

MT Baseball remains undefeated at 5-0.

Sports, page 6

THURS 68°/53°

FRI 56°/40°

SAT 53°/30°

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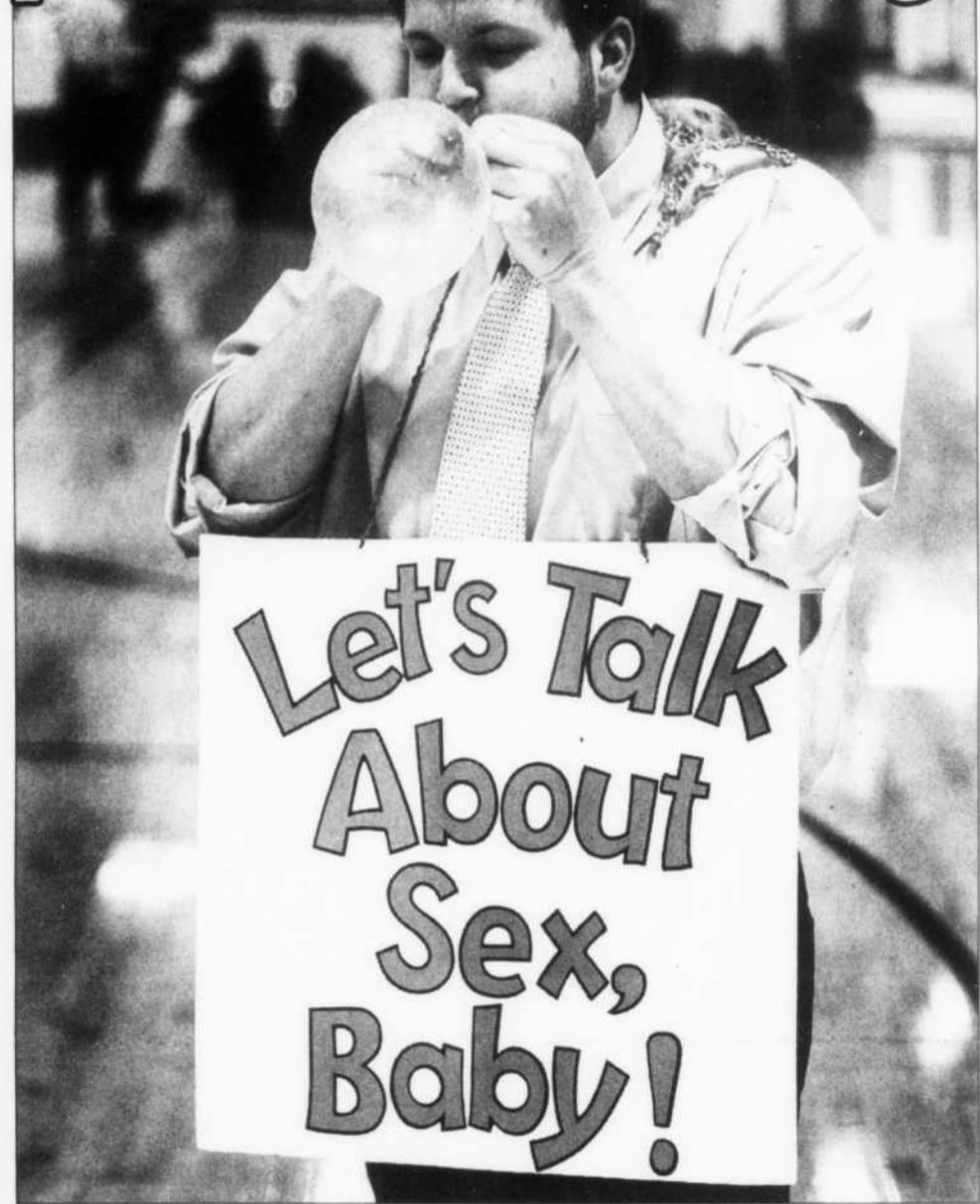
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

EDITORIALLY INDEPENDENT

THURSDAY, FEB. 26, 2009

VOL. 85, NO. 12

Jump start your health promotes well being



Let's Talk About Sex, Baby!

Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Curtis Nolte blows up a banana-lubricated condom. The MTSU Health Fair celebrated the opening of the new campus pharmacy yesterday. Booths were set up to teach students and faculty about healthy living and how to create a better life.

HEALTH, PAGE 2

University staff under fire Steering Committee proposal could have effect on some senior, tenured faculty

By TIFFANY GIBSON
Managing Editor

After reviewing the proposed cuts summary and final report from the Steering Committee, some faculty agree with having a furlough once a month and beginning post retirement early if other positions will be saved.

The summary report said that having a furlough once a month will save \$5 million.

"I don't think anybody wants that and [President Sidney] McPhee wouldn't choose that, but I think it's one option," said Jane Marcellus, journalism associate professor and member of the Faculty Senate. "From what I've heard, as a faculty senator it would be handled fairly."

Marcellus said that she would rather not have a furlough but if it can preserve people's jobs then she is in favor of it.

Ed Kimbrell, journalism professor, said he has talked to faculty who are also in favor of the furlough.

"If it would save some positions at the university then I would be more than willing," Kimbrell said.

"Now that's a 5 percent cut in income, but if it would go towards helping people and keeping them, then I'm all for it."

One of the other proposals mentioned in the summary and final report is suggesting to faculty to begin post-retirement early. The final report said this could be done by announcing a 5-year moratorium by

Gebert said the program consists of faculty members that want to retire and will agree to a number of years, usually 1 to 4, to teach half time with 15-credit hours at half salary so their medical benefits will continue.

Because of the status of the economy, Gebert said the number of faculty thinking about beginning post retirement is going down because faculty lost their investments in the stock market.

"I know a couple of faculty that were going to retire and now



"I know a couple of faculty that were going to retire and now they've dropped the idea since the stock market crashed."

ED KIMBRELL
JOURNALISM PROFESSOR

approving post-retirement teaching after June 30.

