

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

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Kappa Sigma regains charter

By MARIE KEMPH
Campus News Editor

More than three years after MTSU's chapter of Kappa Sigma Fraternity lost its charter, its house on Greek Row and was placed on probation by Greek Affairs, a new group of members has successfully taken the necessary steps to once again be recognized as an active organization on campus.

Kappa Sigma celebrated its re-chartering ceremony Dec. 12, after being classified as a colony with the Greek organization's national headquarters.

"We have re-grouped and spent a lot of time giving back to the community," said Kappa Sigma President Coby Hart, junior aerospace major.

He said that although assumptions may be made about the group, based on past incidences, all of the active members of Kappa Sigma today are new to the organization and were not involved with any of the previous scandals from a few years ago.

"All of us are new to the Greek system," Hart said. "People are always going to have opinions, but we have worked hard to be a part of the MTSU community again."

Kappa Sigma member Nick Braden, senior aerospace major, said members spent much of last year helping people in Middle Tennessee communities who were affected by natural disasters, including those affected by the tornado that struck Murfreesboro last April.

Braden said members are required to complete 25 hours of community service a semester, maintain at least a 2.5 GPA, and help raise money for non-profit organizations throughout the year, including one of the national organization's flagship causes - the Military Heroes Campaign.

The campaign is designed to raise money for the Fisher House Foundation, a national non-profit organization that provides free housing for wounded military veterans and their families throughout the duration of rehabilitation, according to the Kappa Sigma national Web site.

Braden said he is looking forward to Kappa Sigma being an active organization again on campus, and that school officials have been supportive.

"We had to meet a checklist of requirements before we were able to get our charter back," Braden said.

To read more, visit us online.



www.mtsusidelines.com

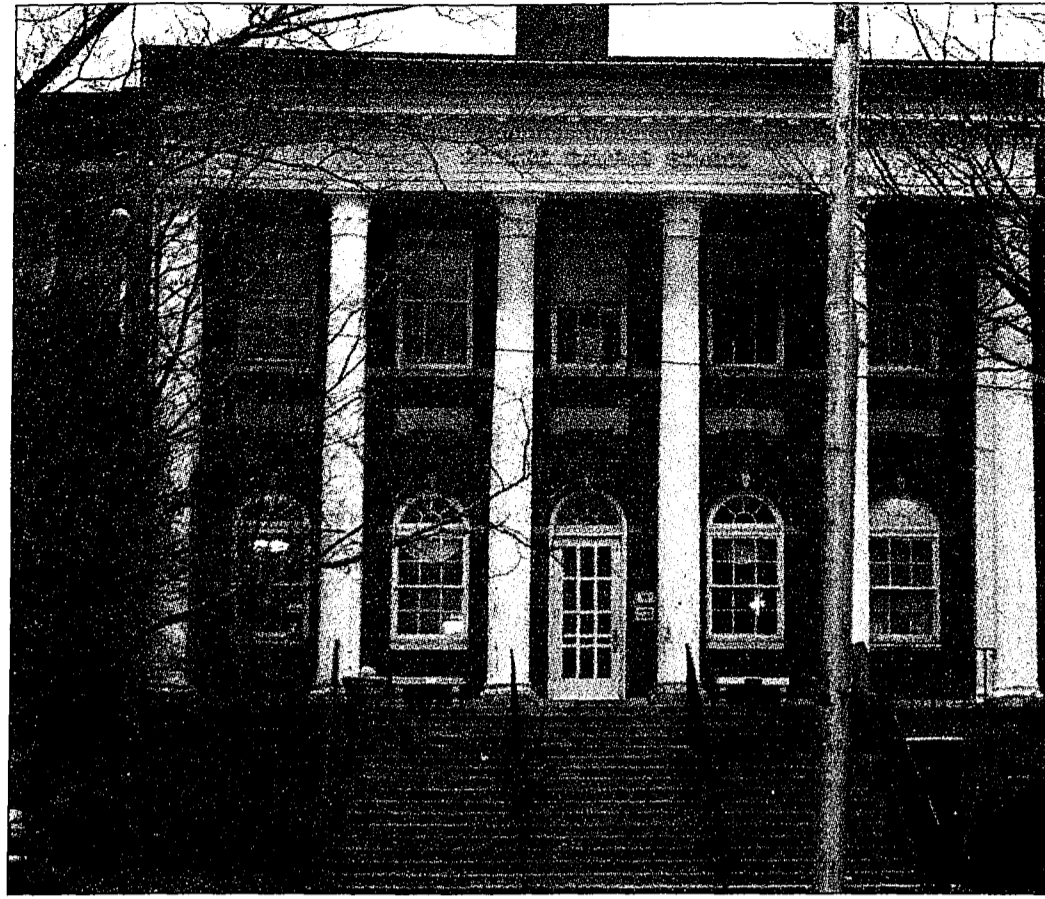


Photo by Jay Bailey, photography editor

Homer Pittard Campus School has been vandalized for the second time in less than a week.

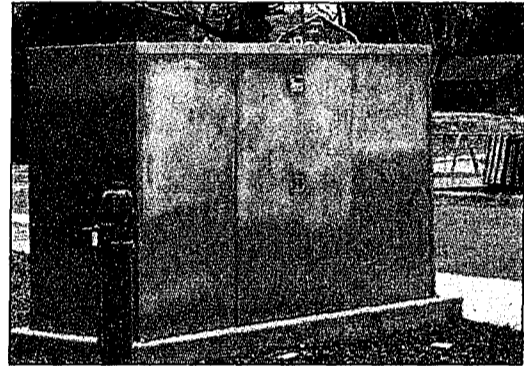
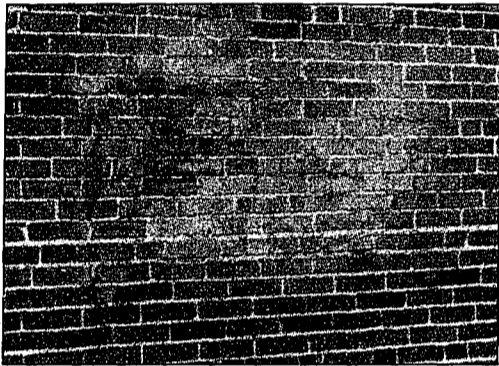


Photo by Jay Bailey, photography editor

Vandals spray-painted the front wall and a large utility box with profanity and racial slurs.

Vandals strike Pittard

By ROZALIND RUTH
Community News Editor

Vandals struck the Homer Pittard Campus School for the second time during the past week sometime Sunday night, according to the MTSU Department of Public Safety.

Last week, vandals rearranged the school's marquee letters into profane and inappropriate words.

"We're an elementary school, we need some stability," said principal Chontel Bridgeman, who is in her first year as an administrator of the elementary school.

"We don't need that type of behavior happening around our kids," Bridge-

man said.

Bridgeman said she was surprised that the two acts of vandalism have taken place within a week in a neighborhood where so many of the school community members reside.

"The first time it happened we weren't prepared," she said. "With this recent event, I was absolutely shocked."

Sometime between Sunday night and Monday morning, vandals spray-painted the front wall, a large utility box, a window and the marquee of the 80-year-old building with what Bridgeman said was profanity and racial slurs.

VANDALISM, PAGE 2

Haiti spurs musical fundraising

By CHRIS RANKER
Contributing Writer

3 Brothers Deli & Brewery hosted a free, all-day benefit concert with local musicians to aid earthquake-ravaged Haiti with the newly-formed, non-profit You & I.

JD Short, co-founder of You & I, is a member of The Compromise, one of the 11 bands who played throughout the day.

Short said they want to help out in any way they can.

"That's really what we know - music," Short said. "We're going to use the talents we've been given."

All donations, which include monetary donations as well as medical supplies, will be given to the Red Cross Haiti Relief Fund.

Additionally, 3 Brothers donated 10 percent of all of the sales until 8 p.m.

Short, an MTSU alumnus, and his partner Kate Batts founded the organization earlier this year.

"Kate and JD came in and started talking about having this benefit, and it just sort of evolved from there," said Eric Fortney, the owner of 3 Brothers. "It was extremely successful, and I'm glad we could set it up."

Fortney said that more than \$1,000 in cash donations were raised this weekend, as well as more than \$4,000 worth of



Photo by Jay Bailey, photography editor

Ryan Coleman, musician and server at 3 Brothers, performs to help raise funds for Haiti.

medical supplies.

"It was great that there was such a good turnout, especially with us just having opened," Fortney said.

Music City Medical Supply was among the donors.

"When they heard we were doing this, they gave us boxes and boxes of supplies," Short said. "We're going to have to get a

trailer to come and take it all away."

"We had stock that was not our mainstream items that was stored up for a situation such as this,"

said Roger Pruitt, Operations Manager of MCMS. "You collect it over

time, and you don't want to throw it away because someone can use it."

Among the supplies were surgical cover-

ings, catheters and other needed supplies.

Short said that this was the first event from You & I.

