

# MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

EDITORIALLY INDEPENDENT

THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2010

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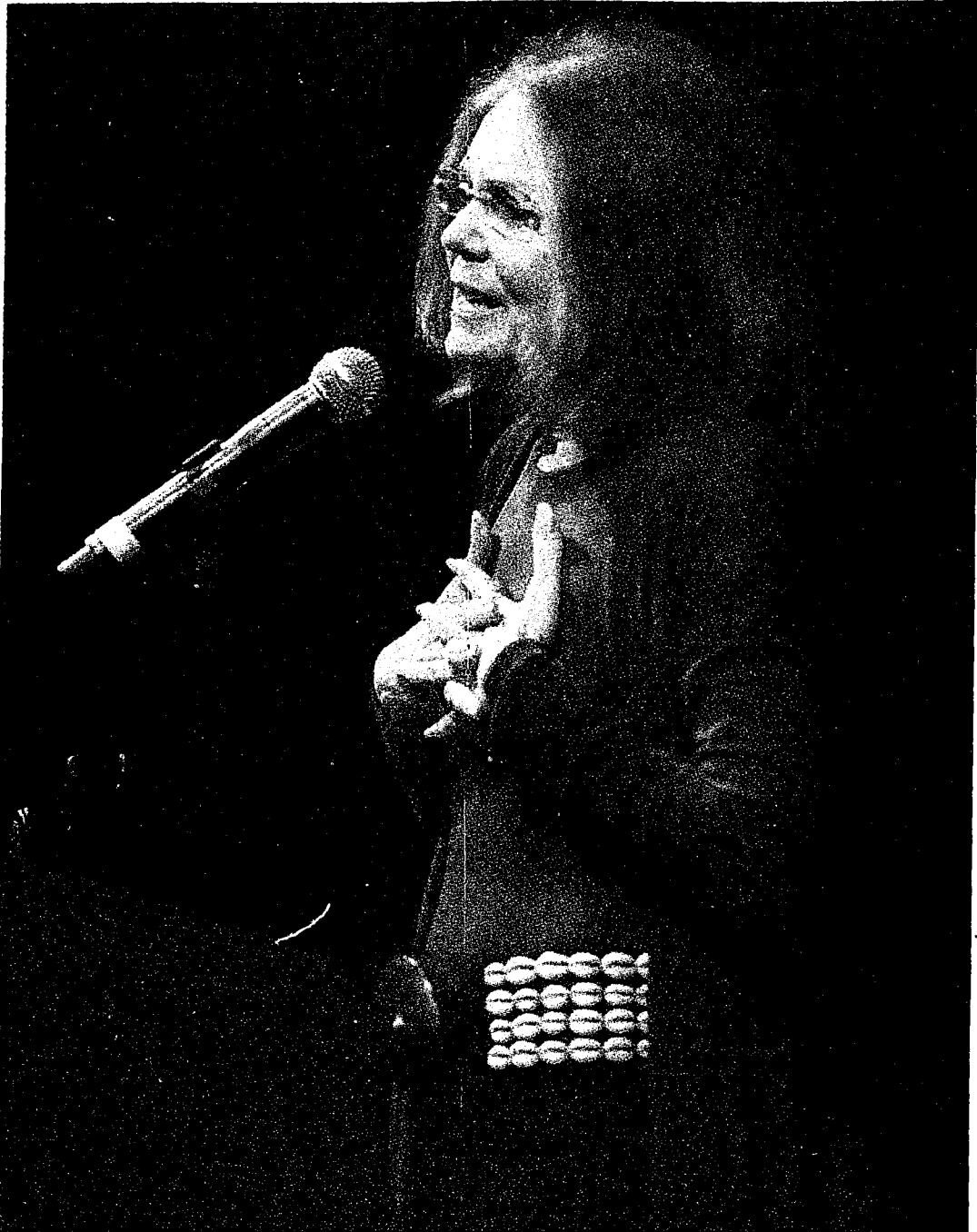


Photo by Ray Ingram, contributing photographer  
Gloria Steinem spoke to students, faculty and staff on Tuesday in an effort to inform viewers of not only her experience and progress during the Women's Movement but encourage future participation.

## Silent change

### Laryngitis silences Gloria Steinem, message still comes through

By DUSTIN EVANS, KRISSY MALLORY  
Managing Editor, Contributing Writer

Despite laryngitis, Gloria Steinem, author and feminist activist, delivered the keynote address for the MTSU Women's History Month commemoration, bringing her experience to a new generation.

Without her voice, Steinem was unable to deliver the address as planned. As a result, Terri Johnson, director of the June Anderson Women's Center, and student Chanera Pierce delivered Steinem's prepared remarks.

Steinem, however, personally answered questions from the audience after the speech.

"I hope that we can make this into an organizing meeting - I hope that we can pretend that we are sitting in a circle, and really talk to each other," Steinem said. "We are sitting looking at each other's backs and its hierarchical - hierarchy is based on patriarchy, and patriarchy doesn't work anywhere."

Steinem utilized the question-and-answer session to give a voice to audience members, and she attempted to shed a new light on their concerns.

"I hope that you will use this to make sure that when we leave this room that our lives are a little better than when we came in," Steinem said.

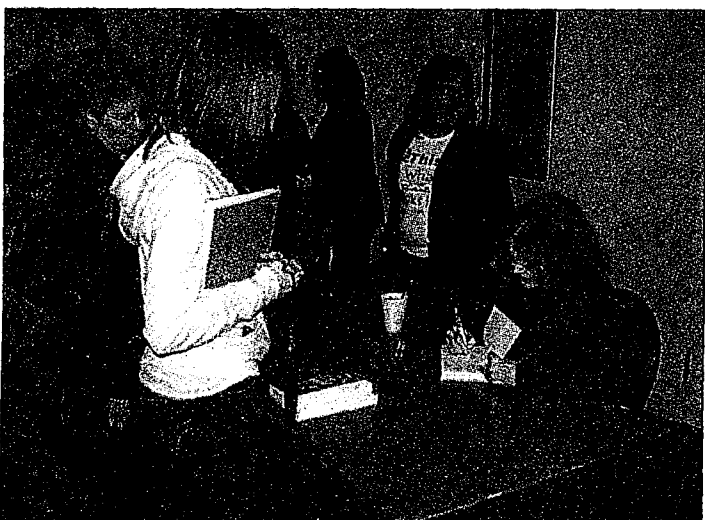


Photo by Ray Ingram, contributing photographer  
Gloria Steinem, author and feminist activist, signed books Tuesday following her keynote address.

Steinem covered a variety of women's issues, but also discussed universal and political issues, and how these issues affect society.

"It's important to recognize that health care is necessary more to women than to men, its necessary to everybody, but because of our child-bearing capacity, we use the health care system maybe a third more than men," Steinem said. "I am profoundly disappointed that we do not have the public option."

Steinem said the public option is necessary because most of the insurance companies are "not our friends." She said America should pass the

pending health care reform legislation, even though it is inadequate.

"The insurance companies stopped the Equal Rights Amendment because they didn't want to equalize their actuarial tables," Steinem said. "You can't categorize people by race anymore, but they still have sex categories; so women pay about 40 percent more, which is stupid [because] having children is socially useful."

To read more, visit us online.



www.mtsusidelines.com

## Officials take shot at state budget cuts

By JOSH WARD  
Contributing Writer

Elected officials and law enforcement from across the state gathered outside Tullahoma for a hands-on demonstration of vintage and modern firearms at Arnold Air Force Base's rifle range Tuesday.

Four senators, 21 representatives, Tenn. Speaker Kent Williams and U.S. Congressman Zach Wamp, R-Tenn., were among many in attendance for a rare, first-hand chance to see and shoot a wide array of firearms at the base's rifle range.

The chief organizer involved, Rep. Judd Matheny, R-Tullahoma, said it was a showcase of the amount of cooperation capable between Arnold's many resources.

Matheny said that these are the programs that suffer from budget cuts, and that this event should demonstrate their value to the country's armed forces.

A multitude of weapons and \$8,000 of live ammunition were made available for the legislators and law enforcement officials to fire, including a vintage World War I-era Browning .50-caliber water-cooled machine gun and a variety of modern and vintage subma-

chine guns, automatic rifles and pistols.

Guests also visited the training facility's \$750,000 virtual firing range, a building that simulates firing a grenade launcher and a modern .50-caliber machine gun at enemy combatants.

The event was a joint effort between the Arnold Engineering Development Center, Arnold Air Force Base, Arnold National Guard and the University of Tennessee Space Institute. The event was organized by the Arnold Community Council and sponsored by several private corporations and local business-owners across Tennessee.

This is the fourth annual event of this kind organized by the AEDC, a 60-year-old institution of 1,400 professionals that conducts developmental tests of wind tunnels, ballistics and firearms for the Army, Air Force and National Guard, as well as private corporations like Boeing and Lockheed-Martin.

