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Students examine the 2-D and 3-D works that were accepted for the "Nous" reception at a gallery in Andrew L. Todd Hall. Photo by Kati Baird.

Cover photo by Matt Masters.

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# MTSU to send its first group abroad to Israel this summer

By Daniel Jansouzian  
Staff writer

A group of students plans to immerse themselves in Israeli culture this summer to learn firsthand the politics, history and religion of the region.

"It's one thing to sit in class all day and debate issues like Israeli nuclear proliferation and how it affects Israel," said Whitney Flatt, a junior international relations major. "It's an entirely different thing to be standing in the country, with the language, with the culture and with the political and religious leaders."

She said it is important to move the understanding of any subject from head to heart.

"After studying about Israel for many years, I think I've got the head part down," Flatt said. "But I believe going to Israel will push my heart to be more well-rounded in its appreciation for Israeli people, politics and culture."

Karen Petersen, assistant dean of the College of Liberal Arts, said that the trip

is a part of an Israeli history class called "The Politics of Being 'Israel': From Abraham to Modern Democracy." It will cover the foundation of Israel more than 5,000 years ago to modern his-

day-to-day life with low-intensity conflict."

Byrnes said he went to Israel in 2007 when a civil war engulfed the region, and he would not have even known a war was happening had it not been for the

have made allegations regarding the use of chemical weapons by President Bashar al-Assad's government. As skirmishes along the Israeli border become more commonplace, the conflict in Syria threatens to

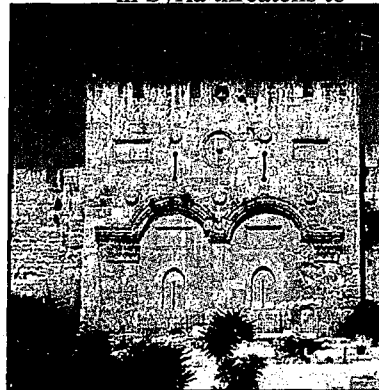
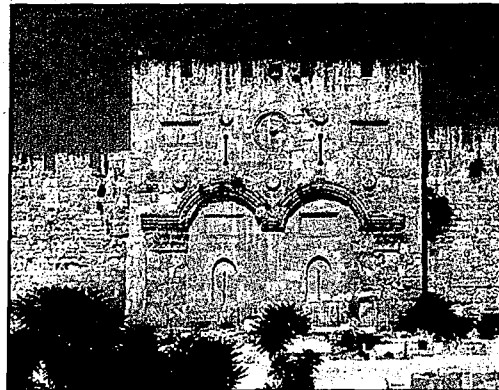
approval process by the International Education and Exchange Committee. The IECC examines all programs and affirms that the academic and safety standards are met. The committee also looks at programs that have locations such as Israel on the State Department's travel warning list.

"I met with the faculty leaders of the MTSU Israel trip in January," Schmidt said. "Because, although initially approved by the IECC, I wanted to wait and assess the situation before the final approval."

The region is under constant surveillance by all involved, and if the situation deteriorates, the trip will be canceled.

The cost to go is \$4,200, but scholarships, grants and other aid are available. Byrnes advises every student to do a study abroad program and an internship before he or she graduates.

"It is an investment worth making," Byrnes said. "It will only get more expensive later on in life." ■



(Left) A sealed gate is the entrance in the wall surrounding Jerusalem. (Right) The Dome of the Rock is where Muslims believe Muhammad ascended to heaven. Photos courtesy of Mark Byrnes.

tory. She will take 16 to 18 students on the trip along with Mark Byrnes, dean of the College of Liberal Arts. It will be the university's first study abroad trip to Israel.

"It's an important political place with a great historical background," Petersen said. "It's important to see the disconnect between what you hear on the news and the truth of people going through

television in his hotel room.

"Anywhere you go you have to take precautions, and we are not taking safety concerns lightly," Byrnes said. "We are aware of the risks and have talked to students about it."

Since 2011, Israel's neighbor, Syria, has been consumed by civil war, and in recent months, militants and human rights groups

spread throughout the Middle East.

Petersen said Israel is very security conscious, and the group will be going mainly to tourist sites and will stay clear of the danger zones. She and Byrnes have both visited in the past and feel confident about security.

David Schmidt, vice provost, said each study abroad program must go through an

## CRIME BRIEFS

### DRUGS

Judd Hall

March 28, 8:35 p.m.

Authorities issued William McLaughlin, 19, a citation for simple possession of marijuana.

### TRAFFIC

James E. Walker Library lot

March 27, 9:41 p.m.

Authorities responded to a hit-and-run accident and issued Stephanie Dawn Jenkins, 24, a citation for leaving the scene with property damage.

### ASSAULT

Recreation Center

March 27, 9:15 p.m.

Authorities responded to a fight between two individuals, one of whom punched the other in the face before fleeing the area.

### AGGRAVATED ASSAULT/ BURGLARY

Nottingham Apartments

March 27, 9:01 a.m.

Three to four males, all armed with small caliber handguns, kicked in the door of an apartment while the victim was inside and stole several items.

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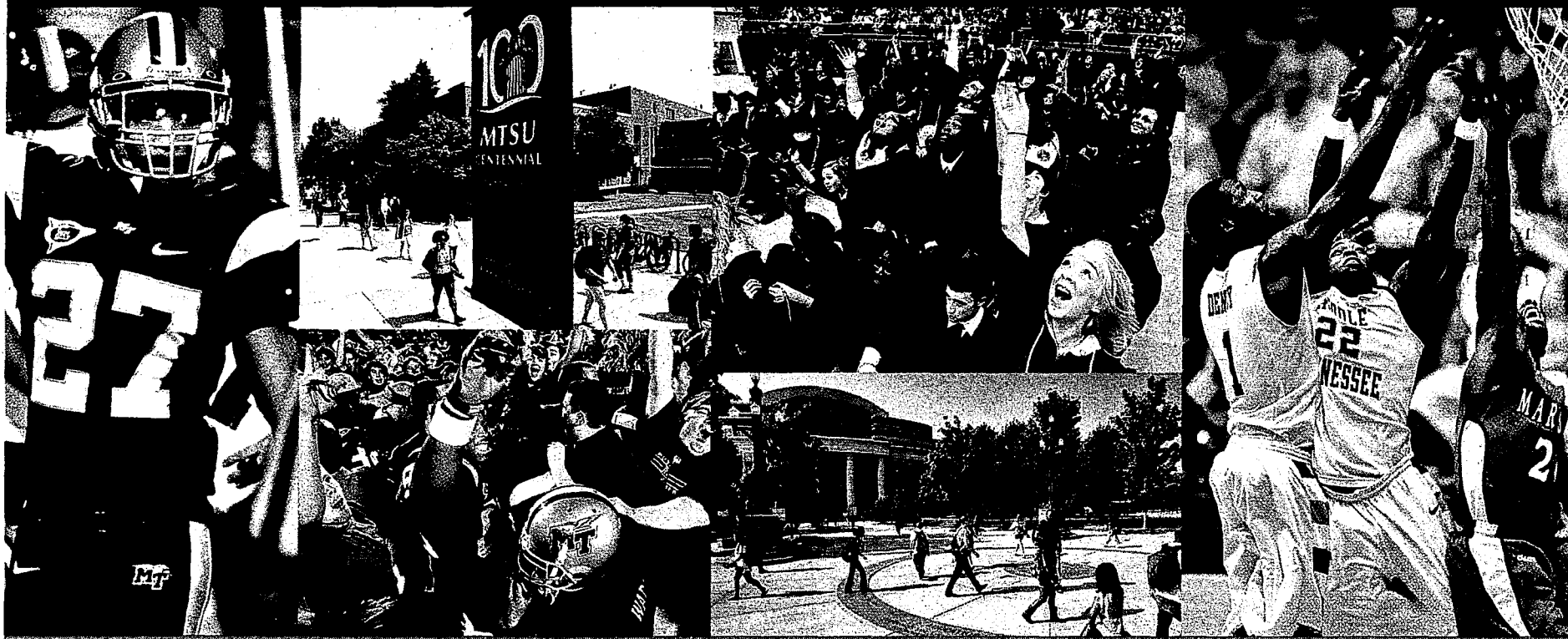
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# Legislature considers state treasurer's pension reform