He said that he and Batts had been planning on forming You & I for some time, and decided to solidify their plans after learning about the devastation in Haiti.

"Right now, we're pretty much just an e-mail address and a phone number, but we hope to start expand-

ing soon and having more events," Short said.

Short said that the organization relies heavily on word of mouth and online invitations, though this event received much news coverage.

"Lots of news channels and journalists have come out," Short said. "People are really eager to help out."

Many members of the community, including numerous MTSU students filled the tables during the event.

"It's so great that people can help out and have fun at the same time," Joe Falconer, a junior Music Education major, said. "I bet the next one will be even better."

You & I plans on sponsoring another benefit show for the Haitian victims on Feb. 3 at The Blue Rooster Bar and Music Hall at 114 North Church Street.

Short said that the most-needed donations are over-the-counter pain medications, bandages and gauze.

Drop boxes for these or other items are located at select businesses in downtown Murfreesboro, including 3 Brothers Deli & Brewery, The Music Stop and Club 527 Main Street.

Monetary donations can be made online at www.redcross.org, www.unicefusa.org, or www.ye.org and other donations can be made around the community.

"You and I can help," Short said. "Donate today."

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MT women's tennis team gears up for successful season.

PAGE 6



ONLINE View our photo album of Desmond Yates online.

mtsusidelines.com

THURSDAY FORECAST

PARTLY CLOUDY
20% CHANCE OF SNOW
HIGH 45, LOW 27

“QUOTE OF THE DAY”

“Every one of us gets through the tough times because somebody is there, standing in the gap to close it for us.”
Oprah Winfrey

High unemployment leaves students listless

By ROZALIND RUTH
Community News Editor

As many as 33 percent of people are either unemployed or underemployed in Middle Tennessee, according to a report published by the Jennings A. Jones College of Business last week.

The results are based on a study done by the Business and Economic Research Center in July 2009, and it also found that up to 39 percent of Tennesseans are looking for more work, even if they are not necessarily underemployed or unemployed.

Seven counties – Bedford, Coffee, Franklin, Grundy, Lincoln, Moore, and Warren – were selected to give a broad range of employment rates in Middle Tennessee, according to the report.

According to BERC's study, 54 percent of the marginally attached – unemployed, underemployed or have given up on finding work – are between the ages of 18 to 34.

Men and women are equally underemployed and more higher-educated individuals are underemployed than unemployed.

Despite the low job rate in Middle Tennessee, Bill Fletcher, director of MTSU's Career Service Center, said that after the fall of the employment market in January 2009, fewer students have been utilizing the career center.

"When I talk about job searching, I'm talking about a variety of activities; and I don't think students understand that," Fletcher said.

The CDC offers services such as career exploration,

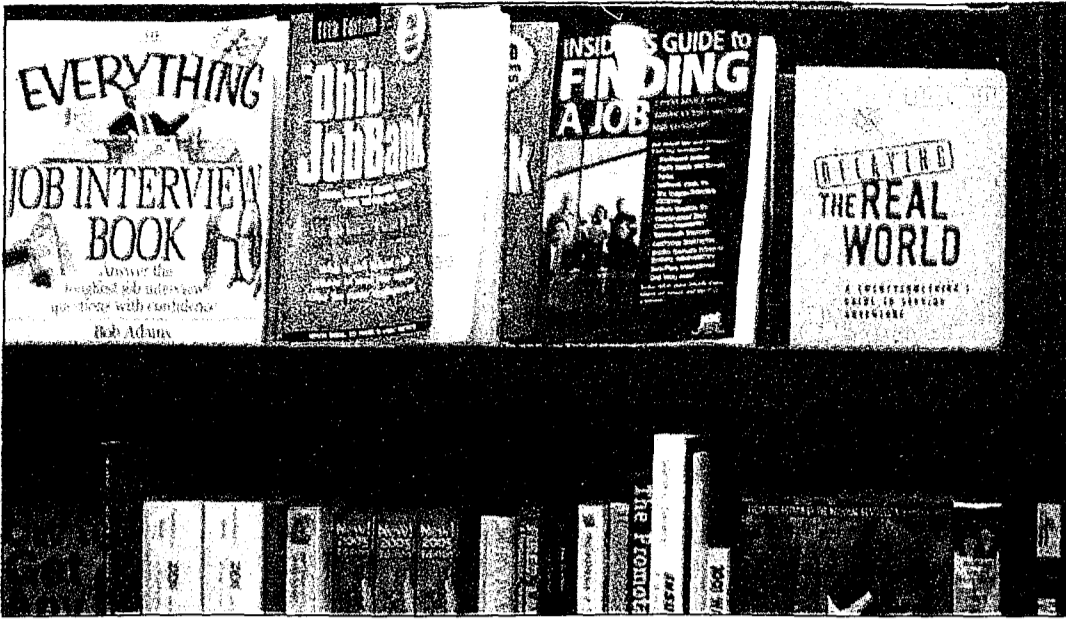


Photo courtesy of Morguefile.com
Tennessee's unemployment rate rises while fewer college graduates apply for jobs.

job searches and campus-recruitment programs, as well as the Lightning Job Source, an online database of employment opportunities.

"Our traffic has not picked up," Fletcher said. "Clearly, what I'm seeing on this campus, for whatever reason, is not an issue to students."

Fletcher said that since February of last year, there has been a 33 to 35 percent decrease of prospective employers that have attended job fairs held at MTSU.

"In October, we had to work twice as hard to recruit employers for the job fair and we ended up with 31 percent employer participation," Fletcher said. "Ironically, I was pleased with that."

Fletcher said not only was there less employer involvement, but there was also a 23 percent drop in attendance from the job fair in October.

The BERC study also re-

ports that 43 percent of the workforce is willing to accept wages under \$9 an hour and over half are willing to commute more than 20 miles for a job they want.

"Students believe there's going to be a whole bunch of jobs for them to pick from," Fletcher said. "If you see one job, you'd better apply for it."

Fletcher said that job seekers should try their best to acquire jobs through employment fairs even if there is only one employer that they are interested in working for.

"In the state, and across the nation, the No. 1 method of hiring is employee referral," Fletcher said. "It's not a job board, it's not Lightning Job Source, it's not Monster.com; it is out there networking – and networking takes time."

Fletcher said MTSU has seen a raise in the number

of graduate students enrolling, which is typically seen in economic recessions.

He said he believes it is unwise for students to attend graduate school simply to delay joining the job market.

"They're just increasing their amount of student loans, student debt, they're increasing their amount of uncertainty," Fletcher said. "I think it would be better to go out and do something and get some experience, and then decide what you want to do in terms of graduate school."

Students interested in utilizing the Career Development Center's services can call 615-898-2501 or visit the center's Web site at career.web.mtsu.edu.

Career Development Center is planning an internship and summer job fair Tuesday, Feb. 9, from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m., in the Murphy Center.

CRIME BRIEFS

Jan. 21, 9:37 a.m.
Traffic
Mass Communications Lot
Subject stated an unknown subject struck his parked vehicle and left the scene.

Jan. 21, 5:37 p.m.
Warrant
Greenland Drive Lot B
Amanda Vineyard was arrested on active warrants for domestic assault and vandalism

Jan. 22, 1 a.m.
Evading Arrest
Ewing Blvd
Joseph M. Bess was arrested on felony evading arrest charges and Chasity L. Shipley was arrested on misdemeanor or evading arrest charges.

Jan. 22, 6:05 p.m.
Alcohol
Deere Hall
Kesha Thornsby was issued a state citation for underage possession of alcohol.

Jan. 23, 1:45 a.m.
Rape
Off Campus
The Murfreesboro Police Department advised that a possible sexual assault may have happened at a fraternity house. Murfreesboro police are unsure where the incident occurred.

Jan. 23, 1:08 p.m.
Traffic
Health and Recreation Center
A complainant reported a hit and run.

