

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

EDITORIALLY INDEPENDENT

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Klosterman lectures on pop culture



Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photographer

Students, faculty and members of the media listen to pop culture critic Chuck Klosterman in the Learning Resource Center Tuesday. Klosterman, author of the book "Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs," discussed how he encountered success as a writer and gave insight on how popular culture is more than just "Britney Spears and the consumption of Oreo cookies."

By CHRIS MARTIN
Copy Editor

Critically acclaimed author and pop culture critic Chuck Klosterman lectured at MTSU Tuesday about his career and the way popular culture shapes people's lives.

Klosterman drew a crowd of more than 400, forcing some attendees to sit on the floor in the McWherter Learning Resources Center room 221.

The bestselling author spoke at length about his journey from a farm in a

small town in North Dakota to being one of the nation's most heralded pop culture writers. He even divulged the most influential factor to his success.

"It's always kind of disappointing, but the big-

gest element is going to be chance," Klosterman said. "I know that's a disappointing thing to hear, but that's one of the biggest factors to how anyone gets anyplace."

Klosterman went on to talk about how chance

played large roles in his success, starting with how he got his first job out of college. After he graduated from the University of North Dakota with a degree in journalism, Klosterman got a job writing for a weekly pop-cul-

ture insert in a newspaper in Fargo, N.D. — a job he got largely due to the fact that he had just graduated college and that only journalists under the age of 30 were allowed to apply.

KLOSTERMAN, PAGE 2

Remembrance presentation honors victims

Kurdish Student Association holds event to memorialize casualties of 1988 poison gas attack

By BRYCE HARMON
Staff Writer

MTSU's chapter of the Kurdish Student Association held a commemorative ceremony Monday to honor the victims of the 1988 genocide in Halabja, Iraq.

The attack occurred under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, who used multiple chemical agents, such as mustard and nerve gases, to kill up to 7,000 Halabja citizens during the Iran-Iraq war. This would lead to many more Iraqi citizens to seek refuge in foreign countries.

Mihvan Ibrahim, a political refugee and president of KSA, began the event with a video presentation depicting the graphic effects of the bombings that devastated Halabja. The video showed buildings in ruins, along with men, women and children scattered along the streets or in their homes dying from the effects of the poisonous chemicals.

"On the anniversary it happened, to our goal and hope is, honor our people and prevent it from ever happening again," said Vejin Ibrahim, secretary of the KSA. "This is basically a way to keep them alive."

Justin Cary, an MTSU alumus, said the video was "intense."

"I had no idea what people outside of America go through sometimes," Cary said. "And its still happening in Darfur, right?"

Following the video, KSA member Umid Ibrahim spoke about the attack that is still hazardous to the citizens of Halabja today.

"The aftermath will still affect our people for a long time to come," Ibrahim said. "The geography and agriculture, along with the people of Kurdistan, are still suffering."

Kirmanj Gundi, a visiting Iraqi scholar, presented a detailed account of

HALABJA, PAGE 2



Photo by Alicia Wilson, production manager

Eric Coburn, a senior geology major, examines samples of foraminifera, a microscopic organism, Wednesday in the fossil lab in Kirksey Old Main. Coburn said he had difficulty finding the typical 300 per sample, which is attributed to a rise in pollution.

Geoscience programs could lose funding

With recent budget proposals, geological honor society might lose place at MTSU, according to the Steering Committee's final report

By GENNA FERGUSON
Contributing Writer

MTSU's Department of Geosciences, the largest undergraduate geoscience program in the state, was recommended by the Steering Committee, the group overseeing budget cut suggestions at MTSU, to be eliminated.

Professional geoscientists, like the geology professors at MTSU, are currently in high demand due to emphasis on new energy tech-



nologies like geothermal energy, heat from within the earth and environmental management, said Warner Cribb, a geology professor and adviser to Sigma Gamma Epsilon, the geological honor society.

"It's really hard to understand how one could

make that proposal in the face of energy and environmental crises," Cribb said.

The proposed elimination comes at a time when students majoring in geosciences have increased 60 percent during the last five years, Cribb said.

According to the Steering Committee final report, released by President Sidney McPhee on March 2, the

Department of Geosciences is recommended for elimination, but general education courses in the geosciences could be taught as part of the Department of Chemistry.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the geosciences job market will grow 22 percent greater than the current national average between now and 2016.

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HALABJA
FROM PAGE 1

the genocide and Halabja's legal intentions.

"We cannot leave this fight to others," Gundi said. "As Kurds, we must refuse to become obscure, and it is up to us to use our freedom and autonomy to feircely fight for our hearing in an international court."

Muhammad Aziz, along with translator Rebaz Qeraxi, spoke to the audience about his firsthand experience during the bombings. "[The bombs] made our basement feel like a piece of paper, like the wind blows a piece of paper, Aziz said. "People shouted 'chemicals, chemicals' while trying to escape on tractors, cars, horses or by foot."

The KSA plans to hold more events in the future such as clothes drives and other community activities, Ibrahim said.

For more information about KSA and upcoming events related to the organization, visit nashvillekurds.com.

Anyone who wishes to donate toward victims of the genocide attacks can do so from the Web site.

