarding future representation are strictly prohibited.

The law also states that agents must disclose, in writing, the consequences of entering into a professional contract, including the possible loss of NCAA eligibility, to the student.

"What can happen is," Gordon explained, "an agent can give an athlete a gold chain or a suit of clothes, with the athlete thinking nothing of it. But, the agent can then turn [the athlete] in, and they lose their eligibility, and nothing happens to the agent."

Current NCAA rules prohibit eligibility for student athletes who sign professional contracts. As the by-law specifically states: "An individual shall be ineligible for participation in an intercollegiate sport if he or she ever has agreed (orally or in writing) to be represented by an agent for the purpose of marketing his or her athletics ability or reputation in that sport."

Gordon said that "an explosion" of unethical activities by sports agents has been witnessed in college campuses and even at high schools.

He explained that agents often hire individuals to scout talent with "runners," individuals that "act as intermediaries to

See Agents, 3

Rock the courtyard



Photo by Steve Cross | Chief Photographer

Nick Sharp performs in front of the Mass Comm building yesterday. The recording industry department sponsors the showcase at noon every Tuesday.

'Buffy' attracts own academic following

By Erika Decker
Staff Writer

English professor David Lavery students David the phenomenon of the academic field of study of the hit television show "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" at Monday's pop culture honors lecture.

In his lecture "I wrote my thesis on you! 'Buffy' Studies as an Academic Cult," Lavery explored the emergence of a branch of television studies called Buffyology, or "Buffy" studies, as mentioned in the title.

Lavery himself is a "Buffy" scholar, and he and his colleague Rhonda Wilcox are two of the leaders in the study of all things in the so-called "Buffyverse."

"The Buffyverse refers to everything related to the world of 'Buffy,'" Lavery explained.

The same kind of cult following "Buffy" draws from average TV viewers, can also be found among those who study the show academically. A kind of "academic cult" has developed, according to Lavery.

In May, 390 "Buffyologists" gathered in Nashville for the Slayage Conference, sponsored by MTSU and coordinated by Lavery.

"This was the largest ever academic conference ... devoted to a single television show," Lavery said. "One hundred eighty 'Buffy' scholars from six countries and 44 states presented papers over three full days at

the Renaissance Hotel. Media from all over the world covered the conference."

There is a vast array of academic themes woven into "Buffy," Lavery said. These include British and English studies, legal studies and linguistics. Also, many books have been published about "Buffy" including *Slayer Slang: A Buffy the Vampire Slayer Lexicon*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy: Fear and Trembling in Sunnydale* and *What Would Buffy Do? The Vampire Slayer as a Spiritual Guide*.

Lavery also discussed another interesting bit of "Buffy" literature. After a character on the show named Lydia told Spike, a central character and vampire from Buffy, that she had written her thesis on him, a real life "Buffy" scholar created a complete version of Lily's thesis.

"At that wonderful moment ... the Buffyverse seemed almost to acknowledge and even to anticipate the extraordinary field of 'Buffy' studies," Lavery said.

Lavery quoted the creator of "Buffy," Josh Whedon, who said about the show's following, "I designed the show to create that strong reaction. I designed 'Buffy' to be an icon, to be an emotional experience, to be loved in a way that other shows can't be loved because it's about adolescence, which is the most important thing people go through in their development, becoming an adult." ♦

Debate Watch to minimize news media's influence

By Erica Rodefer
Campus News Editor

A program encouraging citizens to ignore the media's commentary on the presidential debate will be held on campus tomorrow night.

Debate Watch advocates debate discussions among peers in an attempt to curb the amount of influence that political parties, experts and the media have on public opinion.

"Research has shown that we're very heavily influenced by what the media said about the debates," said Debate Watch organizer and speech and theater professor Greg Simerly. "This is an effort to talk amongst ourselves rather than listening to what the correspondents and the political parties tell us what happened in the debate."

The presidential debate offers a unique opportunity in which voters can see the candidates side by side talking about the issues, according to Simerly.

"I want to keep an open mind and see what each candidate has to say and what each candidate has to say in response to the other," Simerly said.

David Ryfe, a journalism professor who teaches a class on media coverage on the presidential campaign, said it might

not make that much of a difference in how students see the issues.

A majority of traditional college students are not involved enough to have strong opinions one way or another, and those that already hold political convictions will not be easily swayed, Ryfe said.

"Young people don't have a broad experience yet. Few of them are party identifiers," Ryfe explained. "Generally speaking, they're apathetic and they're not persuadable mainly because they don't know enough to be persuaded, and they don't care enough one way or another."

Despite the small likelihood that the meeting will cause participants to change their minds on political issues, Ryfe said media influence has a lot to do with public opinion on the debates.

"It is certainly the case that media interpretations of the events tend to drive public opinion," he said. "That's why at the end of the debate each campaign sends out a whole hoard of spinners into the media to influence how they interpret the debate."

Simerly said he doesn't expect people to be entirely removed from the media

See Watch, 2



Photo submitted

The MTSU debate team poses in their team T-shirts. They will debate with the British national team to discuss the role of the United States as "the world's policeman."

Debaters to argue against British

By Matt Anderson
Staff Writer

The MTSU debate team is going to face off against the British National debate team next week on the United States' role as "the world's policeman."

MTSU's debate team will take the stance that the United States should be the world's policeman, and the British team will argue against the assertion. The event is an exhibition, so there will not be an official winner, but there will be an audience vote at the end, according to Greg Simerly, director of MTSU's debate program.

Courtney Carver, a senior criminal justice administration major from Murfreesboro, and Scott Tuggle, a junior sociology major from Bell Buckle, Tenn.,

will represent MTSU.

Rob Marrs of Liverpool, England and Aneurin Brewer, originally from Barbados, will represent the British team. Marrs and Brewer are touring the country, having already debated at Hofstra University in New York and the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

The debate will also be a clash of styles. American debate teams strike a balance between style and substance, while European teams play for laughs.

Anyone who has seen the Irish debate team would know what to expect, according to Tuggle.

"They're hysterical," Tuggle said. "A lot of times they gloss over arguments by making some crack at it. Usually, every-

body buys it, because it's like - eh, they're Irish."

"They'll make fun of their opponent and have a good time with it," Simerly said.

The debate team meets an hour-and-a-half every week, but members always have debating on their mind. There is also a class in debating.

"When you're watching 'Headline News,' you're thinking, 'I need to remember that, I need to remember that,'" Simerly said. "If you're just driving to campus and the radio's on, you're constantly taking in preparation."

"It's more of a lifestyle almost in the sense that you're constantly trying to record the information that you

See Debate, 2



This week's poll question at
www.mtsusidelines.com
How do you feel about Ron Jeremy
coming to campus?

Grillin' more than burgers



Photo by Micah Miller | Staff Photographer

Murfreesboro Fire Department fire engines surround Corlew Hall yesterday afternoon after receiving a call about a grease fire that started in the kitchen of McCallie Dining Hall. Aramark employees used an extinguisher to put out the fire prior to the arrival of the fire department.

Meet MTSU's SGA Senators

By Alex Miller
Staff Writer

College of Mass Communication

Jessica Reeves is a sophomore serving her first term on the Senate. She has worked on the homecoming and AIDS Quilt committees, which are affiliated with the Student Government Association.

She belongs to the Delta Zeta sorority, Raider Republicans and Raiders for Christ. She is public relations director for the Panhellenic Council.

This fall she will try to get students more involved on campus and will try to make the SGA more visible.

"[Senators and officers] are elected by the students and are here to serve the students," she said. "So it seems only fitting that the students can see how we are benefiting them."

Kasey Talbott is serving his third year on the Senate. While he is not currently in a fraternity, he was formerly president of MTSU's Interfraternity Council. He has been a Student Orientation Ambassador for CUSTOMS.

He was one of only two sen-

ators who opposed legislation requiring students to serve a year in the senate before running for executive office, Talbott said.

His agenda for the fall is to push for campaign finance reform. He wants a spending cap on student campaigns. Some SGA members spend big bucks to run professional-looking campaigns, he said, which is unfair to students with fewer resources.

Tyler Smith is a senior serving his first term in the senate. He is vice president of the Raider Republicans. He belongs to the Young Republicans and the Rutherford County Republican Party Executive Board.

Smith plans to write a lot of legislation this year, but he wants what he writes to be effective.

"I will not write or sponsor petty legislation just to be drafting legislation," he said. "My legislation will help all students, not just the common few. Students who previously felt they were not represented will appreciate and see the effects of my legislation." ♦

Debate:

Continued from 1

accumulate," Tuggle said.

During practice, the team has practice debates to work on style, but they also have reading assignments and they type notes for the other members. Students draw from their majors and specialize in certain topics, but Simerly said they try to have a "working knowledge" of all subjects. That could be anything from the environment to AIDS in Africa to the European economy.

The debate will be Tuesday, Oct. 5, at 4:30 p.m. in the Business and Aerospace Building State Farm Room. It is free and open to the public. ♦

Watch: Program features peer discussion

Continued from 1

coverage.

"I think [media interpretation] certainly has a place, but the purpose of this program is for people to share with each other first - to talk about their first impressions," Simerly said.

The Commission on Presidential Debates, which is the national organization that coordinates the presidential and vice presidential debates, sponsors the program. There will be similar Debate Watch meetings held all over the country.

Simerly said he hopes to have representatives from a wide range of beliefs and polit-

ical affiliations.

"We have about 30 students lined up [to attend]," Simerly said. "We hope to get 30 members from the Murfreesboro community to join us as well so we have a diversity of different people and different viewpoints."