"Retirement is a choice that faculty have, [and] not all the Tennessee Board Regents institutions have used the post retirement option that we use at MTSU," said Kaylene Gebert, executive vice president and provost of Academic Affairs. "That is under consideration as to whether we continue that program or not."

they've dropped the whole idea since the stock market crashed," Kimbrell said.

Kimbrell said that there are two retirement systems: the Tennessee Consolidated System and the Teachers

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University spends \$10,000 on 'vote yes' advertising campaign

By MICHAEL STONE
Editor in Chief

Events and Transportation Services signed a \$10,000 contract with Sterling Communications on Dec. 16, 2008 in an attempt to vote yes on a referendum entitled "All-Access Campus Improvement Plan".

According to the contract, which was approved by Ron

include \$3,500-\$5,500 for a Web site, \$1,100 for "word-mark/logo development," \$850 for vote yes signs and \$500 for miscellaneous expenses.

John Cothorn, senior vice president, said he supports Malone's decision to support Sterling Communications, a Murfreesboro-based marketing firm.

"We had to get the information out on how it would benefit students now and in the future," Cothorn said.

Cothorn said that he did not believe it was wrong for the "information" to

have the phrase "Vote Yes" on it.

"We wouldn't have put the information out there if we didn't support it," Cothorn said.

President Sidney McPhee could not be reached for comment.

The contract said a strategy would be made to "build support among key student constituencies, such as Student Government Association leadership and others with common interests, who can help tell the story and build additional widespread support."

Malone, assistant vice president of ETS, the objective for Sterling Communications was to "build support and acceptance, leading to a positive vote, for a campus initiative including a parking garage, street improvements and transit expansion for the MTSU campus."

"The project manager [from Sterling Communications] for this particular endeavor serves as a consultant and an adviser," Malone said.

The contract said that the project manager working on the plan is to be paid \$120 per hour. Other fees included in the price of the contract

PARKING, PAGE 3



MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
SIDELINES



COLLAGE

Committee crunches mass media

By EMMA EGLI
Assistant News Editor

The Academic and Instructional Review workgroup has proposed to create a media center by merging Sidelines, WMOT 89.5, WMTS 88.3, Collage and Scared Rabbit Records into one location with one budget.

The AIR workgroup has recommended a



number of smaller reductions that are estimated to save MTSU a combined total of at least \$4 million. One of these smaller reductions includes the proposed media center.

"I think the people pro-

posing it have no idea what each individual organization is about," said Richard Lowe, a senior mass communications manager and general manager of MTTV. "The idea of a student media center would be a good idea only if every organization in that media center had a shared goal."

According to the Steer-

ing Committee's proposed final report, the combined budget of the media center's units could be reduced by about \$500,000. It also said that savings would ensue from staff reductions.

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Continued from page 1: Health Fair promotes well being

By SPENCER MOHEAD
Staff Writer

MTSU Campus Recreation and Student Health Services held its first unified health fair yesterday in conjunction with the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new campus pharmacy.

President Sidney McPhee attended the 9 a.m. ribbon-cutting in the atrium of the Health, Wellness and Recreation Center to commemorate the pharmacy, which has been active since January.

Several student- and campus-run health organizations set up booths in the main gym of the Rec Center for the health fair, which lasted from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. According to graduate assistant Sara Hughes, 125 students, faculty and staff had registered their attendance at the health fair by the fair's

midpoint at 2 p.m.

"I'm very pleased with how it's gone," said Lisa Thomason, director of Health Promotion. "People are having fun."

Members of Professor Cheryl Ellis' Teaching Human Sexuality class presented a number of booths that instructed the proper use of contraceptives, the dangers of sexually transmitted disease and the negative effects of alcohol on judgment. The last booth demonstrated its point with a game where participants attempted to sink Ping Pong balls into solo cups while wearing goggles that simulated inebriation. The booths also gave away a variety of condoms.

"Its purpose is to inform students about STD's, especially this close to spring break,"

Rich Veloz said while wearing a sandwich board that read, "Let's talk about sex, baby."

A nutrition trivia pong game at the Student Dietetic Association booth gave students health tips.

"I learned about nutrition baby steps," said Riley Jacks, a senior elementary education major.

The Speech/Language and Hearing Clinic booth offered free hearing tests and information about its clinic, which is one of few facilities to allow undergraduate students practical experience in their fields.

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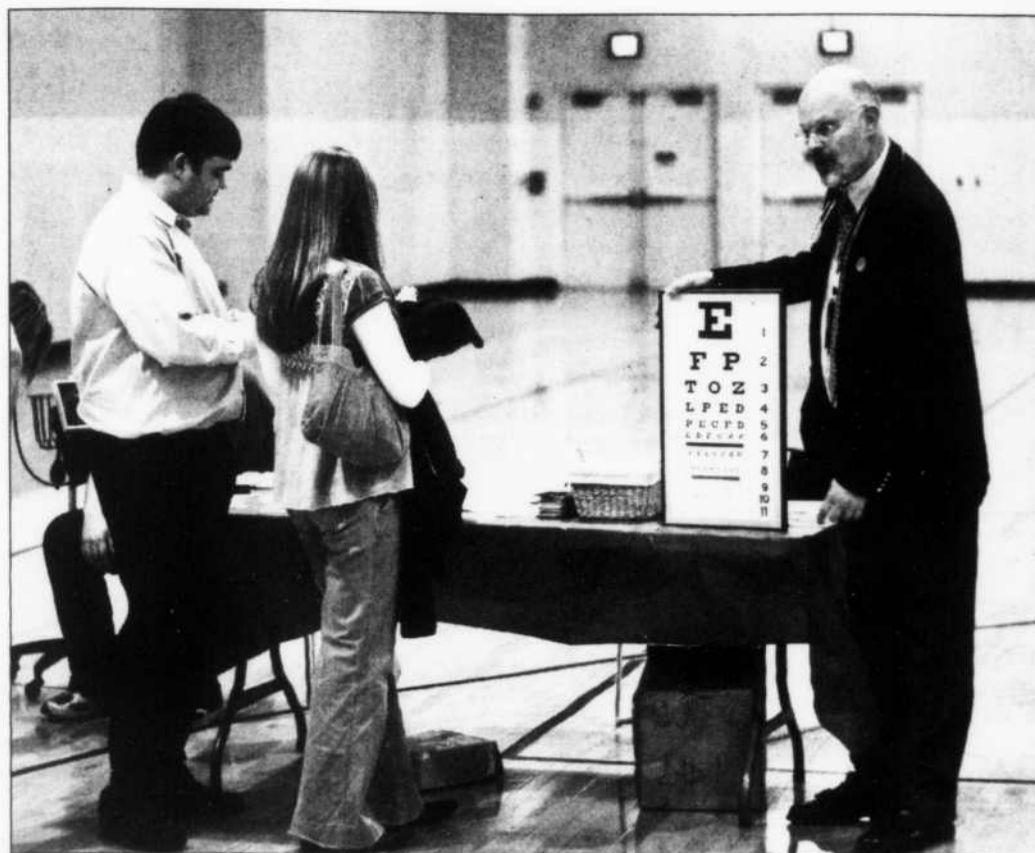