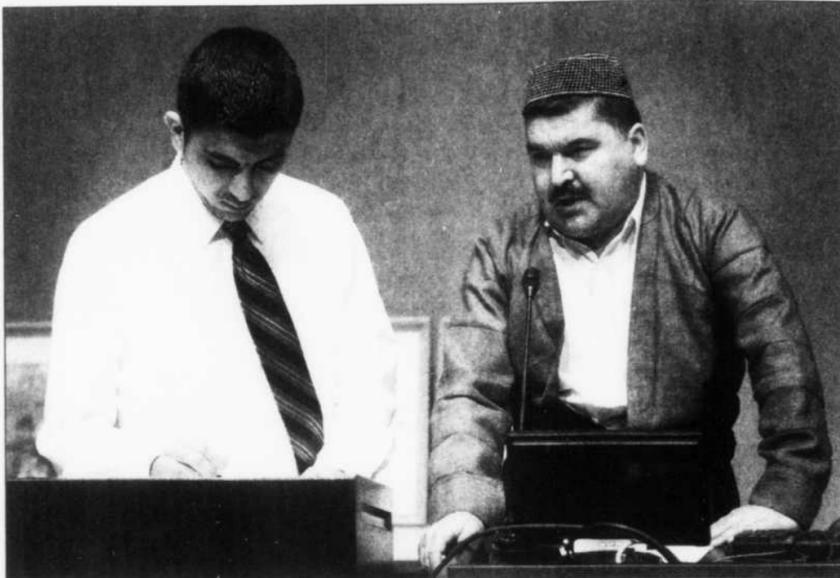


Photo by Alex Treneff, staff photographer
Mauhammad Aziz (right) discusses the 1988 poison gas attacks in Halabja, Iraq. Rebaz Qeraxi (left) translated for Aziz.



Photo by Alex Treneff, staff photographer
Attendees listen to speeches about cases of genocide Monday in the State Farm room.

KLOSTERMAN
FROM PAGE 1

His next big break came when he was applying to be a music critic for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, a job for which he was self-admittedly unqualified. Klosterman said he didn't get the job, but asked the person doing the hiring a key question that resulted in his next job.

"The question I asked him is 'who did you hire?'" Klosterman said. "And he said, 'Some guy you've never heard of from Akron, Ohio.' So I immediately applied for a job in Akron, Ohio because there was going to be an opening."

"In fact, I think one of the main reasons that they hired me in Akron was because they thought perhaps I was psychic, as I applied for a job the day a guy quit."

In addition to sharing his biographical information, Klosterman also discussed how popular culture shapes society and how it is defined.

"People think that by saying 'popular culture' you're inherently saying that something is totally important because consumers like it," Klosterman said. "For instance, Britney Spears and the con-

sumption of Oreo cookies is the same, but I've never believed that. To me, pop culture is just popular culture — it is the culture that is popular."

Klosterman said technology has expanded society's cultural memory by providing greater access to old forms of culture, such as music and films. As a result, the generation gap that used to exist between parents and their children has diminished.

"The most important thing to a lot of kids in the '60s was the Beatles, and their parents had no frame of reference for that, no relationship whatsoever," Klosterman said. "Now it's very different. Now, there are probably some kids here whose favorite band and their parents' favorite band is both U2."

The lecture, titled "Life through the Prism of Pop Culture," was sponsored by the John Seigenthaler Chair of Excellence in First Amendment Studies and the College of Mass Communication.

Klosterman has written several books and has had his work appear in various publications, including *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *GQ*, *Esquire* and *Spin*.

GEOSCIENCE
FROM PAGE 1

"We are bigger than the UTK [University of Tennessee at Knoxville] graduate and undergraduate geology programs combined," Cribb said.

Cribb said the department brings in about \$2 million in tuition per year and operates at around \$1 million. He added that student research is primarily funded by outside agencies, such as the National Science Foundation, a government agency that promotes science and engineering through research programs.

"Even Vanderbilt Earth and Environment Sciences has written us a letter of support," Cribb said. "Vanderbilt graduate and undergraduate students have been regular users of our research labs over the years because we have research facilities which they do not."

MTSU undergraduate students use the graduate-level research labs, Cribb said. He added that the benefits from research are immense in terms of the scholarships that students receive to attend some of the United State's best graduate schools.

MTSU is the only university in the Tennessee Board of Regents system to have been awarded a chapter of SGE, Cribb said. Cribb added that the department went through a difficult, year-long review process in order to be awarded a chapter of the honor society.

Eric Coburn, a senior geology major and president of SGE, said that research helps members of the organization and graduate students to prepare for work in geoscience fields and graduate schools.

Members of SGE participate in volunteer work along with research, Coburn said.

Coburn said that members help boy scouts earn merit badges, and work with non-profit organizations such as Girls Raised in Tennessee Science, which encourages girls to pursue careers in sci-

ence and math, and Women in Science, which encourages women to participate in science and technology.

Cribb said that if the department is eliminated, then SGE will be as well.

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Up 'Til Dawn raises \$81,000 for St. Jude

Positions are open for next year's Up 'Til Dawn. Once you become part of this organization, you will receive experiences sure to add value to your resume and make you feel good about helping children at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

There are many ways to get involved as a volunteer, team member, executive board member or planning committee. Within these positions are opportunities in entertainment, catering, corporate sponsorship, public relations, recruitment, finance, patient relations, logistics, fundraising and more.

Applications are in the KUC room 326-S and are due Friday, Mar. 20. For more info visit <http://frank.mtsu.edu/~uptildawn> or call 615-898-5812.



Up 'Til Dawn is a national student-led, student-run fundraising organizations. Over 200 campuses participate in an Up 'Til Dawn event, but MTSU is among the best. For over 10 years, MTSU students have been leading the way in hosting this campus and community wide event, raising over \$640,000 to fight childhood cancer.



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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 grammar, length and content.

OPINIONS

Sidelines is the editorially independent, non-profit student-produced newspaper of Middle Tennessee State University. Sidelines publishes Monday and Thursday during the fall and spring semesters and Wednesday during June and July. The opinions expressed herein are those of individual writers and not necessarily Sidelines or MTSU.