At the meeting the participants will watch the debate, turn off the television and get into smaller groups to discuss it.

"We'll discuss what we thought, what issues we think were important, which candidates approached the issues best and stuff like that," Simerly said.

Simerly expects a great deal of the discussion to focus on

which candidate presents himself as "the most presidential."

The presidential debate will not follow the same traditional format that debate teams must follow.

"It's less of a one-on-one debate as much as it is an opportunity for both on the same stage to, once again, make their cases," Ryfe said. "Campaigns would be very skeptical of an actual debate because they can't control the process, and they're all about debate."

Debate Watch will be held in the John Bragg Mass Communications Building, Room 104 tomorrow at 8 p.m. ♦

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Agents: Bill will protect athletes

Continued from 1

get to know star players." Runners pose as friends to the athlete; offering rides, gifts and promises to athletes regarding future representation. What athletes do not know is that these runners document the time and money that they spend with the athlete, and upon contract signing expect to be reimbursed for their services. Seventeen states have no laws against the regulation of sports agents, and thus created the need for a uniform national law under the jurisdiction of the Federal Trade Commission. "The legislation doesn't set up a national police force. Instead, it deputizes the 50 states to take action," Gordon

said. The bill proposes that all sports agents are to state in writing the signing of a contract between a student and agent to the school's athletic director within 72 hours or before the next athletic event the student is involved in. Failure to comply with the law can result in an \$11,000 a day civil fine for each offense committed by agents and/or their representatives. Schools can seek restitution for damages or expenses they may incur as a result of a violation. The legislation was endorsed by the NCAA, National Coaches Association, the National Basketball Association and the National Football League. ♦

UTC closes meetings for chancellor search

Associated Press

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. — Early meetings in the search to fill the top job at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga have been closed to the public, a move officials say is needed to get more applicants.

The decision runs counter to the open search used recently at the University of Tennessee, leaving critics to wonder why Chattanooga is closing the doors to the public.

"A closed search seems to be a reversal of a trend that we all applauded when the search for the UT president was made open," said Richard Rice, president of the Faculty Senate at UTC. "A closed search may be a reversal of the transparency policy that we're looking for in a new chancellor."

Gov. Phil Bredesen said Tuesday he would look into the situation, and in general prefers searches to be "as open as is reasonably possible."

"I do believe the University of Tennessee, because of the two predecessors who had been chosen in a very quiet way, that it was particularly important in that one," he said. "But I'd like to see exactly how UTC is trying to do it before I have an opinion on it."

The UTC search will be closed until candidates are selected for interviews in February.

"We want to keep them confidential in order to increase the applicant pool," search committee chairwoman Verbie Prevost

said. "If their names are held out there for two or three months, the person puts himself or herself in jeopardy at their current position."

Prevost said most searches at UTC are closed until a list of final candidates is selected, and the search for a chancellor should be the same.

The UT search was one of the most open in the nation and was at the center of state politics after former UT President John W. Shumaker resigned a year ago after an audit revealed his lavish spending.

Officials hoped to rebuild confidence in the process after two failed presidencies. Candidates failed to win throughout the search, and all committee meetings and interviews were open to the public.

The search led to the selection of current UT President John Petersen, who said he thinks it is fine to close the UTC search.

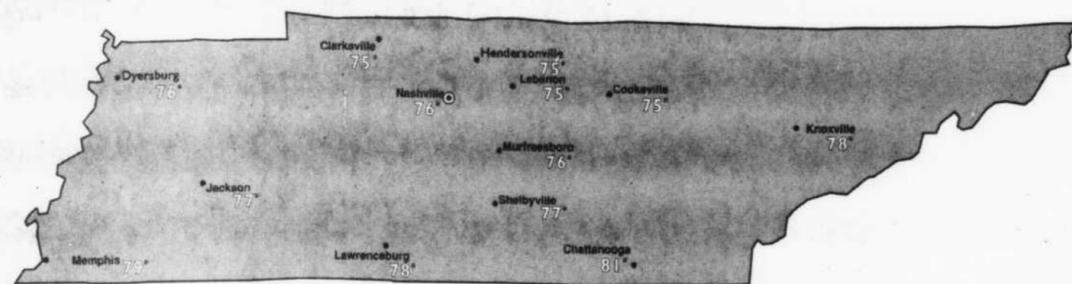
"I don't think we'll do the sort of search they did for me," he said. "There was a reason it was done. I will encourage an open enough process that there will be opportunity for everyone with an interest to weigh in on the process."

Petersen will pick the new UTC chancellor from a list of three finalists provided by the search committee.

Chancellor Bill Stacy left the \$195,000-a-year UTC job in August to become headmaster at Baylor School. ♦

Tennessee Weather – Monday's Highs

From the Associated Press



Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
78° ▲ 53° ▼	83° ▲ 61° ▼	74° ▲ 46° ▼	70° ▲ 44° ▼	69° ▲ 46° ▼

Statistics show tough economy made jobs scarce for many welfare recipients

By Lucas L. Johnson II
Associated Press Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — A weak economy is part of the reason participants in Tennessee's welfare program are having a tough time finding employment, according to statistics from the University of Tennessee.

"The state is increasing jobs about 1 percent a year," Bill Fox, an economist at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, said Monday. "In that environment, it's not surprising that people in Families First have found employment tougher."

Families First is Tennessee's welfare system, which began in 1996 and replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

Under the Families First program, the state Department of Human Services offers temporary cash assistance while participants agree to follow a "Personal Responsibility Plan" that includes work and educational/professional training.

This month, the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville released a 2003 study of Families First that shows most current welfare par-

ticipants cite "no work available" as their reason for not working.

About a decade ago, officials said health problems was the reason most participants said they couldn't find work.

DHS Deputy Commissioner Ed Lake said his commission noticed a significant increase in caseloads in July 2002 and on up to September 2003, when caseloads in other states were actually dropping.

"We didn't understand why it was happening in Tennessee," Lake said. "But we found out it was related to economic conditions in Tennessee and lower growth rate in the retail service sector."

The state Department of Labor and Workforce

Development recently reported that Tennessee had a net loss of 67,000 jobs from 2000 to 2003, mainly because of the bad economy.

"In order to keep down caseloads for Families First, the economy should be healthy and offer jobs for which these people are highly competitive," Fox said.

For the past few months, Lake said Tennessee's caseload has leveled off at about 74,000 cases.

DHS officials also said they were pleased to learn from the study that the number of recipients seeking a GED, or general equivalency diploma, has increased to 4,500.

DHS Commissioner Virginia T. "Gina" Lodge said recipients

can't be successful without some form of education, which is why the program stresses "a merger of jobs and education."

The study also found 36 percent of recipients now have home computers.

"Without computer skills, it's hard to go very far in this world," Lodge said.

DHS officials all agree that the number of recipients seeking to better themselves shows that they don't plan to stay in the program, but use it as a "temporary emergency" — the way it was intended.

"The stereotype is that it's this longtime intergenerational phenomena, but most people are only in the program for temporary periods of time," Lake said. ♦

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From the Editorial Board

Watch the debates, decide for yourself

Flip-flop, more jobs lost than Herbert Hoover, cowardice, delusions of grandeur. These are only a few of the charges thrown out by the presidential candidates, their designated loudspeakers and, of course, that doggone media.

Is Bush an underestimated debater? Is Kerry really a late finisher? How many times did the candidates rehearse prior to the debate? Who whipped who in debates for statewide elections held years ago? Who cares?

Fortunately, an attempt is being made to expose students and the Murfreesboro community at large to check out the candidates in the raw, free from the spin and "expert commentary" that is sure to flow from the mouths of knighted pundits before and after President George W. Bush and Sen. John Kerry try to hash out the issues on their own.

Although the debates consist of rehearsed sound bites custom-built for media consumption, there is something to be said for seeing what a candidate has to say in its entirety, free of conveniently trimmed film footage and the pundits' interpretation of what Bush's or Kerry's words actually mean.

This is why Debate Watch – which will show the debates but makes a point of not allowing attendees to see the pre- or post-debate media coverage – has come into existence.

Debates have long been a primary factor in turning elections. In 1960, John F. Kennedy's masterful adoption of television as a new form of media helped him triumph over Richard Nixon, who look exhausted, unkempt and certainly un-presidential.

In 1988, Democratic nominee Michael Dukakis was asked if he would support the death penalty for a person who raped and killed his wife. He responded by essentially saying that, even then, the death penalty would still be inappropriate. His numbers soon plunged into the abyss and George H.W. Bush was subsequently elected the 41st president.

In other words, if you think the debates are meaningless, think again.

So go check out Debate Watch if you can tomorrow night. Consider it an intellectual experiment. ◆

Getting exactly what we pay for at MTSU

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With regards to the events associated with a recent national college placement publication, I can't believe that we shouldn't be concerned with having a good school image, because I feel the education here is fairly decent. We should be striving to do our best and compete with every school, no matter what it is.

Why do I, along with many other people that I've talked to, feel like the piece of paper we're going to receive upon graduation isn't worth much?

Oh, maybe it's because people don't view this school as worth much. The sad news is that this image probably won't change.

A big institution like MTSU should have several top recognizable programs. Why do we keep the admission standards so low when our school is so crowded? I'm not trying to keep this heavenly facility all to myself, either.

A lot of us don't have a choice when picking a college. I understand the HOPE scholarship is making a difference, but it must not be that big since a surprisingly small number of students at MTSU actually get to keep the scholarship.

And don't tell me that's because the requirements are not clearly stated or that they are too high. I know that students who meet the scholarship requirement are guaranteed access to a public institution of higher education.