Rep. Stacey Campfield, R-Knoxville, has attended the event for the last three years.

"It's a lot of fun," Campfield said. "It's something different; it's not every day



Photo Mary Reeves.  
Courtesy Shelbyville Times Gazette.  
State Rep. Pat Marsh gets last minute instructions as he puts on earring protection.

that you get to shoot a sub-machine gun."

Previously in his career, Campfield proposed a bill to allow all full-time faculty and staff at any university to carry handguns.

"By banning guns on campus you are not banning the criminals," Campfield said in an article with the Associated Press in 2009. "All you are banning is the people from being able to defend themselves."

The legislation to introduce firearms to universities failed to receive a secondary motion in April 2009, according to the Tennessee General Assembly's Web site.

## Concert raises money for kidney transplant

### Gospel Extravaganza helps fund former MTSU student with medical bills

By LAUREN DAVENPORT  
Staff Writer

Black History Month culminated this week with the 10th Annual Gospel Music Extravaganza benefit concert on Sunday, raising more than \$3,200 for a local musician awaiting a kidney transplant.

MTSU's 2010 Black History Month Committee sponsored the benefit to raise money to help Quenton Bryant, a local gospel musician, who suffers from "glomerulonephritis," a rare disease that causes a person's kidneys to improperly filter waste and fluids.

The show featured MTSU's Generation of Praise, a gospel choir composed of approximately 50 students from around the world. The choir sang a passionate and impressive version of "God Blocked It," by Kurt Carr.

"To me, black history month means honoring your past, knowing where you are presently, and how you can make a difference in the future," said Bethany Paschall, junior education and behavioral science major and member of the gospel choir.

More than 200 people attended the three-hour concert, which was filled with gospel music and spiritual dancing.

"An old saying, that many may know, is 'you must know your past in order to realize your future,'" Paschall said. "We have had countless people of the black community pave the way for current and future generations."



Photo by Chris Donahue, staff photographer  
Groups perform during the Gospel Music Extravaganza benefit concert on Sunday.

As the students sang, the crowd enthusiastically joined in clapping, dancing and singing along.

The extravaganza incorporated many different types of performances that highlighted black culture, including traditional African dance, soulful choirs and bluesy gospel solos.

"I didn't know we had a gospel choir at MTSU," said Chad Vance, senior liberal arts major. "But after their performance at the church Sunday night, I am planning on finding out when their next performance is, so I can see them again—they were fantastic."

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Gambling and nightlife makes Las Vegas appealing Spring Break option.

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IN TODAY'S ISSUE



Get up-to-date information on the SGA election online at

MTSUSIDELINES.COM

### THURSDAY FORECAST

SUNNY  
NO CHANCE OF RAIN  
HIGH 45, LOW 25

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop."  
Confucius

# Students to protest against budget cuts

## MT Solidarity hosts noon rally today to oppose elimination of university programs

By ROZALIND RUTH  
Community News Editor

MTSU's chapter of Solidarity will host a rally today on the Keathley University Center Knoll from noon until 2 p.m. to protest recent budget cuts and the subsequent elimination of programs.

The rally is planned as part of the "Day of Action to Defend Public Education," a national protest.

Jase Short, senior philosophy and sociology major and MT Solidarity member, said that speakers from the National Educators Association, Tennesseans for Fair Taxation,

while the rally is being organized by MT Solidarity, everyone should have the chance to voice his or her opinion on the cuts being made at the university.

He said the rally is not meant to be highly political, rather a way for everyone to show the administration how they feel about the changes being made to campus and academic life.

"We were all under the knife of the budget cuts last year," Short said. "Virtually every department was in one form or another, and students are really taking a hit from tuition."

Jacob Wittenberg, junior philosophy major and active MT Solidarity member, said that Solidarity is a national organization made of students and other community members, which works to bring "socialism from below."

According to Solidarity's Web site, "socialism from below" refers to how the organization brings together the working class or oppressed individuals to make change.

Wittenberg is one of four candidates running for Student Government Association president, and he serves as a senator for the College of Liberal Arts.

Wittenberg said many different groups around the nation are planning to hold various types of protests and fundraisers, in order to bring attention to the day of action because programming and budget cuts are a problem all over the country.

"Programs are getting slashed, and it's hurting everyone who is involved with the university," Wittenberg said.

Wittenberg said not all of the student speakers would be members of Solidarity because the organization wants to make the rally as accessible as possible to the entire student body.

"We want to reach out to a broad group of students and student groups so that it's not just a Solidarity event," Wittenberg said. "Solidarity is not the only group who is effected and cares about the budget cuts."

**“We're trying to make sure that the administration and the state officials know the students haven't forgotten about what happened last year.”**

**JASE SHORT**  
SENIOR PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIOLOGY MAJOR

United Campus Workers and fellow students are scheduled to speak during the event.

"Administrations around the country are using budget cuts as a way to transform the university in a way that's not really beneficial to students," Short said. "Tuition is sky-rocketing and cuts are being made to high quality academic programs."

Short said the cuts made both at the university level, and the state level to MTSU's budget affects all students. He said many MT Solidarity members were involved in voicing concern of the budget cuts as individuals, but that the day of protest will bring several organizations together.

"We're trying to make sure that the administration and the state officials know that students haven't forgotten about what happened last year," Short said. "We'll be prepared if there's another round of serious confrontation."

Short said he wants students to know that

## THROUGH THE SIDELINES LENS

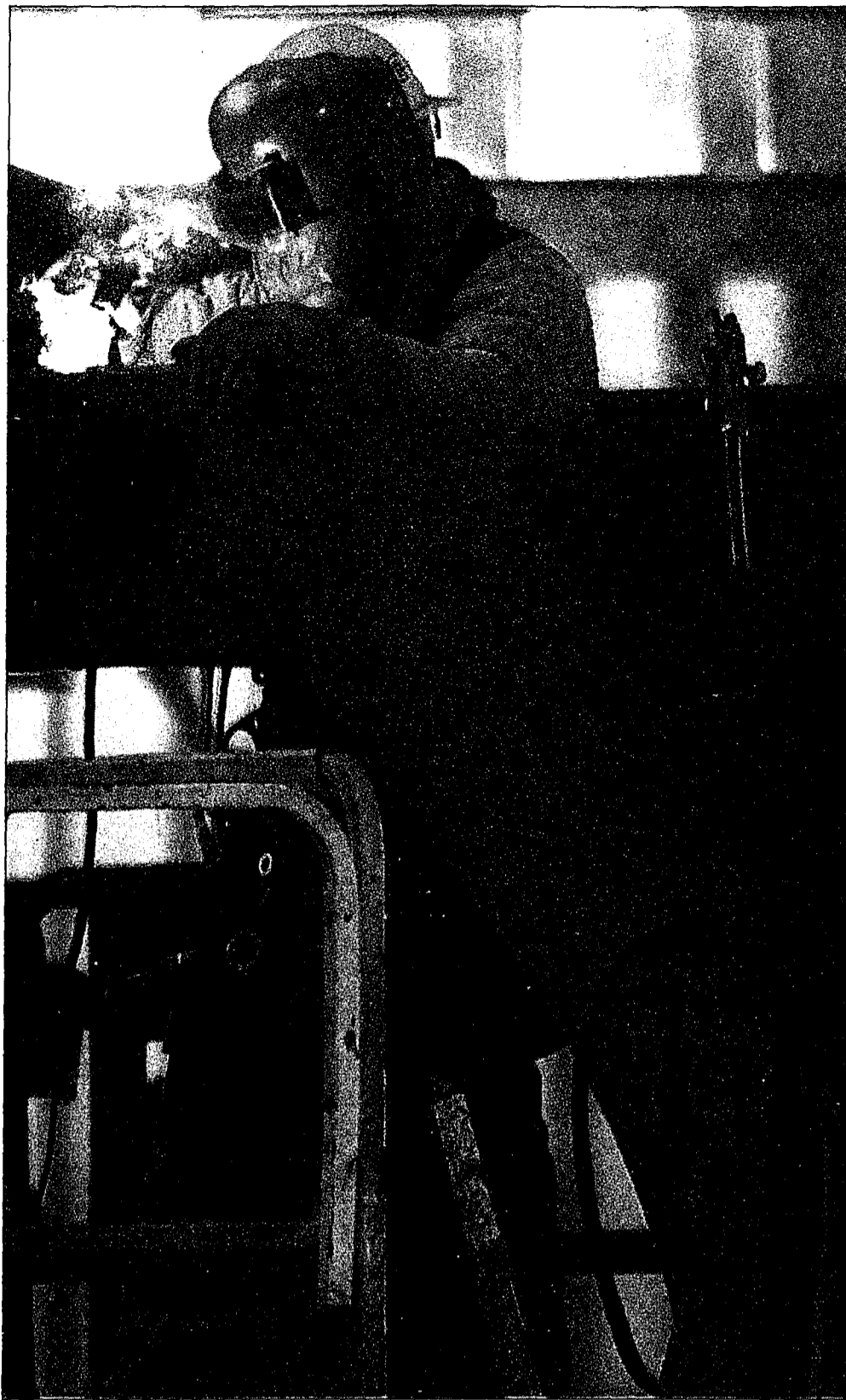


Photo by Jay Bailey, photography editor  
Construction on the new College of Education and Behavioral Science Building makes progress as construction workers weld the eventual staircase for the building on Wednesday. The building is set to be completed in 2011.