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Dr. Pat Spangler performed free eye and blood pressure exams for students at the health fair yesterday.

MT Baha'is hold prayer for imprisoned leaders

By DUSTIN EVANS
Staff Writer

The Baha'is of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County is scheduled to host its "Interfaith Prayer Meeting for the Safety of Persian Baha'i Leaders" on Feb. 26 at 7 p.m.

The prayer meeting, which is being held in room S118 of the Business and Aerospace Building, is in response to the arrest and impending trial of seven Baha'i leaders in Iran.

Fariba Kamalabadi, Jamaloddin Khanjani, Afif Naemi, Saeid Rezaie, Mahvash Sabet, Behrouz Tavakkoli and Vahid Tizfahm have all been charged with espionage to Israel and are scheduled to stand trial within the week. All seven face

the death penalty.

"The Iranian government will not admit the fact that their charges are unfounded," said Amelia Crofts, the president of the MTSU Baha'i Association. "The main issue here is the fact that they are Baha'is; [Iran] thinks Baha'is will go against the Islamic government."

Crofts said that Iran thinks that Baha'is are threatening their government because Baha'i is a newer religious faith in the country.

"The persecution of Baha'is has increased dramatically since the [Iranian] Revolution of 1979," said Carol Mansour, the spokeswoman of the Middle Tennessee Baha'is. "When the [Islamic] fundamentalist clergy took over the coun-

try, one of their first acts was to gather the governing bodies of Baha'i and have them executed."

Crofts said that the Baha'i faith is a world religion that strives to unite all faiths and races from around the world into a single human family. She said that the followers of Baha'u'llah are found in every country, making it "the second-most widespread religion besides Christianity."

"This meeting really is for everybody [and] anyone who wants to come pray for human rights and religious

freedom in the world," Crofts said. "We are going to have prayers from all religions; we want prayers from every religion represented so that it is really focusing on the human issue."

Mansour said that the prayer meeting would help to provide solace to the imprisoned leaders and their families.

"We are hoping to ease the suffering of this incident, leading to their release," Mansour said. "We believe that prayer has the power to affect change."

Crofts said she hopes the meeting will also promote

awareness of religious persecution, not just in Iran.

"Hopefully it will promote awareness to the students on campus and to members of the community so that they can write to their congressmen - let their congressmen become aware of the situation there so that we can put forth some action to stop that from happening," Crofts said.

On Feb. 13, the U.S. House of Representatives introduced H. Res. 175, which would condemn the government of Iran for sponsoring the persecution of the

Baha'is and violating the International Covenants on Human Rights.

The Baha'is have been using America as the place to defect for quite some time, Mansour said.

"Middle Tennessee is set up as a safe haven for refugees," Mansour said. "Many Baha'is come to Middle Tennessee as their first stop for refuge."

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Don't clean your nails with your KEYS



MTSU could stop expenditures to Governor's school

STAFF REPORT

The work group for Academic and Instructional Review suggested in its final report, released on Feb. 19, that President Sidney McPhee cut the expenditures for the Tennessee Governor's School for the Arts.

Lynda Hawkersmith, the assistant director and dean

of students for the Tennessee GSFTA was unaware of the report's release, however, she said that she does not feel that the change will affect the program.

"We are funded by the state of Tennessee," Hawkersmith said. "[The proposed cut] would not shut down the program."

Charles Perry, chair of

the Steering Committee, said McPhee would be making the final decision on the matter, and it would be unfair to comment on any specifics.

"MTSU has hosted Governor's School for 25 years," Hawkersmith said.

She also said that MTSU has a very strong connection with the program.