On The Rocks

Klara Nizki
Staff Columnist

Unfortunately, MTSU has the lowest requirements without being a community college, like its image sometimes suggests it might be.

It's an embarrassment when it's common campus knowledge that the average length of attendance to earn (or not earn) a bachelor's degree is seven or eight years.

Let's face it; MTSU is the Wal-Mart of education.

Yes, I said it, proudly at that. Just think, we do have it all: wonderful professors for almost every subject for a pretty decent price. I do mean this sincerely in a non-sarcastic way, but what happens when a student has a problem with, let's say, what the requirements are for graduation.

It seems that the paper we are handed when we first begin (no matter the degree) is fairly easy to follow – or is it? There are all these "what ifs?" that pop up towards the end: "Am I allowed to take this class if I've already taken this other class?" or, "Is this class right for my elective?"

We've all been there, stranded

in Wal-Mart, asking for knowledgeable help to find something, let's say a not-as-common spice, pesto paste. One would normally assume it would be in the spice aisle.

Wrong. That would make sense and we can't have any of that. You ask everyone, but you seem to run across the standard dumbfounded look, followed by a crooked finger pointing you in another direction towards another dumbfounded individual.

That's kind of how our advising system works. No one seems to be 100 percent sure that my friends and I are taking the right classes, although I was always taught that, "Oh, that's probably right," isn't good enough.

How are we going to graduate if we don't know if we are taking the right classes?

I bet the professors and department chairs meet casually in a room with pondering looks on their faces, and say, "Hmmm, yes, we think that these classes that Student X here has taken will be okay enough to fulfill the requirements for graduation."

Instead of implementing better education (towards both students and administrative faculty), we're busy getting into debt over building a sports hall of fame, despite the fact that our football team rarely ever wins. Granted, that building went up so fast because the alumni donated the money to build it.

Yes, that does make more sense; it's always easier for the Tennessee Board of Regents to approve the building of something that they didn't have to pay for.

It's quite sad that we had to trade the hopes of a parking garage for the deteriorated sports dreams of middle-aged men who never were stars in the first place. Then again, I'll hope that our Raiders will fare well (and prove me wrong) this season, but you won't find me holding my breath.

You know, it's funny how this article spawned from my outrage when trying to find a parking spot. I was 30 minutes earlier than usual and for some unknown reason, perhaps God having a laugh at my expense, I still wasn't able to get to class on time.

It's really comforting that I have to battle for a parking spot in the gravel lot by the Recreation Center, just so I can unwillingly smell the roses and frolic happily through the rugby field as I am late again for an exam.

It's the oldest joke in the book, yet no one knows the answer: How many complaints does it take to build a parking garage, have enough employees (counselors and professors included), fix a leaky ceiling, secure a frail balcony or improve our school rating?

Let's ask Mr. Owl. ◆

Klara Nizki is a junior business major and can be reached at knizki@aol.com.

Populace should be able to approve new police

In the wake of recent disasters and our ill-foreseen choices regarding war, homeland security has taken on a new importance in America. Our country's self defense system is continuously criticized and readjusted; however, many overlook the problems with our most local kinds of protection, police officers.

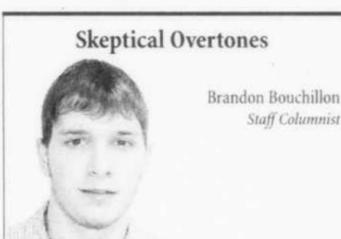
Officers of the law play a vital role in keeping America safe. Their duty is to serve and protect this country's citizens. However, too often those terms seem to contradict each other. Why can't the cops who look out for us genuinely care about us at the same time? The two seem to always cancel each other out.

Have you ever been driving, only to glance in the rearview mirror and notice a police cruiser, then proceed to fall apart? This aura of fear and paranoia that follows cops is troubling, but not always undeserved. It seems that in this day and age, the idea of a cop is scarier than it is comforting. But if their job is to serve us, then why are we so afraid?

This suspicion seems to stem from the actions we see on a daily basis. The disparaging looks from a cop hanging out at a gas station counter or the verbal assault one can receive for the smallest of ordeals only enforce the idea that police are in fact not our friends, but simply authority figures who can get us in trouble if they deem fit.

If we are going to give a group of people complete control over what happens in an area, then shouldn't we also train them to handle absolutely everything that can go wrong there?

In this country, it is possible to become a police officer in a mere four months. Four months, the measly length of an elongated summer, is all it takes to become a professional enforcer of right and wrong. In that period of time, can you learn even half of what can be thrown at



Skeptical Overtones

Brandon Bouchillon
Staff Columnist

you while "serving" and "protecting"? It certainly doesn't seem to be enough to teach common decency and people skills.

Then again, maybe it's the type of person who wants to be a cop that throws everything off kilter. After all, carrying a gun, arresting who you deem fit, or frightening motorists into driving at ridiculously slow speeds do seem to be power-hungry traits.

There is a fine line between what is fair and what is abuse of power, and it would help a great deal if this line was defined for police officers.

Since the citizens of this country are the ones who regularly deal with police officers, then shouldn't we have also some say in who gets to protect and serve us? At the very least, let citizens approve their training and, if need be, their character before police can carry out their wishes upon all of us.

The longer we neglect to do something about this aspect of our legal system, then the more this corruption of inexperience seems to spread. Police officers are here to serve us, not to petrify or threaten, so give the people some say in who is going to watch out for us and how we'll be treated as they do. This is a republic after all, or at least it used to be. ◆

Brandon Bouchillon is a sophomore journalism major and can be reached at bcb2t@mtsu.edu.

Correction:

In Monday's edition of *Sidelines*, Quanshell Scott was misidentified in a photo accompanying the story "Blue Raiders rebound with victory over Troy." Also, the photo was misattributed and was taken by Kevin Lane. *Sidelines* regrets the errors.

Come on folks. Get your rant on.
slopinio@mtsu.edu

From the Opinions Editor

Kamazotz can kill: living in the 'burbs a health hazard

It's nice to see the Rand Corporation concerned with my health.

According to the British newspaper *The Guardian*, living in suburbia has been linked to high blood pressure, arthritis, diabetes and migraines. And don't get me started on how it will add wrinkles to your face.

It boggles the mind, really. One would think that the hustle and bustle of life in the big city would be more dangerous. If smog from car-choked thoroughfares didn't kill you and if you weren't mugged in a dark, seedy alleyway late one night, then surely the aggravation of trying to navigate the main arteries of a city such as my hometown of Philadelphia would have caused you to burst a vein or something equally horrible.

However, Rand Corporation goes on to say just why exactly we're all, quite literally, dying to live in Kamazotz. (For those of you who didn't read much as a child, Kamazotz was a city of identical houses and people in Madeleine L'Engle's "A Wrinkle in Time.")

The answer? We're all lazy!

We suburbanites live in pockets of housing that are generally far removed from anything remotely interesting; say, downtown entertainment or shopping, for example. So we have to rely on our cars to take us everywhere we want to go.

Trouble is, as we drive more we have less of an excuse to walk places. Less walking cuts into our daily dose of exercise, which contributes to the fact that, for example, the average Atlantian suburbanite is in poorer health than someone the same age living in downtown Seattle.

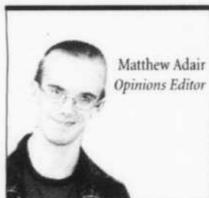
Granted, it isn't all our faults. We can't exactly go anywhere on foot (or on bike for that matter) if our homes aren't connected to anything but highways.

Miserable city planning is no excuse, however. The report should serve as a wake-up call to all of us thinking that we have the good life, far removed from the grit and grime of a major city.

The study did have one bit of good news, however: Suburban living does not increase feelings of isolation and depression.

So we may be unfit, but at least we're happy. ◆

Matthew Adair is a sophomore graphic design major and can be reached at matt.adair@gmail.com.



Matthew Adair
Opinions Editor

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Tennessee State Fair a big disappointment