## March Deals



## March Events

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Quiznos Sub</b><br>Small Veggie, Chips, Drink<br><b>\$4.99</b> | <b>\$5.00</b><br>Small Ham & Swiss, Chips, Drink | <b>\$5.00</b><br>CHOOSE 2<br>Sammie & Sammie, or Soup, or Bullet |
|---|--|--|

|   |                                  |   |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>BURGER</b><br>Create Your Masterpiece<br>Cheeseburger, Fry, Drink<br><b>\$5.00</b> | <b>\$3.00</b><br>2 Minis & Drink | <b>\$6.00</b><br>Veggie Burger, Apples, Drink |
|---|----------------------------------|---|

|   |  |                                      |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>STEIN BROS. BAGELS</b><br>Fruit Cup or Yogurt & Bottled Water<br><b>\$4.99</b> | <b>\$4.00</b><br>Ragel, Schmeat & Coffee | <b>\$6.00</b><br>BLT, Chips, & Drink |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|

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|   |                               |  |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Pizza Hut</b><br>1 Topping Pizza (Pepperoni, Sausage, Cheese, Veggie) & Drink<br><b>4.99</b> | <b>6.00</b><br>6 Wings & Soda | <b>2.00</b><br>Add Breadsticks & Drink to any Meal |
|---|-------------------------------|--|

|   |   |                                |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>Chick-fil-A</b><br>Garden Salad & Drink<br><b>\$6.00</b> | <b>\$4.99</b><br>Chick-Fil-A Sandwich Combo | <b>\$5.00</b><br>8 Piece Combo |
|---|---|--------------------------------|

Look for MT Dining'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 Just4U icons at McCallie, Raider Zone and the KUC to help you identify healthy options!

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**Australian Outback Dinner**  
Tues. March 2 PREMIUM Dinner @ McCallie

**Mocktails**

**WELCOME BACK FONDUE**  
Lunch @ JUB

**MARCH BIRTHDAY**  
Wed. March 17 Lunch & Dinner, McCallie & JUB

**March Madness**  
Thur. March 18 Lunch @ JUB

**MILKSHAKE MONDAY**  
Monday March 22 Lunch @ McCallie

**Maximum Mexican**  
Thur. March 25 PREMIUM Dinner @ JUB

**Movie Night**  
Monday March 29 Dinner @ JUB

**CLIPCAKE CREATION**  
Wed. March 31 Lunch @ McCallie



# House passes severe weather bill

STAFF REPORT

The U.S. House of Representatives passed Tuesday the Natural Hazards Risk Reduction Act in an effort to strengthen protections against tornadoes and wind-related weather damage.

The bill, which passed with a 335-50-46 vote in the House this week, is a huge step forward for tornado safety and research, according to a press release issued by Rep. Bart Gordon, D-Tenn.

"In the past two years, tornadoes

have killed 24 people and injured more than 100 people in Middle Tennessee alone," Gordon said. "The programs this bill supports can save lives and millions of dollars in our communities."

Kory Bryant and her 9-week-old daughter, Olivia, were killed and dozens were injured when a series of tornadoes tore through Rutherford County on April 10, 2009.

"We transported approximately 35 patients," said Randy White, public information officer Rutherford County Emergency Medical Services. "Out of

those 35 patients, [there were] seven critical patients, and we also had two DOA [dead on arrival] patients."

Provisions were included in the bill to develop technologies to more accurately forecast and predict windstorm paths and trajectories.

"More precise forecasts and more secure buildings will save lives and help reduce the massive costs associated with wind damage," Gordon said.

The bill has been sent to the U.S. Senate and is awaiting a vote in committee.

## GOSPEL FROM PAGE 1

Bryant is a former MTSU student and football player who was diagnosed with glomerulonephritis as a teen, and has struggled with the disease his entire life.

Today, Bryant is awaiting his second kidney transplant after his first failed in 2005.

Rev. William Glass Jr. told the crowd that "Brother Q" has remained upbeat despite his health issues and is always there to lend a hand to anyone who needs it, especially when it involves playing the bass.

Bryant stood at the end of the concert and expressed his gratitude and said that he would say a prayer for everyone in the sanctuary daily.

"It's great to honor such a courageous man for our final Black History celebra-

tion this month," said Tina Barnfield, senior liberal arts major.

Black History Month was established in 1920 as "Negro Literature and History Week," at a time when very little black history had been recorded. Eventually, the week was changed to the month of February.

February was chosen in honor of President Abraham Lincoln and Fredrick Douglas, both of whom have birthdays that month, for their significant contributions to black history.

"For me, Black History Month is a time to reflect back and recognize the sacrifices that people have made across time," said Chris Fleming, an MTSU alumnus, "[It's] a time for people to learn what they may not know about the role of African Americans in shaping history."



Photo by Chris Donahue, staff photographer  
MTSU's Generation of Praise performed Sunday at the 10th annual Gospel Extravaganza benefit concert.

# Credit card regulations help cardholders make dent in debt

STAFF REPORT

The deadline for credit companies to comply with the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act expired on Feb. 22.

The law requires transparency in billing procedures in an effort to protect consumers from hidden fees.

The credit card bill became law on May 22, 2009, after being prompted by an inquiry from the U.S. Federal Reserve into unfair business practices of credit companies.

The law is geared toward preventing credit companies from using predatory practices that entrap young cardholders with limited experience in dealing with credit issues, including teenagers and college students, said Rep. Bart Gordon, D-Tenn., in a statement released to the press last week.

"This new policy ensures cardholders have the information they need to make educated deci-

sions about their finances," Gordon said.

Gordon voted in support of the bill, which passed by a 357-70-7 vote last year.

The law prohibits credit companies from raising interest rates on account balances until the minimum balance is 60 days past due, as well as preventing interest rates from being raised in the first year after a card is issued.

Gordon said he hopes these reform measures will help those in debt keep more of the money they earn.

"No family should find themselves deep in debt because a card company hid an unfair policy in fine print of their contract," Gordon said.

Additionally, the law requires credit companies to give cardholders the option to authorize credit and debit transactions that result in overdraft fees rather than immediately processing those transactions without the cardholders' consent.

## CURRENT EVENTS

**SGA Elections:**  
March 2 through 4

**Seuss Celebration: Dr. Seuss's birthday celebration**  
March 6, 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.  
Location: Discovery Center at Murfree Spring  
Admission: free  
March 6, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Location: Discovery Center  
Admission: free

**American College Dance Festival Southeast Conference**  
March 7 through 9, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Various campus locations

**Community Celebration of United Way of Rutherford and Cannon Counties**  
March 9, 11:30 a.m.  
Location: World Outreach Church  
Admission: \$10

### Events Policy

Sidelines welcomes current campus and community events submitted by all readers. Please e-mail events to [slnews@mtsu.edu](mailto:slnews@mtsu.edu) or [slcampus@mtsu.edu](mailto: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.

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## 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.

## More voters equals more SGA power

Student government needs higher vote totals to be truly representative of student body

The fact that the Suntrust Room in the Business and Aerospace Building was largely empty during the Student Government Association candidate debates on Feb. 22 really wasn't very surprising. After all, the few people in the room either felt a personal investment in the process or some kinship with those that sat at the front table.

As the elections end tonight, all of the positions in the SGA are up for grabs, with multiple candidates running for several of them.

But a fair question for students to ask themselves is: "Why should I care? MTSU proved that there is no point to student government when it overrode our vote on the parking garage!"

Here are some important points, ones that add so



By the way...

Drew Dunlop

much more to the story of the SGA.

First, the lack of an audience points out why the administration isn't particularly pressured to worry about student reactions.

We can blame the lack of involvement in the SGA election process, attendance at debates and senate sessions on the lack of student power. But perhaps, the lack of student power comes from the lack of involvement in

the SGA election process and in other elements of student government.

It is a chicken-or-the-egg question that hasn't been put to the test. While considering the importance of a strong student voice with controversies like the parking garage effort, when would be a more important time to test it?

An argument against this would be that there already was a vote that was ignored. The vote, however, showed that only 1,800 students out of a student body of about 24,000 at the time were against the garage; 1,500 were for it.

Let's put this in perspective: A little under 14 percent of the eligible voters even bothered to participate, with about 7.5 percent of the student body saying, "No."