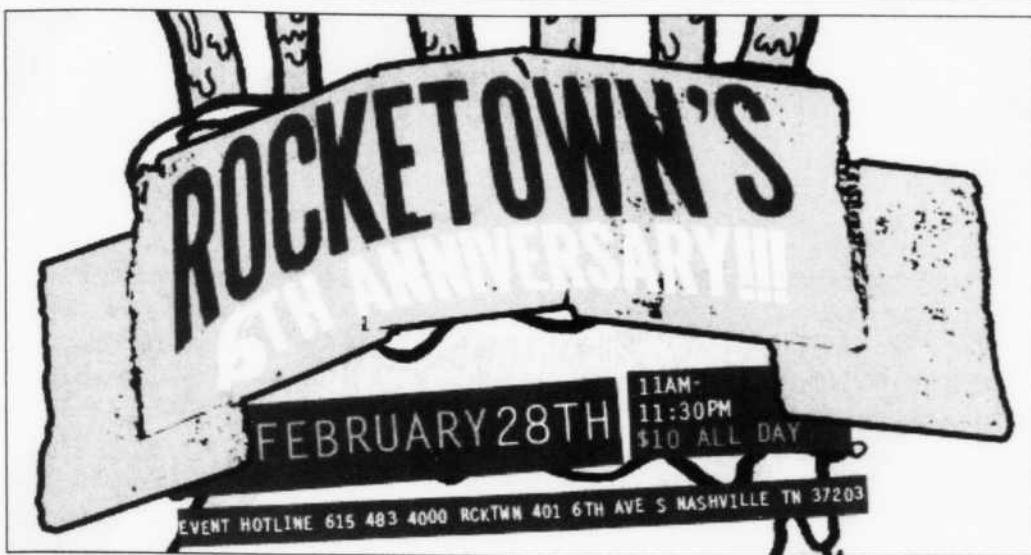


Photo courtesy of Rockettown

Rockettown burns its birthday fuse

By FAITH FRANKLIN
Community News Editor

Rockettown is scheduled to host its annual birthday party Saturday to celebrate six years of building relationships with the teenagers who visit annually to enjoy music, skateboarding and coffee.

The party, an all-day event, will feature skateboarding and dodgeball competitions as well as a "Halo II" and "Super Smash Bros." competition, ending with a fashion show.

"Our sixth anniversary

of reaching out to teens in downtown Nashville is a great [time] for everybody to come together and see a little bit of what we provide at Rockettown," said Audra Davis, director of programming.

Rockettown is a youth outreach, recreation and entertainment facility.

"Our mission is to provide a safe place for teens where they feel accepted," Davis said.

Rockettown also provides entertainment options, such as concerts, as

well as after-school and weekend programming.

"Our after-school programs are targeted toward those in high school, but our concerts are for all ages," Davis said. "We have a lot of college students who volunteer down here who help with shows and who also help with some of our mentoring programs."

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PARKING FROM PAGE 1

Sondra Wilson, SGA president, and Brandon McNary, SGA executive vice president and speaker of the senate, have both said they support the referendum.

The referendum includes the construction - scheduled to begin in 2011 - of a five-story, 830-space parking garage, additional buses to the Raider Xpress shuttle system, new bike lanes, improvements to MTSU Boulevard and the construction of an entrance to campus from Wiles Court.

Four houses located on Wiles Court, a residential neighborhood off Greenland Drive, and one house near the road would be directly affected by the construction of the entrance.

"As a university, we would have to purchase those houses," Malone said.

Students renting houses on Wiles Court said they were upset about the entrance's construction.

"If they actually do decide to put the [Wiles Court entrance] here, it would be a pretty big disappointment on my behalf," said Jacob Azmitia, a junior nutrition

major and resident of 802 Wiles Court.

Azmitia said his landlord owns two houses on the street.

"They have been pressuring him into selling for a while," Azmitia said. "He doesn't seem too perturbed about it at the moment, but you can tell he will eventually sell when the price is right."

Nick Menson, a senior concrete management major, lives at 1902 Greenland Dr., a house that would be affected by the entrance.

"[The Wiles Court entrance] is a misappropriation of funds," Menson said. "They need to invest in academics."

Adam Weber, a senior plant and soil sciences major and Menson's roommate, said he disagrees with the entrance.

"I'm a little ticked because there are programs that are getting cut," Weber said. "I'm an agriculture student, and they're thinking about cutting the Farm Lab."

The final report from the workgroup proposing suggestions for budget cuts within academics at MTSU included the elimination of the lab at an estimated savings of \$600,000 for the university.

Weber said this would lead to the elimination of agricultural programs at MTSU.

"Why don't they take the money that would go towards the [entrance] and fix all the programs on campus that are going downhill," Weber said. "There are people who are in degree programs right now that are facing going to another school to finish their degree."

Today is the last day students will be able to vote on the referendum, as well as in the SGA elections. To vote, students must log into their MTSU webmail accounts and look for an e-mail from Gene Fitch, associate vice president for Student Affairs and dean of Student Life, entitled "Spring 2009 SGA Elections - Vote Now." Further instructions are within the e-mail.

Female Ecstasy users and non-users needed for research

Researchers at Vanderbilt are recruiting Caucasian females (ages 18-25) who have used Ecstasy and those who have not used Ecstasy to complete a confidential brain imaging study. Participants will be compensated up to \$375 for their time in completing a comprehensive study. For inquiries or to enroll, contact Gavin at 615-936-1013.

This study is sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

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OPINIONS

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

All-Access campaign frivolous, vote no!

MTSU is about to endure about \$19 million in budget cuts from state appropriations.

University officials are doing everything possible to ensure the cuts don't affect the "Academic Master Plan."

After hearing the word "academic" in "Academic Master Plan," one would assume the plan would pertain to, say, academics. But the plan has to do with on-campus construction, and lots of it.

The next phase the university is working on in the Academic Master Plan is the "All-Access Campus Improvement Plan." This includes the construction of a parking garage, buying more Raider Xpress buses and purchasing houses from landlords near campus to build a new entrance.

For this plan to go into effect, the student body must first vote in favor of it. If it passes, fees will be raised by \$5, \$15, \$20, \$40 and \$60 over the next five academic school years, increasing each year.

It seems kind of strange that a university about to make cuts to countless programs on its campus would try and persuade the student body to fund such projects.

Events and Transportation Services has already spent at least \$10,000 on "Vote Yes" advertising.

We, the staff of *Sidelines*, can hear the frustration emitting from programs, such as WMOT, that are on the verge of elimination.

Students are told that the reasoning behind the Academic Master Plan is to build a pedestrian-oriented campus with an academic core. But if there aren't any academic programs left, what difference will aesthetic landscapes and majestic new buildings make?

"But past students voted yes on fee increases to give you better buildings," say university officials.

Regardless, *Sidelines* strongly advises you to consider voting no.

Voting for the All-Access Campus Improvement Plan is scheduled to conclude tonight at midnight. To vote, students must log into their webmail accounts and select the mass e-mail entitled "Spring 2009 SGA Elections - Vote Now."