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Godspeed and good luck Lady Raiders

Most people have the misconception that all MTSU sports are terrible and can't compare to other schools' teams. Be prepared to hold your tongue because the Lady Raider women's basketball team has been invited to the NCAA tournament as a No. 8 seed.

After completing the Sun Belt tournament as champions, the Lady Raiders will take the court against No. 9 seed Michigan State on Saturday in hopes of moving forward in the NCAA tournament to play teams such as Duke and Tennessee.

Head coach Rick Insell has been building a program for the past four years, all of which have been successful for the Lady Raiders. This is not to mention that Insell has recruited players like Chrissy Givens and Amber Holt, who were both drafted into the WNBA.

National recognition for this year's team has been building all season long with a very talented team playing at a high level. Despite their youth, the team has bonded and has great chemistry on and off the court.

At one point, the team was ranked 25th in the nation and untouchable in conference play. And for the better part of the second half of the season, junior forward Alysha Clark has dominated team after team as she boasted a remarkable 27.3 points per game, which led the nation by a full three points by the end of the season.

Last year, the Lady Raiders broke into the national tournament as a five seed and earned a first round victory over Gonzaga before falling in the second. This year's team looks to repeat that success and go even farther in the tournament, but that won't happen if its own school doesn't believe and support them.

Since the game will take place in Michigan, we encourage students, faculty and alumni to support the Lady Raiders. For those needing rides to the event, the Blue Raider Athletic Association is sponsoring a charter bus ride to and from the game.

Fans need to collect their blue attire and some gas money to hit the road because this is going to be one game no one wants to miss. With Michigan having home court advantage, it would be nice to see some Raider fans in the stands.

For those who can't attend the game, it will be aired at 11 a.m., CST on either ESPN, ESPN2 or ESPN-U.

Before they take on the Spartans, we would like to say that we're proud of our athletic program and the dedication student athletes put in.

For more information on the game, check out our sports coverage on page 5.

Philosophy: To cut or not to cut?

The best tools?



Discussion

Kurt Maier

"Sorry, the lab is closed. Our department doesn't have enough money for printer supplies."

How often have we heard this recently? The English lab was closed, and if the English lab can't print papers, we're in bad shape.

The whole world economy has slowed down to the point where that's all we hear about in the news.

The responsible thing to do in times like these is scale back the amount of money we spend on ancillary activities.

The school might be acting a little rashly in considering closing down useful and well-respected degrees like MTSU's physics and geosciences programs, especially while it spends money on advertising its plans for a tiny parking garage. That's not to say it has the wrong idea, just the wrong targets.

MTSU's real work is to provide the best education possible to its students.

It has plenty of instruments at its disposal to get this done.

I'm using the science department as a tool chest to build my future, for instance, and I don't

think anyone is denying that the Department of Philosophy is similarly full of tools.

But are they the right ones for MTSU?

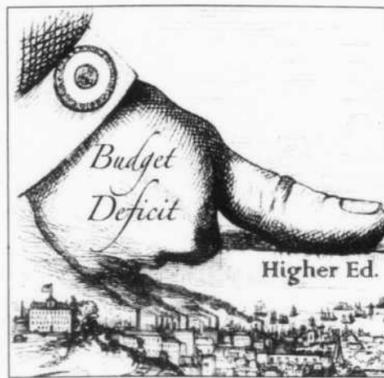
The Department of Philosophy teaches a lot of formal logic and Marxist theory, but, on the other hand, the math and computer science majors also do a lot of work in formal logic and Marx is just as teachable in an economics or political science classroom.

The Department of Philosophy likes to point at Plato and Aristotle as examples of its field's great achievement. Neither of those great men needed funding from Tennessee to get their work done.

Philosophy students will tell you that the university system was created by philosophers. The science of chemistry was born of alchemists, but I don't hear anyone advocating we form an alchemy department here at the school.

MTSU must now carefully select the tools it uses to build our futures. Philosophy students seem to be great at organizing protests and getting petitions signed, but speaking your opinions through a megaphone doesn't make you right.

Kurt Maier is a senior in basic and applied sciences and can be reached at km2p@mtsu.edu.



Origins of college

Given the current dismal state of our economy, MTSU has proposed a money saving scheme that involves

a considerable downsizing of the academic programs that it offers.

As I perused the extensive list of prospectively doomed majors, I was dumbfounded—albeit glumly unsurprised—to discover that philosophy had made the cut (pun intended).

As an English major and philosophy minor, and having studied (in a philosophy class) the origin and history of academia, I feel that the proposed elimination of philosophy as a potential major is appalling and a bitterly ironic.

The ancient Greeks invented a number of nifty concepts like geometry, atomism and democracy, and they also created the academy in which these concepts were discussed and studied at length in the interest of producing thoughtful, clever citizens. In the academy, a particular emphasis was placed on the study of philosophy (an ancient word meaning "love of wisdom") as it was held to the highest esteem in this culture.

Philosophy is the foundation on which rests every liberal art and every science, and the "powers that be," who presumably want colleges to graduate thoughtful, clever and productive members of society, propose

cutting this from the university program of possible majors?

I once asked the chair of the philosophy department, Ron Bombardi, about the importance of studying philosophy as opposed to other disciplines, and his response was one that I'll never forget.

He said [of philosophy majors] that, "you can do anything anyone else can do. Only you can do it better."

In closing, I'll quote one of my favorite writers, Ambrose Bierce, in his cynical outlook of the direction in which our society is headed if changes aren't made (namely, not eliminating philosophy as a possible major).

As defined in "The Devil's Dictionary":

Academe - *n.* An ancient school where morality and philosophy were taught.

Academy - *n.* A modern school where football is taught.

Tiffany Blackburn is a senior in English and can be reached at tmb2r@mtsu.edu.