CURRENT EVENTS

Bull Madness Invitational with concert Joe Diffie and Colin Mckaug
Jan. 30, 7:30 p.m.
Location: Tennessee Miller Coliseum
Admission: \$18

Art Exhibit: Ramblings and Dwellings: Ken and Libby Rowe
Jan. 28 through Feb. 9, 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday
Location: Todd Gallery
Admission: free

MTSU Theatre: "Ladybug"
Jan. 28 through 30, 7:30 p.m.
Location: Tucker Theatre
Admission: free for students, \$5 for faculty and staff, \$10 general admission

Red Cross Blood Drive
Feb. 1, 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.
Location: James Union Building, Tennessee Ballroom

Spring Honors Lecture Series: Dr. Karen Petersen, "Problem Solved? The Political Implications of Palestinian Statehood"
Feb. 1, 12 p.m. until 1 p.m.
Location: Honors Building Room 106
Admission: free

Black History Month: Unity Luncheon
Feb. 3, 11 a.m.
Location: JUB, Tennessee Ballroom
Admission: \$10 for students, \$20 General admission

Events Policy

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

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

www.mtdining.com

January Deals

ASIAN EXPRESS
One Item Combo \$4.99

CHICKEN SANDWICH COMBO \$4.99

CHICKEN SALAD SANDWICH COMBO \$6.00

8-PIECE CHICKEN NUGGET COMBO \$5.00

EGG & CHEESE WITH OJ 4.99

Blue Plate Special \$4.99

CHEESE PIZZA, BREAD STICKS & DRINK \$4.99

SMALL TUNA CHIPS & DRINK \$4.99

Add a cup of Soup on Egg Roll or Donuts(3) \$1.00

2 MINTS & DRINK \$3.00

VEGGIE BURGER, APPLES & DRINK \$6.00

CHICKEN SANDWICH COMBO \$6.00

BAGEL DOG, CHIPS & SOFT DRINK 6.00

Add a cup of soup or dessert! \$1.00

ADD BREADSTICKS & DRINK TO ANY MEAL 2.00

SMALL TUNA CHIPS & DRINK \$5.00

FOOD STUDIO

CHICKEN SANDWICH COMBO \$4.99

CHICKEN SALAD SANDWICH COMBO \$6.00

8-PIECE CHICKEN NUGGET COMBO \$5.00

EGG & CHEESE WITH OJ 4.99

Blue Plate Special \$4.99

CHEESE PIZZA, BREAD STICKS & DRINK \$4.99

SMALL TUNA CHIPS & DRINK \$4.99

Look for MTDining's Sustainability logo to see the many steps we are taking to help MTSU go green!

Healthy dining is important! Keep an eye out for these JustAU icons at McCallie, Raider Zone and the KUC to help you identify healthy options!

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Photo by Meagan McCann, staff photographer
MTSU offers mothers a chance to focus on school while providing a safe environment for their children.

Mothers get day care options on campus

By MATTHEW HAMMITT
Contributing Writer

The Homer Pittard Campus School is accepting enrollment for its Evening Extended School Program, which currently provides care for 48 children during after-school hours.

Working parents are more likely to use the daycare program, and the program's staff attributes this to limited awareness among the MTSU student body.

"It's been challenging to get students to know that we are here," said Program Director Jennifer Stanley. She has been the program director for more than nine years, and has worked in after-school childcare programs for more than 15 years.

The Evening Extended School Program is a service run by MTSU and has been operating for about 10 years. The program is available for children ages 5 to 14 and operates from 3-9:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

Megan Shearin's son has been attending the program for two years.

"It's hard to make sure everything gets done," Shearin said. "So homework is one less thing

to worry about."

Enrollment in the program is \$50 a week for the first child and \$40 a week for each additional child. Parents may also pay for services on a daily basis at a cost of \$20 per child. Children attending three or more days a week are automatically charged a weekly fee.

Parents must fill out an application and submit a \$25 registration fee in order to enroll in the program. Applications can be processed on the day they are submitted, and children can begin attending on that day.

One of the highly regarded aspects of the program among parents is the homework contract, a document signed by both the parent and the child that specifies the amount of time each day the parent wishes their child to spend working on assignments for school.

The fulfillment of this contract helps to alleviate some of the strain placed on parents with busy schedules.

Stanley and her staff have implemented a free-choice program that allows children to participate in a variety of different activities that cater

to the child's individual interests, such as dance, drama, cooking, cheerleading and sports.

The program also offers a selection of specialized clubs prepared by the staff, which is presented at regular intervals throughout the day. Children can become involved in as many of these specialized clubs as they choose.

Assistant Director Ju'Nequail Smith has worked in the program for five years and said she prefers it to previous childcare facilities she has worked for.

"It's much more structured and organized than [other programs]," Smith said.

In addition to the regular staff, many of whom are MTSU students, the after-school daycare provides several student tutors from the university each semester to assist in helping its pupils with assignments.

Parents interested in the Evening Extended School Program can contact the Homer Pittard Campus School by phone at (615) 904-8220 or by e-mail at eesp@mtsu.edu. Applications for enrollment can be obtained by visiting the school's Web site at: <http://frank.mtsu.edu/~eesp>.

Students compete for red carpet cameo

By TAYLOR HIXSON
Contributing Writer

Two MTSU journalism students have been selected as semifinalists in the mtvU Oscars Red Carpet Correspondent Contest for a chance to report live from the 82nd annual Academy Awards in Los Angeles, Calif., on March 7.

The semifinalists, Nicki DeCroce, junior, and Tony Holt, senior, videos are judged based on votes cast by registered MTV.com members, according to the contest's rules of entry.

Students from colleges and universities from across the country entered the competition, and only 10 teams reached the semifinals.

"It's been really good to see the entire university get behind us," Holt said.

The official contest rules require a team of two college students to produce a two-minute video showing why they would be the best candidate to represent their college and community on the red carpet.

"We are trying to stay positive, but don't want to get our hopes up too much," DeCroce said. "There are some good videos."

While some contestants produced videos about their campus or showed off their interviewing skills, DeCroce and Holt said their video entry focused on their involvement with MTTV and their desire to do as much as possible to win the competition.

"Their video is different, unique and well thought out," said Michael Booker, business manager of MTTV.

Holt said they had several ideas for the entrance video, which was shot with a high-definition camera borrowed from MTSU alumnus



Photo courtesy MTTV
Tony Holt (left) and Nicki DeCroce (right) prepare for the mtvU Oscars Red Carpet Contest.

Adam Mills. Holt said he feels good about the video that he submitted.

"Our video is extremely different from everyone's, which can help us or hurt us," DeCroce said.

DeCroce said she dressed up in formal attire, and showed how she would take public transportation, hitchhike or even ride a Razor scooter all the way to the Oscars if necessary.

"Other videos tell why they should win; but our video shows why," Holt said.

DeCroce said that she and Holt have gained more confidence in their ability to win the

competition after seeing last year's entries at the 2009 National College Media Convention in Austin, Texas.

"We could totally do this," DeCroce said. "It's really exciting."

The top three teams are set to win a trip to Los Angeles and be given the chance to talk with other professionals that are in the entertainment and media industries.

"If [their video] doesn't place in the top three, the judges weren't looking for the right things in terms of creativity," Booker said.

The finalists will get to report on pre-events of their

choice, including The Governor's Ball Preview, The Foreign Language Film Award photo-op and The Makeup and Hairstylists Symposium.

The grand-prize for best video will be announced March 6 in an official ceremony, and that team will be rewarded with a press pass and interview pass for each team member to use during the Oscars.

Any student who would like to watch DeCroce and Holt's video may go to www.oscars.mtvu.com and register for free to vote for their favorite video. Registered members are allowed to vote once a day until Feb. 10.

VANDALISM FROM PAGE 1

"Obviously, someone has a lot of time on his or her hands," Bridgeman said.

Bridgeman said that MTSU police told her that acts of vandalism have been reported near the school on Lytle Street, including slashed car tires and other property damages. She said that she did not expect more acts of vandalism, especially so soon after the first two incidents.

Homer Pittard is a laboratory school owned by MTSU in which its students receive special curriculum, such as constant interaction with graduate students completing practicum courses, who in return gain hands-on experience with young students.

The school also holds night classes and practicum courses for the Department of Elementary and Special Education.

Bridgeman said that it is detrimental for young children to be possibly exposed to that type of language and offensive messages, and that she and the school's staff try to maintain a consistently safe and natural, learning environment.

"It's hard for the kids," Bridgeman said. "They can really sense if something is wrong."

Bridgeman said she hopes that who ever has been vandalizing the campus is apprehended soon. She said she worries about her students' welfare and the disruption of their education.

Bridgeman said many of the parents find it disconcerting to see police cars outside of their child's school.

"The visual aspect of coming on campus and seeing police is very alarming to students; it causes them to have a lot of questions," she said. "I had some parents that related to me that it was hard dropping their children off knowing what is going on."

Bridgeman said that when she arrived at the school on Monday morning and saw the vandalism, she immediately called the superintendent of Rutherford County Schools and MTSU President Sidney McPhee.

Within minutes, Bridgeman said there were work forces from MTSU and Rutherford County Schools at Homer Pittard to help with the cleanup.

"A positive outcome of all of this is the two [workforces] coming together," Bridgeman said. "I've gotten a lot of e-mails from the parents to make sure that me and any of the other minority faculty members know that [the racial slurs] are not representative of the school."

Bridgeman said that the cleanup took half of the school day, and the team of workforces made sure that none of the profane words were visible to the students.

"It is really hard for the kids to understand why someone would try to hurt anything on our property," she said.

Bridgeman said that she doubts the vandalism was a personal response to the enrollment practices of the school because it does not have special enrollment criteria.

Unlike other public schools, students are not required to live within a specified school zone. In addition, the school does not charge tuition, determine acceptance by academic requirements, or use specific demographics of its students to determine eligibility.

Bridgeman said the only criteria for acceptance is the child's position on the school's waiting list, which is determined by the child's birth-date. Therefore, she said, it is the parents' personal responsibility for his or her child's education.



Photo by Chris Donahue, staff photographer
Student Government Association officers listen to senators at the SGA's Jan. 21 meeting.