Don't let rhetoric affect your decision. It's just the administration's way of trying to convince you that construction is more important than academics during times of tremendous budget cuts in higher education.

Why MTSU needs to keep WMOT

The following is a letter written to President Sidney McPhee concerning the elimination of WMOT.

I am writing to express some of my thoughts and concerns regarding the possible elimination or restructuring of WMOT. You have no doubt received much correspondence recently from members of the community outlining why they think WMOT should be saved.

My perspective may be slightly different from what you've been hearing. I would like to consider not only why WMOT should be saved, but also why it cannot be eliminated. It is an issue of permanence. WMOT is unique and

valuable far beyond its relevance to MTSU's academic structure. One of the few remaining 24-hour mainstream jazz stations in the country, WMOT is legendary and revered by a large family of artists and listeners nationwide. If the jazz community loses this station, it is gone forever.

It's my belief that the financial problems being suffered by WMOT stem from the jazz community taking the station for granted and assuming that it will always be funded by MTSU. This situation is now being exacerbated by budget cuts. MTSU must be relieved of the burden of financing a radio station that it views as having a

limited contribution to its educational mission while keeping WMOT on the air serving the community that has come to rely upon its invaluable service.

For the burden of financing the station to be relieved, several things must happen.

First, the staff and Board of Directors of WMOT need to cultivate a much higher level of corporate underwriting and explore the possibility of writing grant applications to major arts funding groups.

Second, WMOT's listeners need to pledge yearly contributions equal to the amount of annual costs for satellite radio or cable music channels.

Third, the artists who benefit from the exposure

they receive on WMOT need to pledge yearly contributions that would equal the amount they would spend on advertising and radio promotion.

Organizing this support base and implementing this structure will take time, so I'm asking you to save WMOT now to afford us the opportunity to facilitate these ideas. Eliminating the station by suddenly cutting funding without any serious attempt to save this 40-year tradition would be unfair to all who have supported this station in the past and have displayed an interest in seeing WMOT remain on the air.

Fire a warning shot, but throw us a lifeline. Give the jazz community two years

to restructure the fundraising so that MTSU will no longer have to finance this radio station. Consolidating the station into one large department with all the other media services offered by MTSU would only serve to dilute and homogenize its mission and destroy its identity and purpose.

WMOT is a gem that cannot be lost. Please find a way to keep WMOT on the air doing what it has done so well for so long for so many in order that it may be restructured to continue doing this important, valuable and unique job.

Sincerely,
Roger A. Spencer
Director, Nashville Jazz Workshop

Low student participation hurts MT

Recently, the Student Government Association held its executive debates for the upcoming elections. Being a first-time SGA senator and member, I was excited and looking forward to it. Already knowing the majority of the candidates from working with them in the senate, I was curious to hear what they had to say regarding the positions they were running for and how they were going to lead the students next year.

First, I want to say that all the candidates did an excellent job, but I'm a little disappointed. As a previous article in *Sidelines* stated a few days ago, these upcoming SGA elections will probably be the most important in quite a while.

There were 15 people at most at the debate.

Regrettably, student participation is a problem that not only the SGA has, but other organizations have



Challenges Ahead

Sam Ashby

as well. In my opinion, for the SGA to be effective and to serve the student body as best we can, we must increase student participation and student dialogue. Unfortunately, posting flyers, creating Facebook groups and talking to people isn't doing the trick.

We need to rethink the way we're doing things. We need to work smarter, not harder. We need to start using things such as Twitter, Facebook, e-mail, etc. more efficiently and to our advantage.

As of now, the SGA is not

allowed to send out mass e-mail messages to students. This needs to change.

If we were to send out a monthly newsletter in an e-mail message, students would begin to see an increased visibility of the events the SGA is sponsoring and a renewed interest in getting involved.

Another important issue that the SGA is currently facing is an apparent disconnect between itself and the administration. For the organization to work effectively and for the best interests of the students, this should not be happening.

The vice president of Administration and Public Affairs, a position among the SGA executive officers, can at any time appoint a legislative liaison. I think it's time that we do that.

Members have stated before that the job in the past has consisted of the liaison sitting in on the meetings

and posting what was said on the SGA Web site.

That is not my vision of a legislative liaison. He or she needs to be a committed student who is willing to ask administration and university personnel tough questions. The liaison needs to be able to follow legislation in the SGA senate and ensure it is signed and passed by the vice president of Student Affairs. He or she needs to be the effective backbone for the SGA.

The liaison will be the mediator between the administration and the SGA during times of lax communication. If the SGA passes a piece of legislation that the administration may have reservations about, it will be the liaison's job to address the administration's concern back to the senate. From there, the senate will readdress and rework legislation to ensure that it is passed.

What I am stressing in this relationship is cooperation. The administration and the SGA will, at times, have different goals in mind when working together.

What should matter, though, are the things on which we agree: the things we can work on together that will put the students first and what can ensure that MTSU is on the right path for the future. With the upcoming year of challenges, it is my belief that the legislative liaison will play one of the most important roles in the SGA, along with the executive officers.

Sam Ashby is a freshman majoring in liberal arts and can be reached at sa2s@mtsu.edu.