U.N. declaration not nearly enough

A United Nations declaration that former president George W. Bush refused to sign will be endorsed by the Obama administration.

The declaration will call for the decriminalization of homosexuality.

United States officials, who are remaining anonymous while the decision is being told to Congress, have said that the administration has decided to sign the declaration to show that the U.S. supports human rights for all.

When it was voted on in Dec. 2008, 66 of the U.N.'s member countries signed the declaration, a huge step toward dealing with anti-gay hostilities.

The declaration was brought forth on Dec. 19, while gay rights and other



The C-Word

Courtney Watson

groups criticized the Bush administration when Bush refused to sign it.

U.S. officials said then that the U.S. opposed discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, however, several parts of the declaration raised legal issues that still needed review.

The Bush team was concerned that those parts could commit the federal

government on matters that fall under state jurisdiction. In some states, landlords and private employers are allowed to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, and on the federal level, homosexuals are not allowed to serve openly in the military.

It was not said what influenced the Obama administration to view the issue differently.

Unfortunately, 70 U.N. countries outlaw homosexuality, and several of those countries will execute those who practice homosexual acts, so while the United States is seemingly taking a step forward in trying to stop anti-gay discrimination, worldwide equal rights still seems to be a long way away.

This may cause more outrage among American citizens who disagree with homosexuality. Regardless, while they may disagree with the alternative lifestyle that some live with, there is no reason that anyone should suffer from violence or be sentenced to death for his or her sexual orientation.

It's a stretch to think that every U.N. member country would go for this declaration when we can't even get everyone in our own country to agree on this issue, one way or another.

Obama is taking a big risk with his decision, and his popularity is sure to go down. Not to mention talk is cheap.

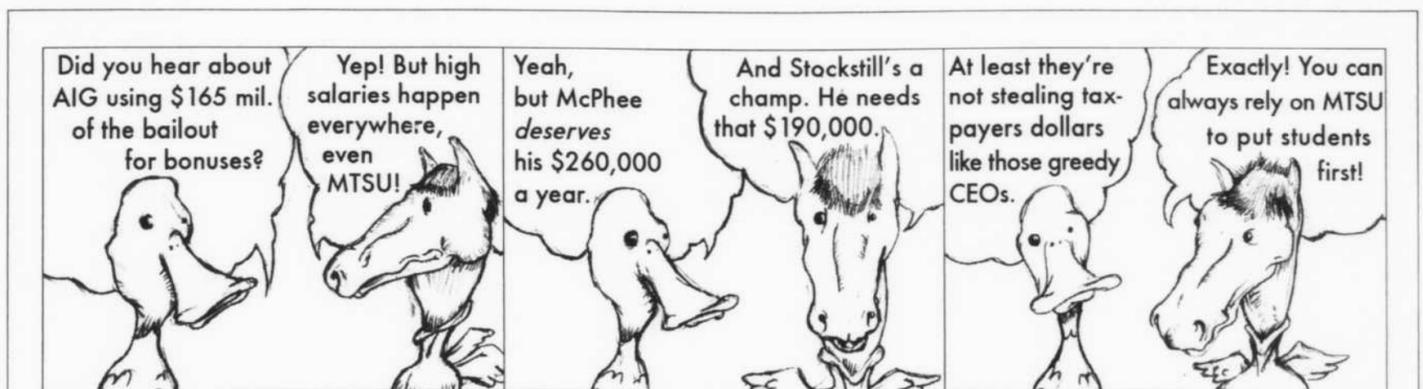
Signing a piece of paper is not going to stop homo-

sexuals from being executed in the Middle East. The step toward equal rights is going to involve a lot more than this declaration, which probably won't even be signed by half of the U.N. members.

While this declaration isn't hurting anything, it's most likely a long way from helping. The U.S. currently does not practice equal rights, and therefore doesn't have a place to preach them. For now, Obama should just remain hopeful for support from individuals who appreciate, however little it seems now, the effort he puts forth. This is a start, but it is not enough.

Courtney Watson is a senior in journalism and can be reached at cew2y@mtsu.edu.

COMICS



"The Best Laid Plans"

slopinio@mtsu.edu

Illustrated by Sean Hood
Written by Byron Wilkes

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**BAND
OF THE WEEK**

Talented, controversial music artist performs in Nashville

Ryan Adams, Cardinals perform laid-back concert

By JESSICA PACE
Staff Writer

People rarely express lukewarm feelings for Ryan Adams. They tend to regard him with either extreme love or extreme hate.

Depending on personal opinion, Nashville either played host to a whiny, over-reactive rock star this past weekend or two glorious nights of Ryan Adams and the Cardinals on their last tour together at the War Memorial Auditorium.

Saturday marked Adams' first Nashville performance since October 2007, and fans lined up outside the auditorium hours before his scheduled performance, listening to muffled soundchecks through the doors.

When the venue opened, attendees flocked to the orchestra pit toward the stage, where two giant, luminous roses glowed blue. Roses are iconic of Adams and the Cardinals, repeatedly appearing in songs and running the matically through several albums. However, Adams is associated with much more than beautiful flowers.

A look into the musician's past reveals countless occasions of Adams canceling shows, starting shows late, abandoning the stage because of hecklers in the audience, ejecting obnoxious concertgoers from the venue and leaving entertaining



Photo by Jessica Pace, staff photographer
Ryan Adams and the Cardinals perform at the War Memorial Auditorium in Nashville last Saturday. The neon roses used during the show are symbolic of how the flower has been a major part of Adams' music and albums.

but scathing messages on the answering machines of critics who are not huge Ryan Adams fans.

The same complaints are launched against Adams as well as used in his defense. Fans come to expect the grandeur in performances that the musician is capable of bringing to the stage. But they often feel shortchanged, as many concertgoers of a rescheduled Kansas City show last February expressed.