SGA raises funds for Habitat build

STAFF REPORT

MTSU students are gearing up for their first weekend of construction for Habitat for Humanity's Blitz Build event, and will be volunteering their time to help build a home in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity of Rutherford County.

Several student organizations will be participating, including the Habitat MTSU Chapter, the Student Government Association, Alpha Omicron Pi, Chi Omega Women's Fraternities, the Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity, as well as others.

Volunteers began the initial construction work last week, building the frame, and are expected to complete construction by March 24. The home is located on Kerr Street in Murfreesboro.

A dedication ceremony is scheduled for March 25, which will be held on-site, where the home will be formally presented to the family.

Volunteers will be needed

on Wednesdays, Fridays and occasionally Saturdays, to work in four-hour shifts, and no technical skills or construction experience is required.

There will be an informational meeting Thursday, Jan. 27 at 4 p.m., in the Keathley

University Center Theatre, for students interested in volunteering their time to help complete construction.

For more information, students may contact Jackie Victory, director of Leadership and Service, at 615-898-5812 or at jjvictory@mtsu.edu.

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VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

ECSTASY USERS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH

Researchers at Vanderbilt are recruiting healthy Caucasian individuals, ages 18 to 25, who have used Ecstasy recreationally to complete a confidential brain imaging study.

Participants will be compensated up to \$375 for their time in completing a comprehensive study.

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

**For inquiries or to enroll,
contact Christina at 615-936-1380**

Letters Policy

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

OPINIONS

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Overruling will hurt future vote totals

Disregard for students body's opinion on garage referendum discourages trust, democratic process

To my fellow senators and the student body: We as Student Government Association senators were given a great shock to our systems in our first meeting of the spring semester.



From an SGA senator

Brandon Thomas

We learned that despite the will of the student body, MTSU's administration has decided to ignore a student-held referendum, one that spoke loudly: "NO Parking Garage!"

This disregard of the student body's voice is not only a disgrace to the fundamental principles by which our nation was founded, but it's also a slap in the face to the SGA. It is no secret that student voting is low, and I fear that voter turnout for future elections

will only lessen due to the lack of confidence in our electoral system.

It is finally time for the SGA to channel the populist anger against this resurrected parking garage and to challenge the administration. This is not a time for those cynics who

feel that "you can't fight city hall."

In fact, for those who feel we cannot challenge our administration on critical issues that will affect us, I ask you to either move out of the way, or step down. For too long, our SGA has been the bastion of non-confrontation, and one to shy away from the most important issues.

Whether it is budget cuts or a parking garage, it's now time to get vocal.

It is time to end the blanket statements that do not extend the dialog, but only hope for the controversy to subside.

It is time to unite our student body and truly embed them into the process.

It is time for us to say no more; this is our school and the voice of the students will not be trampled upon like yesterday's trash.

It has been suggested by a student that everyone in the SGA resign from his or her position or be temporarily suspended until we are taken seriously as an organization - and not just used as an illusion for fake democracy. At the very least, what the SGA Senate can do for the student body in response to the garage is introduce a resolution to not only distance itself from the actions of a tyrannical administration, but also take this issue to the

Tennessee Board of Regents meeting with signatures of students who are apposed.

It is true that buildings like the Health, Wellness and Recreation Center were built and put in place by our predecessors for the greater good of MTSU; we should thank them. However, we are in the middle of the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression, and students that are barely making it should not be subjected to the MTSU Master Plan.

With stagnate salaries, the number of faculty members being downsized and important departments under consideration to be cut, the priorities of this plan are

all wrong.

What's the problem with reforming the infrastructure that we already have? Where's the town hall to answer these questions?

If we truly need a parking garage, the administration needs to ask the students what we want. However, I just suspect they will disregard what we want again until we show them we mean business. Remember, good things don't come to those who wait - they come to those who agitate.

Brandon Thomas is a sophomore political science major and SGA senator for the College of Liberal Arts. He can be reached at blt3a@mtsu.edu.

PARKING GARAGE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Administration's ruling insulting to democracy

The administration's decision last week to proceed with enacting fees to cover the cost of the construction of a parking garage, despite students' vote against it last spring, flies in the face of the democratic process. Last year, students voted against the fees after Parking and Transportation Services used student money to run a pro-garage campaign called the "All-Access Campus Improvement Plan."

It was unethical then for the university to use student fees, and it is reprehensible now that the administration would disregard the student body's voice.

Brandon McNary, who praised the administration's decision in a Student Government Association meeting last week, is more a voice for the administration than the students.

In my time on and off the SGA Senate, I fought as the voice of the students, and I applaud those senators who stood up against the administration last week. It's a shame your SGA president didn't do the same.

Matthew Hurt, 2009 MTSU graduate

Big campaign donations deceitful toward voters

On Jan. 21, the U.S. Supreme Court undermined the work of many presidents and congressmen by effectively turning back the clock to the 19th century.

A 5-4 vote threw out a 63-year-old law that restrained the influence of corporations, lobbyists and labor unions on elections. Big corporations are allowed to contribute directly to candidates, but they must be funded by voluntary contributions from employees.

However, after Thursday's ruling, campaign regulations do not apply to promotional DVDs, Internet ads or theaters.

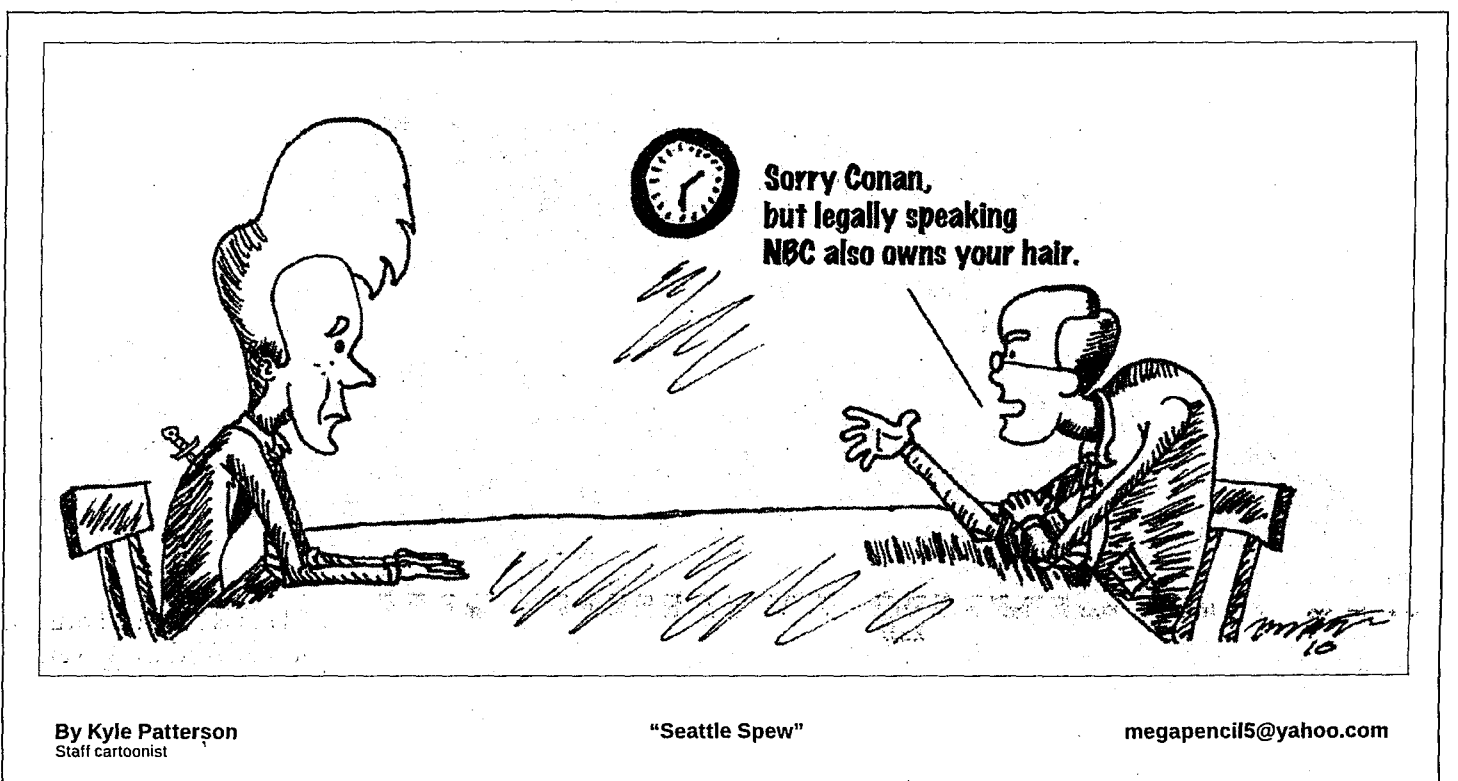
Therefore, corporations are now free to spend more than \$10 million of corporate funding on political ads calling for the election or defeat of candidates in this year's crucial elections and will potentially influence elections for years to come.