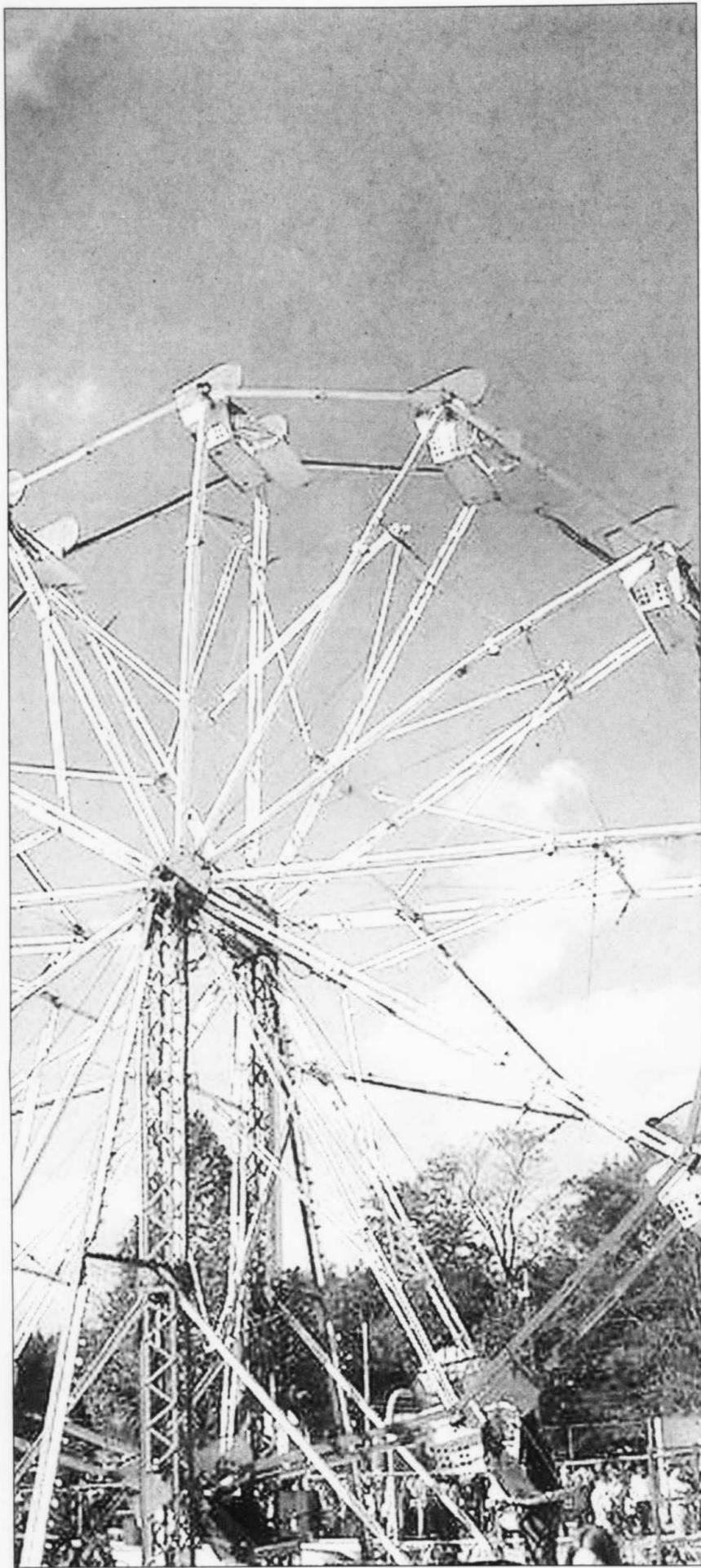


Photo provided by morguefile.com

Just Answer the Question



Michaela Jackson
Features Editor

Blue ribbons. Smart sundresses. Mile-high Ferris wheels. These are the trappings of state fairs of old. I'm sure we all remember the fairs of our youth: the fair straight out of "Charlotte's Web."

Father buys the family a bundle of midway tickets for the modest price of \$5. Mother pushes the baby pram down the sparkling clean midway, admiring the bright colors and joyful sounds, snacking happily on made-from-scratch cotton candy.

The spirit of happiness and community simply permeates the atmosphere.

I recently visited the fair when it was in Nashville a couple of weeks ago. I hoped to experience the ideal fair that had so strongly captivated me as a child. I remember as a little girl wandering with my mommy and daddy through a maze of lights and colors, every turn of the corner presenting a new excitement, a new opportunity. Could this experience be relived now, 15 years later?

Apparently not. My boyfriend and I were greeted at the entrance to the fairgrounds by a less-than-thrilled parking attendant. After shelling out my first \$5, just for the right to drive my car onto the property, we trudged across an automobile-inundated cow pasture toward the main gate.

We soon found ourselves standing right inside the blockades, feeling a little bewildered and out \$16. Regaining my composure after the initial stress (and sticker-shock) of simply gaining entrance to the long-awaited fair, I

approached my next challenge: the ticketed booth. Numbly, I handed the cashier \$40 in exchange for a minuscule pile of tickets (something like 15).

I began to realize that my ideas of spending a beautiful evening in the setting September sun, strolling along arm-in-arm with my lover, rejoicing in the splendor of it all, were little more than mere unfortunate illusions of grandeur.

My suspicions were confirmed as we began our pilgrimage down the midway to the background music of hecklers (the little men inside the traditional fair games) jeering my boyfriend for not having won me a prize yet. They even stooped so low as to accuse him of not loving me and spoiling me like he used to — as if they had any idea!

Needless to say, the experience of being verbally assaulted by sad little fair workers who clearly hated their jobs did little to enhance my experience. We did not give in, though. I waited until I saw the prize that I really wanted instead of giving the satisfaction of taking my poor boyfriend's money to the first yahoo who insulted his male pride.

Finally, my eyes fixed on a medium sized Saint Bernard puppy (whom I now affectionately call Beethoven). After playing as much of the balloon-pop game as \$15 can buy (and succeeding wonderfully, I might add), the heckler finally

agreed to sell the puppy to my now thoroughly cheated boyfriend for a nominal \$20.

To his credit, my boyfriend beat the heckler at his own game by fibbing that he only had \$8 left, to which the heckler quickly acquiesced. Ha. Take that, heckler. You lose.

Assuming that the hecklers would be appeased by the sight of the newly won Beethoven in my arms, my boyfriend and I began our journey toward the Ferris wheel. Undaunted, though, the hecklers continued their heckling, now focusing on the fact that my prize was not impressive enough. "Win her a bigger one!" they relentlessly yelled.

Arriving at the Ferris wheel slightly frazzled but unharmed, we took our place in line behind the man in the NASCAR T-shirt holding the hand of the crying baby — the classic carnival pair.

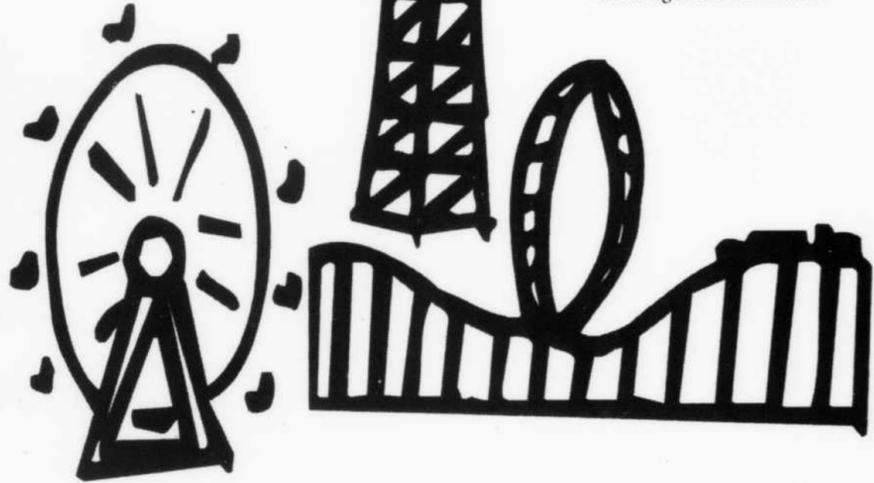
After our uneventful Ferris wheel ride, we decided to throw in the towel. Admittedly defeated, we handed our remaining tickets to a man with the familiar bewildered expression standing just inside the gates and made our way back to the car.

Amazingly, we had managed to spend more than \$75 in less than an hour, and had nothing to show for it but a mediocre memory and a \$35 stuffed Saint Bernard.

I must confess I was nearing an emotional breakdown by the time the whole ordeal was over. I admit that I am a very sentimental person, particularly when it comes to reliving the memories of childhood, and I was sorely disappointed by my state fair experience.

Apparently, the fair just isn't what it used to be. Maybe there are wonderful state fairs elsewhere, but Tennessee has clearly forsaken the beaten path of quaint and childlike fairs for shameless thievery.

My advice: The fair simply isn't worth your time unless you have a natural affinity for wasting your money and enduring causeless insults. ♦



More students expected to watch this year's debates

Young adults poised to reappear on political radar for elections

By Lucy Kafanov
DC BUREAU

(U-WIRE) WASHINGTON — After months of political warfare conducted through books, movies, ads, attacks and counterattacks, voters will finally be treated to live face-to-face debates between the vying candidates, and this time college students are paying attention.

Republican President George W. Bush and Democratic presidential nominee Sen. John Kerry agreed to three 90-minute presidential debates. Jim Lehrer of the "NewsHour" on PBS will moderate the first debate Thursday at the University of Miami in Florida, which will focus on foreign policy and homeland security.

"Students are a unique voting group and generally speaking they don't vote in big numbers," said Sean Aday, assistant professor of media and public affairs at the George Washington University. "But this year there is some evidence that they're paying a lot more attention to the election, and so it seems that they will give more atten-

tion to this debate."

Some undecided students, like University of Miami senior Elizabeth Lieb, are hinging their decision on the outcome of the debates. A registered Independent, Lieb says that she is ready to be "swayed by either candidate." She also says that most students are starting to get caught up in the excitement of the election and that the debates will be watched closely by people in her area.

"People in Florida truly understand that your vote really does count, and so absolutely, definitely, most students will watch the debate," Lieb said. "That's one other chance to really sit down and to really get what's going on. Maybe people haven't had as much time to read what the candidates are all about but now they have a chance to watch the two candidates arguing and to see what they stand for."

"Students here really do care about what is going on," said Anna Berkowitz, a Washington University junior majoring in Spanish and Business. "Although I think that people are already aware of issues and they are active in whatever political parties they

might associate with, I also think that having debates brings it closer to home."

The next debate will take place on Oct. 8 at the Washington University of St. Louis, Missouri where undecided voters will have to ask the candidates questions. The final debate will focus on domestic and economic policy and will take place on Oct. 13 at Arizona State University — and an Oct. 5 vice presidential debate will be held in Cleveland.

Both candidates spent the past week in deep preparation for the first debate, typically the most watched. Though traditionally Republicans are seen as stronger on foreign policy issues, continuing casualties in Iraq may help the senator frame his arguments. Kerry's challenge will be to convince voters of the failures of Bush's Iraq policy while outlining a victory plan of his own.