By Quint Qualls  
News editor

Sweeping changes to the state higher education pension system are making their way through the legislature after the state treasurer proposed his plan to the General Assembly in late February.

The classification of the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System is that of defined benefit, which means benefits are defined by a mathematical formula that takes into account salary and years of service. State Treasurer David Lillard's plan would move the state pension system to a hybrid of defined benefit and defined contribution, where more responsibility would be placed on employees to pay into the system.

If passed, the changes would only affect state employees hired on or after June 30, 2014, according to Deputy Treasurer Steve Curry. Current employees would see no alterations to their retirement plans.

"What's driving this is we see certain trends that suggest that our pension plan may not be sustainable going forward," Curry said. "The employer contributions to the plan have increased dramatically over the last 10 years. The investment return has not performed up to our actuarial assumption of 7.5 percent."

According to Curry, the proposed changes have resulted from financial crises over the past decade, beginning with the Dot-com bubble of 2000 and the

Great Recession of 2008.

"The financial

percent.

"When investments do not meet assumed

**"The employer contributions to the plan have increased dramatically over the last 10 years."**

markets of this century have not been kind versus the great experiences we had in the '80s and '90s," Curry said.

The bill intends to lessen the fiscal burden of state employee pensions on taxpayers. The state now contributes around 15 percent of salary to the pension program. Curry said that the proposed plan will lower that to nine

investment return assumptions, the employer must make up the difference through increased contributions," said Sen. Randy McNally, sponsor of the bill. "That growth in the employer contribution level is an unsustainable burden on the taxpayers."

United Campus Workers, a union for faculty and staff of public universities,

opposes the treasurer's proposed plan, according to Tom Anderson, president of the organization.

"It's honestly political," Anderson said. "The conservative movement across the country over the past 30 years has worked very hard to get rid of defined benefit plans in the private sector, and they have largely succeeded to the detriment of employees. There has also been a concerted effort to get rid of defined benefit plans in the public sector."

Anderson said that the retirement system is now in very good fiscal health and does not need to be changed.

The state treasurer's office confirmed that Tennessee's pension program is in the top tier of well-funded state

pension programs in the nation.

However, treasury reports indicate that the employer contributions for state employee pensions have more than doubled since 2003.

Curry said that the proposed reforms seek to reign in that spending and create a more sustainable plan.

"Forty-five of the 50 states have made some type of change to their pension plans in the last four or five years," Curry said. "We have put together what we think is a well-developed pension plan going forward. We've utilized the services of a financial consultant and an actuary in designing this plan. We think it is of benefit to both our taxpayers and public employees." ■

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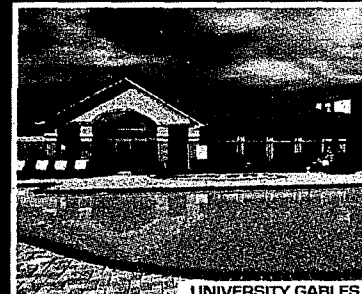
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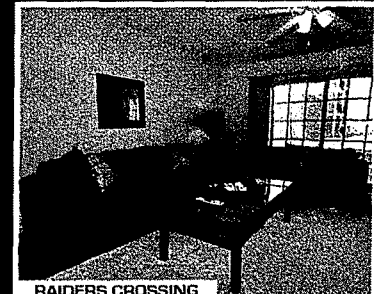


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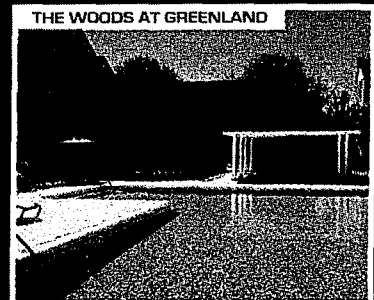
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THE WOODS AT GREENLAND

# Senior passes along the impact of a classroom

**By Ben Mills**  
Contributing writer

There is very little that Stacia Shewmaker doesn't remember about her third grade class. The big classroom windows. The pet hamsters in the corner of the room. The U-shaped pattern of desks that surrounded the "story time rug." The daily multiplication drills that she seemed alone in enjoying.

Most of all, she remembers the feeling of freedom and comfort in the classroom and her favorite teacher, Mrs. Allard.

At school, Shewmaker had no family problems, no mean stepfathers and no little brothers to raise. It was just her classmates and Mrs. Allard, a woman whose love and affection for her students would make a lifelong impact.

Shewmaker's childhood was far from ideal. By her ninth birthday, she had gone through more hardships than most do in a lifetime. She watched her alcoholic stepfather leave her mother, who was then forced to work three jobs to make ends meet for her family. She saw a new stepfather enter the picture.

Shewmaker also was burdened with the responsibility to watch and to raise her younger brother while her mother was at work, an overwhelming task for any nine year old. The only time she felt free was at school.

"I loved school. I loved being surrounded by people. I loved talking and always having something going on. It was a nice distraction," Shewmaker remembers,

verbally abusive man that I did not like at all. I hated being around him. I just loved to be at school and learn new things and get away from my life at home."

her trademarks. She never showed anger and loved to give hugs. "Everybody loved her," Shewmaker recalls. "She was very warm and encouraging,

would tell them something interesting about herself to give them a better idea of who she was. Her daily facts were usually something silly or funny, but

about her childhood," Shewmaker remembers. "She told us about how her father was very mean and abusive to her and her mother. He would throw chairs when he was angry. She told us that school was her safe place to go. That's why she wanted to be a teacher: to give others that same escape."

Shewmaker was shocked. Her teacher, whose kindness and constant smile indicated that she had lived a perfect life, had actually lived the same life as her. Shewmaker felt a hope that she had never experienced before.