Justice Anthony Kennedy stated that Thursday's overturned regulations were an unconstitutional restraint of free speech. Does this now mean that the greedy and irresponsible banks and financial institutions which have been reprimanded for using bailout money to provide executive bonuses are now granted speech rights equal to or greater than those of every American citizen?

I, as do many Americans, take great issue with the Supreme Court's ruling. Neither the Constitution nor any amendments grant suffrage to corporations and unions.

The decision is wrong for the constitution, wrong for our country and wrong for our democracy.

Greg Mecomber, sophomore international relations major



By Kyle Patterson
Staff cartoonist

"Seattle Spew"

megapencil5@yahoo.com

Government employees should be held to same free speech standards

Soldier's arrest for song lyrics is double standard of First Amendment

What happens when the very men and women who join the military to fight for basic human rights are not extended those same rights because of the service they perform?



Things to ponder
Allison Roberts

Marc A. Hall was arrested in December 2009 for a song he wrote and recorded called "Stop Loss." In his song, Hall blasts the Army's stop loss policy, which allows the Army to hold soldiers past their contacted enlistment dates.

Hall, who is stationed at Fort Stewart near Savannah, Ga., was supposed to end his time in the military in February, but in December he received orders to go back to Iraq instead.

Hall did what musicians have done for years and put his anger and frus-

tration into a song. Rappers like the members of NWA and 50 Cent have made millions threatening to kill people or boasting about violent acts they've committed, but rather than receiving a Grammy or record deal as those rappers have, he was arrested for using "threatening language."

So, how is that for irony? Hall can fight to protect the First Amendment rights of rappers like Eminem, who fantasized about killing his ex-wife and mother in numerous songs. But, because Hall has no First Amendment rights, his rap song that fantasizes about a shooting spree got him arrested just because of the occupation he holds.

All soldiers and government employees are told that as part of their service, they are not afforded some basic rights, among them is First Amendment protection. How is that for a "thank you?" You can put your

life on the line to serve your country, but you can't express anger for doing so?

The stop loss policy basically gives the Army the right to say, "I know you were supposed to leave on a certain date, but Uncle Sam needs you in the country of his choice." I would think that the stop loss policy would be far more appalling than a rap song threatening violence, because we all know that never happens.

I can't blame Hall for being angry, and I don't really think anyone else can either. He had his own plans set in place.

He was leaving the military life to join his wife and their new baby, but now he can't do that because he's sitting in jail because of his rap song. Hall's arrest further proves that freedom of speech isn't a guarantee for everyone, even if you are fighting so other people can have that right.

Allison Roberts is a senior journalism major and copy editor for Sidelines. She can be reached at allisonroberts3@mac.com.

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Relief needed for more than large disasters

The story is fairly inspiring: Americans everywhere, emptying the paltry contents of their wallets for a good cause. The earthquake in Haiti not only shook the island, but also the hearts of Americans. It seems everyone is throwing in a dollar or two for Haiti's relief effort.



Pearl before swine

Pearl Howell

Undoubtedly, it is a wonderful story of giving. Billions of dollars are being poured into Haiti from TV and Internet fundraisers.

Celebrities encourage giving and do plenty of it themselves.

George Clooney hosted a telethon, Lady Gaga is giving all of the proceeds from one of her concerts to the relief effort, and

countless others performers are preparing benefits. Oprah has been mentioning the relief effort on her recent shows and directing viewers to where they can donate.

Everyone seems to be more

than willing to give aid to a country desperately in need, and it is a wonderful display of what Americans can do when they have their mind in the right place.

However, the magnificent show of support leads one to wonder where all this charity is in non-disastrous circumstances. There are crises going on every day that go unacknowledged and unaided.

There are thousands of countries across the world being torn apart by war or natural disasters on a less-publicized basis. In Uganda, the people are living in desperate straits, as they are either housed in refugee camps or taking part in a violent, senseless and years-

long war.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has been involved in war for years as well, with even more violent backlash and harm to the country's inhabitants.

HAITI RELIEF

In many eastern countries like Thailand and Kosovo, slave trade and the exploitation of basic human rights runs rampant and without penalty. Women are lured with offers of work in another country and then trapped, sold and used for illicit purposes.

Where is their billion-dollar relief fund?

Even in our country, there

are causes worth supporting. Clinics and support centers for the abused, shelters for the homeless, and food drives for the hungry need money every day. Animal shelters, nursing homes, hospitals, schools – places to give time and money are unending and desperately in need.

While it is lovely to see so many people responding to a crisis, it is upsetting to see all the programs they don't help. People are in need more frequently than just during Christmas and horrific disasters.

I know that most students on campus don't have much money to pour into charitable

causes. But there are other ways of giving, like volunteering and fundraising. If every student on campus participated in one volunteer organization or gave five dollars to a non-profit one they deem worthy, the amount of good done would be immeasurable.

There are about 25,000 students at MTSU. Surely some of you can manage to do a little giving year-round rather than just on specific occasions. Certainly, it is not a bad thing that Haiti is receiving desperately needed help, but why should the giving stop there?

Pearl Howell is a freshman theater major. She can be reached at rph2t@mtsu.edu.

First impressions crucial, especially for professors

First impressions are extremely important in every aspect of your life. We judge others most often on the first impression given to us.

When it comes to professors, one would think that they are seasoned veterans of giving the first impression speech. However, I was severely disappointed in one of my professors this week.

I walked into my class with high expectations, which may have been my first mistake. Most of my communication teachers have been very dynamic and get me excited about the future.

I arrived to class about 10 minutes early. Fifteen min-



Even odds

Rebecca McGrath

loafers that should have been thrown out a few years before the '80s.

I am still not fazed. I have encountered his type before and normally enjoy the laid-back atmosphere that goes along with it.

The first thing out of his mouth was a rant about how he is a terrible speaker, spell checker and writer. He claimed that the class would have to work with him throughout the semester because he did not have the time to worry about getting these things correct.

Now wait one minute. I can put up with tardiness. I can even deal with the messy appearances.

However, I cannot deal with the utter lack of communication skills shown by my professor.

I thought this was a communication class. Over the years, my teachers have stressed the importance of communication skills in order to be successful. These skills allow for self-expression in a manner that is exciting and easy for others to understand.

How is it possible that this communication professor can stand up on the first day of class and explain to his students that he isn't familiar with the subject he is teaching?

I realize that the first day

of class is normally used to make introductions; teachers want to use this time to prepare their students for their teaching formats and let students know about themselves.

I appreciate the fact that he was trying to be truthful, but his introduction left me with a bad taste in my mouth.

I do not need a disclaimer at the beginning of class stating all of the mistakes my professor is going to make throughout the semester.

Maybe his introduction just didn't sit well with me. For all I know, I could be the only student in the class with this impression.

What I do know is that I expect more out of my professors. I expect them to be able to deliver their message clearly and without incorrect spelling. Is that too much to ask?

Thankfully, impressions can change for the better. By the end of the semester, I could be eating my words. For now, I just want people to remember that no matter who you are, first impressions do count.

Please try to make them as positive as possible.

Rebecca McGrath is a junior organizational communication major. She can be reached at rkm2z@mtsu.edu.

Lust does not develop into lifelong fulfillment

I was playing chess at a bar in Germany one night when an old, American man randomly asked me: "Excuse me, young man. Are you gettin' any [explicit] while you're here or what?"

Without giving him an answer, I went back to my game, figuring the joking was over. I was wrong, however, for he still insisted I give him an answer.

Despite his crude behavior, I answered in a way that clearly showed a difference of perspective on how men should treat women. In his opinion, I was missing out in life and should stop being so respectful towards women and start living more promiscuously.

"You just gonna leave all the women to an old man like me, then?"

"Yes," I said. "But not all of them are going to sleep with you."

His friend then added, "And those are the ones you want, right?"

"Exactly!" I smiled. "But not all of them!"

Agreeing to disagree, I still wanted to make it clear that I did not think I was better than him and admitted that I, too, was by no means sexually pure. In retrospect, I explained to him that I felt these experiences were unbeneficial and, therefore, wished for something in life with more substance than just sexual satisfaction.

Before I left, we exchanged names, and I wished him and his friends a pleasant evening. They really were not evil or threatening people. I don't want to paint this picture of them.

However, it should be remembered that words that encourage senseless, selfish satisfaction are powerful and capable of entrapping one's entire existence in their perimeter.

If one is not willing to take on the responsibility of a lifestyle beyond personal pleasure, he or she will never be satisfied.

Lust is a natural instinct in which every man faces and deals with in life. However, lust does not always appear to be corrupting.

It can sometimes seem to be an answer to fulfillment or clarity in life, which is why man will always be willing to test its waters.

However, if, hypothetically speaking, sexual lust did bring forth lifelong fulfillment, the man to whom I spoke with would not have told me that he desires more of it.

My point is this: it is impossible for something to be fulfilling if it never leaves one satisfied. It is my belief that we yearn for such completeness in our lives.