Compelling? Hardly. Indicative of a trend that could be applied to the non-voters? In Bizarro World, absolutely.

Now imagine that 85 percent had taken an interest and voted. That would translate to 45 percent — about 11,000 students — saying "No!" Is that compelling? Decidedly. Is that indicative of a trend? Everywhere but Bizarro World.

Second, there are several candidates running on a platform of giving some pushback to the administration on that particular issue. One or two of them are candidates for president. The questions are: "Do you know if there are presidential candidates running on that platform?" and "Do

you know if that is important to know?"

Yes, it is important to know. The SGA president sits on the university president's board. This is significant because you, the voter, get to decide the tone and tenor of the voice in that room.

Do you want a voice that is adversarial and makes students' anger known directly?

Would you rather have a voice that is dissenting but accommodating, with more of an eye on policy impact rather than popular opinion?

Or would you rather not worry about it? My belief is that you, the reader, owe it to yourself to worry about it. The SGA president sets the tone for the administration's relationship with the

students, and by extension, determines in a large way the administration's decision making about things like the parking garage.

If you want the administration to have a relationship where voter discontent is clear, you need to vote for one person. If you would rather there be a negotiating partner with the administration, you need to vote for another.

But if you weren't in the room, you don't know for whom to vote. It is worth your while to look into it and find out today. Tomorrow's MTSU depends upon it.

Drew Dunlop is a senior communications studies major and legislative adviser for the SGA. He can be reached at [msd2y@mtsu.edu](mailto:msd2y@mtsu.edu).

## FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

## A silent protest: Steinem triumphant despite setbacks

A room full of eager listeners awaits audience with one of the founding sisters of American feminism. Suddenly, a radio segment with Gina Logue is the only thing left to remind you that you are even here to see Gloria Steinem.

It is almost 5 p.m., before anyone informs the public that an overflow of people are in attendance and that they are trying to patch an audio feed outside of the Tennessee Ballroom. Eventually, better late than never, Steinem takes the stage.

We would like to applaud all of the powers that be that were able to bring such a distinguished guest to our campus. Her words were nothing short of a dramatic inspiration in the apathy-riddled times which we live.

"In the '60s, what met us first was ridicule — we have moved from ridicule to serious opposition, which is probably a step forward," Steinem said. "We've succeeded in changing the majority consciousness in this country."

Albeit a whisper, Steinem spoke throughout the question-and-answer session despite suffering from laryngitis for the duration of her Middle Tennessee trip.

In order to tackle these challenges, the script of her intended remarks were given to two members of the June Anderson Women's Center who couldn't have delivered a weaker performance. Common words were mispronounced, and the entire speech seemed to lag on with no attached meaning.

It seems as though the university would have wanted to bring one of the many public speakers on campus, or possibly a communication professor, to deliver the remarks.

Despite all of these shortcomings, Steinem was able to accurately and effectively deliver some important messages of how civil rights battles and fights against social injustices can still be fought.

"Every single issue of equality we care about has majority support in the public opinion polls," Steinem said. "Because we succeeded, we have a backlash that's been going since the 1980s, and it's very entrenched, and the backlash has taken over one of our two great political parties."

All partisan arguments aside, Steinem's eloquent portrayal of the current times, and its praises and problems, shows that Steinem has moved past the period of being grouped together with activists like Jane Fonda.

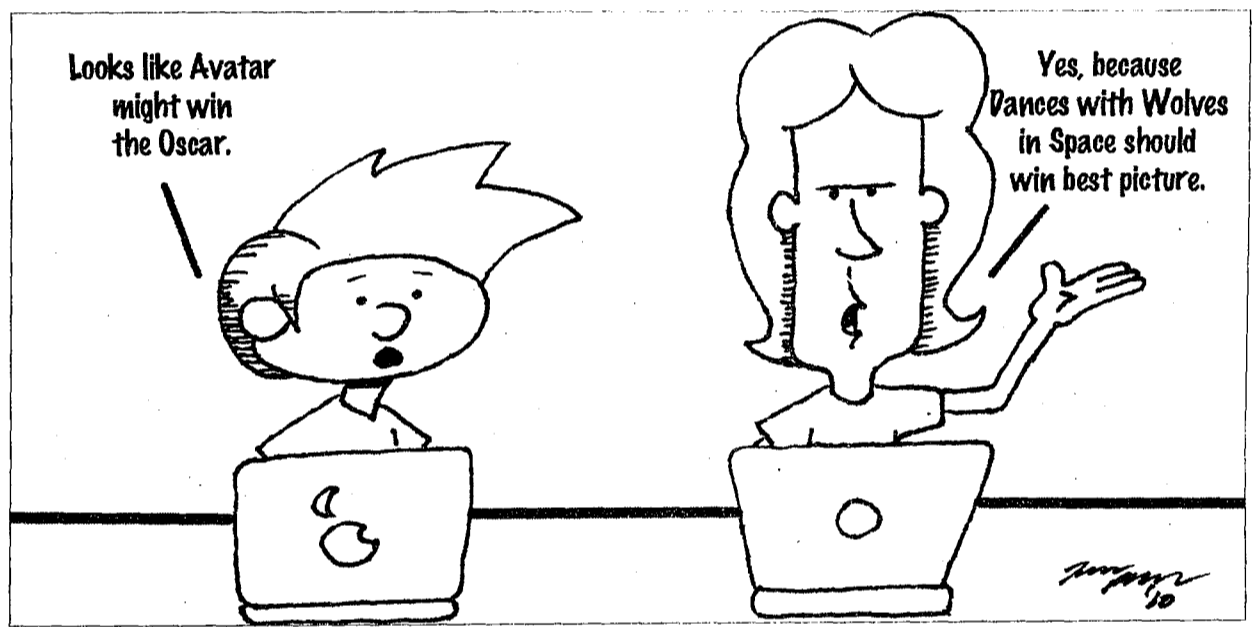
Her message even spoke to the hearts of the youth. A young girl approached the microphone to ask a question. Steinem responded to the child's question — why aren't there any women presidents?

Steinem reflected upon her youth, and the innate passion that youth have to stand up against social injustices. She said that she was able to avoid the brainwashing that could have made her lose such qualities.

Steinem then wished the young girl a positive presidency.

Steinem's message shone through some minor disasters. Yet, thankfully, angry mobs and protesters did not attend the festivities — and for that we at Sidelines are eternally grateful.

And somehow were more grateful to be proud of our university for hosting such a wonderful choice for the keynote address.



By Kyle Patterson  
Staff cartoonist

"Seattle Spew"

megapencil5@yahoo.com

## Foreign language learning would create a more diverse United States

Having English as a first language is by no means a negative attribute. However, according to the U.S. English Foundation, there are 322 languages spoken in America and only 1 percent or more of all Americans can speak two or more of these. We are not necessarily always at fault, though, for not being bilingual.

Foreign language learning, or FLL, is not strongly encouraged in our education system. Because English is the business language of the world, many foreign countries make it compulsory to take FLL in kindergarten or grade school.

We often do not start until high school and, unfortunately, FLL is seldom a requirement.

Since FLL is not required, the stereotype is often made that Americans are incompetent. However, we



Befürworter  
des Friedens

(Promoter of peace)

Nate Bernardini

are just as capable of learning a second language as anyone else.

We simply need legislation passed that will foster FLL at a young age and into adulthood. In addition, more diversity needs to be integrated into our culture.

According to WorldAtlas.com, the entire continent of Europe has about 3.9 million square miles of land area. Although America is a bit smaller — 3.5 million square miles — Europe

is the home to 50 different countries, many of which have dissimilar languages, cultures and histories.

In terms of land area, visiting another country in Europe is like visiting another state in America. However, Americans do not need to worry about experiencing culture shock when driving from Tennessee into Kentucky.

In addition, American news networks also lack in diversity.

To date, American news networks continue to show a lack of coverage over foreign affairs. In her speech titled "How Does News Shape the Way We See the World?" Alisa Mille, head of Public Radio International, said that most Americans get their news from local TV networks. Though, only 12 percent of the local TV news coverage is dedicated to international affairs.

Furthermore, in February 2007 "the combined (American news) coverage of Russia, China and India, for example, reached just 1 percent," she said. In the same month, Millie added, the story of Anna Nicole's death "eclipsed the coverage of all other countries except Iraq."

Three years later, many American pop-culture stories, such as Tiger Wood's recent apology speech, are still making headlines and being sensationalized by American news networks.

This past Sunday for example, the homepage of CNN.com headlined Canada's victory over the U.S. hockey team instead of any other international and national story. To the left of the headline, was a somewhat smaller one about the earthquake in Chile that took the lives of more than 700 people.