Whatever other cities were offered, Nashville

won the lottery with Saturday night's performance, which commenced 15 minutes later than the scheduled 8:30 p.m. start time.

The band opened with the up-tempo "Beautiful Sorta" from "Cold Roses" and continued with a nearly two-and-a-half hour performance. Tracks from "Cold Roses," "Easy Tiger" and the 2008 album "Cardinology" dominated the set list, with numbers from "Heartbreaker" and "Love is Hell" scattered in.

Adams' seemingly eter-

nal range of songs kept the show changing constantly, from the whine of John Graboff's driving steel guitar in "Let it Ride" to the slow romance of Adams' rendition of "When the Stars Go Blue." "Freeway to the Canyon," "Grand Island" and "Lost Satellite," three tracks from the Cardinals guitarist Neal Casal's album "No Wish to Reminisce," also snuck in the set, as well as a cover of Alice in Chains' "Down in a Hole."

The band encoed with "Magnolia Mountain"

from "Cold Roses."

But no Ryan Adams show would be complete without the standard goofing off. Adams interrupted the music flow several times to converse with the audience about philosophic song meanings - "Magick" is apparently about dreams, sailboats and shoelaces, among other things - and discuss how The Eagles do not care what anyone thinks.

"Let it Ride" and "Down in a Hole" were separated by "The Evening Joke." Adams also improvised a song

about bassist Chris "Spacewolf" Feinstein's emotions and Casal's attempts to cut Adams' banter short.

These improvisations and side conversations are precisely what many detest about Ryan Adams. When the price of a ticket is \$40+, frustration is justified.

Still, fans keep coming back for more. The War Memorial Auditorium was filled with people there to hear Adams play his youth-injected version of a sound created by the earliest pioneers of folk, country and Americana.

And though his talent is often overshadowed by his over-reaction to the audience when it gets a little too boisterous, Adams deserves credit for fearlessness in both solo endeavors and recordings with the Cardinals. The sound of the sometimes Dylan-esque folk of 2000's "Heartbreaker" was defied completely by 2003's "Rock n Roll," which tapped into Adams' early punk interests.

Through 10 albums, Adams has never been short of surprises no matter what genre he happened to be exploring at the time.

Adams is undeniably a wild card in his show quality and unpredictable albums. But as he and the Cardinals approach the end of their tour together, they gave Nashville the kind of farewell Ryan Adams fans would hope for.

Film Review: Watchmen

By BYRON WILKES
Opinions Editor

Director Zack Snyder brings Alan Moore's 1986-87 graphic novel "Watchmen" to life in an adaptation that closely parallels the original dynamic of the epic.

Touted as the superhero movie that could never be filmed by many of the original "Watchmen" fans, Snyder has found a sufficient and exquisite way to do just that.

The year in this alternate dimension is 1985, a time when U.S. and Soviet nuclear tension has never been higher and Richard Nixon is still president - both facets true to the original work.

The movie begins with the abrupt murder of retired, gun-crazed hero the Comedian (Jeffrey Dean Morgan). A dark figure breaks into his apartment and throws him out of the window after a brief but tense brawl. The mystery of his murder instigates a cascade of events that provide the canvas on which the rest of the movie is painted.

Most of the film's present-day heroes, and even villains, have reverted back to using their legal names and taking normal occupations in civilian life.

But "Watchmen" takes place in both the past and present, revealing not only the consequences of previ-

ous actions, but also the devastation wrought by their wake.

William Hoy does a stellar job with the film's editing, making transitions between times not only seamless, but relevant and comprehensible as a whole.

The exposition of prior events is often narrated by one of the Watchmen, most often Rorschach (Jackie Earle Haley), whose character depends heavily on action. His gruff voice lends itself well to these typically dismal reflections.

It is especially captivating when Dr. Manhattan (Billy Crudup) recounts bygone times that linger in the mind.

Cinematographer Larry Fong intricately lays out graphically stunning sequences. He optimally utilizing advanced computer-generated sequences, such as in Mars' ethereal and desolate surface, where Dr. Manhattan spends much of his screen time meditating and constructing equally otherworldly designs. Complex narratives and intertwined sub-plots are probably the largest factors corroding Fong's work.

Crudup, an omiscient, man-turned-god character, succeeds in his inability to relate to the human plight any longer, as he is catalyzed by his constant quest for understanding. He is

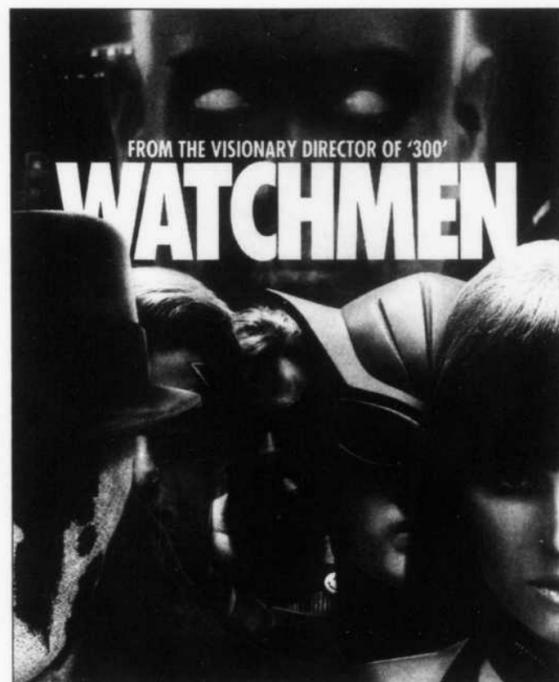


Photo courtesy of Warner Brothers
One of the promotional posters for "Watchmen" depicts the various characters from the movie. The film is based on the 1986 graphic novel written by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons

Director: Zack Snyder
Starring: Malin Akerman, Billy Crudup
Rating: Rated R for strong graphic violence, sexuality, nudity and language.
Run Time: 162 minutes



underscored by his powers to teleport instantaneously and shift size, though for Dr. Manhattan, time exists merely as a singularity.