Personally, I have never met someone who lived a life in a circle of inconsistent, uncommitted sexual pleasure and thought to myself afterwards: "That is what I want in life; if I could only be like him, my life would

be complete."

Men and women who take on the lifelong responsibility to care for another person are the most inspiring of people. These are the parents who are bringing up the next generation in such a way that will improve their children's children. This is where I see, though have not experienced, beauty, purpose and a stable course of direction.

Therefore, I would like to encourage myself, as well as all others, to take on a lifestyle which nurtures and cares for the life of another, and, if capable, raise a child through adoption or birth.

It is within these decisions, though challenging and more difficult at times, where the building blocks of social structure are founded and, when made correctly, can lead one to feel the most rewarded and fulfilled in life.

Nate Bernadini is a senior German major. He can be reached at ntb2f22@gmail.com



Befürworter des friedens

(Promoter of peace)

Nate Bernadini

Comments from

www.mtsusidelines.com

"This is so great! Students definitely need more fruits and other healthy foods. And the government needs to support healthy behaviors..."

-Laura on "School goes green to help promote better health," Jan. 24

"That's absolutely ridiculous making us pay for something we don't want."

-Anonymous on "Administration disregards student voice," Jan. 24

"MTSU's Phillips Bookstore is run by eFollett, which does not offer textbook rentals. We would save time and money if they did...When does the eFollett contract expire and who do we need to contact to make sure the next company offers rentals?"

-Pete on "Chegg' out your options before buying textbooks," Jan. 20

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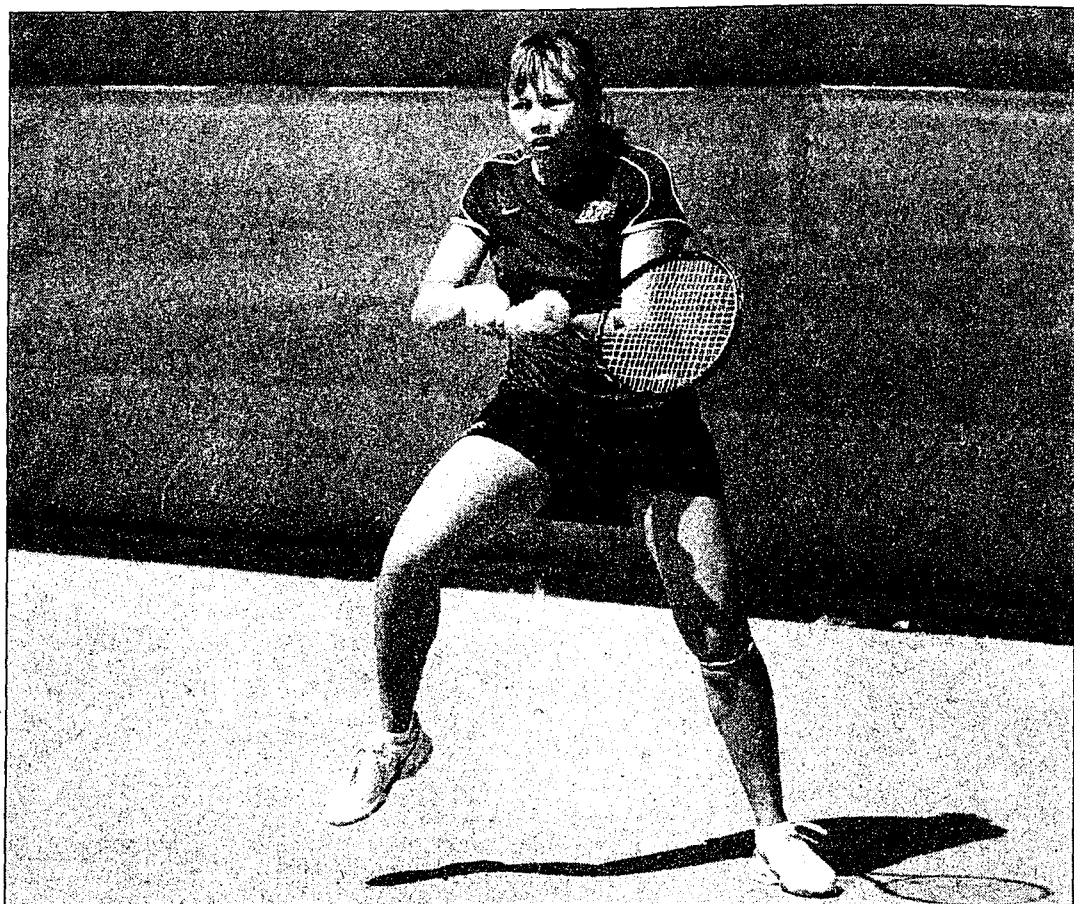


Photo by Jay Bailey, photography editor
Marietta Bigus, sophomore singles and doubles player, competes for MTSU during her freshman season.

Women's tennis opens season against Belmont

By STEPHEN CURLEY
Sports Editor

The Blue Raider women's tennis team opens the Spring season Friday when it travels to Nashville to take on Belmont University.

The team is coming off a disappointing 9-14 campaign last season, finishing just 1-4 in the Sun Belt Conference.

Five of the team's seven players are entering their second year at MT and are hoping to build on the experience of last season.

"They're no longer in their rookie year," said head coach Alison Ojeda.

The Blue Raiders will field a young team, with just two seniors. The rest of the team is made up of four sophomores and one freshman.

The two seniors, Natalie Araya and Anna Djananova, finished last season with records of 15-15 and 11-13, respectively.

"I would take a young team that has heart and desire over a veteran team that's ready to be done any day," Ojeda said.

One of the four sophomores on the roster, Carla Nava, is a newcomer to the team, in her first season with

the Blue Raiders after transferring from Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. Last season Lamar posted an 11-8 record mostly at the No. 3 singles position.

"She's a heck of a player," Ojeda said. "She'll come in and make a huge impact right away in the singles lineup."

Belmont, defeating them the past two seasons, 7-0 in 2008 and 5-2 in 2009.

"A couple of the [2009] matches were close, so this will be a good test for us right off the bat because I feel like we're a heck of a lot better than we were last year," Ojeda said.

While the success against Belmont has the Blue Raiders

"I would take a young team that has heart and desire over a veteran team that's ready to be done any day."

ALISON OJEDA
WOMEN'S TENNIS HEAD COACH

The lone freshman on the team, Yurii Nomoto, comes to the Blue Raiders from Kedron State High School in Brisbane, Australia. Despite her inexperience, Coach Ojeda is confident in her ability.

"[Nomoto] is actually one of our best players," Ojeda said. "She's really nervous right now so it's gonna take a few matches to figure out what she can do with those nerves, and hopefully she fights through them."

The Blue Raiders have had recent success against Bel-

mont, confident that they can start the season on the right foot, Ojeda said the team is staying focused while preparing for the Bruins.

"You want them to go in knowing what those last couple of years were like because they need to know where we should finish when that match is over," Ojeda said. "I think every good champion and every good athlete knows exactly where they stand."

MT's first home match will be Feb. 5 against the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga at Nashboro Village.

Women's Tennis Spring Calendar

Jan 29	Belmont	Nashville, Tenn.
Feb 5	Chattanooga	Nashboro Village Indoors
Feb 6	UT-Martin	Nashboro Village Indoors
Feb 19	Arkansas State	Jonesboro, Ark.
Feb 21	UALR	Little Rock, Ark.
Feb 27	Marshall	Nashboro Village Indoors
Feb 28	Mississippi	Oxford, Miss.
Mar 6	FIU	Miami, Fla.
Mar 8	Florida Atlantic	Boca Raton, Fla.
Mar 12	Louisiana	Lafayette, La.
Mar 14	South Alabama	Mobile, Ala.
Mar 26	UAB	Birmingham, Ala.
Mar 27	UTEP	Birmingham, Ala.
Apr 2	ULM	Memphis, Tenn.
Apr 3	Memphis	Memphis, Tenn.
Apr 10	Denver	Denver, Colo.
Apr 16	North Texas	Buck Bouldin Tennis Center
Apr 17	Troy	Buck Bouldin Tennis Center
Apr 18	Western Kentucky	Buck Bouldin Tennis Center
Apr 22-25	Sun Belt Conference Tournament	New Orleans, La.