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COMICS

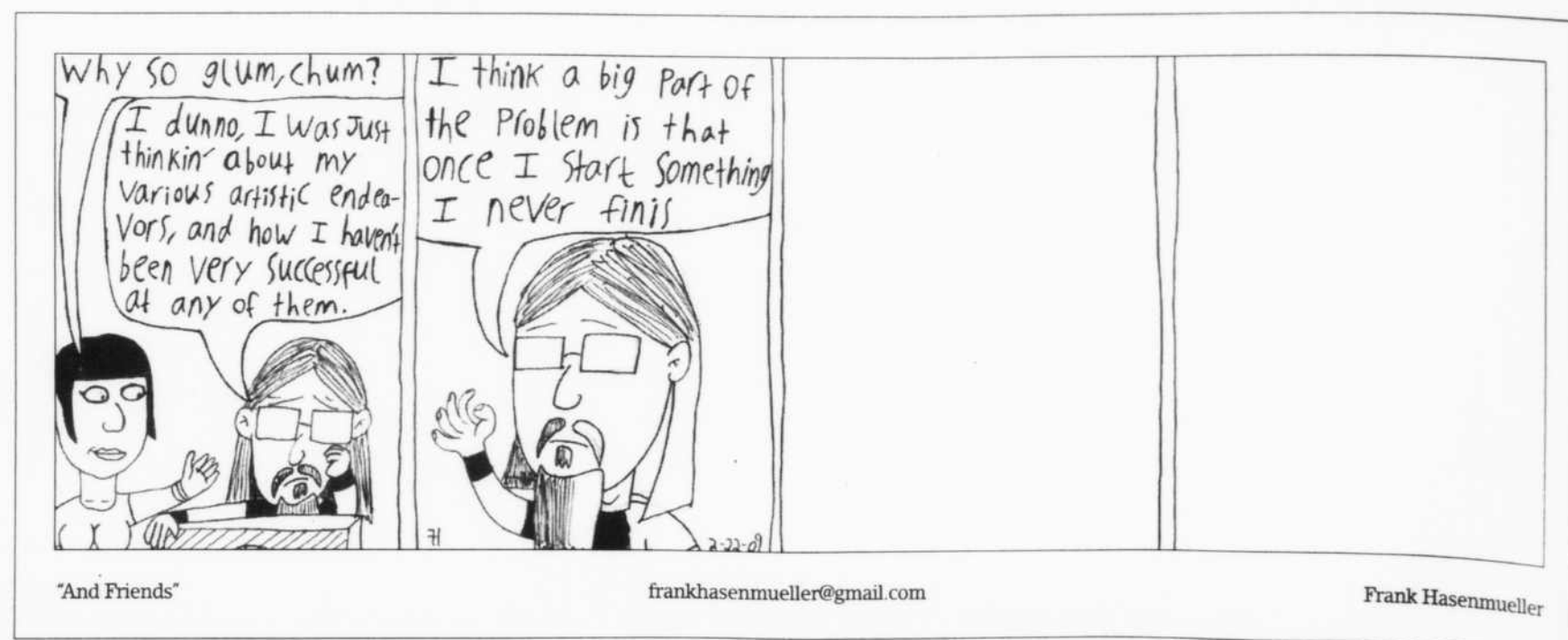


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Frank Hasenmueller

Letters Policy

Sidelines welcomes letters to the editor from all readers. Please e-mail letters to slopinio@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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FEATURES



DO YOU FEEL YOU
HAVE A VOICE IN
MTSU'S FUTURE?

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Augustana comes to MTSU

Band plays to promote third album "Can't Love Can't Hurt"



JESSICA PACE
Staff Writer

Most people know Augustana because of songs like "Boston," the piano-driven hit that received extensive radio play and sold more than a million copies. Thanks to the MTSU concert committee, the band visited Tucker Theatre last night with new songs from its third album, *Can't Love Can't Hurt*, which was released in the spring of 2008. The performance was something of a homecoming for guitarist Chris Schachtleben, who briefly attended MTSU.

Lead vocalist Dan Layus expressed the band's love for playing on college campuses.

"College shows are a blast," Layus says. "All the kids are just wanting to have a good time."

Some might say Augustana experienced success in reverse. The band reached the top of the Billboard Heatseekers chart with its second album, *All the Stars and Boulevards*, and sealed a deal with Epic Records while the guys were still in their late teens.

Between performances on the *Late Show with David Letterman*, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and *The Ellen Degeneres Show*, and opening for the likes of Dashboard Confessional and Snow Patrol, it was difficult for the band to both grasp the recognition as a

reality and realize that the music industry is not always kind.

Though his career is far from reaching a standstill, Layus has had the time while on tour to write songs with less pressure and digest the whirlwind of success Augustana quickly received.

"It's kind of hard when you're in it," Layus says. "It's the same as any job. Each milestone is so detailed, and it's hard to see how lucky we've been day by day when we're in it."

Though grateful for Augustana's popularity thus far, Layus still has high expectations for the band and does not yet think that it has achieved the level of success its are capable of.

"I think it's a healthy mix of expectations and humility and drive and luck," Layus says. "I definitely would never have thought that our lives would come to this level. You have a certain level of expectations for yourself, but you can't expect a certain response because there are so many outside contributors to how a single does or how a tour does."

One thing Layus has learned between recording, writing and touring is that some things are out of his hands.

"I've stopped blaming myself for why a certain thing flopped or why there weren't a lot of people at a show — maybe they had to study."



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Dan Layus, lead singer of Augustana performs at Tucker Theatre Wednesday night to promote their new album.

Now, Layus says he hopes the band stays away from becoming jaded and has developed a better sense of know-how in the studio and on stage.

"I don't believe anyone in this business deserves success," Layus says. "If you take anything too seriously, you shoot yourself in the foot. We expect more from ourselves than what people can give back."

Though he likes the well-received songs from *Can't Love Can't Hurt*, Layus admits that singles are often not necessarily the songs that are most important to him.

"Twenty Years" came out really cool — the dynamics and strings, especially," Layus says. "I Still Ain't Over You" is fun to play live. I like at least half the record still."

Even if Layus gets tired of playing songs from *Can't Love Can't Hurt*, he says he is not anxious that all of Augustana's early success signifies that the band has hit its peak.

"I still don't think I've written the best [that I can write]," Layus says. "If I did, I would be worried. But I look up to Wilco, Tom Petty, Bruce Springsteen, and they all still have massive hits."

Augustana has had little trouble producing hits in the past, and *Can't Love Can't Hurt* is no different in that "Sweet and Low" and "I Still Ain't Over You" have already achieved a lot of recognition. The band has kept the same sound with a slightly upgraded formula.

Apart from a new pro-

ducer, Mike Flynn, Layus remarks that the songwriting has advanced to a more mature level.

"My perspective is different," Layus says. "I think *Can't Love Can't Hurt* is way more focused on a point lyrically."