"I wanted to be just like Mrs. Allard," she says. "If she could be so nice and loving despite her hardships, so could I."

She immediately knew what she wanted to do with her life. She wanted to teach and provide a safe-haven for kids who lived the same home life as she and Mrs. Allard.

"I knew I wanted to affect people with love, regardless of what they were going through at home," Shewmaker says. "The classroom is just such a great outlet to love on children whose parents don't have the highest expectations of them."

From that day forward, she planned to be a teacher.

"All through school, I took my studies very seriously," she says. "Having such a good experience in my early years of school really drove me. Just knowing

**"She immediately knew what she wanted to do with her life. She wanted to teach and provide a safe-haven for kids who lived the same home life as she and Mrs. Allard."**



Shewmaker hopes to influence childrens' lives as a teacher in the same way Mrs. Allard impacted hers. Photos by Ben Mills.

now a 21-year-old senior at MTSU. "When I was at home, I had a lot of responsibilities, like taking care of my brother. My mom had also remarried to a

Mrs. Allard was a short, pleasant woman who looked like the typical grandmother of children's books. Her ever-present smile and soft, warm voice were

even if you were wrong about something."

Mrs. Allard also made a focused effort to build personal relationships with her students. Each day, she

one day her personal story took a much more serious tone. It was one that resonated deeply with Shewmaker.

"One day, she opened up and told us

## FEATURES

that I could make such a positive impact on children's lives was all the motivation I needed through school."

Shewmaker graduated with honors from Blackman High School in 2009 and earned a full-ride academic scholarship to MTSU. She is now finishing her senior year, keeping her high GPA intact and approaching a semester of student teaching.

"I'm so close to my goal," she says. "I'm extremely excited to student teach next semester. I feel prepared, and I'm excited to show what I've learned and put it to use. I'm just ready to settle down and give my full attention and efforts to one classroom. I just want the kids I teach to

love school and realize it's such a good opportunity for them to get away from things and just learn."

To this day, Shewmaker says she owes her success and drive to be a teacher to Mrs. Allard.

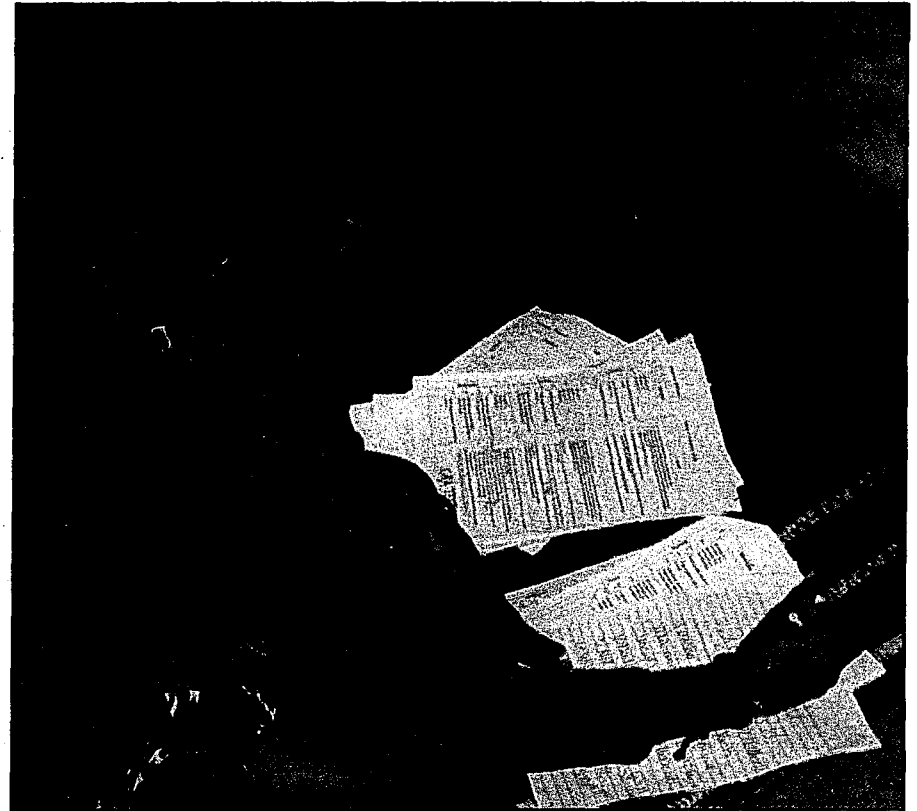
"About two semesters ago, I was personally reflecting on why I wanted to teach," she says. "I realized that my desires went back to the impact Mrs. Allard had on me 12 years ago. I decided to look up her contact information and let her know how much she meant to me."

After finding Mrs. Allard's information through the school district, Shewmaker sent her an email, thanking her.

Mrs. Allard's re-

sponse was equally as heartfelt. She said she still remembered Shewmaker and was very thankful for the kind words. She told Shewmaker that the reason she taught was to make positive impressions on her students, like she had done with Shewmaker.

"I told her that I still remembered the story she told us about her home life," Shewmaker says. "Because she was still able to be such a good person coming from a bad home, I knew that I could too. If she could do it, I could do it. I told her it was because of her that I'm going to be a teacher." ■

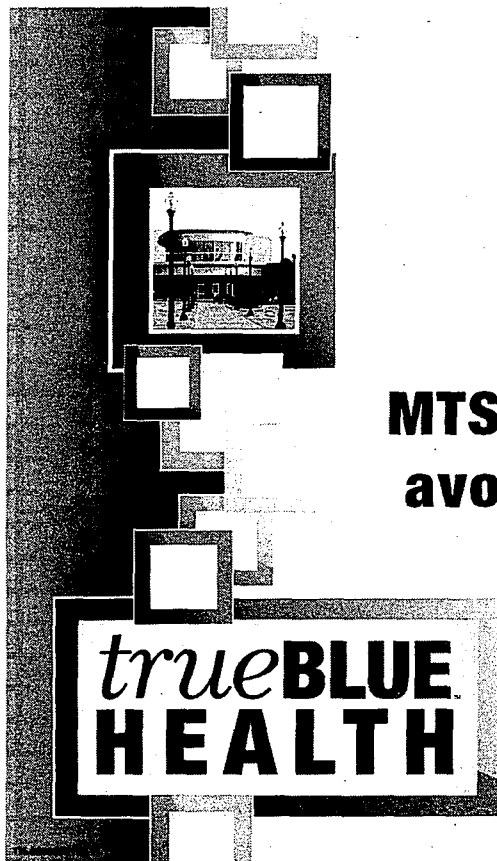


Shewmaker attributes her drive and her success to her third-grade teacher. Photo by Ben Mills.

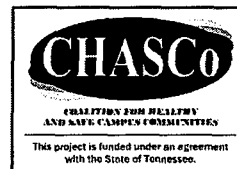
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## MTSU students limit their drinking or abstain to avoid performing poorly on tests and projects.