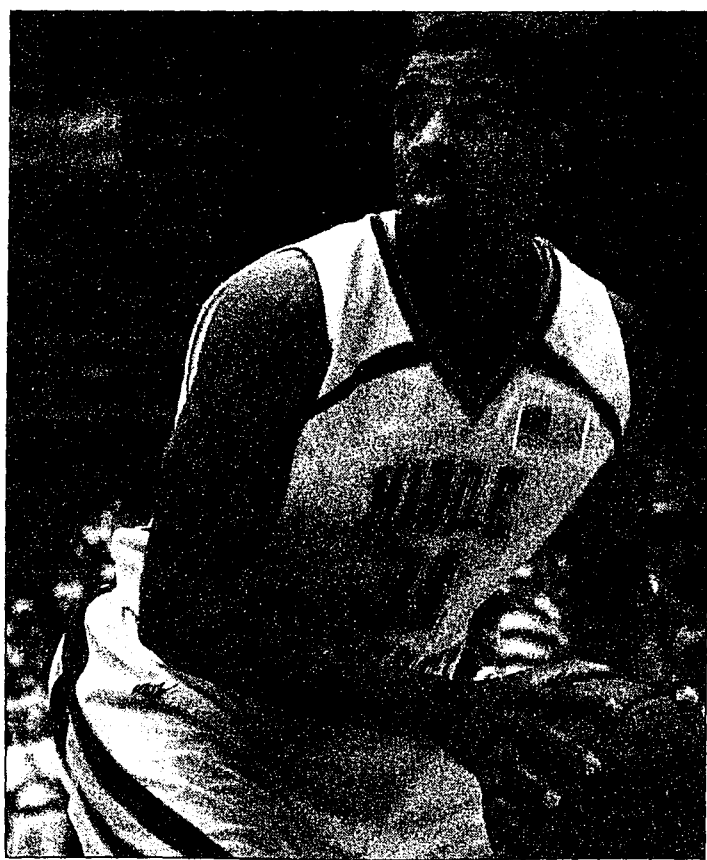


Photo by Brennan Sparta, staff photographer
Desmond "Boogie" Yates guards the ball helping produce another MT win.

Yates named SBC Player of the Week

STAFF REPORT

Senior forward Desmond Yates was named the Sun Belt Conference Player of the week by the league office Monday after becoming the Blue Raiders all-time leading scorer, racking up 28 points against Western Kentucky University.

"Obviously, it was a great week for our team," said head coach Kermit Davis.

The Somerville, Tenn., native led the Blue Raiders to two wins over WKU in the last week, in addition to a win at the University of Louisiana at Monroe.

The wins put the team into an unexpected tie for first place in the SBC East Division with Florida Atlantic University.

"I think Boogie will say the most important stat is that we won three league games," Davis said.

Yates currently has 1,629 points in his career, seven more than Robert Taylor's 1,622.

Taylor played for the Blue Raiders from 1989-1993.

Yates also shot 66.7 percent during the three games, while missing just three of 17 free throws.

Yates and the rest of the Blue Raiders return to action Thursday night to host the University of New Orleans. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m.

Basketball brings win streak into Mardi Gras

By CASEY BROWN
Staff Writer

In just one week, MT elevated itself from the depths of the conference to contender with a pair of impressive victories against longtime rival and perennial Sun Belt Conference powerhouse Western Kentucky University.

Today, the Blue Raiders look to solidify their position at the top of the standings when MT takes on New Orleans at 7 p.m. at the Murphy Center. Today's contest will be the last time the two teams meet, barring a matchup in the conference tournament, as New Orleans will compete in NCAA Division III beginning in July.

In its last outing, MT put together possibly its most complete effort of the season, dispatching WKU in Bowling Green by an 84-74 margin. The Blue Raiders were led by senior forward Desmond "Boogie" Yates with 28 points and junior point guard James Washington, who finished with 18 points and a number of clutch shots.

With the win at E.A. Diddle Arena, MT improved to 11-10 overall, with a 6-3 conference record. The Blue Raiders are tied atop the East Division with Florida Atlantic, who handed MT a devastating 61-60 loss in Murfreesboro on Jan. 16. Both teams trail West Division leader Arkansas State by a half-game overall.

Thursday's game against the Privateers is the first of

a critical three-game homestand for the Blue Raiders, who will also play host to North Texas and Troy. A sweep of the three home contests would assure MT of finishing no lower than .500 in conference play, and would go a long way towards securing a first-round bye in the SBC Tournament in March.

On the other side, the Privateers are simply trying to tread water. New Orleans fell to Louisiana-Monroe 48-47 at home on Saturday, despite holding the Warhawks to 27 percent shooting from the field.

With the loss, the team dropped to 7-13 overall and 2-7 in SBC play, and inched closer to the cellar of the West Division.

In the teams' first meeting on Dec. 31, the Blue Raiders defeated the Privateers 63-58 in New Orleans in a close contest. After the Privateers had cut the lead to 59-58, Washington forced a turnover to give MT its first conference win of the season.

The Privateers should get a boost from the expected return of leading scorer Billy Humphrey, who missed the last four games with a knee injury.

Humphrey, an integral part of the Georgia squad that won the 2008 Southeastern Conference Tournament, was second in the SBC in scoring at 17.8 points per game prior to his injury.

Other players to watch for include freshman

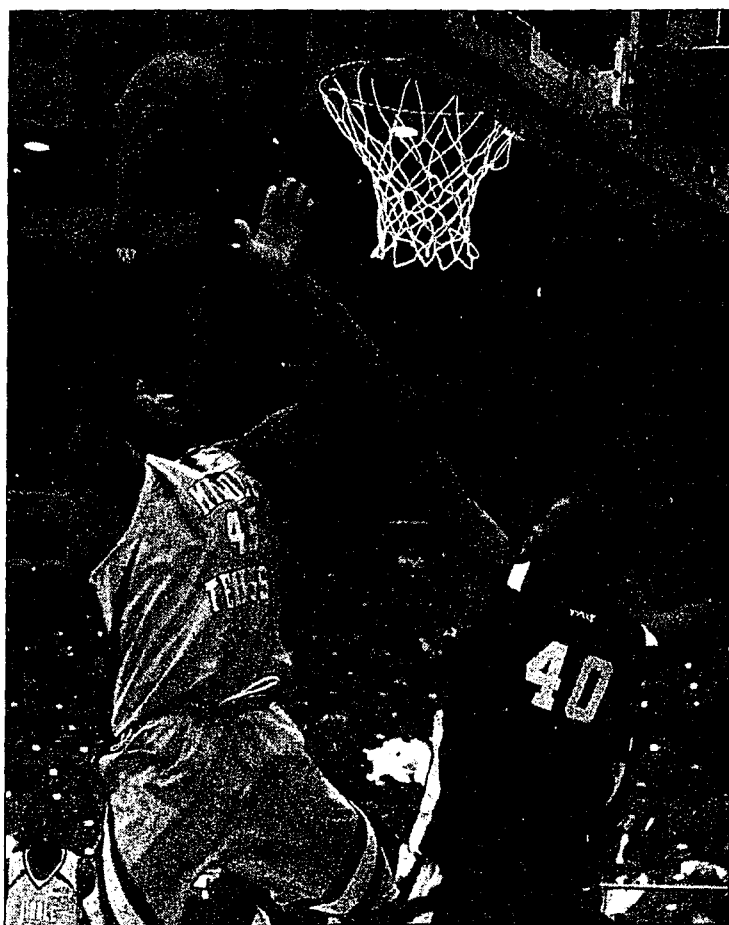


Photo by Brennan Sparta, staff photographer
Senior center Theryn Hudson shoots against FAU junior forward Brett Royster Jan. 16.

point guard Carl Blair and sophomore shooting guard Charles Carmouche.

For the Blue Raiders, much of the scoring is expected to come from Yates, the reigning SBC Player of the Week, and Washington, as well as senior forward Montario Haddock.

On the defensive end, MT hopes that senior guard Calvin O'Neil can continue his recent success. Head coach Kermit Davis credited O'Neil's airtight defense on WKU star A.J. Slaughter as one of the key ingredients to MT's sweep of the Hilltoppers.

The game between the Blue Raiders and the Privateers on Thursday won't be the only attraction at Murphy Center. The Middle Tennessee football team will be recognized for its historic New Orleans Bowl Championship and 10-win season at halftime, and team members will participate in a pregame autograph session at 6 p.m.

In recognition of the New Orleans Bowl championship and that night's opponent, MT Marketing has selected the game for its annual Mardi Gras theme.

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FEATURES



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MTOP discourages couch potato syndrome

By EMMA EGLI
Features Editor

The climbing wall is intimidating. Walking into the Campus Health and Recreation Center, your eye is immediately drawn to the daunting 30 foot panels of fiberglass that dominate the middle of the rec center.

My irrational fear of heights had kept me from taking a second look at the wall because, quite frankly, I was sure I would never find myself scaling it.

In fact, the whole idea of the Middle Tennessee Outdoor Pursuits Program seemed anything but appealing to me. The only camping I had ever done consisted of me setting up a tent in the backyard when I was about 10 years old. I can't step outside in the summer without every mosquito on the planet dive-bombing me. Nature and I just don't get along.

So why would someone like me go on hiking or kayaking trips when they are anything but outdoorsy?

"We get that all the time," said Josh Stone, associate director of the recreation program. "That's the biggest barrier we have been trying to break down."

Stone said there is really no reason for students to feel intimidated because they plan these trips with beginners in mind.

"We set our trips up basically for the beginner," Stone said. "We try to make it appeal to almost anybody, whether you are a beginner or really experienced."