To his detriment, Dr. Manhattan's computer-animated naked body may

distract views from the ponderous but enlightening substance of his dialogue.

Another particularly effective component of "Watchmen" is the soundtrack, which reflects the timeline view the movie

partially relies on. From Billie Holiday and Nat King Cole to Janis Joplin and Bob Dylan, the movie incorporates a slew of different eras' music to reflect the compartmentalized notion of time.

One of the most chilling and effective images in "Watchmen" is the alternate version of the Vietnam War. In this scene, Dr. Manhattan implodes Viet-Cong soldiers systematically as he slowly strides toward them in the distance. Meanwhile the Comedian, complete with hyena-like laughter, torches surrendering combatants around the giant's feet. "Ride of the Valkyries" blares from the very first second and brings a certain appreciable realism to the fiction.

Silk Spectre (Malin Akerman), in contrast, is a delight to watch the entire time. She brings confrontation to the forefront of not only Dr. Manhattan's identity, but Nite Owl's as well. In speaking with Dr. Manhattan, she is utterly human, not just some blasé damsel in distress. This reveals the beauty of human life through love to a man who thinks it is moot compared to the infinite expanse of the universe.

However, many scenes depict graphic violence. The Comedian and Rorschach are notorious for such acts

of unusual bloodshed, although these scenes underscore the characters personalities, and only further elaborate on the nature of each character. That said, if you're squeamish about blood or nudity, you might want to skip "Watchmen."

Snyder's "Watchmen" is an engrossing expedition of what power really means in modern society. The movie also explores the fallacy of mankind and themes of intolerance that infest it still today. It is complete with the inclusion of scenes on the very prevalent issues of prejudice and nuclear proliferation, as well as political stoicism and corruption.

Many die-hard fans of the original graphic novel will undoubtedly detest this Hollywood remake for specific reasons (e.g., the absence of a certain squid-monster entity from the comic and ensuing plot holes). But most will likely enjoy it wholeheartedly for what it is.

Either way, "Watchmen" is a well-made creation that will take audiences through a gorgeously alternate universe. Though not too far-fetched, "Watchmen" surely is a testament to the multitudes of individuals who came together to make the movie phenomenal. And for these reasons, I give the movie 2-and-a-half stars out of four.

Women's basketball in first round of NCAA tournament

#20 Tina Stewart

Opponent:
Michigan State
When:
Saturday at 11 a.m.



SPORTS

#22 Caty Jutson



Softball home doubleheader

Opponent:
South Alabama
When:
Saturday at 1 p.m and 3 p.m.

MT elected to 2009 NCAA tourney

Lady Raiders use Sun Belt championship to spring into possible postseason triumph

By CHRIS WELCH
Sports Editor

The No. 8 seed Lady Raiders will travel to Lansing, Mich. Saturday to take on No. 9 seed Michigan State in the first round of the NCAA tournament.

The Ladies learned of their placement in a nationally televised broadcast that aired Monday on ESPN2. The women's team, along with almost 500 supportive Blue Raider fans, gathered at the Embassy Suites in Murfreesboro for a viewing party.

The game will be televised in its entirety locally on ESPN2 and nationally on either ESPN, ESPN2 or ESPN-U. The Blue Raider Athletic Association is also sponsoring a charter bus ride to and from the event.

The trip to the tournament marks the first time that MT has ever played Big 10 opponent and host the Michigan State Spartans. It is the 12th tournament appearance in MT history.

The MT women's team has faced four other Big 10 opponents in the past, including Indiana and Wisconsin.

The Lady Raiders have racked up a 7-1 record against their past Big 10 opponents.

Michigan State comes to the tournament after a 20-10 season, headlined by junior forward Aisha Jefferson.

Jefferson scored an average of 11.1 points per game, compared to MT junior forward Alysha Clark's 27.3.

This is Michigan State head coach Suzy Merchant's second trip to the NCAA Tournament. She helped lead Eastern Michigan to the tournament in 2004's second trip to the NCAA Tournament. She helped lead Eastern Michigan to the tournament in 2004, where she helped lead the Eagles to a Mid-American conference victory.

The Lady Raiders, having moved up in the ESPN/USA Today Coach's Poll to No. 25, come to the tournament as Sun Belt champions, boasting a 28-5 record. MT is 5-11 in 11 previous NCAA Tournament appearances, with the last appearance coming in 2007, where MT was the No. 5 seed.

The tournament bid preceded an announcement Tuesday that Clark was appointed as one of the six players selected as a Region 4 finalist for the State Farm Coaches' All-America Basketball Team. Clark was one of two Sun Belt Conference players to be given the honor, joined by UALR's Chastity Reed.

A selection committee will narrow the field from the 52 regional finalists to



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

The Lady Raiders rest during a time out against Kentucky Wesleyan College. The team will play Michigan State first in the NCAA tournament Saturday at 11 a.m.

40. The 40 finalists can come from any of the eight regions.

Middle Tennessee head coach Rick Insell is 1-2, leading his former MT

squads to the tournament in 2006 and 2007, his first two years as coach.

MT is ranked second in the nation with 8.8 3-pointers per game, fifth

for scoring margin (+16.7) and fifth for national field goal percentage (46.8).

The winner of Sunday's game will then play the winner of No. 1 Duke and

No. 16 Austin Peay in the second round Tuesday. Regionals begin March 28 with the women's Final Four play beginning April 5.