Layus converted the stress of juggling fatherhood and a band breaking through into song material and took voice lessons in an effort to take more care in performing.

"There was more to take care of," Layus says. "There were people not relying on me, but I had to pick up some weight and make changes. And they were good ones — they were motivating and helped me stay out of a sea of oblivion."

Layus says that some of this doubt and stress is

evident in *Can't Love Can't Hurt* and has impacted his continuously changing writing process.

Augustana also looks up to bands that they have opened for, like the Counting Crows, because of the band's ability to remain grounded in spite of whatever fame they achieve. This is a mentality Layus wants Augustana to mirror.

"They've had so much commercial success, but you don't think of them like that," Layus says of the Counting Crows.

Augustana is straddling a line between not-quite-there and greater recognition.

Until they break through as big as Layus would like, the band members are just aiming for continued success without losing their heads along the way.

Before he was our president

Student shares her experience meeting then-Illinois Sen. Barack Obama

By CLARA RASMUSSEN
Contributing Writer

The world witnessed the inauguration of President Barack Obama on Jan. 20. Many people took the trip to Washington, D.C., while others stayed home and enjoyed the moving moment on TV.

Where were you that day? On the way to my international relations class, a group of students was watching the inauguration from a projector in the political science building.

In that moment, hearing President Obama's voice, I thought how lucky I was to have met him in person.

I had the opportunity to go to the capitol with John A. Logan College in Carterville, Ill. They offered a course involving a trip to D.C. involving visits to the Pentagon, Supreme Court, Arlington Cemetery and meetings with senators and congressmen.

But the most exciting part of the trip was being



Photo courtesy of Clara Rasmussen
Exchange student Clara Rasmussen had the opportunity to meet Sen. Dick Durbin and then-Sen. Barack Obama. The experience made the inauguration more memorable for her.

introduced to then-Illinois Sen. Barack Obama.

The Capitol was full of action and rushing around, with senators coming and going. I felt invisible in the world of policy-makers, in a place

where the power to change the future of American citizens is in their hands.

You could see yourself becoming one of them, sitting at a nice desk; dressing in expensive suits; signing paper after paper; being

somebody.

The Capitol building had a set-up room with big windows and many chairs. We met at least 30 people from other Illinois colleges. I got a seat close to the podium in the second row

so I could watch every moment that was happening.

Everybody was excited, ready for the great moment to arrive. Sen. Obama stepped into the room, followed by Sen. Dick Durbin, both dressed in dark suits, and so confident. They brought with them an atmosphere of power and importance that I felt as soon as they started talking.

Sen. Obama showed so much intelligence, but the most important thing was that he listened carefully to the questions being asked. He was calm and took a few moments before he answered, making sure nobody would feel excluded. A man with so much potential and great accomplishments, I thought.

"What are the plans for veterans and education?" asked Greg Cassel, a 39 political science major.

"These are the primary issues that I am dealing with," answered the Senator.

After the conference we

posed for a group picture with both senators, but I really wanted a picture with just them. Taking a deep breath, I asked the guide if she thought that taking a picture with only the senators and me would be possible.

After questioning the senators, she motioned for me to follow. I was very nervous but proud. After my picture was taken, I thanked them and we shook hands.

Paul Rasmussen, 36, also got to shake hands with Obama and thought that he had "a lot of integrity."

We all had a great discussion about the senator on the way back because he left a wonderful impression that would not be forgotten.

The trip covered so much of the past, present and future of American history.

Meeting Obama, I was impressed by his confidence, education, background and his willingness to help people. Those things have brought him to where he is today.

SPORTS

Baseball still undefeated after first five games

By ZACH REVES
Assistant Sports Editor

Five games into the baseball season and the Blue Raiders still haven't added anything to their loss column.

For an encore performance to its three game sweep of Missouri State, MT earned a 12-10 victory over Belmont Tuesday and a 9-8 win over Tennessee Tech yesterday.

Against Belmont, the Blue Raiders had to come from behind and into extra-innings to keep their record unblemished.

Sophomore shortstop Justin Miller scorched a two-run double down the right-field line in the tenth inning to give MT the lead and the victory. Miller went 3-for-6 with four RBIs and one run scored in the win.

The Blue Raiders fell behind early when starting pitcher sophomore Jud Stoltz gave up five earned runs on six hits in his two innings of work.

However, the MT offense mounted a comeback, scoring four runs in the fourth

thanks to the power hitting of sophomore left fielder Bryce Brentz and junior catcher Drew Robertson. Brentz went 3-for-5 for the game with two RBIs and Robertson provided two RBIs on 2-for-5 hitting.

Freshman pitcher Brett Wilson picked up his first win of the season and junior reliever Coty Woods earned his second save of the season as he struck out two in his one inning appearance.

"I can't ask anymore from Coty Woods," said head coach Steve Peterson. "He looks very calm in save situations. I know my team has confidence in him."

Yesterday's victory over TTU was only his fair share of dramatics as junior infielder Stuart Meinhart scored his first hit in a Blue Raider uniform—a grand slam.

In the bottom of the sixth, Meinhart nailed a fastball to right field to give the Blue Raiders the deciding runs of the game.

"I know Stuart is going to be aggressive," Peterson



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

Sophomore baseman Taylor Dennis follows through with his swing during a base hit in MT's opening series against Missouri State.

said. "I wanted to see what Stuart would do and hit the grand slam. It was huge for him, and I know he was excited."

Other than Meinhart's blast, the Blue Raiders had little offense on the day.

MT only totaled seven hits compared to TTU's 11, but the boys in blue made their count. Junior first baseman Blake McDade added some extra offense as he went 2-for-3 with an RBI and a run scored.

Sophomore pitcher Nick Montgomery earned the third save in as many appearances this season. The Blue Raiders will return to action with three-game series against Jacksonville State at ReSmith Jr. Field starting Friday at 3 p.m.

Return to action with three-game series against Jacksonville State at ReSmith Jr. Field starting Friday at 3 p.m.