Bush hopes to keep Kerry on the offensive by pointing out contradictions in his voting record and statements. Both candidates are known as good debaters and have each won most of the major debates in their respective political histories.

Some caution that the candidates will need to readjust and refine their message to keep the younger voters' attention. Kelly McDonald, who teach-

es communication at Arizona State University cautioned that although the debates may spark intense interest in the election in students of debate hosting schools, it will be harder to retain nationwide student attention unless the candidates start to speak on issues that matter specifically to younger voters.

"Students are really turned off because they don't understand why the war records or the lack of war records in Vietnam for either of these guys is really material to how they're going to be as presidents," said McDonald. "A bunch of people have expressed concern if Bush is re-elected whether there will be a draft. A bunch of people have expressed concern about Kerry's ability to lead. So the debates will be a critical litmus test to answer both these concerns."

David Ingenito, a UM sophomore majoring in communication is "excited about the foreign policy topic" but would like to see the candidates talk about gay marriage issues and social security. Berkowitz says that abortion and perhaps even taxes are some other topics that students want to hear discussed in the debates.

"Whoever is elected will be president for the next four years and I'll graduate in two," said Berkowitz. "So

[the candidates'] goals, policies, and agenda are going to start affecting me more so than they are now as a college student."

"[Debates] can matter very much because debates are the most substantive moments of the campaign," said Aday. "They are the best opportunity for voters to learn what a candidate stands for, what their vision is, what they plan on doing in the future, and what kind of person they are."

Indeed most students acknowledge the usefulness of the debates, though not all will be tuning in. Some don't see the need to watch the debates as they have already chosen their candidate.

Alex Drossler, a senior International Affairs major at GW, said that he's been paying "minimal" attention to the campaign and isn't certain if he'll watch the debate.

"I think debates matter but I don't think they're gonna affect how people vote," said Drossler. "I think people who are going to vote for Bush will vote for him regardless of how the debates will go, and the same goes for Kerry. The debates are useful to discuss the issues but I don't think they're going to affect the election — maybe for moderates who are undecided — but everyone I know has already made up their mind." ♦

SPORTS

6 ♦ SIDELINES

Wednesday, September 29, 2004

Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Blue Raiders prepare for reeling North Texas team

By Jonathan Hutton
Staff Writer

The Blue Raiders (1-2, 0-1 SBC) will be looking for their first win in the Sun Belt Conference as travel to Denton, Texas to take on North Texas on Saturday (0-4).

In his weekly press conference Monday, MT head coach Andy McCollum talked about the talented team they are up against this weekend.

"It will be our second tough league opponent on the road," McCollum said. "We know what kind of team they have. They have had some tough opponents and a tough start, but their conference play starts now. As anyone in this conference knows, it's wide open. They are 0-4, but I assure you they have a lot of confidence going into conference play."

North Texas has struggled with the death of quarterback Andrew Smith, who died in a head-on collision with an 18-wheeler last month. Smith was found to have a blood-

alcohol limit of 0.13, well above the Texas legal limit of .08.

"We sent them things from our staff and players, but we [McCollum and UNT head coach Darrell Dickey] really have not talked about it since the season began," McCollum said. "You think about those families and it keeps things in perspective."

The Mean Green lost 37-14 last week to Baylor.

Penalties hurt the Blue Raiders in crucial spots last week, including a personal foul that gave Louisiana-Lafayette a first-and-goal at the MT 7-yard line. The Blue Raiders finished with 13 penalties for 111 yards.

"What we have to cut out is [the fact] we had one or two stupid penalties that hurt us," McCollum said. "It's not intentional, but they are critical plays and that's where you shoot yourself. It's not just the penalties, it's making plays when you are in position."

Quarterback Clint Marks completed 35 of 46 passes with one touchdown, but also

threw a late interception in the end zone that sealed the victory for the Ragin' Cajuns. Marks said that he hopes he can help MT get its first SBC win this weekend.

"I just take the approach that it's a conference game and we really need this win," Marks said. "North Texas is a great conference team. We have to go in there with our heads up and fight to get the win."

For the Blue Raiders to get that victory this weekend, McCollum noted that he wouldn't think twice about replacing players in order to get the maximum results out of his team.

"We have to make sure the guys on the field are going to make plays when they have the chance, or we are going to have to find others who can," McCollum said. "Nobody works harder than these kids or the staff I have up there right now. We will keep working and hope the breaks come to us, but you also have to make your breaks."

The Blue Raiders take on UNT at 6:05 p.m. on Saturday. ♦

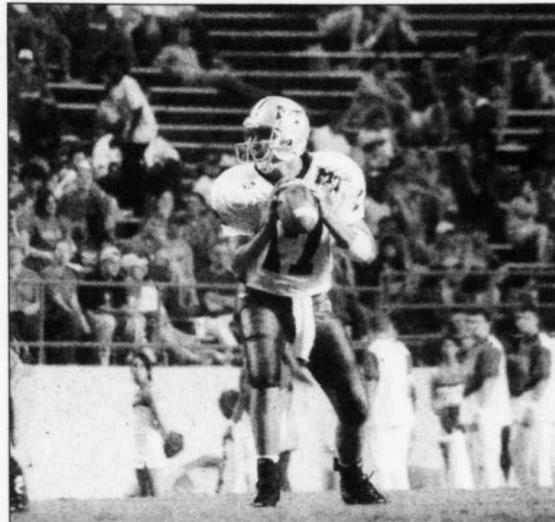


Photo by Steve Cross | Chief Photographer

MT quarterback Clint Marks was 35-for-46 on Saturday.

From Blaze to Blue Raiders



Photo by Micah Miller | Staff Photographer

Former Blackman High School standouts Lindsey Sisco (left) and Megan Carter now play for the Blue Raiders.

By Katy Hamlett
Staff Writer

With a new coach and new injuries causing new lineups, the Middle Tennessee volleyball team is entering unfamiliar territory this season. Among the changes are two new – yet somehow familiar – faces hailing just a few blocks from campus.

Megan Carter and Lindsey Sisco graduated from Blackman High School in 2004 and are now freshmen Blue Raiders.

"I was hired here kind of late in February and the signing date was in April. We were way behind with recruiting," MT head coach Matt Peck explained. "I knew Blackman finished second in the state, so I called the coach [Blackman head coach Mary Rickman] first thing and met with them both right away. I went to see them practice with their club up in Nashville and

was very impressed with both of them."

Carter and Sisco met on a city league basketball team in 5th grade and have been playing in the same league or on the same team ever since.

After experimenting in both volleyball and basketball, volleyball soon emerged as both of the girls' stronger sport.

"I like basketball, but I played it just for fun," Sisco said. "Around my sophomore year I decided to get serious about volleyball and made it my only sport."

"In basketball, a lot of times it's all about one or two players in one game," Carter added. "But in volleyball, you really have to know what everyone's doing on the court – and I really like that."

After committing to volleyball, the girls began to dominate their competition.

"They were so consistent in every game," Rickman said. "Lindsey and Megan are two

very good all-around players in defense, in hitting, in serving. They just played incredibly."

As a former MT volleyball player whose career kills mark was broken last season by KeKe Deckard, Rickman gave Carter and Sisco a lot to look up to.

"She was a great influence because she just loves the game," Carter said about her former coach.

After all the hype associated with recruiting and transitioning to college play, Carter is redshirting this year due to a knee injury suffered in practice.

"We were debating at the time to redshirt her anyway, because she was a middle in high school and we are going to train her as an opposite or an outside hitter," Peck said. For the first time in her volleyball career,

See **Blaze**, 7

Lady Raiders set two MT records

By Jon Leffew
Assistant Sports Editor

The Middle Tennessee women's golf team shot a final-day 295 on their way to a three-day total of 911 in the Unlimited Potential/Baytree Classic last weekend.

These scores were good enough for fourth overall in the tournament, which was held at the Baytree Golf Plantation in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

The scores for both the final day and the tournament are the best scores ever recorded by MT.

"I am extremely proud of the way the girls played on Sunday," head coach Rachael Short told MT Media Relations. "We played with poise and really struck the ball well. This is a young team, but they are coming around pretty quick. Now we have to build on this heading into the next tournament."

Taryn Durham finished fourth overall with a three-day total of 218.

The freshman from Glasgow, Ky., fired a final round 69 (which ties the school record) to lead the Lady Raiders.

Maggie McGill, a sophomore from Bowling Green, Ky., tied for 12th with a 226, while Kristin Lynch, a senior from Tullahoma, finished 21st with a 231.

Jamey Dillard, a freshman from Madison, Tenn., finished

with a 236, while Kemmerlee Pennington, a senior from Crossville, rounded out the scoring with a 244.

The tournament was won by the University of North Carolina-Wilmington, which finished with a three-day total of 891.

Coastal Carolina finished second with an 898, followed by East Tennessee State and MT.

This marks the third straight year that the Seahawks have won the tournament.

The Seahawks were led by junior Michelle Jarman. Jarman finished all three rounds with scores that were below par to capture medalist honors. She broke two school records in the progress and recorded the program's first hole-in-one.

Coastal Carolina led by five shots through two days of the tournament, but the final day total of 288 by the Seahawks proved to be the difference.

Line Cordes finished second overall and led the Lady Raiders with a three-day total of 215.

The tournament was the first of the fall season for ETSU, a team that had eight top-10s in nine events last year.

Ashley Barten led the Lady Bucs with a three-day total of 223.

The Lady Raiders will not play again until Oct. 8, when they will participate in the Pat Bradley Championship in Miami, Fla. ♦



Photo by Bradley Lambert | MT Media Relations

Senior Kemmerlee Pennington finished tied for 68th.