MT softball splits doubleheader against Austin Peay

By ZACH REVES
Assistant Sports Editor

The MT softball team split Tuesday's non-conference doubleheader against Austin Peay, taking the first game, 5-0, and dropping the second, 7-4.

The Blue Raiders (5-14, 0-3 Sun Belt) rebounded from a six-game losing streak with the first victory on the day.

Four Austin Peay errors and a dominant defensive performance guided the Blue Raiders to a shutout victory in the early game. MT scored five runs on seven hits including a three-run second inning that put the game out of reach.

Junior pitcher Lindsey Vander Lugt (4-7) earned the win with her ninth complete game of the season as she pitched all seven innings. The effort was her

first shutout of the season, and she allowed only three hits with two walks and two strikeouts.

The Blue Raider offense was led by junior leftfielder Caitlin McLure and sophomore catcher Laurie Anna Cooley who achieved two hits each. Both McLure and Cooley had one RBI and one run scored in the contest.

MT couldn't keep up their defensive pressure in the second contest as the Blue Raiders allowed six runs in the fourth inning, only one of which was earned.

On the mound, freshman Caty Jutson (1-5) allowed one earned run in three innings of work. However, the defense behind Jutson committed four costly errors that allowed six unearned runs to pile up against the Blue Raiders.

At the plate, MT was lead

by junior firstbasemen Jessica Ives, who went 2-for-4 with one RBI. Sophomore centerfielder Kelsey Dortch added one RBI and scored two runs in the contest.

The Lady Govies of Austin Peay took a 1-0 lead in the bottom of the first, but MT stormed back to take a 2-1 lead in the top of the third. Dortch hit an RBI single to a gap in left field to tie the game 1-1. Dortch gave MT the lead by stealing her way to third and advancing home on a wild pitch.

However, the Blue Raiders committed two crucial errors in the fourth, which led to Austin Peay scoring six runs that sealed away the game.

MT softball will return to Sun Belt Conference action with a home doubleheader against South Alabama on Saturday at 1 p.m.



Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photographer

Thirdbaseman Martha Davis throws a ball to pitcher Caty Jutson during the season home opener against Memphis. The softball team shutout Austin Peay 5-0 in Tuesday's first game.

World Baseball Classic highlights an American weakness

Let's face it, America hates inter-country sports.

The Olympics of baseball, or the World Baseball Classic, has been going on since March 5 and the results from the U.S. have been amazingly underwhelming.

Half-empty stadiums and sub-par TV ratings have greeted the best ball-players from 16 different countries as teams compete for international pride that, as it would appear, very few people even care about.

The WBC, which is a relative newborn in the sports world, was founded in 2006 to provide international baseball competition be-



Mr. Irrelevant
Zach Reves

cause the Summer Olympics occur in the middle of the many country's major-league seasons. Through a double-elimination tournament, a world champion is crowned and subsequent parties will flow through the victorious country's

streets.

That is, unless the U.S. wins, of course.

As the home country one would think American fans would dominate the stadiums. But in truth, the red, white and blue appears as a minority among the rest of the crowd. Instead, zealous fans from countries such as Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Japan and even the Netherlands are seen decked out in their country's colors from foul-pole to foul-pole. All of them are screaming at the top of their lungs in a sense of pride that America hasn't felt in years.

Why do Americans ig-

nore a contest that everyone else has put so much faith in? When did baseball stop being the great American pastime?

It isn't like the product that the WBC puts in front of the fans is sub-par in baseball standards. As a matter of fact, the WBC is full of all-stars and legends, with only the best-of-the-best getting the chance to represent their teams. Every game is like a dream matchup to watch, as everyone that takes the field is a quality player.

Some Americans have ignored the WBC, citing that the major-league season is

a better product to watch with such great matchups as the Boston Red Sox playing the New York Yankees over and over again. With this, I see that some Americans are more riled up over regional rivalries rather than seeing what other countries can bring to the table.

Americans may have so much pride in its own sport institutions that other countries' attempts are seen as insignificant compared to what America creates internally. This truly is a shame.

America is only a part of the sports world, but to us we are the only sports

world.

The WBC deserves our attention as a country because we should be proud of the game America made famous around the world. Instead, we treat international competition as something that gets in the way of our daily lives instead of something that should create patriotism.

If we can't band together to cheer for our country in a sport, what can we band together for?

Zach Reves is a senior Journalism major and can be reached at sports02@mtsu.edu

Blue Raider baseball fall 9-4 to Southern Illinois

By ZACH REVES
Assistant Sports Editor

The Blue Raider baseball team couldn't turn hits into runs in Tuesday's 9-4 loss to Southern Illinois at Reese Smith Jr. Field.

Ten hits only yielded four runs for MT, as the team couldn't find its swing until it scored three runs in the bottom of the ninth in a comeback attempt that came a little too late.

The Blue Raiders (13-3) couldn't find an answer to Southern Illinois' top four batters in the order as they compiled all of SIU's RBIs.

The Salukis (7-12) hammered two homeruns to lead their 12-hit attack.

Freshman pitcher Brett

Wilson collected his first loss of the season, giving up three earned runs on five hits in five innings of work.

Sophomore reliever Nick Montgomery also gave up three runs in one inning of relief as the game got out of reach in the seventh with a 9-1 deficit.

Senior thirdbaseman Rawley Bishop led the MT attack, going 2-for-4 with two RBIs and a run scored.

Junior right-fielder Stuart Meinhart added to the Blue Raider effort going 2-for-4 with two RBIs and a walk.

SIU got on the board in the top of the second with a runner coming home on a sacrifice double play.

MT responded with a

single by Bishop in the bottom of the third that scored a man from second.