LANGUAGE, PAGE 5

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
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# Animals should roam in natural environment

## Recent death of SeaWorld trainer raises concerns for animal-themed amusement parks

Last summer, my family and I went on a vacation to Florida. We stayed on the beach for a few days, visited several theme parks, attended a dinner theater, bought a ridiculous amount of souvenirs and ate some incredible foreign food. One of the amusement parks we visited was SeaWorld, home of the Shamu show that has caused so much hoopla over the past few days.

Tilikum, one of the largest orca whales in captivity, killed his trainer Dawn Brancheau on Feb. 24. Whether he was simply playing or acting out of frustration, the death has shaken many who enjoy marine shows.



**Pearl before swine**

Pearl Howell

This incident brings forth an issue that many tourists, including myself, do not think about when being splashed by a massive, majestic killer whale. Should wild animals be taken into captivity, trained and used for entertainment?

Animals have long been exploited for entertainment purposes. Dog fights, cock fights and horse races exist throughout history in almost every culture. Animals have been over-bred, abused and even killed in the name of amusement.

In the Elizabethan era, bears were baited and murdered at bear gardens in England. In Spain and several other Spanish-speaking countries, bullfighting is still a common sport.

As shown by the scandal raised when authorities revealed Michael Vick's penchant for dog fighting, old cultural habits die hard. Just because something has a long history,

however, does not make it right. It would appear the line between blood sport and good, clean family fun is a tough distinction to make.

In a way, the use of wild animals is almost a flaunting of human ingenuity and a destruction of animal majesty. Amusement parks, zoos and aquariums turn a feral beast into a lapdog, leaping through hoops for a treat. They remove them from their natural habitats and place them in small, simulated enclosures.

For every animal in captivity, it is common for several others of its kind to have been killed in the process of capture. When

these captive animals breed, their young are generally sold to be trained for a circus or even killed at game farms.

Certainly not all captivity is bad. Many domesticated animals help people on MTSU's campus. Service dogs, livestock and pets surround almost every student's life in some way. To cease the use of animals in society would lead to a virtual breakdown of life as we know it.

Still, is it really fair or kind to keep these wild, dangerous creatures locked away, using their mind power to learn new tricks instead of performing natural feats in a natural environ-

ment? When did animals become "neat" creatures to put next to roller coasters? Why aren't they treated with the fear and respect they deserve?

Recent reports say that Tilikum, who has been in captivity since he was two years old, is staying in the Shamu show at SeaWorld with no penal measures taken against him. I say that keeping him in a small pool with 30 other whales for the purpose of amusing and amazing spectators is punishment enough.

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

## LANGUAGE FROM PAGE 4

The story of Xynthia, a powerful cyclone that recently took several lives and destroyed many parts of Portugal, France, Spain and Germany, was only briefly mentioned on the homepage under CNN's latest news column with the words: "Storm batters Europe; 55 dead."

When news networks provide narrow news coverage, less attention is given to international affairs. This makes international news less accessible and, in retrospect, causes viewers to have little to no concern for foreign affairs, lives and countries.

Imagine how different our reactions to the earthquake in Haiti would have been had it not gotten as much attention. Although

### How to say 'hello' in...

|   |                                       |                                   |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Cherokee</b><br>Oh-see-YOH   | <b>German*</b><br>GOOT-en Tahk        | <b>Portuguese*</b><br>bohn DEE-ah |
| <b>Chinese</b><br>Nee HaOW  | <b>Hawaiian</b><br>Ah-loh-hah         | <b>Russian</b><br>ZzDRAST-vet-yah |
| <b>French*</b><br>Bohn-zhoor  | <b>Hebrew</b><br>Sha-LOHM             | <b>Spanish</b><br>OH-lah          |
|  | <b>Italian*</b><br>bwohn JOR-noh      | <b>Swedish*</b><br>goo dahg       |
|   | <b>Japanese**</b><br>Kohn-NEE-cheewah | <b>Turkish</b><br>MER-ha-ba       |

\*Literal translation is 'good day' \*\*Literal translation is 'good afternoon' Source: IPL.org  
Graphic by Michael Stone, opinions editor

this story was thoroughly covered, international news tends to only make headlines when a major disaster occurs.

Otherwise, the kidnapping of an American girl of-

ten gets more coverage than say, a train that crashed in Russia resulting in 120 dead. By not being well enough informed on international affairs, Americans are not given the chance to

become interested in foreign countries, and thus, FLL is devalued.

As a result, we often do not try to communicate to foreigners in their native languages.

The objective of learning a second language is not to change nationalities. As an influential world power, we should desire to learn a foreign language and be able to exchange ideas and opinions with foreigners.

FLL is challenging, but it is by no means magic or unrealistic.

If America became a bilingual nation, it would revolutionize the role Americans play in the world. Achieving this revolution simply starts by beginning to learn.

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

## Comments from www.mtsusidelines.com

"What is interesting is that MTSU had adamantly told the students for years that there is not a parking problem. But, when they want new offices for their employees, they will build a new building and call it a parking garage. I also find it hard to believe that employees are not going to be allowed to park in that garage. There is a lot of heavyweight sitting around in MTSU offices (I am not referring to faculty) being paid to perform limited tasks. How often can a student get a problem resolved by interacting with one MTSU employee? It is a shame how the students are treated."

*-Anonymous on "Budget cuts seem targeted, made with short noticed," Feb. 29*

"The Baldwin Photographic Gallery is an invaluable asset to the cultural life of this campus. It seems terribly short-sighted to sweep it away. MTSU should provide more, not fewer, opportunities for students to experience high-quality artistic achievement if we are indeed a comprehensive university rather than a vocational training school."

*-Kevin Donovan, English department, on "Budget cuts seem targeted, made with short noticed," Feb. 29*

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# Sports

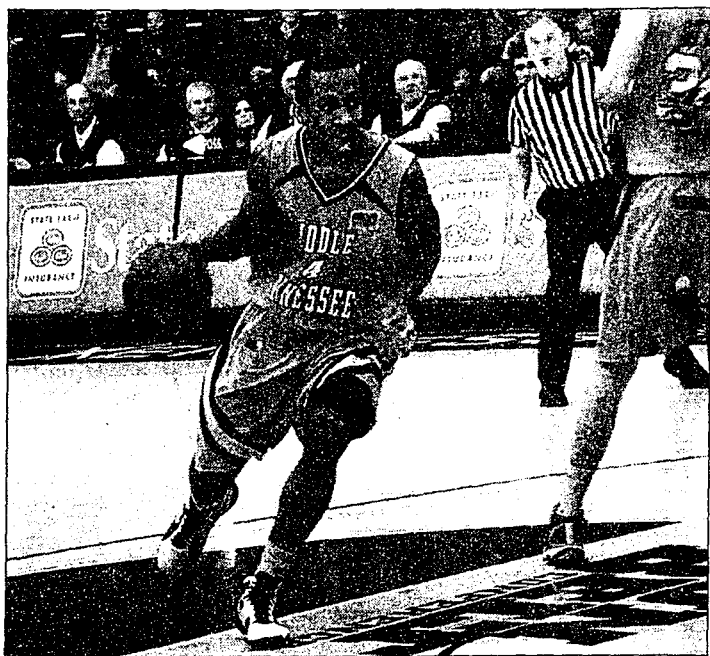


Photo by Jay Bailey, photography editor  
Senior guard Calvin O'Neil drives down court against Florida Atlantic University on Jan. 16 in the Murphy Center.

## MT men have favorable path to final

The MT men couldn't have asked for a better path to the Sun Belt Conference Tournament Championship game. With their sweep of the Florida schools last weekend, the Blue Raiders locked up a share of the conference title; however, they only have the No. 3 seed.

Troy sits atop the bracket after winning the Sun Belt's Eastern Division, winning the tiebreaker with MT based on head-to-head record, as the Trojans beat Middle in both matchups this season.

The No. 2 seed goes to North Texas, who won the Western Division outright. Despite North Texas's win over Troy head-to-head, the three-way tiebreaker, which is very complicated and far too difficult to explain, gives Troy the overall No. 1 spot.

Then comes the Blue Raiders, who receives the final first round bye with the No. 3 seed, and might be sitting as pretty as anyone in the tournament.

The teams MT doesn't want to see are Troy and Western Kentucky, and they both sit on the top half of the bracket, meaning that the only way MT would match up with either is in the championship game.

Troy quite simply just gives Middle fits. MT lost both Troy games by a combined seven points, and would probably love another shot at the Trojans, especially if that means not seeing Western Kentucky.

Beating a team three times in a season is difficult when the two teams are so evenly matched. This once again makes Troy the lesser of two evils when compared to Western Kentucky.

Also, Western Kentucky is starting to look like the team that beat Vanderbilt, who beat MT by 20 Jan. 4.

Since getting Sergio Kerusch, who at this time next year will be playing in the NBA, back, WKU is 7-2, with its only losses coming in his first game back in which Kerusch played limited minutes, and an out-of-conference loss against Houston.