Titans don't need to panic just yet



Cody Gibson
Staff Columnist

People are so quick to write off the Titans because they are merely 1-2.

They sit in last place with the Houston Texans.

The Jacksonville Jaguars are in first place and the Indianapolis Colts are not far behind in second.

The Titans have been here before. Tennessee is by far the most resilient team in the NFL. (Music City Miracle, anyone?) This resiliency is echoed by team leader Steve McNair and head coach Jeff Fisher.

Fisher's coaching strategies prove year after year to be

among the top in the NFL.

The importance he places on defense and special teams are what make the Titans a great franchise.

The offensive system Fisher has in place has allowed the organization to save money and rebuild through the draft while staying competitive.

Most teams think of rebuilding as not making the playoffs and picking high in the draft. Fisher and company draft so well in the positions they are put in.

In regards to the defense, Fisher has such an understanding of the game that the defense will definitely be among the top in the league.

They have only allowed 17 points a game. Even if the defensive front seven is not as strong as in past years, the Titans will be strong enough to make the playoffs.

The Titans secondary is among the top five in the NFL. This will anchor their defense and allow the front seven to develop as planned. One thing is also certain: Jeff Fisher will never give up on his team.

This Sunday against San Diego, Fisher will have the team prepared with a must-win attitude.

On the offensive side of the ball, the running game has been fantastic. Chris Brown has run for more than 100 yards in three games, making fans forget about Eddie George and his abysmal 3.5 yard average the past two years.

The offensive problems start with the passing game. Steve McNair has managed only a 74.3 quarterback rating and thrown only one touchdown pass. To add injury to insult McNair is questionable for Sunday's game with a bruised

sternum.

However, McNair plays best when his backup is against the wall. Numerous times over the past few seasons McNair has gutted out winning performances with one or more ailments.

Also, this week the receiving corps will get a lift with the return of Tyrone Calico, making for a dangerous array of weapons at McNair's disposal.

Looking at the Titans schedule, the road does not get any easier. They have to travel to Indianapolis, Green Bay, Minnesota and Jacksonville.

Yet year after year, the Titans always find a way to win.

This year will be no different. A slow start is common for many teams. Losing two in a row is not the end of the world.

For those who count out the Titans, wait until January and see who's playing. ♦

MT women's tennis team ends play at Furman with two wins

By Jon Leffew
Assistant Sports Editor

The Middle Tennessee women's tennis team traveled to Greenville, S.C., over the weekend to compete in the Furman Fall Classic.

The tournament was dominated by the University of North Carolina and Clemson, but MT picked up victories in both flight one and flight two singles on Sunday.

Senior Jennifer Klaschka ended a three-match skid with a three-set victory over Furman's Mary Neill Hagood. The 6-3, 4-6, 6-0 victory moved Klaschka into seventh place.

Ana Maria Cibils won seventh place in flight two singles. The senior from Montevideo, Uruguay, defeated Furman's Shannon Moore by the score of 6-4, 7-5.

Senior Emily Vest was defeated in flight four by the University of South Carolina's Justin Walsh by the score of 6-3, 6-1.

MT sophomore Jacqui Williams was defeated

in flight five by Caroline Ferrell from the University of Virginia, 6-0, 6-1.

Iowa's Morgan Tuttle defeated MT's Claudia Szabo in flight six by the score of 6-3, 6-1.

UNC's Kendall Cline defeated Vanderbilt's Amanda Fish 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (2-0) to capture the title in flight two.

Fellow Tar Heel Jenna Long defeated Bonnie Baird of Furman 6-1, 6-3 for the flight five title.

The Charlotte victory for UNC was Julie Martin's final victory as she defeated Vanderbilt's Jix Martin 6-4, 4-6, 6-1.

Clemson's Julie Coin defeated UNC's Aniela Mojzis in the finals of flight one (7-6, 6-1), while the other Clemson victory came from Rorry Farah, who defeated UNC's Caitlin Collins 6-3, 7-6 to win the flight four championship.

MT will continue play in the Kentucky Fall Invitational on Oct. 1. However, Klaschka will not participate, as she is slated to play in the Riviera ITA All-American Championships in Pacific Palisades, Calif., on Oct. 5. ♦

Blue Raiders pick up first conference victory

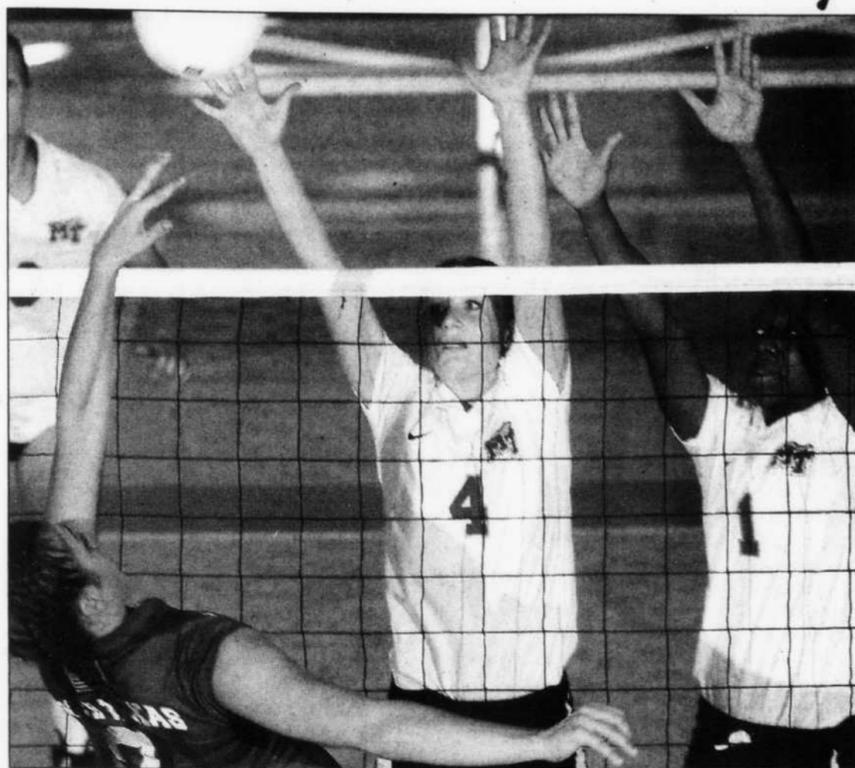


Photo by Micah Miller | Staff Photographer

MT's Megan Sumrell (4) and Quanshell Scott block UNT's Anne Pope on Sunday.

By Ron Moses
Staff Writer

After a three-game weekend, the Blue Raider volleyball team defeated North Texas 3-1 (25-30, 30-27, 30-22, 30-20) on Sunday, giving Middle Tennessee its second straight victory and its first victory over UNT in three years.

North Texas won the first game, but the Blue Raiders took over from there to win their first Sun Belt Conference match of the season.

"We didn't think that they [UNT] could play with that intensity throughout the rest of the match," MT head coach Matt Peck said. "I am really proud of our players. The win is a credit to players like Andressa Lyra who stepped up and played

left outside hitter for us this weekend, a position she hasn't played all season."

MT recorded eight aces for the second straight match. Alicia Lemau'u led the squad with three, while Lindsay Sisco and Dara McLean added two each.

McLean, who was recently named the SBC Player of the Week, led the team to two victories over the weekend by amassing 64 kills and a .544 hitting percentage.

McLean's 24 kills marked her fourth straight match with more than 20 kills. Andressa Lyra added 20 kills, and Megan Sumrell had 47 assists.

Theresa Alowitz added 12 digs for the Blue Raiders. Anne Pope and Brittany Gregory led the way for the

Mean Pope on Sunday. Anne Green. Pope had 16 kills and three blocks, while Gregory had 12 kills and a service ace. Heidi Johnson finished with 42 assists, and Taylor Lawrence had 10 digs.

North Texas was unable to hit more than .129 in the match's final three games and finished with an overall hitting percentage of just .146.

Comparatively, the Blue Raiders have a .277 overall hitting percentage.

The loss drops UNT to 2-11 overall and 1-1 in SBC play, while moving the Blue Raiders to 5-8 overall and 1-1 in the conference.

The Blue Raiders will return to action on Oct. 1, playing host to the Arkansas State Lady Indians. ♦

Blaze: Carter, Sisco part of Peck's new plan

Continued from 6

Carter has to watch from the sidelines.

"I just want to go out there so bad," Carter said. "It's sad really, because I want to play. I want to play with Dara and KeKe for their senior year."

While Carter was forced to sit out the season, the team's numerous injuries forced Sisco to move up. Working with fellow front line teammate Megan Sumrell, the two combined for 10 kills in a 3-0 win over Troy last Saturday.

"I'm used to stepping up and playing," Sisco said. "It's definitely put a lot of pressure on me, but I can handle it. It [the

team's injuries] really motivates me to play better. It gives me a reason."

Sisco's confidence is beginning to show up more prominently on the court.

"She wants the ball," Peck said. "She's just to the point where she keeps going and going, and she's very effective when she gets it."

"Our center is a sophomore with not a lot of experience," Peck said. "Lindsay is very insistent and we can tell Megan [Sumrell] that she can rely on her."

As the team works on building bonds and learning each other's playing styles, Carter

and Sisco have an eight-year head start.

"Lindsey doesn't play scared," Carter said. "As a freshman, if I were playing this season I'd be scared and timid, but she goes out there and acts like it's nothing."