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Source: MTSU Core Drug and Alcohol Survey, 2012, n=1155  
MTSU is an AA/EEO employer.

## Faculty, students frustrated with dysfunctional photo facilities

By Emily West  
Managing editor

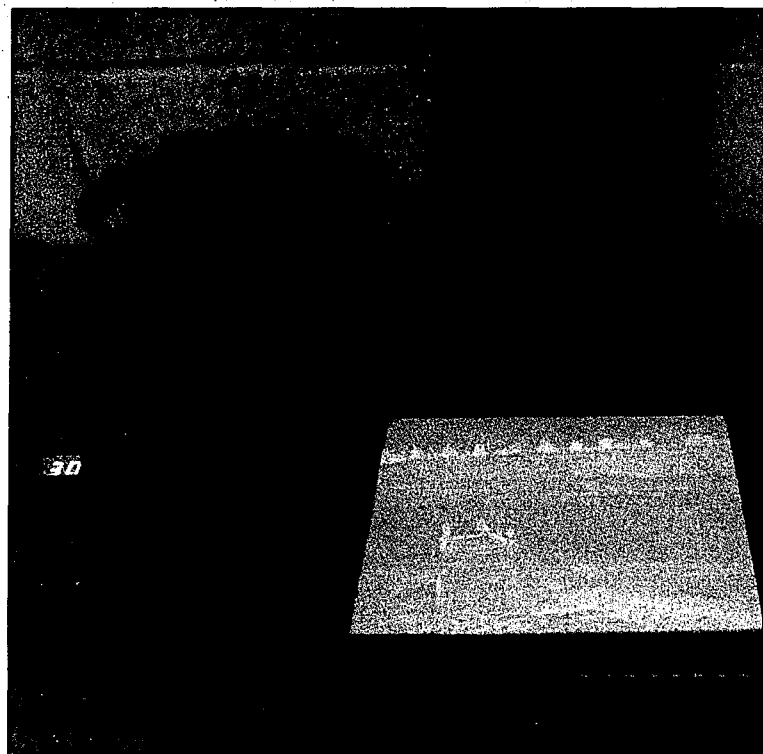
Professors and students have watched the Photography Building fall apart for the past two decades – the roof leaks, crumbling floors hide under dusty mats and aged equipment breaks down daily.

The sounds of construction for a new science building indicate the Photography Building will soon be demolished, and where the photography building once stood will be an addition to the student quad. The 100-plus photography majors will move into the McFarland Building in summer 2014.

The photography concentration has always sought improvements but none were forthcoming. Photography professor Chris Harris said little has been done in repairs since his arrival in 1990. He said administration sees repairs as a waste of money.

"In all honesty, you would have to look at the photography department and say, 'No, it has not been supported by the university properly at all,'" Harris said. "I think the one thing I want to get across is that the hesitancy on funding us has come from somewhere else. Our department chairs have tried to get our department funded properly, and we have tried for grants as well."

According to K. Watson-Harris, director of Academic Affairs Space Planning, the



(Left) A photographic print being made in the darkroom with an enlarger. (Top-right) Digital and print mediums are both offered in the concentration. (Bottom-right) Olivia Throckmorton, sophomore photography major, works on a photo collage and light table inside the photography building. Photos by Matt Masters.

Photography Building has 11,873 gross square feet, and McFarland has 10,285 gross square feet. Cost estimates for the transition have not been calculated, Watson-Harris said.

Tom Jimison, photography professor and curator of the Baldwin Gallery, said McFarland is the right fit for the concentration. The former Student Health Service center will accommodate film photography because of its tile and plumbing.

"We've had three alerts over the past 10 years that we were going to be moved out of the building, but then there was nowhere to put it," Jimison said. "It was hard, but we as a department are excited about the new move and the building. I think everything will work

out fine."

A primary concern is the lack of space for a cyclorama wall, the large white wall used for the studio class for advertisement, fashion and portrait photography.

"This is a great program strength," Jimison said. "For now, none of the ceilings in McFarland are high enough to contain it."

The money allocated to the photo concentration comes from the Electronic Media Communication department, headed by Billy Pittard for almost two years. The operating budget for the department without salaries is \$55,673, according to the dean's 2012-2013 budget. The Baldwin Photo Gallery's budget is \$10,000.

"The allocation that

the state gives combined with tuition gets less and less," said Roy Moore, dean of the College of Mass Communication. "It's natural to feel that you aren't getting all the funding that you need. I am always making proposals for more funding. We have done a number of repairs on the building."

The budget for the EMC department has lessened throughout the years.

"It was before I got here, but there was a recurring budget cut, and the chair gave up a significant portion of the operating budget," Moore said. "We are trying to restore the operating budget to where it was and account for inflation and increases."

The department had to cut from either the

operating budget or faculty salaries. Because most of the professors were tenured at the time, the department had no choice.

When asked to comment about the photo building, university Provost Brad Bartel declined to comment.

However, professors continue to teach in a problematic environment. A large hole exists in the side of the roof that allows rodents access to the ceiling.

"We have had squirrels ripping holes in the roof," Jimison said. "We've had the squirrels do everything from steal Twinkies to popping up into classrooms."

Moore also sees critters as an impediment to the learning environment.

"When you have

something that is reported, it goes directly to maintenance, and they decided what needs to be done," Moore said. "The dean doesn't go running over to catch the squirrel in the cage, even though it might be fun."

The maintenance department has cut down trees that damaged the gutter systems, but heavy rains remain destructive to a flat roof. After heavy downpours, water leaks into the ventilation system.

"The hallway is disaster central when rain comes," said Jonathan Trundle, assistant photography professor. "We have had a couple of moments last semester where rain poured on top of enlargers and computers. We can't move one of the computers because it's



## COVER STORY

chained, locked to the wall. I have plastic tarps ready the night before a big rain storm just in case.”

Trundle said the maintenance department tried to fix the roof, but leaks are still in the hallway and faculty dark room.

Students and professors said their equipment breaks down regularly particularly scanners and objects in the dark rooms.

“We have too much talent to go waste,” said Brittany Wynne, senior photography major.

“We aren’t bitter, but it would be nice to have a little more funding and a little more space, so nothing stops us from doing what we want to do. We don’t have enough of the lenses, easels or grain magnifiers to combat that everyone is here. It hinders us from reaching our full potential. Of course, we appreciate what we do have.”

A fellow classmate stayed positive.

“I haven’t had too many issues and problems,” said Russ Humensky, junior photography major. “Newer stuff would be good ... I haven’t let anything get to me ... not too many negatives.”

Professors said their students are resilient and find ways around equipment malfunctions.

“It’s not easy, but that’s what I want to point out about the photo students,” Harris said. “They are marching on without Cope. They deal with it the best they can without Cope’s help, and that’s a hell of a good thing.”

Trundle added that the faculty tries to fix what they can.