Of those seven wins, five were double-digit wins, one was a nine-point victory, and the other was a win against Arkansas State in which they came back from a five point deficit late in overtime on the road.

Simply put, Western is the most dangerous team in the tournament and would be a matchup nightmare for MT. Sure, Calvin O'Neil can guard A.J. Slaughter with help from the point guard coming off of



### Basketball Buzz

Craig Hoffman

Jamal Crook or Anthony Sally's man, but where Montarrio Haddock was guarding Steffphon Pettigrew, he now has to guard Kerusch.

This leaves Boogie Yates on Pettigrew, which isn't an awful mismatch, and Jeremy Evans to be dealt with by the much smaller Trevor Ottley or J.T. Sulton.

There is a chance that Theryn Hudson would be back for MT, which would be big (literally) in matching up against WKU. Hudson brings next to nothing offensively, but is a big body and at 6'11" he is a better matchup than Ottley or Sulton on Evans.

However, none of this happens unless both WKU and MT win their side of the bracket and make the final. WKU doesn't have a bye, although playing New Orleans might as well be one. The Hilltoppers then have to face Arkansas State and Troy before making the final, and could be exhausted come Tuesday.

Meanwhile the Blue Raiders will get either Denver or FIU in its first game on Sunday. Although MT lost to FIU once and only beat them by three last week, that's the team the Raiders would rather see.

Denver runs the Princeton offense, which eats clock and makes the opponent defend for the full 35-second shot clock, which would tire MT for its next game more than a traditional FIU team. Either way, MT should be able to win its first game.

They would then face North Texas, who they beat by five in the regular season. North Texas knocked MT out of the tournament last year and the Blue Raiders would gladly return the favor.

Simply put, MT couldn't have asked for a more reasonable bracket. Are the games going to be easy? No. Is MT a lock to get to the final? Absolutely not. But avoiding Troy, Western, and Arkansas State is a good step in the right direction for a team that still needs to win its conference tournament if it wants to play in the postseason.

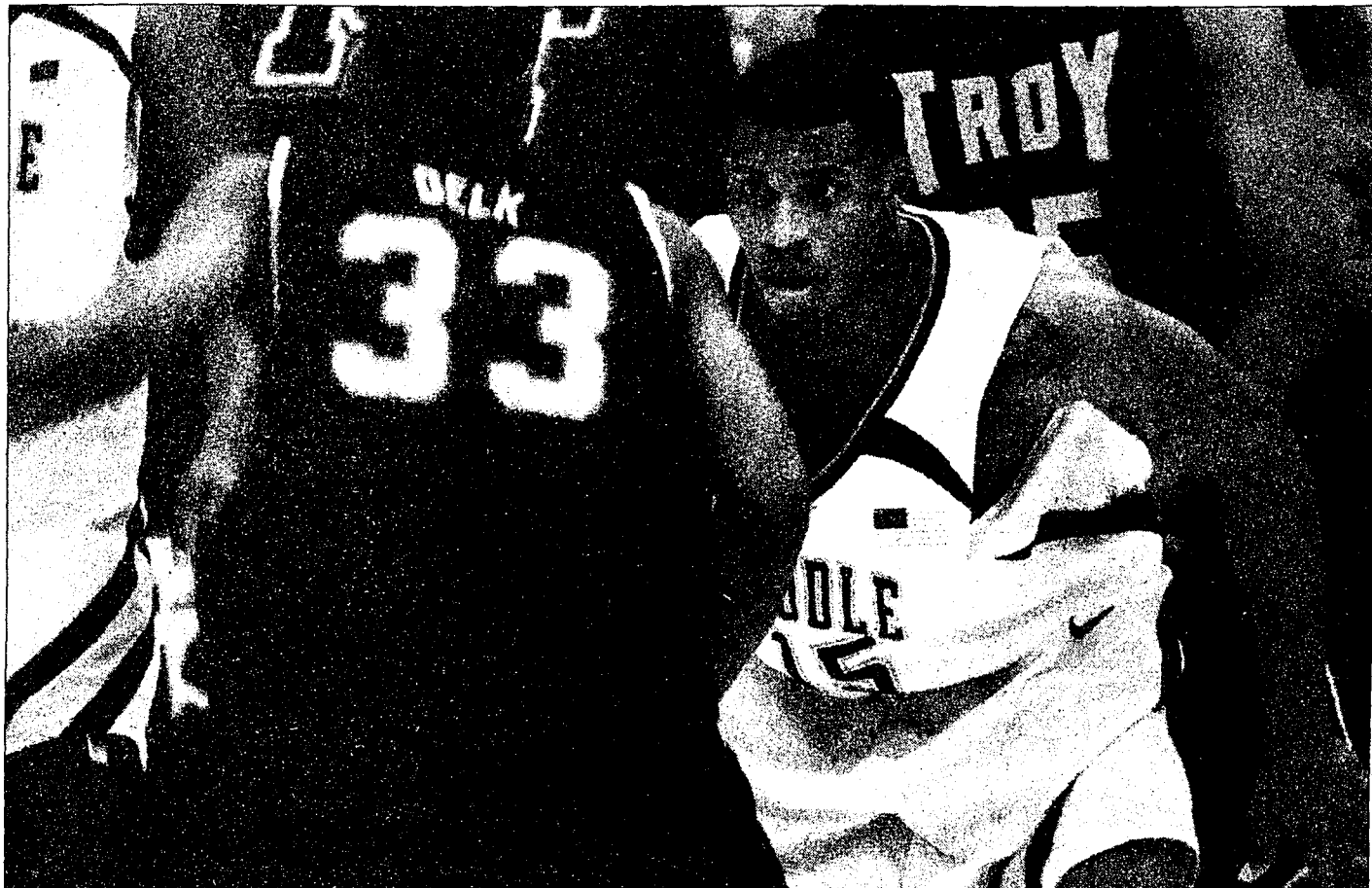


Photo by Jay Bailey, photography editor  
Junior guard James Washington goes one-on-one against Troy University's senior guard Richard Delk in the Murphy Center on Feb. 4.

## Insell, Davis ready for March

By STEPHEN CURLEY  
Sports Editor

March is here, and the Blue Raiders are ready for the madness.

Both the men's and women's teams begin postseason play Sunday as the Sun Belt Conference tournament begins in Hot Springs, Ark.

For the first time in school history, both teams finished with a share of the regular season championship, earning each team a first round bye and Saturday off.

The men (19-12, 10-6 SBC) will face the winner of a first round game between Florida International University and the University of Denver, who play Saturday.

"It's two extreme styles, with Denver having the most extreme style of anyone we could possibly play," Head Coach Kermit Davis said. "They run a totally different type of offense that we're familiar with, but with Florida International it's not that big a preparation because we just played them."

The Blue Raiders defeated Denver 57-50 at home in their only meeting this season. The team lost to FIU at home 65-58, but beat the Golden Panthers 74-71 in Miami.

The women (22-5, 17-1 SBC) also earned a first round bye, as the No. 2 seeded Lady Raiders will play the winner of a Saturday matchup between FIU and the University of North Texas.

If the Lady Raiders advance to the finals, they will likely have to go through the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, who handed the team its lone conference loss. Head Coach Rick Insell has tried to keep his team focused on the present, however, not looking ahead and taking everyone seriously.

"We'll work on our transition game, and our half-court defense as well as our press sets," Insell said. "We know what teams are on our side of the bracket, so we know which teams may give us more problems."

The Lady Raiders dismantled both FIU and UNT

when they met this season. The team took care of FIU 90-58 at home while throttling the Golden Panthers in Miami 101-58. North Texas was taken apart by the Lady Raiders in perhaps the most lopsided game of the year, 119-51 at the Murphy Center Jan. 30.

"We've beaten some very good teams," Insell said. "I think any of those teams can beat Little Rock and can beat us, if we go in looking for Little Rock three days down the road, then we could very well be coming home Sunday night."

On the line for both squads is not only the conference championship, but a spot in the NCAA tournament, as each tournament winner is guaranteed a spot. Insell said that defensively, the Lady Raiders will have to improve if they want to compete in the big dance.

"At that point, you're looking at teams that are bigger, faster, and laterally quicker than you," Insell said. "If you're gonna stay in those games you're gonna have to do it defensively."

Each team's seniors are more motivated than ever to use this postseason to further leave their mark on the program. It was a year of records for the Lady Raiders, as forward Brandi Brown became the all-time 3-point leader at the school, while guard Chelsia Lymon set the career assist record, all while forward Alysha Clark ranked second in the country in scoring.

"They're really special," Insell said. "You don't get anything like this but maybe once in your whole lifetime."

On the men's side, forward Desmond Yates fought through injuries to be the lone Blue Raider named to the All-Sun Belt First Team while guards Calvin O'Neil and Montarrio Haddock stepped up at critical moments in the season to help the team.

"They had a real good feeling of accomplishment to win at Florida Atlantic and get a piece of the championship," Davis said. "They can't wait until it gets here."