With the name change from Lady Raiders to Blue Raiders and the hire of new head coach Matt Peck, MT's volleyball team has adopted the slogan "New Name, New Coach, New Direction" for 2004. Carter and Sisco are just another important piece to MT's remodeling and changing direction. ♦



Match Postponed

The soccer match between Middle Tennessee and Alabama A&M has been rescheduled for Monday,

Oct. 4 at 3 p.m. The game was originally scheduled for Sept. 26 at 2 p.m. ♦

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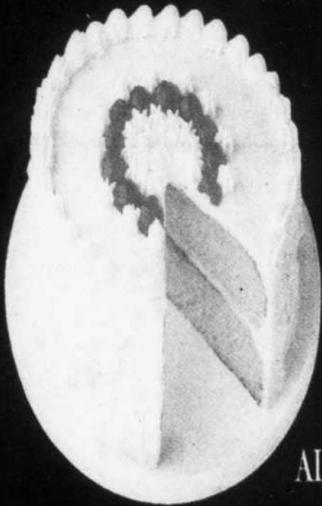
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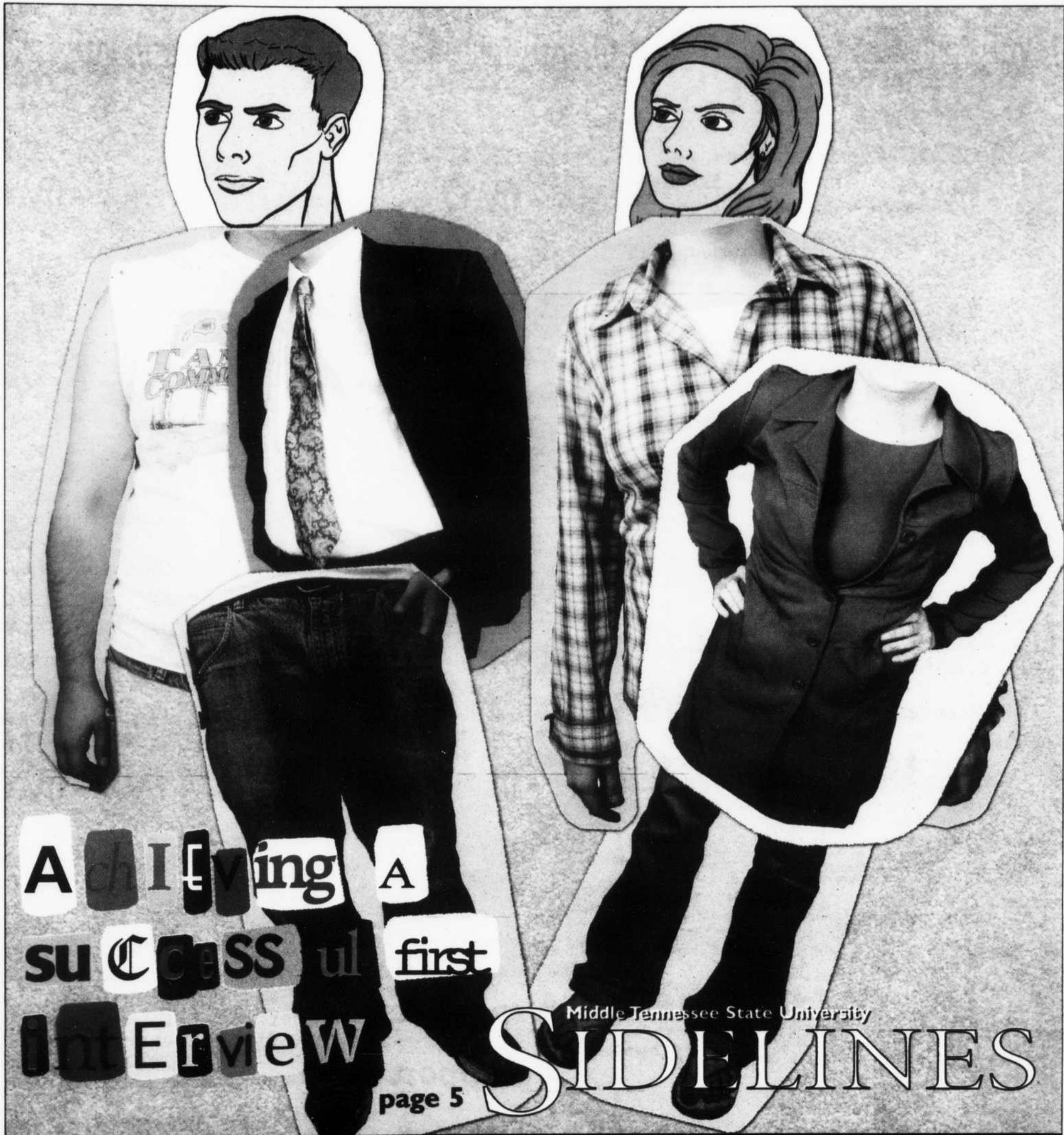


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page 5

Middle Tennessee State University

SIDELINES

SPECIAL EDITION CAREER GUIDE

SIDELINES

Career Guide

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Career fair commences

By **Kristin Hall**
Managing Editor

Worried about job prospects? Concerned about graduation? The annual Career and Graduate School Fair can alleviate your fears about a dismal future in fast food.

All types of employers from financial groups to publishing houses will be on hand tomorrow in the Murphy Center on the track level looking to hire new graduates for internships, part-time and full-time positions.

According to MTSU's Career and Employment Center, 134 employers and 24 graduate schools will have booths to give information to students.

"We are pleasantly surprised with the increase in the number of employers at this year's fair," said Karen Austin, assistant director of the career center.

While most of the employers are local companies, there are several large corporations

who will have representatives available. These include Staples, Dell, Bridgestone/Firestone and Walt Disney.

Some of the big graduate schools who will have booths at this year's event are Vanderbilt University Law School, University of Mississippi Graduate School and Western Kentucky University Graduate Studies.

Austin said that now is a good time for May graduates to start looking for jobs because it normally takes a few months.

"If students are thinking about internships, which is really important these days, they should start earlier than their senior year," Austin explained.

Austin recommended interested seniors should do a little research into preferred companies before attending the fair. This shows an interest in the

job and helps students stand out, she explained.

Resumes are essential to bring to hand out to potential employers at the fair. For tips on resumes, the career center will individually critique resumes and there are some sample resumes on their Web site.

"Professional dress is not required, but students should be presenting themselves to the employers as a viable candidate," Austin explained.

And finally, a follow-up phone call or letter to the employers will confirm your interest in a position, Austin said.

The fair will start at 10 a.m. and run until 3 p.m. on Thursday.

For more information about the career fair or tips for landing that dream job, visit their Web site at www.mtsu.edu/~career/. ♦



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Economy looks good for new graduates

More than 100 employers to attend this year's career fair Thursday

By Kristin Hall
Managing editor

Employers are expected to hire 13.1 percent more college graduates this year than last year, according to a recent survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

Just in the service industry alone, employers stated they expect to hire 12.1 percent more than last year, according to the survey.

Karen Austin, assistant director for the Career and Employment Center, said she's seen a change in the type of jobs offered to college graduates over the last year.

"This year we're seeing a lot more real jobs," she said. "In the past couple of years, we were getting a lot of sales jobs based on commissions, which is really

hard on new graduates."

"Now we're seeing more operations jobs, training positions and sales jobs with good base salaries," she explained.

At this year's Career Fair, 134 employers and 24 graduate schools will be looking for college graduates to hire for internships, part-time or full-time work.

"We are pleasantly surprised with the increase in the number of employers at this year's fair," Austin said.

Austin said that the change she has seen is more small- to medium-sized companies looking to hire.

"I've also seen legislation that is leading toward jobs," Austin said. "Things like the No Child Left Behind Act created a need for licensed teachers in areas like elementary and special education."

Starting Salaries for College Graduates

Psychology:	\$28,230 (2 percent increase)
History major:	\$30,344 (4.8 percent decrease)
English major:	\$31,113 (8.1 percent increase)
Political science:	\$32,926 (3.6 percent increase)
Business administration:	\$38,254 (6.2 percent increase)
Accounting:	\$41,058 (1 percent increase)
Management information systems:	\$41,579 (2.5 percent increase)
Information sciences and systems:	\$42,375 (10.7 percent increase)
Mechanical engineering:	\$48,578 (No Change)
Computer science:	\$49,036 (4.1 percent increase)
Computer engineering:	\$51,297 (0.1 percent decrease)
Chemical engineering:	\$52,539 (0.3 percent increase)

Changes in Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards have led to a bigger

need for safety inspectors. Furthermore, starting salaries increased in 2004 over

last year's levels, mostly for business degree-holders, according to NACE surveys. ♦



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Internships provide experience, job skills

When you're a little kid it seemed as though as soon as you stepped off the stage after graduating college, there would be someone there to offer you a job making \$50,000 a year.

However, as some of my friends have recently discovered, this is hardly the case. The job market is fiercely competitive, and people often take jobs that are not even exactly in their field, making \$10,000 to \$20,000 less than what they had originally anticipated.

These are the ones who are lucky enough to even find a job. Oftentimes, upon applying for a position, possible employers ask, "What type of experience do you have?"

As it turns out, waiting on tables or folding clothes at the mall for the past five years are not the top job skills employers are looking for, and your degree in basket weaving is not even enough to get your foot in the door.

So, how do you bridge the gap between having no experience and landing your dream job, or at least one that pays



Yesterday's Tomorrow

John Miller
Staff Columnist

better than the old one at the Gap? Internships.

Over the course of my collegiate career, I have had the opportunity to take part in four internships. When asked what these internships were like, I usually respond, all of the work with none of the pay, or half of the pay if you are really lucky.