Never rock climbed before? Not a problem. The staff at MTOP set up routes on the trips that encompass all levels, from those who struggle with putting on a harness correctly to those who could summit a route in their sleep.

Speaking of staff, the personal and easygoing employees of MTOP will help you to remain calm while exploring the limits of your comfort zone.

"That's why I love having student staff there rather than just an old person like me," Stone said. "They're very encouraging to other students."

And he's right. When I finally worked up enough courage to try the rock wall in the rec center, all my fears were quickly washed away by the cheerful and can-do attitude of wall-attendant and now alum, Hailey Traver.

Traver says the trips the organization goes on are a far cry from ordinary weekends spent in Murfreesboro, and they give you ample opportunity to make new friends with similar interests.

"I think it's a really good opportunity for students, if anything else, to get outside and meet new people," Traver said. "If you are enjoying the outdoors already but you don't have a lot of friends that want to go outside with you, this is a good way to do it."

If you take a look at the upcoming spring adventure calendar, the planned trips include surprisingly affordable trips such as winter backpacking for \$20 and rock climbing for \$10. The more epic trips include those to Maui for \$1,300.

Hold the phone, who goes winter backpacking?

"It takes a special person," Stone said.

Ok, I can see how a breathtaking view of a quiet forest, possibly even covered in snow, could prove to be an exhilarating adventure. But the whole "winter" aspect seems to be a little dissuading, especially if it's an

overnight trip.

"The good thing about winter backpacking in Tennessee is it doesn't get too cold and all the leaves are on the ground, so you don't have to worry about trying to hike through the foliage," Stone said.

Traver also said that the upcoming trip on Feb. 6-7 at Virgin Falls will be a blast because it gives you an opportunity to see the forest in a different view.

"We are going to do a pretty good job of keeping everyone's hearts pumping," Traver said. "Hats and gloves are a must."

If one of the factors deterring you from rock climbing, kayaking or mountain biking is your safety, rest assured you will be in good hands while seeking an adrenaline rush.

"All of us are first aid and CPR certified," Travers said. "A lot of us have the wilderness first aid certification and it's basically EMS in the woods to keep everyone safe."

Because the trips have limited capacity, Travers and Stone advised signing up early. If you are unable to attend one of the trips, also keep in mind the Outdoor Equipment Rental Center, in the lobby of the rec center, rents equipment at cheap prices.

"You can rent backpacks, day packs, canoes, kayaks, crash pads for climbing, sleeping bags and pads, tents and stoves," Travers said. "Pretty much everything except harnesses — for a weekend a canoe is \$20 and tents are \$8."

So as appealing as staring at the wall of your apartment and watching reruns of Jersey Shore sounds, do something fun for the weekend — go pursue the outdoors.



Photo by Chris Donahue, staff

Columbia alums take risks with album 'Contra'

By GARRETH SPINN
Contributing Writer

The story of Vampire Weekend is an uninteresting one, to say the least. Guys met in college, became friends, made music together, posted a few songs on Myspace.com and became wildly successful months later.

It's a story we hear a lot these days, but something tells me Vampire Weekend's new album, "Contra," is the record that will ensure they won't fizzle out like many of the bands that went (or are going) down the same path. The music world expected big things from this Columbia University quartet, and they somehow mostly overshot these expectations.

Most bands these days take baby steps in musical and sonic growth (i.e. Wilco, Radiohead). Here, Vampire Weekend took a huge second step.

They were smart enough to keep a lot of the things that made their debut, Vampire Weekend, a success; the wittiness, the carefree nature and the worldly percussion. "Contra" uses that, then adds many of the electronic elements that were found in Keyboardist/producer, Rostam Batmanglij's, popular side project Discovery.

The way the record starts off is al-

most perfect. "Horchata," "White Sky" and "Holiday" are all songs that sound like Vampire Weekend, but they incorporate those new electronic elements and keep the overt African percussion.

After this, the record seems to lose all connectivity, which is acceptable at times; but leads me to wonder what they're really trying to do here. Despite this, Ezra Koenig's songwriting is as strong and as catchy as ever.

The barn-burning lead single, "Cousins," will be engraved in your brain for weeks to come. But in songs like "California English" and "Diplomat's Son," it's clear that the band was really searching for off-the-wall melodies and off-the-wall song structures.

This is effective superficially, but after several listens, it seems like they tried a bit too hard.

"Contra" is a pretty complex collection of songs, and it reaches its most complex and most difficult on the final track "I Think Ur A Contra." This aching ballad is as unsure musically as it is lyrically. Koenig croons about a lost love over an ever-changing arrangement that includes the first appearance of an acoustic guitar jittery arrangement, which

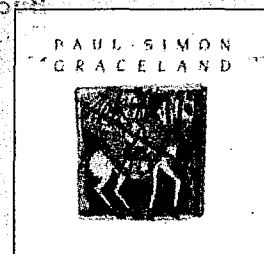


turns into a powerful string arrangement, then fizzles out with a bare bones percussion arrangement.

It's hard to really articulate what makes this record great or not great. I have to force myself to listen to it, whereas the first record played itself. This would have been a more fitting album for Vampire Weekend down the line as maybe a third or fourth album.

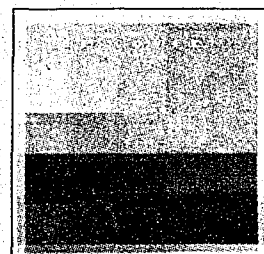
There are great songs here, but the production is over the top and overthought at times. I always love it when bands evolve and create a new sound for themselves, but Vampire Weekend took it too far on "Contra." At the same time, they proved that they're no joke.

ALBUMS YOU MAY ALSO LIKE



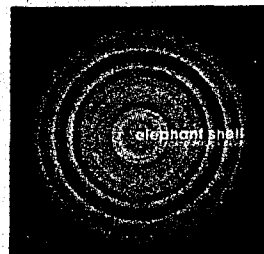
Paul Simon
"Graceland"

Released: August 12, 1986



Discovery
"Discovery LP"

Released: July 7, 2009



Tokyo Police Club
"Elephant Shell"

Released: April 22, 2008



'Legion' delivers sinful mediocrity

By ANDY HARPER
Advertising Manager

God is tired of humanity's crap and wants us all to die.

This focal point is the central theme for director Scott Stewart's first major motion picture "Legion." The movie begins with the decision of archangel Michael (Paul Bettany — "Iron Man," "The DaVinci Code") to remove his wings and become mortal.

After Michael's brutal self-mutilation and subsequent bullet-packed break-in of an illegal armory, the plot switches its focus to a small gas station and diner owned by Bob Hanson (Dennis Quaid — "Pandorum," "Vantage Point"). Bob, along with son Jeep (Lucas Black — "Jarhead," "Friday Night Lights") and pregnant waitress Charlie (Adrienne Palicki — NBC's "Friday Night Lights"), begin to notice awkward quirks with the restaurant's television reception.

Enter four diner guests, rapper Kyle Williams and the Andersons: father Howard, daughter Audrey and mother Sandra (Kate Walsh — "Grey's Anatomy"). Add in one witty and

wise cook named Percy Walker, and Stewart has given his audience a tragically campy combination of dull, backwoods smarts; urban brawn and suburban indignation.

With their stereotypes established and all lines of communication down — including television, radio and telephone — the fun begins with a laugh. As seen in the movie trailers, little old Gladys Foster is the first "possessed" human the diner crew encounters. After a few choice words and social judgments, Ms. Gladys is divinely hijacked and, after crawling on the ceiling, rips out Howard Anderson's throat.

SPOILER ALERT

And this is how "Legion" roughly continues for the next hour and half. The diner crew gets a weapons upgrade with the appearance of Michael, a trunk-full of semi-automatics and a shady explanation of what started Armageddon. God, says Michael, is tired of humanity squandering the gift of life and has sent the angelic armies to dispose of the world's last hope — Charlie's unborn baby boy.

At times, the movie uses delicate and humorous references to biblical lore.

But those fleeting moments of subtlety are overshadowed by the off-putting directness that "Legion" uses to spell out its simplest allegories.

The action sequences are quick, dark and confusing. After Gladys is disposed of, more angel-possessed humans begin to swarm the diner. During a rigorous assault by what Michael describes as "empty vessels," a girl who, on first glance appears to be a possessed Audrey, drags an injured Howard out of a broken window. The girl even says, "Look Mother, look what you made me do." It isn't until five minutes later, when Sandra holds a hysterical Audrey, that the audience realizes Audrey is still alive and not possessed.

Overall, "Legion" isn't vastly different than its marketers led us to believe. The action sequences and hilariously painful deaths are bearable and occasionally entertaining. The dialogue is a little lacking, but no different than any other action movie whose budget is piled into special effects. As a scary movie, there are a few shallow frights, but no after-taste of sustaining fear, leaving "Legion" a decent movie to catch as a matinee on a lazy weekday afternoon.

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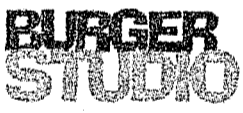












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