Expect everything to be left on the court at the Summit Arena.

## MT announces football schedule

STAFF REPORT

The Blue Raiders will play six home games in 2010, as well as two games on national television, Director of Athletics Chris Massaro said Monday.

MT will open the season at home Sept. 2 against Big Ten foe University of Minnesota, then welcomes Austin Peay State University Sept. 11.

Two games, a home game against Troy University Oct. 5 and the contest at Arkansas State University, will be televised on ESPN2.

"To get two national broadcasts on ESPN is a direct result of the success of our program from a year ago and says a lot about the direction Rick Stockstill's program is headed," Massaro said. "We are hoping for more televised games when other packages are announced later in the year."

The Blue Raiders follow up the opening home stand by hitting the road the

| 2010 Blue Raiders Football |                        |         |                            |
|----------------------------|------------------------|---------|----------------------------|
| Sept. 2                    | Minnesota              | Oct. 23 | Louisiana-Monroe           |
| Sept. 11                   | Austin Peay            | Nov. 2  | at Arkansas State (ESPN 2) |
| Sept. 18                   | at Memphis             | Nov. 13 | OPEN                       |
| Sept. 25                   | at Louisiana-Lafayette | Nov. 20 | North Texas                |
| Oct. 2                     | OPEN                   | Nov. 27 | at Western Kentucky        |
| Oct. 5                     | Troy (ESPN2)           | Dec. 4  | at Florida International   |
| Oct. 9                     | OPEN                   | TBA     | New Orleans Bowl           |
| Oct. 16                    | at Georgia Tech        |         |                            |

Graphic by Dustin Evans, managing editor

next two weeks, playing at the University of Memphis Sept. 18 and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Sept. 25.

After the Troy game, MT travels to Atlanta to take on Georgia Tech University Oct. 23, its second game against a major-conference opponent. From there, the team returns home to host the University of Louisiana

at Monroe.

The final two home games of the season will be Nov. 13 and 27 against the University of North Texas and Florida Atlantic University, respectively.

In between those contests, the team travels to Bowling Green, Ky., to take on Western Kentucky University Nov. 20 and concludes the regular season Dec. 7 at Florida

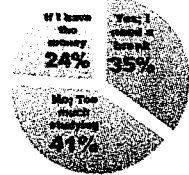
International University.

"It's great for our fans that we play 10 of our 12 games within a three or four-hour drive by car, which should allow us to get a lot of support on the road," said Head Coach Rick Stockstill. "It is a challenging schedule that presents us with a lot of opportunities, and we look forward to getting things started in August."

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# FEATURES



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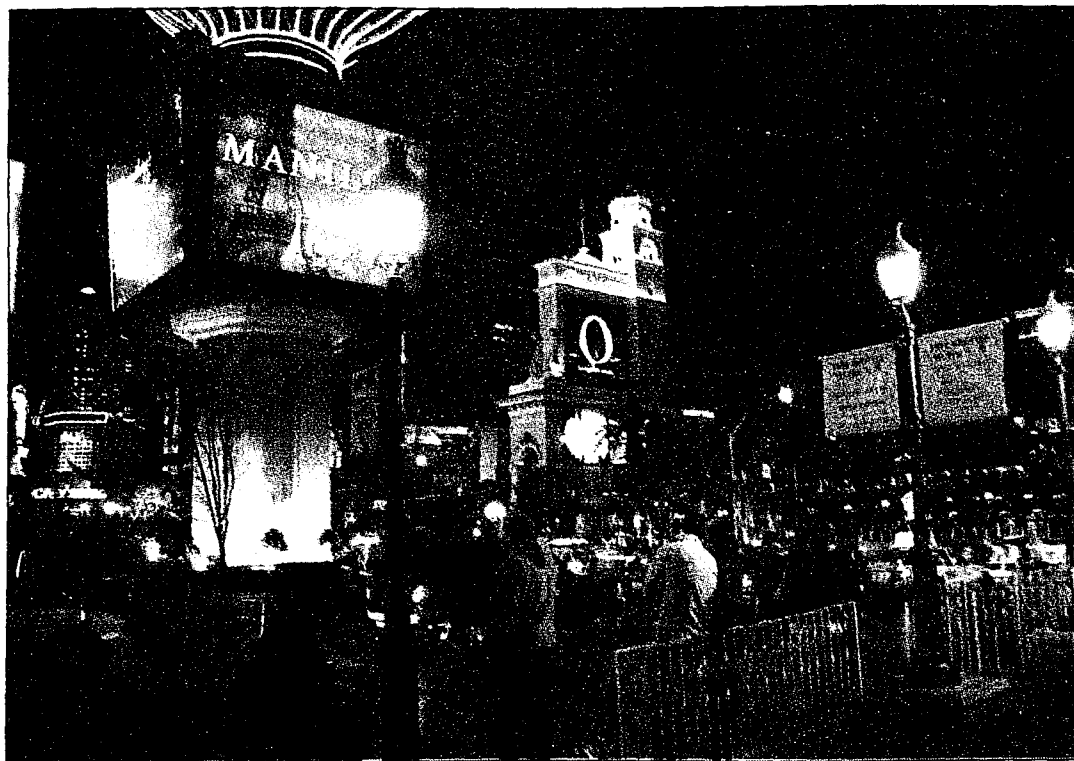


Photo by Tiffany Gibson, staff photographer  
Vegas offers gambling and a thrilling nightlife that would prove enjoyable for any Spring Break.

## Gambler's Paradise Take a chance, spend your time off in Las Vegas

By TIFFANY GIBSON  
Staff Writer

If you're feeling lucky, you can hit the craps tables. If you want to get lucky, you can visit an authorized brothel. Either way, you're sure to have a good time for Spring Break in Sin City.

It's that time of year when college students take a break from academics and spend a week letting loose and doing keg stands on a beach in Cancun. But instead of traveling outside of the U.S., I'm proposing that students book a vacation to Las Vegas.

As a news intern working for the Las Vegas Sun, I've had a chance to explore the city, but those who haven't should consider visiting during Spring Break.

The city has many attractions, but the most iconic one is The Strip, therefore, any planned trip requires at least one visit to the stretch.

The Strip houses several luxurious hotels and casinos that all have different themes, allowing tourists to indulge in different cultures while gambling away their savings.

When you're feeling in the mood for exquisite French food or a tour of the Eiffel Tower, you can explore the Paris Las Vegas Hotel and Casino. The Paris has its own model of the Eiffel Tower and a restaurant at the top overlooking the entire valley.

If you've seen "The Hangover" you know all about the Roman-themed hotel and casino, Caesars Palace. And yes, Julius Caesar lives there. We had a few long island iced teas the other night and locked Marcus Brutus in a bathroom with a tiger. It was a good time.

But my favorite place on the Strip is the Bellagio. It has a huge pond in front and

operates fountain shows every 15 minutes to classic and contemporary music. It truly is a necessity when touring Las Vegas.

Students should also try to attend some of the Strip's acrobatic and musical shows.

If spending time in the big city makes you homesick, head over to Bill's Gambler's Hall and Saloon where you can see Tennessee legend, Elvis, perform.

OK, so it's not the real Elvis, but impersonator Pete Valle is from Memphis, Tenn. He's also not your typical Elvis impersonator.

Weighing in at more than 400 pounds, Valle is known in Las Vegas as Big Elvis because at one point he weighed 960 pounds.

Another show to check out while in town is the Blue Man Group at The Venetian. The group's eccentric skits and tricks are mesmerizing and worth the expense. Everyone in the audience also gets to partake in a rave with streamers, strobe lights and techno music.

Need I say more?  
Neon light fixtures and advertisements with scantily clad women are few and far between in Middle Tennessee, so try something new and take a trip to Las Vegas for Spring Break.

If not, then try to do something recreational. Don't spend the next week sitting on the couch, watching "Real World" reruns and eating Spaghetti O's. Do something creative and enjoyable.

And remember, "What happens on Spring Break, stays on Spring Break."

*Tiffany Gibson is a junior journalism major studying and working in Nevada as an intern for the Las Vegas Sun.*

## Break Elsewhere Many great Spring Break destinations surprisingly go unnoticed by students

By EBONY EDWARDS  
Contributing Writer

There comes a time in every college student's life when enough is enough. School is becoming too hectic. The dreaded finals are rapidly approaching. The lure of the returning springtime sun seems to be calling their names. A very crucial break is needed – Spring Break.

Yes, Spring Break, when students can finally relax their brains, relieving them of the equations, due dates, tests and papers the semester brings. Spring Break, when all that matters is fun in the sun, shorts and flip-flops. Spring Break – even the words themselves sound refreshing.

During the weeks prior to the break, students will be faced with an extremely important decision – to pinpoint a suitable location that'll fulfill their Spring Break needs.