Seriously, each one of these has in some way shaped my college experience for the better.

After my first semester at MTSU, I moved to France to study and work in a marketing firm. Because I had more or less only worked in restaurants since the time I was 16, it was a bit of an adjustment to work in an office environment.

The company I worked for

wanted me to write an economic study comparing that region of France and Tennessee for possible trade and investment opportunities. If that was not daunting enough, it all had to be in French.

At 19, I had no clue how to do this. After six weeks of research, interviews and nervous writing, I produced a 27-page economic study that got me a check and a thank you. I had an unbelievable time studying and working in France, even though at times I did not exactly know what I was doing.

Fast forward three years. I am once again studying in France.

One cold November day, I learn I have won a scholarship to study and intern in Washington. Even though there were dozens of positions available, there was only one I was interested in.

After arriving in D.C., I find myself walking down the halls of Congress going to a job interview. It was a bit intimidating meeting with the chief

of staff to discuss my job skills, or lack thereof.

Nonetheless, I was hired and spent the semester working in Congressman John Tanner's office. While there, I was expected to be at work by 9 a.m. sharp everyday in a suit and tie.

I also had to learn how to use several software programs, research topics for use in speeches and legislation, and write constituent letters.

I was very fortunate because my office treated me as part of the staff, and not just "the intern."

While there, I learned many skills and made countless contacts that I know will benefit me in the future.

Since leaving Washington, I have interned in Congressman Bart Gordon's office as well as the Tennessee Senate. Although each of these experiences was unique, they all have commonalities.

Over the course of my internships, I have learned that as "the intern," you are the low man on the totem pole. At times you will be asked to do

things that you think are trivial and beneath you. I have had to run copies and make my fair share of coffee.

At the same time, I have been able to network and make friends and contacts that will help me when it comes time to apply to law school and find a "real" job.

In addition, the job skills I learned will give me an edge over someone who has equal credentials minus the job experience.

To those who ever want to get a good job or go to grad school, internships are a way to facilitate getting there.

While interning, take advantage of every opportunity possible and network as much as humanly possible. You never know when someone you meet might one day offer you a job or help you get into the grad school of your choice. ♦

John Miller is a senior political science and French double major and can be reached via e-mail bigharf@comcast.net.

Some internships not all they're cracked up to be

I look back on my internship as Cameron Diaz probably looks back on her first modeling jobs. (Yes, I'm talking about the topless ones.) I'm embarrassed that it ever happened.

There I was – as bright-eyed and bushy-tailed as any ambitious student getting a first taste of a profession she's spent years of her life dreaming of – about to embark on what I thought was going to be one of the best experiences of my life.

That morning I jumped out of my bed with a smile on my face and a glimmer in my eye. I would be working as a writer at a local publishing company, and I had a pretty good feeling about it.

There was one wee little detail I'd forgotten to consider. I really knew absolutely nothing about this establishment



Better Than Nothing

Erica Rodefer
Staff Columnist

that I'd committed myself to for the entirety of my summer "vacation."

Well, vacation hardly explains it. The company wasn't what it presented itself to be. On the Web site it seemed like a fairly well-established place of business.

There were a multitude of writers, some of which had interviewed the likes of Tom Cruise and Reese Witherspoon. The design of the page looked professional enough. I had mused through

the pages glancing at the content and thinking, "I'll be nervous if someone asks me to call Brad Pitt."

Needless to say, I was less than happy when I realized what kind of daily tasks would be expected of me.

The office staff consisted of an overwhelming two-person team: the owner of the company and a marketing intern.

Aside from the undeniable fact that my supervisor was hardly a friendly, understanding ray of sunshine (which I expected), the place was a wreck. This was not like your typical newsroom disorganization.

There were piles of papers, cameras, film, food and trash in such abundance at times I felt that the clutter might swallow me up so fully that I'd be whisked off into an even fur-

ther state of oblivion than was typical for me in unfortunate office space.

Then there was the problem of my job. Instead of the original, thought provoking journalism I had planned to do, I ended up doing a lot of Web perusing. Unfortunately, this wasn't just because I was looking for an escape during my miserable hours there.

Instead of calling up sources on the phone, as is the general practice for journalists in this setting, I was commissioned to go searching for celebrity biographies, articles or other random information already published on the Internet.

Despite my initial pleading that I felt uncomfortable putting my name on something that I solely ripped-off from secondary sources, I probably

did two phone interviews in the three-month span I worked there. "It's a time issue," I was told.

What's worse is the way my work looked once it was published. I turned in clean copy, I'm sure of it. From working at *Sidelines*, I have learned to be very careful to avoid typos and misspellings. However, of all the articles I wrote, I'd say all but one or two had additional typos and grammatical mistakes AFTER going through the "editing" process.

These articles didn't exactly provide me with the type of clipping that an aspiring journalist would want to give to potential employers. ♦

Erica Rodefer is a senior journalism major and can be reached at ejr2c@mtsu.edu.

Achieving a successful first interview

By Jason Cox
Editor in Chief

So it's about time to put those expensive books on the shelf, dust off your business suit and go apply for that first job that you've been working toward for the last four to seven years.

But what does that potential employer expect from you? How exactly should you approach the interview — should you tell your interviewer what you want to do, or let them tell you what the expectations of the job are? Should you wear that black three-piece suit? And just what is a neutral color, anyway?

Arenee Guthrie, a job and career specialist with Opportunity Industrialization Center of Nashville, says knowing what you want to do and about the position you're applying for is crucial to landing that first job or any job.

"People now in the job



Photo Illustration by Micah Miller | Photo Editor

A strong handshake can impress an employer.

market are not hiring people who just come off the street and say they're looking for a job," Guthrie says. "They want you to know what you want to do because they can match you with the right career path or the right job. In that case, it's better for you and better for them, too."

Guthrie says knowing about

your employer and any of the company's areas of specialty help give that important good first impression.

"If you want to go work at Vanderbilt Hospital, you need to do some research on the hospital, know what it's known for, know their specialty areas and things of that sort," she says.

"Know something about the area that you're working in. If you're going to be working in the emergency room, you need to kind of get a feel of what goes on in emergency rooms.

"Allow the employer to know that you have done some research on your own to, you know, go into this market. It's not a hit-or-miss kind of situation," she adds.

Guthrie says that often the best way to get a real idea of what the everyday tasks of a particular position are is by talking to people already employed in that field, keeping your expectations and a realistic view of your skills in mind.

"If I was going to be going for a job as a teacher, I might want to call or talk to people who work in that field or that industry and talk to them about what it's like on a daily basis to be a teacher. What are some of the duties, what are some of the responsibilities, and match that up with what my skills are," she says.

Getting it all together

"First impressions are the best," Guthrie says. "You have to have a presentable approach when you come into an interview. You have to have things in place."

This means knowing what you're applying for, what you want to do and knowing a little bit about the company you want to work for. Your expertise and preparation will show

through in the interview, Guthrie says.

"Whatever's going on on the inside of you is actually going to show on the outside," she says. "If you're enthused about what you're doing — it's one thing to go to an employer and say, when they say, 'Well, what are you looking for?' and you say 'Well, I just need a job.'"

'Neutral Colors'? Wha???

Wearing the right or wrong outfit can mean the difference between a handshake and a new job or a 'We'll call you' and the door.

"I think you have to be dressed according to what you're going to apply for," Guthrie says. "And even if you know you're going to go and apply for some high-fashion model position, you don't want to go in there looking like you just got off the runway in Paris. You want to still go in there with a suit on, some pumps and neutral hose."

Good, neutral colors include some shades of black, grays, navy blues and some browns such as a charcoal shade, Guthrie says. Be careful with black colors, though.

"You can wear a black suit on an interview, but you don't need to look drabby in it," Guthrie says.

Guthrie says a black pinstriped suit can work fine as long as the stripes are somewhat subtle and not bright and ostentatious, she says. ♦

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Employers want people with soft skills

By Kristin Hall
Managing Editor

With the upcoming Career Fair, students should be looking to emphasize their soft skills in order to catch the attention of employers.

According to Karen Austin, assistant director of MTSU's Career and Employment Center, soft skills complement technical skills students receive in class and in the workplace.

Soft skills include responsibility, working with a team, punctuality, leadership ability, organization and friendliness. The National Association of Colleges and Employers recently ranked the top 10 soft skills that employers are looking for.

The top quality is communication skills, followed by honesty/integrity, interpersonal skills, motivation, a strong work ethic and teamwork skills.

When thousands of students graduate and compete in a slow economy, showing an employer that you have soft skills may help land a coveted internship or job.

Student organizations such as honor societies, professional groups, fraternities and sororities can all develop soft skills.

"Involvement in a student organization can be very helpful specifically if you're in a leadership position," said Jackie Victory, coordinator of student organizations and community services.

"Employers want to see students who can work well in teams," Austin explained.

But it's important to show employers your dedication.

"Students need to show that they are active in student organizations, not just a list of groups," Austin said. "If they take leadership roles, that helps."

Students involved in organizations on campus can learn time-management skills, recruitment, how to plan agendas and delegate responsibility, Victory said.

"Students learn how to effectively communicate with administrators on campus in the process of planning events on campus," Victory said.



Photo by Micah Miller | Staff Photographer

The Career and Employment Center can help students find jobs.

Learning soft skills like these most of the time only comes from hands-on experience, Victory said.

"Employers want to see specifically what students have gained from partic-

ipating in groups," Victory said, "and how students got involved on campus."

The career center is located in the Keathley University Center, Room 328. ♦

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