“We use spit and wire, or whatever it takes,” Harris said. “I think twice in 20 years we have gotten some new equipment in the labs. The university never has really helped, and it makes me frustrated. Compared to most things, it’s not costly at all. I think \$10,000 would spruce us up immensely. You buy yourself four 21-inch Macs with four gigs it’s about the same price.”

The EMC department aims to continue both film and digital photography.

“We aren’t planning to drop the film aspect, and we will probably be able to move most of the sinks,” Pittard said. “There is a move toward digital, and we are constrained at the moment because we need more digital lab space. We don’t have enough ... On the film side, I think it has its value. You would miss out if you didn’t have the experience. I love photography. We are about content, and you can’t survive without photography.”

Even though the building’s appearance could hurt student recruitment, professors said that because the program offers film and digital, it is attractive.

Most photography programs are housed within art departments. MTSU almost followed suit about 20 years ago, thinking the concentration was “too creative” for the mass communication program.

“I have never

understood how this was happening,” Harris said. “I still have the documentation that was signed all the way to the president that we were supposed to go to art. I am glad we are still in mass communication, and Billy Pittard has supported photo passionately.”

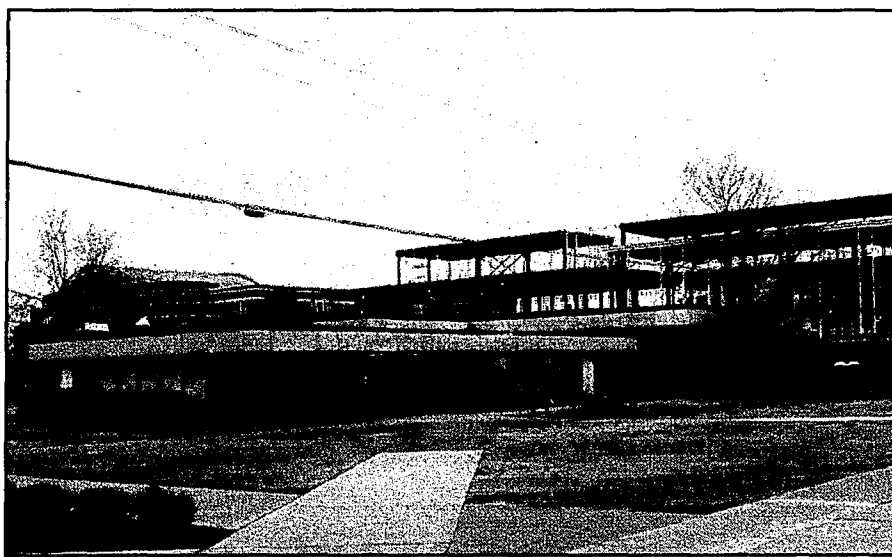
The Baldwin Gallery experienced complications because of the Ned McWhorter Learning Resource Center renovations. Harold Baldwin, former professor and gallery namesake, donated \$100,000 for the gallery’s move inside the mass communication building. While the gallery is in transition, students and faculty are compiling a detailed spreadsheet to catalog the thousands of pieces of archived art.

The art is uninsured, because state universities have not had the funding to cover fine art collections until now. According to Jimison, the gallery looked at appraising the archive three years ago, priced at \$16,000. The gallery hopes to digitize the archive to cut the price in half.

Construction for the gallery starts this summer. After its completion, the gallery board will revisit insurance funding.

“There is a new awareness, and we hope that will make things better,” Harris said. “I do think that President McPhee is much more aware of what will go on, and he has newfound interests. I don’t mean to be harsh, but for too long it has been lacking support from Cope.”

“In all honesty, you have to look at the photography department and say, ‘No, it has not been supported by the university properly at all.’”



Top: The MTSU photography building with the new science building being constructed in the background. Bottom: Basic darkroom inside the photography building. Photos by Matt Masters.

## RANTS AND RAVES

**April 3**  
Linear Downfall  
The End  
2219 Elliston Pl.,  
Nashville  
9 p.m.  
\$5



A trend exists among bands in Nashville: Everyone wants that “dirty-rock” sound, which leaves us with 300 bands who look and sound the same. So when a band like Linear Downfall comes along, it’s really hard not to love them. The band combines experimental and psychedelic rock, creating a

sound that is unique and refreshing. The band’s distinctive sound stems from a love of unconventional music.

In 2009, the band released their first record *Daydreaming At Night*, and grew in number when band member Will Hicks joined the party. Their sophomore album *Gloomillume* was released

in 2010, and in 2012 Linear Downfall added their final member, Dom Marcoaldi, and debuted their third record *Fragmental Hippocampus*. Each album combines electronic music with samples of violins and stringed instruments, resulting in a sound similar to Of Montreal.

**April 4**  
Denison Witmer  
12th and Porter  
114 12th Ave N.,  
Nashville  
8 p.m.  
\$10



You would think 15 years into a musical career would be a good time to switch things up a little. Bands have a certain expectation that comes with being a seasoned musician. People expect new styles and a fresh sound now and then.

However, for folk artist Denison Witmer, this is not

the case. Witmer released his first album *Safe Away* in 1998, and has been building his repertoire as an artist ever since. That doesn’t mean his music has gotten better over time, it just means he continues to make it.

Witmer is not completely talentless; his voice is decent and he plays the guitar, but

his music definitely does not leave the listener wanting more.

His lyrics and sound are cookie-cutter. Do yourself a favor, and save the \$10.

**April 4**  
“Django Unchained”  
Student Union  
Theater (208)  
7-10 p.m.  
\$2



Quentin Tarantino is known for creating films not easily forgotten. “Reservoir Dogs,” “Pulp Fiction,” “Kill Bill” and he has done it again.

“Django Unchained,” another Tarantino film that will be talked about for decades, is playing in the Student Union Theater.

The film, starring Jamie Foxx, Leonardo DiCaprio, Christoph Waltz and Kerry Washington, is set in the antebellum South. The movie centers on Django, (Foxx) a freed slave who is sold away from his wife, Broomhilda (Washington). Determined to find her, Django sets out on a quest across the United

States with a bounty hunter (Waltz) to rescue her from the plantation owner, Calvin Candie (DiCaprio), who she was sold to.

Nominated for five Academy Awards, “Django Unchained” paints a picture of the cruelty of slavery, while also telling the story of a love that stops for nothing.

**April 5**  
Midnight Movie  
Madness: “Army of  
Darkness”  
Student Union  
Theater (208)  
11:59 p.m.- 3 a.m.  
Free with MT ID



We’ve all seen those movies that are successful because of how ridiculous they are. They’re the movies that should be ripped apart for poor acting and awful plot lines, but instead are beloved for the same reasons. You know the ones: “Napoleon Dynamite,” “Zoolander” and “Monty Python and the Holy

Grail.”