In addition to finding a destination, funds must be gathered and reservations must be made. Then the tranquility, thrills and tomfoolery can begin. And the possibilities are endless. So, where to? Panama City? Miami? Orlando? The Bahamas? ... way too typical.

Many Spring Break destinations seem to go unnoticed by college students. For some reason, many have adopted the belief that the experience of a great Spring Break can only happen in certain areas. But this couldn't be more wrong.

According to some students at MTSU, places like Myrtle Beach, Gatlinburg, Hilton Head Island, Virginia Beach and South Padre Island offer new and exciting Spring Break experiences.

**Destination 1: Myrtle Beach, S.C.**

Myrtle Beach is a resort community lo-

cated along the Atlantic Ocean. The city offers up to 60 miles of wide, sandy, soft beaches, amusement and water parks and a lively nightlife.

Myrtle Beach is actually a more timely drive than going to typical destinations like Miami or Orlando. It only takes about nine hours and 35 minutes to experience the beauty of Myrtle Beach, in comparison to an 11-hour drive to Orlando or a brutal 14-hour drive to Miami.

According to Jarrell Gray of Murfreesboro, who has experienced Myrtle Beach firsthand, the trip would definitely be worthwhile.

"I was there for exactly four days," Gray says. "I was able to go beach fishing and enjoy some very good seafood – the people there are very nice too."

**Destination 2: Gatlinburg, Tenn.**

Gatlinburg Falls, which is the newest and most elegant addition to the city, is located in the Smoky Mountains.

A Spring Break vacation in Gatlinburg Falls would offer scenic views of the Smokies along with serenity, luxury, excitement and privacy in one of their spectacular cabins.

The cabins offer one to nine bedroom accommodations along with amenities like pool tables, Xbox, high-speed Internet connection, large kitchens, wide-screen TVs, outdoor hot tubs, indoor jetted baths and vertical spas/showers.

Adam Goodman, sophomore basic and applied science major, is planning to spend his Spring Break in a Gatlinburg cabin.

"My friends wanted to make this a couples' retreat so we could all get away," Goodman declares. "There are always too many stupid, drunk college students in places like Panama City."

BREAK, PAGE 8

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# And the nominees are...

By LAURA AIKEN  
Staff Writer

Oliver Stone once said, "There's something about movies that always amazes me, their transcendence of time. You can in one second, in one frame, see something that will spark you as divine or genius."

In a shower of glass rain drops, the dresses glitter and gleam — crystal chandeliers pouring down from the heavens. The cameras' scattered flashes flicker aimlessly across the night sky — there's a buzz in the air.

Sharply dressed gentlemen in their penguin suits smile pearly white smiles, each one more ruggedly handsome and

talented than the one before.

Scouting closer and closer to the boundaries of the red carpet, Hollywood's staunch followers crane their necks and strain their vocal chords for just a glimpse of the limelight, hoping some of that sparkle will rub off on them.

The household names glide across the red carpet, while those who crave such recognition divert their eyes, bowing down in reverence, unable to look directly at the blinding light of achievement.

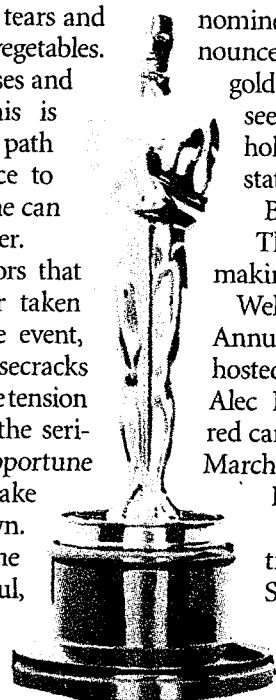
Outwardly, congratulatory expressions are pasted on their faces throughout the evening, the chosen ones.

But on the inside, the stiff competition swells after

months of sweat, tears and eating only raw vegetables. For actors, actresses and moviemakers, this is an irrevocable path with a steep price to pay — not everyone can walk away a winner.

Humorous actors that are usually never taken seriously host the event, throwing out wisecracks to slice through the tension in the air, while the serious actors have opportune moments to make jokes of their own. Whether or not the joke is successful, is completely irrelevant.

Because in the



nominees' eyes when the announcer starts to open that gold-crusted envelope, we see the life-long desire to hold that coveted gold statue in their hands.

But is it all worth it?

The moment has come, making time stand still.

Welcome to the 82nd Annual Academy Awards, hosted by Steve Martin and Alec Baldwin. Follow the red carpet — on the night of March 7.

## Best Motion Picture

The Academy of Motion Pictures, Arts and Sciences has expanded this category to include 10 nominees as opposed to the

usual five.

And the nominees are: "Avatar," "The Blind Side," "District 9," "An Education," "The Hurt Locker," "Inglorious Basterds," "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire," "Up" and "Up in the Air."

"I think 'Avatar' will win because it was so groundbreaking, and it got such a good response. However, if I could choose which movie should win, I'd pick 'The Hurt Locker,'" Tyler Smith, a junior marketing major, said.

I concur with Smith's prediction. While I adore "The Hurt Locker," I know "Avatar" made a really big splash. Also, the gamut of people in this country would probably

side with "Avatar," because most kids forced their parents into taking them to see it. So, it will probably fall on recognition, not substance. If it were based on merit, "The Hurt Locker" would most definitely win.

## Actor in a Leading Role

And the nominees are: Jeff Bridges for "Crazy Heart," George Clooney for "Up in the Air," Colin Firth for "A Single Man," Morgan Freeman for "Invictus," and Jeremy Renner for "The Hurt Locker."

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Photo courtesy of Morguefile.com

Scenic Gatlinburg, Tenn. is a great getaway for people looking for a calm relaxing Spring Break without all of the crowds.

## BREAK FROM PAGE 7

So, what is there to look forward to?

"A nice, fun, quiet getaway," Goodman responds.

### Destination 3: Hilton Head Island, S.C.

This beautiful location is situated along the southeastern coast of South Carolina. Although it is only 12-by-5 miles wide, Hilton Head Island offers more than 250 restaurants and 200 stores/outlets, and is known as one of the most friendly beach getaways in the world.

"There are actually not a lot of people who come to Hilton Head Island during the spring," says Debbie Stracener, Hilton Head Island consultant. "The water only reaches about 65 degrees, so that's a little too cold for most people, but there is still a lot to enjoy."

Other activities on Hilton Head Island include Harbor Town Lighthouse for only \$3 per person, shopping at Shelter Cove Harbour and a variety of cruise excursions.

"Visitors can also enjoy golf, tennis, bicycling on our 55 miles of paved pathways, shopping on Hilton Head mainland or one of our many art galleries," Stracener says.

### Destination 4: Virginia Beach, Va.

This destination comes complete with museums, aquariums, lighthouse tours and whale watching for the Spring Breaker who wants to try something new.

In addition to the soft sands and beautiful waves of Virginia Beach, one of the most sought after attractions of Virginia is Busch Gardens.

"Busch Gardens is located in Williamsburg, Va., which is about an hour away from Virginia Beach," explains Judy Garner, employee of the Virginia Beach Visitors Center.

The average temperature on Virginia Beach during the month of March is 58 degrees, making it a little too cold for swimming, but there are plenty of other ways to enjoy your time there.

"A walk along the boardwalk is always very nice, and the beautiful environment

is always suitable for finding some entertainment," Garner promises.

### Destination 5: South Padre Island, Texas

Don't let the size fool you — South Padre Island is tiny, but has a lot to offer. It's the best known beach vacation in Texas during the summer. However, many fail to recognize that it is excellent for all seasons.

South Padre Island offers plenty of outdoor recreation and entertainment, parasailing, diving, motocross and windsurfing, which dominates the water sport scene. Dolphin watches are very popular, and to experience the complete "South Padre" feel, a sunset cruise during "Fireworks Over the Bay" held every Friday night will suffice.

Neetasha Thompson of Murfreesboro said she will never forget her experience in South Padre Island a few years ago. Her enthusiasm and excitement about it seems to linger.

"The water there was so clean, and you could actually see parts of the ocean floor," Thompson says. "You could walk out of your hotel room and be directly on the beach and the air was fresh."

Along with tingled senses, notable attractions are the Gladys Porter Zoo, Isla Blanca Park, and Schlitterbahn Beach Waterpark, offering water sports during the day and live music at night.

"It is definitely a good choice for Spring Break," Thompson proclaims. "I would love to go back."

Its proximity to the Gulf Coast allows South Padre's temperatures to remain in the mid-to-high 70s and low 80s. It is definitely a beach for all seasons.

Spring Break is right around the corner, which means time is winding down for the chance to plan the perfect getaway. There are no excuses for having a mediocre vacation with so many great destinations now revealed.

Why journey to a vacation spot that seems to be so ordinary? Get away from the norm and switch things up a bit. We should all do ourselves a favor and not continue to let these places go unnoticed.