The 1-1 tie was broken in the top of the sixth as SIU's Chris Serritella hammered a three-run homerun over the left-field wall. SIU continued to add five runs to its lead in the top of the seventh.

The Blue Raiders were able to record three runs on six hits in the bottom of the ninth, but it proved to be too late for the boys in blue.

The Blue Raiders will return to Sun Belt Conference action at home against Florida Atlantic tomorrow at 6 p.m. The game will be the first contest in a weekend three-game series against FAU.

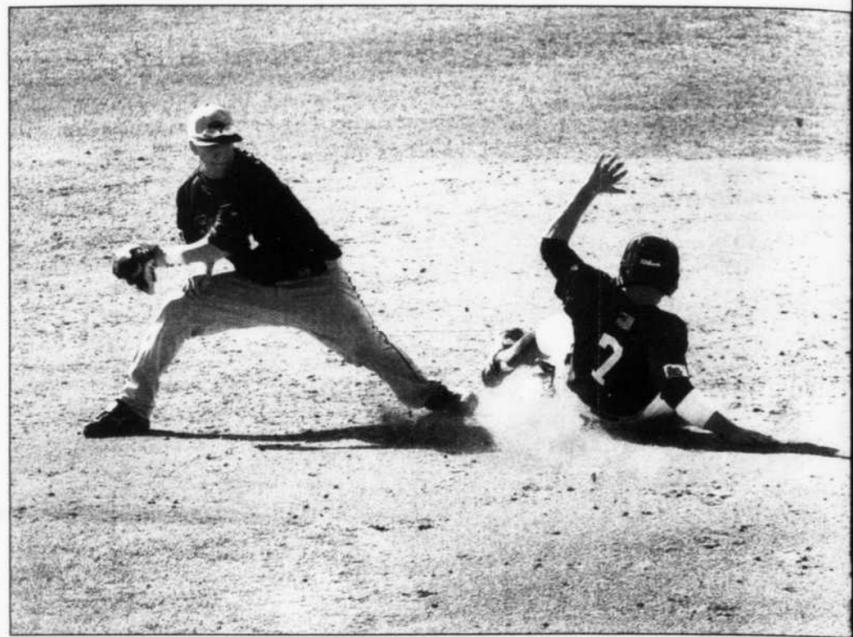


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

Outfielder Bryce Brentz slides into second base on a double during Tuesday's loss to Southern Illinois. The Blue Raiders only scored four runs on 10 hits in the contest.

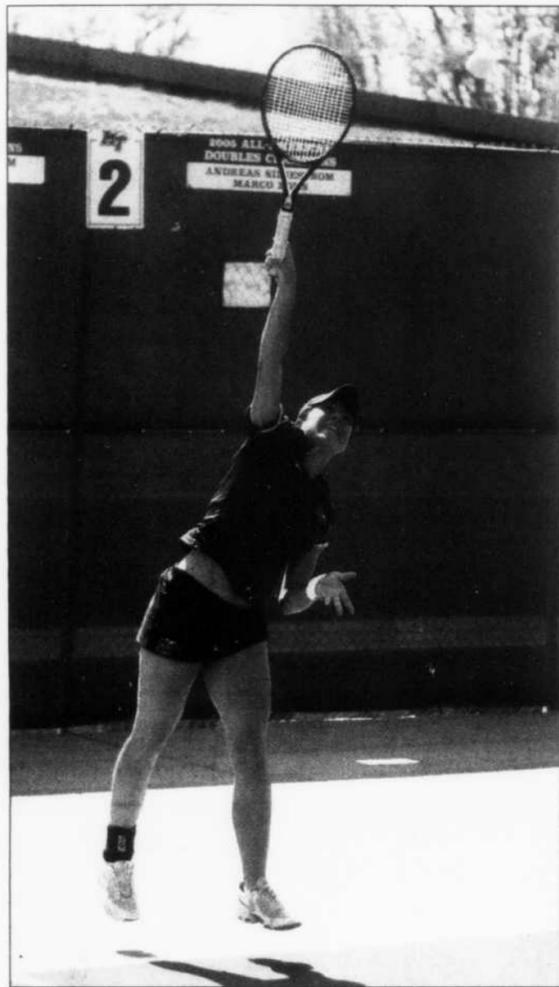


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

Senior Andrea Herrera leaps for a serve during her singles match against Princeton. Princeton won 7-0.

Women's tennis falls to Ivy League

No. 39 Princeton takes singles, doubles matches to extend winning record

By CHRIS WELCH
Sports Editor

The No. 39 Princeton Tigers rode home victorious after a 7-0 sweep at the Buck Bouldin Tennis Center.

All seven Tigers helped Princeton take home the win, increasing their win streak to six matches and dropping MT's record to 6-8.

Doubles play fell first. The power team of senior Marlene Chemin and junior Ann Djananova had the best match of the day, but was still not enough to earn the win as the superior matchup of Princeton's Lauren McHale and Rachel Saiontz prevailed with a 9-8 (7-3) decision.

None of the six singles matches progressed to the third set, and only the second doubles match between MT's Djananova

and Chemin and Princeton's McHale and Saiontz went to a tiebreaker.

In the singles game, freshman Marietta Bigus lost to No. 107 McHale 6-4, 6-1. Senior Andrea Herrera posted the closest match of the day, falling 7-5, 6-4 to Saiontz.

"It is the first time we have come off the court losing, and I have left impressed by the way we played," head coach Alison Ojeda said. "We battled with them and did a great job."

"We have been watching film and figuring out ways to get better, so I think we are beginning to make a turn in the right direction."

The women's tennis team is scheduled to play next Saturday when it will host Indiana State at the Bouldin Tennis Center. The match starts at 2 p.m.

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