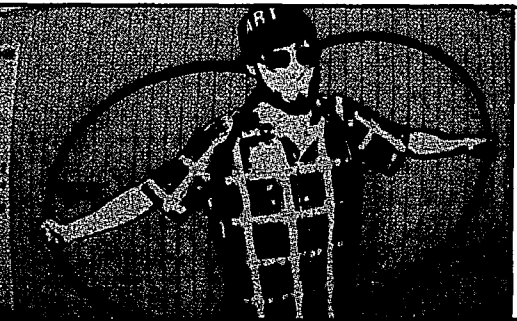
However, some films are just plain awful. “Army of Darkness” is the third installment in the “Evil Dead” trilogy. The movie was directed by acclaimed director Sam Raimi — the only part of “Army of Darkness” that is even remotely impressive.

It follows Ash Williams,

the trilogy’s protagonist, as he battles the undead in an attempt to get back to the present after getting stuck in the middle ages.

If the worst Kung Fu movie imaginable and a terrible zombie movie got together and had a love child, it would be “Army of Darkness.”

**April 5**  
This Is Art  
12th and Porter  
114 12th Ave N.,  
Nashville  
9 p.m.  
\$5



With the growing popularity of artists like Deadmau5 and Skrillex, electronic music is getting more recognition in mainstream culture than ever before. Pop artists like Ke\$ha and Britney Spears are using synthesizers and sampling on their albums, and bands like M83 are becoming widely known

and featured in Victoria’s Secret commercials. This Is Art is just another example of electronic music at its finest. This Is Art is the alias of Art Webb, a bassist and electronic producer hailing from Nashville. Webb’s passion for music began when he was 14 years old. Young Webb listened to Jimi

Hendrix’s album *Electric Ladyland* and was hooked — he had to create music of his own. Webb finds inspiration in artists ranging from Kurt Cobain to RJD2. In 2004, Webb released his first record *Fetal Myth of Psyche*. This Is Art’s sound, a mix between STS9 and Passion Pit, is worth a listen.

# 'The Next Day': Not your average over-the-hill comeback

By Jay Powell  
Features editor

Whenever an artist returns after a prolonged absence, the resulting album and/or tour are typically met with enthusiasm.

It's an exciting time. Mad hysteria is on message boards, but artists never live up to the level of anticipation and expectation. Eventually, the album is written off as a halfhearted attempt to recapture what once made musicians so great and lack in genuine integrity.

David Bowie is a different kind of artist. His work has always transcended genre, and he is challenging expectation in the art of sound and vision. His music was innovative in the glam movement of the 1970s and reinvented how we thought music could sound.

Upon release of the new album's artwork, a defacing of his 1977 album *Heroes*, some were skeptical about whether their favorite thin white duke had suffered a bad case of cynicism during his decade-long absence.

His new album, *The Next Day*, takes us into his later years and reminds us that he still cares about music. It gives his fans a much-needed refresher course on why he is one of the world's most respected musicians.

On January 8, Bowie's 66th birthday, he shocked the world by releasing his first single in almost 10 years, "Where Are We Now?" The song was slow and



A classic yet aged sound combine to create Bowie's latest album. Photo courtesy of Facebook.

moody. The video was confusing, and fans were left scratching their heads as to why he resorted to the use of autotune for his vocals.

Thankfully, the rest of the album is classic Bowie and pushes the boundaries to give us something fresh to overanalyze for years to come. With *The Next Day*, Bowie reassures doubters that he still takes his music seriously and isn't phoning it in during his twilight years.

One thing that has made Bowie so popular throughout the years is his ability to transcend genre and appeal to more than one kind of audience.

On *The Next Day*, he explores rock ("The Next Day," "You Will Set The World On Fire"), jazz/funk ("Dirty Boys"), psychedelic rock ("I'd Rather Be High") and pop ("Boss of Me"), among others.

## Scary Monsters.

It is uncertain if we will see future Bowie releases – God knows the world needs a few like it. The fact that

fans now have 17 new songs to memorize is a testament unto itself. Bowie swore off playing live after a near fatal heart attack during

a stop on his "Reality Tour" in 2004. In the meantime, the world can rejoice a new album exists by the timeless rock musician. ■

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## The 90s meet the millennium



Justin Timberlake, the "Boy Meets World" cast and Destiny's Child are trying to catch up with their fans in the 21st century. Photos courtesy of Facebook.

**By Jane Horne  
Arts & Entertainment  
editor**

For the first time in our generation, we are watching our tween and teen entertainment become "old."

Our favorite Saturday morning television shows have been replaced by pre-teen dramas with bad acting, and Justin Bieber and One Direction are the new N'Sync and Backstreet Boys.

The fact that the memories of our childhood are now 20-plus years old could be the explanation for "90's nostalgia" that inspires excitement and eye rolls. However, this strategy is probably another marketing ploy to earn already rich people more money.

From 1993 to 2000, teens everywhere fell in love with Cory Matthews, the beautiful Topanga Lawrence and resident bad boy Shawn Hunter. Earlier this year, Disney Channel announced the sequel to "Boy Meets World."

"Girl Meets World"

will pick up with the story Cory and Topanga's daughter, and Ben Savage and Danielle Fishel will return to their former roles. The original producer, Michael Jacobs, is behind the sequel.

Other cast member involvement has not been announced — Mr. Feeny is confirmed present — but longtime fans of the show can only hope.

But are past fans the target for "Girl Meets World?" It is the Disney Channel after all. When the show does air, sure, some kids will tune in, but parents sitting down with kids to watch is more likely.

The 90's nostalgia marketing ploy isn't just centered around television shows.

Destiny's Child was used to increase hype to draw more viewers to this year's Super Bowl. Their recently released "new album" excited fans only to severely disappoint them with a kind-of-OK new original song on an album filled with overlooked love ballads from back

in their heyday.

Justin Timberlake — who, let's face it, is a child of the 90s — had to have known what he was doing when he surprised fans with his album after a seven-year hiatus.

And even Fall Out Boy is regenerating fan excitement. Although they didn't enter the music scene until 2003 and fizzled out four years later, there is no denying that FOB fans are the same ones who encompass 90's kid stereotypes — you know, the ones who tried their hand at guy-liner in middle school instead of popping collars and donning those hideous Birkenstocks. That guy-liner will inevitably come back during the upcoming tour.

These seemingly innovative ideas come with downfalls. The nostalgia associated with bands and television shows of decades past allow our generation to get excited and momentarily retreat back to childhood in-

Continue on page 13

## New wave finds The Strokes



# THE STROKES

The new sounds by The Strokes pleases some fans but trips up others. Photo courtesy of Facebook.

**By Claire Osburn  
Assistant Arts &  
Entertainment editor**

Every new album by The Strokes has come with a musical treat. The Strokes have satisfied our generation's rock-and-roll taste with their heavy, New York sound since the release of their first EP, *The Modern Age*, in 2001.

However, the boys get experimental on their latest album, *Comedown Machine*.

This record, like 2011's *Angles*, was formed as a collaboration of ideas from all five band members. Frontman Julian Casablancas even recorded

his vocals with the rest of the band this time at New York's iconic Electric Lady Studios.

The Strokes' fifth album marks the end of their five-year contract with record label RCA, whose logo serves as the album artwork. A lesser fan might confuse the acronym for the album's title.