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

Sophomore guard Anne Marie Lanning drives the lane. Lanning scored five points against FIU.

Lady Raiders clinch Sun Belt

STAFF REPORT

The Lady Raiders may have broken their streak with a loss last week at Florida Atlantic, but not their spirit.

In yesterday's game against Florida International, MT tallied up a 74-54 win. The performance not only solidified the team's No. 1 seed in the Sun Belt tournament with the win, but also left FIU in the dust, leaving MT at least a regular-season claim to the conference title.

The game started with a bang, as junior forward Brandi Brown kickstarted the MT offense with her first five shots, four of

which came from behind the 3-point line.

Junior forward Alysha Clark passed the 30-point mark for her seventh-straight game and led the game with her 32 points.

Junior guard Chelsia Lymon also got into the double digits, putting up 14 points throughout the game. Lymon also shot 3-for-3 in her 3-point field goal attempts, helping add to MT's total of 24 makes.

The Lady Raiders led the way, scoring seven points only two minutes into the game. Their lead increased to 9-2 by 16:51, and the Lady Raiders never looked back, staying on top for the

remainder of the first half.

MT went into the locker room leading off of a jump-er by junior guard Dana Garrett, to put the Lady Raiders up by 41-23.

FIU junior guard Monica Bosilj attempted to rally the Golden Panthers, starting off the second half with her two-point jumper, but was immediately countered by a Lymon 3-pointer.

The Lady Raiders continued to wear FIU down until the buzzer. MT scored the final point on a Lymon foul shot.

The women's basketball team will return to the Murphy Center this Sunday against Western Kentucky. Tipoff is at 3:30 p.m.

MT football warms up with winter workouts

By RYLEE PATRICK
Contributing Writer

Beginning last Monday, the Blue Raider football team hit the gym to begin a three-week-long mat drills session that will take place during its winter workouts sessions.

The team meets at 5:30 a.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday to hone its skills in speed, agility and strength in preparation for the upcoming 2009 football season that tentatively begins with an away game against the Clemson Tigers.

"Mat drills are a way for us to work on our speed and agility while we develop the physical and mental strength that we need to be the most successful team we can be," said Mike Williams, redshirt freshman and left tackle for the MT football team.

During the offseason, the Blue Raiders spend a large portion of their time in the weight room and locker room while preparing for the upcoming season, and the mat drills are a way for the athletes to showcase their hard work to each other.

"Mat drills give everyone the chance to prove to our coaches how we have improved over the year,"

said Colin Boss, a redshirt freshman and right guard for MT.

"During mat drills, I see my teammates work and hurt together as a team," said sophomore defensive end Emmanuel Perez. "It makes me feel good to see my teammates pushing so hard to improve themselves."

In addition to showing the strengths of the team, the mat drills will also aim to highlight the areas where the team needs improvement.

"What we need as a team is for the guys on the team to step up and prove themselves as leaders. We need people to grow up," Williams said.

Boss agreed with Williams and said, "We need more unity among our teammates and coaches. Everyone needs to come together so that we can be a stronger team this season."

With one week down and two more to go, several of the players said they could already notice a difference in their performance and the performance of their teammates. Mat drills are one of the tools the Blue Raiders are utilizing to build a solid team in preparation for the 2009 season.

Looking ahead to the upcoming season, several players said they are anticipating returning to the

field and have their own hopes for what the new season will bring.

"I'm looking forward to playing Clemson for our first game of the season," Williams said. "They are a strong team and I think this is a great opportunity for us to go out there and show everyone how far we've come as individuals and as a team."

Boss said that he believed this season's team had a lot of potential. "I think what we all want is to go to a bowl game this season," he said. "We have the potential and the ability to; we just need to go out there and perform our best."

Other players are just looking forward to the excitement of the season. "I'm looking forward to being back on the field with my team," Perez said. "We work really hard year-round and we're ready to hit the field again."

Mat drills are scheduled to continue for the next two weeks, with the fourth session taking place this Monday. Following winter workouts, spring training will begin March 18th and will continue until the annual Blue-White game on April 18th.

Men's basketball looks for second road trip win

By ZACH REVES
Assistant Sports Editor

The Blue Raider men's basketball team will play its last road game of the regular season tomorrow night as it looks for the season sweep of Florida International.

With the Sun Belt Championships starting on March 4, momentum matters for the Blue Raiders as they look to remain perfect against opponents from the

Sunshine State.

In their previous contest this season on Jan. 10, the Blue Raiders walked away with a 68-63 home victory thanks in part to senior guard Demetrius Green's winning 3-pointer.

MT (16-12, 9-7 SBC) is coming off a 74-68 road victory against Florida Atlantic on Saturday that featured a pair of seniors fighting for the team's post-season life.

Senior guards Kevin Kanaskie and Eric Allen stepped up their game and led the team out of a three-game losing streak in the conference. Kanaskie scored a game-and-season-high 24 points, while Allen put up his first career double-digit with 17 points and 11 rebounds.

However, MT could be a very different team in this outing compared to its previous appearance.

Green, who missed a majority of the game against FAU with a sprained ankle, remains questionable for tomorrow's game. He ranks third on the team with 11 points per contest.

Instead, the Blue Raiders will look to receive a spark from junior forward Montarrio Haddock, who is returning from his one-game suspension. Haddock, who leads MT with 5.4 rebounds

per game, has been a momentum booster all season for the team coming off the bench.

In MT's way stands FIU (11-18, 6-10 SBC), who is coming off a 79-66 loss to Sun Belt co-leader Western Kentucky. The Golden Panthers boast five different players who average more than 10 points a game, but the strength of FIU lies in its ability to rebound the ball effectively.

The team averages 34 rebounds a game.

With two games left, the Blue Raiders remain tied for sixth place with North Texas. MT is four games behind the division leading WKU.

After the road game, the Blue Raiders will return home to finish the regular season by hosting long-time rival WKU Saturday. Tip-off is scheduled for 7 p.m.