Casablancas whines, screams and croons his way through the 11 tracks, totaling the 38 minutes that make up *Comedown Machine*.

Album opener "Tap Out" epitomizes Casablancas' love of 80's new wave.

"Somehow we don't have to know each

other's names," Casablancas sings, solidifying the band's rockstar status.

The upbeat, synth-rock rhythm appears on other tracks like "One Way Trigger" — Albert Hammond Jr. and Nick Valensi still manage to sneak in some Strokes-esque guitar riffs — and title track "80's Comedown Machine," a softer rock ballad.

Devouring the album in one sitting is difficult. The tracks jump from genre to genre, but at least it ensures that listener boredom won't be an issue.

"All the Time,"

Continue on page 13

MILLENNIUM from page 12

nocence as we struggle with graduating college, finding jobs, getting married and having kids.

This situation opens the door for harsh and often unnecessary criticism. Fans expect the shows and the music to have the exact themes of honesty and angst instead of what is produced in today's vastly different entertainment industry. It is essential to keep in mind that while we grew up and changed so did our childhood icons.

Keep expectations low as new albums drop and television premieres draw near. They're still the same people, just a decade and then some older. ■

NEW WAVE from page 12

*Comedown Machine's* first single, is reminiscent of the classic Strokes' sound.

In the best song on the record, "Welcome to Japan," Casablancas sings over a tune that causes involuntary grooving.

"I didn't wanna notice, didn't know the gun was loaded, didn't really know this, what kind of a\*\*hole drives a lotus?"

The Strokes get dirty on punk-rock tune "50/50." "I will say don't judge me!" screams Casablancas over Fabrizio Moretti's drumming, which can actually be heard on this track.

Nikolai Fraiture rounds out the five-some and rocks the bass guitar, although the pulsating electronic

beats have a hard time sharing the spotlight.

The musicianship of the band is something to be admired. It's too bad the vocals are all over the place. Casablancas' voice is difficult to understand because it is drowned out by the band, and it ranges from over-dubbed to distorted to falsetto, especially on "Chances," the album's break-up slow-burner.

The record ends with a hard-to-listen ditty titled "Call It Fate, Call It Karma." I recommend pressing the skip button on this too-dreamy tune.

As a whole, the album is fun, despite its experimental nature and estrangement from the sound I fell in love with in the first place.

But we have to let our kids grow up at some point, right? ■

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# Real cost of United States-Middle East war is immeasurable

**By Alex Harris**  
Opinions editor

It has been 10 years since American boots first touched ground in Iraq, and it's been longer since America adopted a war mentality in the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001.

It's very likely that many of the young 2013 high school American graduates have no memory of this nation at peace. In this period of time, 6,648 United States military service members were killed. Estimates of the wars' effect to the local civilian populations are much worse — between 158,000 to 202,000 killed, and millions of Iraqis displaced within their own nation, as well as around the world as refugees.

There have been more than 50,000 military members wounded, and many of them came home with missing limbs, broken bodies and broken minds, trying to pick up the pieces of their lives.

Additionally, since 2004, the number of military suicides has climbed dramatically, and in 2012, the average was estimated to be almost one military suicide a day, according to National Public Radio.

The monetary cost to the U.S. of these dual wars is more than \$1.4 trillion, according to CostofWar.com, a number that is only going to continue to climb.



Alex Harris

According to a recent Harvard University study, the cost will likely grow to between \$4 trillion and \$6 trillion, fueled by the cost of medical care for the more than 50,000 wounded, plus the cost of repairs and replacements to a military force worn down from 12 years of war and conflict.

The monetary values are only a part of the overall cost to our nation resulting from these prolonged, ill-advised military conflicts.

The invasion of Iraq, the bungling of the mission in Afghanistan and the subsequent military occupation have caused the U.S. a loss in stature and respect across the globe. These incidents also caused a growing cynicism among its own citizens.

America, once able to portray itself as the best hope for freedom, is now in the wake of the Iraq war and the Afghanistan occupation. The country seems increasingly imperialistic as it involves itself more in the affairs of other nations in the

region.

The U.S. has military personnel in 148 countries around the world, with more than 650 actual military bases in 38 countries. As a part of the war on terror, our nation's drone program has been active in not only Afghanistan, but also Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia.

Now, in the eyes of citizens around the globe, the U.S. is associated with terrorism as the terrorist, not the victim. In many ways we are viewed as the foreign occupier, not the savior; the imperial hegemon, not the revolutionaries.

Our involvement in nation-toppling and rebuilding in Iraq has yielded another unforeseen circumstance in the subsequent rise of Iran, a country with which we already have a contentious history of interventionist policies.

Iran and Iraq had been rivals in the region, always in a conflict with each other that kept them both occupied. Now, with the removal of Iraq as a military power, U.S.-Iran relations are increasingly contentious, and the actions being taken can only lead to more conflict.

All of these costs — lives lost, bodies destroyed, money wasted and stature decimated — are the costs produced from more than a decade of continuous warfare.

And for what? Some arbitrary idea of "American interests" in the region? Why should

the citizens of the nations around the world care what the interests of any other nation are?

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the U.S. became the most powerful nation in the world. Some would argue that this gives us carte blanche to impose our will on other nations across the globe.

However, these interventionist actions only really serve to undermine our previously substantial global influence.

Instead of viewing our strength as something that protects us from foreign involvement and simply an example of prosperity and governance to the

other nations of the world, we use it as a bludgeon to influence other nations onto the path we think is best.

The short-sighted pursuit of our "national interests" has turned much of the the world against us, and no change in foreign policy is in view. Even at a time of involvement in two prolonged wars, we continue to saber-rattle at Iran and Syria, and we aided in the overthrow of Qaddafi in Libya, a formerly American-tolerated dictator, during the Arab Spring.

A new drone base was also recently established in Niger in support of the French efforts to quell the internal problems in

Mali.

In light of the continued interventionism and the growing costs resulting from that policy, it would behoove our nation's leaders to question the foreign policy of defensive war and to remember that all empires come to an end when boundaries are overstretched.

Our leaders should also question whether they think the cost is worth the results, because the lives of those willing to defend this nation from its enemies and protect its citizens, are worth far more than some political interests in a foreign nation.

*Alex Harris is a Marine Corps veteran, and was deployed to Afghanistan in 2009.*

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**Leon Alligood, Sidelines adviser, Box 8 or deliver applications to The Center for Innovation in Media.**

**Application deadline: April 8th at 4 pm.**

**Editor selection interviews will be held April 12th.**

# Blue Raider football hits the ground running with spring practice

**By Mark Mize**  
Sports editor

A talented stable of running backs are among several offensive positives for Middle Tennessee football, as it prepares for its inaugural season in Conference-USA this fall.

After the graduation of D.D. Kyles and a season-ending injury sustained by workhorse Benny Cunningham, the backfield is now one that coaches say they are confident in, thanks to a breakout performance by true freshman Jordan Parker and those fighting for a position behind him on the depth chart.

"Jordan is a really good back," said Rick Stockstill, MT head coach. "I think he'll get better because he's really humble. He's got a really good work ethic, he cares, he takes care of his body. The future is bright for him."

Parker set the school freshman rushing record last season when he ran for 851 yards and three touchdowns despite sharing the bulk of his carries with Cunningham early on. He averaged just under 130 yards per game throughout the season's final four contests, which included three 100-yard performances.

However, the team's reserve units received a bit of a shake up this spring due to a pair of position changes and the signing of two incoming freshmen, who were among the most heralded of this spring's recruiting class.

Last year's third-leading rusher, Drayton Calhoun, made the shift from the offensive to the defensive backfield when it was announced he would line up at defensive back this spring.

Stockstill pointed to the team's need at the

little bit of him seeing an opportunity to play more," Stockstill said.

Former Smyrna standout Jeremiah Bryson could potentially be seeing more time at running back this fall. The redshirt-sophomore, who moved

offseason.

Finally, among current players on the roster, Reggie Whatley and William Pratcher will look to put their veteran experience to use at the tailback position.

Pratcher, a redshirt-senior, found himself

where he took a 96-yard kick return to the house last season to defeat rival WKU on ESPNU in November.

"I don't think you can make it through a season with just one primary back. You like to come out of August

has supplanted the starter to lead the team in rushing in both 2011 and 2012. Parker could be forced to fend off incoming freshmen Shane

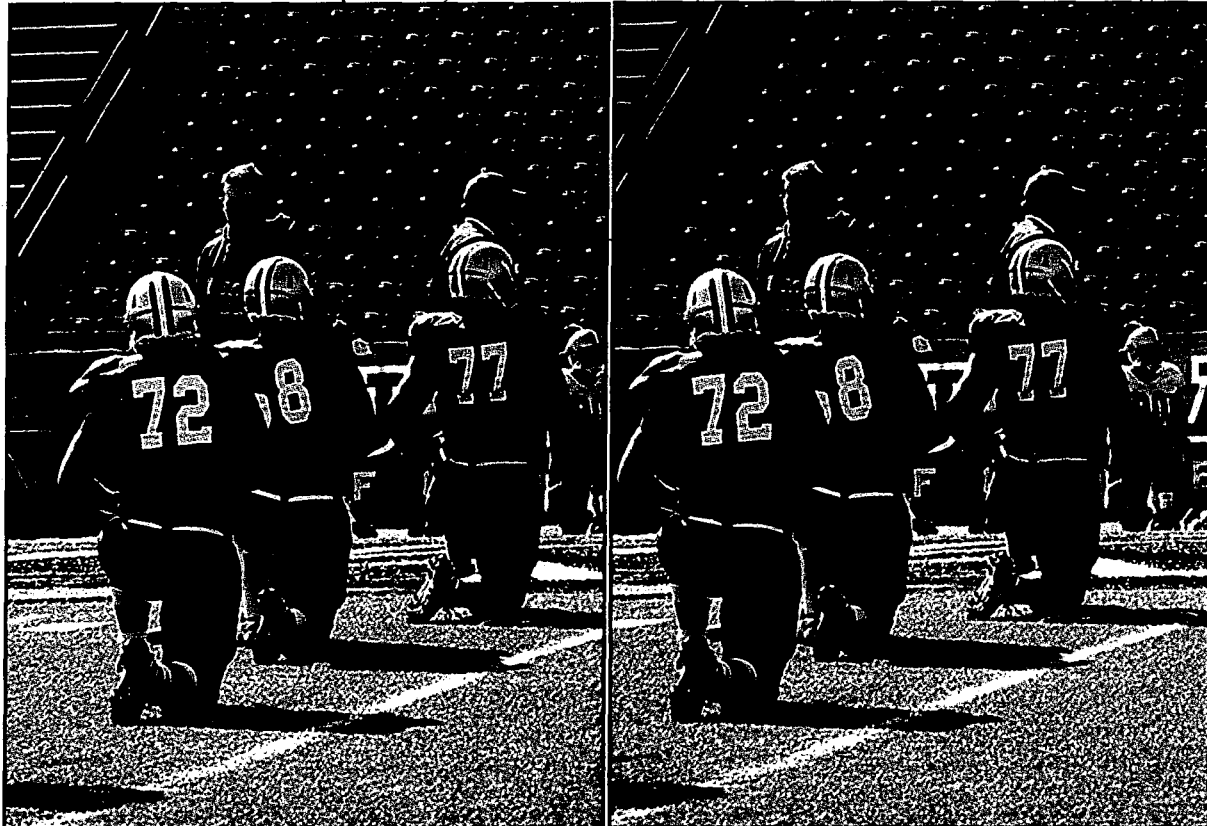
Tucker and Kamani Thomas when the pair of three-star recruits arrive on campus this fall.

"Right now, I think those two guys are very good running backs. We're excited to get them here and throw them in the mix and see what they can do ... I think they're going to be excellent running backs here," Stockstill said.

Thomas, the 13th ranked all-purpose back in the nation according to Rivals.com, finished his high school career in Dallas, Ga., with 4,484 rushing yards and 48 touchdowns throughout four years. Tucker, who turned down offers from the likes of Kentucky and Louisville to attend MTSU, capped off his senior year at Memphis University School with more than 1,200 total yards and 10 scores.

The Blue Raiders still have almost three weeks of practice left before the annual Blue-White spring game April 20. Each back on the roster will look to use that time to audition for extended playing time, as the team prepares for their new C-USA competition this fall.

"I tell them all the time, 'Play with a chip on your shoulder. Play with something to prove.' We have a sign in the locker room that says, 'Prove It Everyday,'" Stockstill said. ■



Jeremiah Bryson, who rushed for 1,515 yards and 19 touchdowns as a senior at Smyrna High School, is among several candidates at running back this year for MT. The play of the offensive line could prove pivotal to the success of the Blue Raiders' rushing offense in 2013. Photo by Jaclyn Edmondson.

position and Calhoun's struggles rushing the ball last year as reasons for the move. He was quick to point out that this would not be an entirely new position for the former LSU transfer.

"He didn't get on the field any at LSU, but he wasn't having to relearn the position entirely. I think it's probably a

from the back field to line up with receivers for much of last season after injuries plagued the outside unit, could move back to his original position this season. Bryson has already wowed onlookers with a pair of long touchdown runs in spring practice, and coaches say he has reportedly added both size and strength this

buried on the depth chart last year after he led the team in rushing in 2011.

Whatley, a change-of-pace back, has seen the field in multiple facets of the game over his first three seasons, but he is still listed as a running back. The redshirt-junior has lined up at tailback, receiver and as a return specialist

saying, 'This guy is going to get the majority of the reps,' but he can't carry the ball every second of the game ... I feel really good about our backfield, and the people we've got back there," Stockstill said.

The seventh-year head coach acknowledged that Parker is the leader out of the gates, but an underclassman



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