Traditions help launch African American History Month at MTSU

from Staff Reports

Ready for praise and celebration? The traditional kickoff events for MTSU’s African American History Month celebration every winter, the annual Gospel Music Extravaganza and the Unity Luncheon, will offer plenty of both as participants honor good works throughout the community.

This year’s MTSU AAHM theme is “From Slavery to Freedom: Africans in the Americas.” There will be a variety of events—music, lectures and social gatherings—throughout the month of February and March.

The Extravaganza, now in its seventh year, will feature all-male choirs, groups, solos, spiritual dancing, readings and modeling African attire.

Most importantly, the event, set for Saturday, Feb. 3, beginning at 6 p.m. in Tucker Theatre, is a benefit for 13-year-old Jamise Marable of Murfreesboro, a longtime AAHM event performer, and MTSU’s Study Abroad Program. Jamise lost her hands and feet in 2006 from complications following pneumonia and kidney failure and is now learning to use prosthetic limbs.

Admission to the Gospel Music Extravaganza is $5 per person. Children under 6 will be admitted free.

On Tuesday, Feb. 6, the annual Unity Luncheon once again will recognize and honor select “unsung heroes” in the area.

See ‘Celebrating’ page 5

MIMIC research facility will be unveiled Feb. 2
by Randy Weiler

The realization of biology professor emeritus Marion Wells’ dream and the “determination” of chemistry professor and administrative director Andrienne Friedli have led to the newest technology to hit the MTSU campus.

The MTSU Interdisciplinary Microanalysis and Imaging Center grand opening will be held Friday, Feb. 2, from 2 until 3:30 p.m. in the Forrest Hall Annex behind the Keathley University Center, Friedli said.

MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee will preside at the ribbon-cutting ceremony, which will be held at 2:30 p.m. in the annex’s west wing.

Faculty, staff and students interested in the research center are encouraged to attend.

See ‘MIMIC’ page 5

Retired professor still watching Washington

by Gina K. Logue

Of all the issues tackled by the 110th Congress in its first 100 hours, one measure received scant media attention.

By a vote of 416-0, the House of Representatives agreed to overhaul the board that supervises the congressional page program. A House Ethics Committee report issued in December acknowledged that the leaders of the 109th Congress were negligent in failing to protect pages from improper advances.

Once upon a time in America, things were very, very different. Frank Essex began his work as a congressional page to U.S. Rep. W.F. Norrell on Jan. 10, 1944. In a Jan. 20 letter to his mother in Stuttgart, Ark., young Essex wrote, “Mr. Norrell wasn’t there, but his secretary fixed me up and got me over to the Capitol. And then I made out with the assistance of the other pages.”

The expressions “fixed me up” and “made out” had much more innocuous meanings in 1944.

When Congressman Mark Foley resigned his seat as the representative of Florida’s 16th District in September after it was revealed that Foley had sent suggestive messages to one or more male pages, Essex could only shake his head.

“Being negligent, as they had to have been to let that kind of thing unfold, is just unconscionable,” says the former MTSU political science professor.

By contrast, Essex has only golden memories of an era in which he walked among and served the giants of American politics and rambled freely on foot throughout the District

See ‘Professor’ page 7

Cultivating Community

MTSU’s Study Abroad Program. Jamise lost her hands and feet in 2006 from complications following pneumonia and kidney failure and is now learning to use prosthetic limbs.

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See ‘Professor’ page 7
FOR THE RECORD

Streaming video, the TBR Media Consortium & you
by Gail Fedak

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creamin’, streamin’ video is here! It’s FMG (Films Media Group) OnDemand, brought to you by your friendly neighborhood Tennessee Board of Regents Media Consortium. The TBR Media Consortium has provided access to a core collection of 29 streaming videos for all TBR schools. This service serves a dual purpose. First, Regents Online Degree Program faculty and students with high-speed Internet connection have asynchronous access to these titles, so RODP students need not travel to the nearest TBR library to complete viewing assignments. Second, faculty and students in traditional classes have access to an additional video-delivery method.

One of the most exciting aspects of FMG OnDemand is that faculty may customize the titles to identify relevant content and organize it to meet teaching needs. Titles are available at 300 kbps and 1.2 Mbps, depending on the user’s Internet connection and use of a PC or Mac. Playlists, a personalized list of videos or excerpts, are easy to create. To use FMG OnDemand, faculty need to set up an account by contacting Jean Reese at jreese@mtsu.edu. Instructional Media Resources staff are available to provide orientation for individual or small groups of faculty. Orientation sessions also may be scheduled with Jean.

Chartered in 1979, the TBR Media Consortium established the means for TBR colleges and universities to purchase educational media at reduced prices. The Media Consortium’s executive director negotiates with vendors to secure discounts and educational public performance and duplication rights for media products, including telecourses, that TBR schools purchase and license. Originally, the Media Consortium licensed off-air recordings and transfers of 16mm films to 3/4” U-matic videocassettes. When VHS became the prevailing video format and prices dropped to more affordable levels, the TBR schools began purchasing programs directly from contracted vendors at discounted prices. While that practice continues, the TBR Media Consortium has moved one more step forward by making streaming video a reality for all TBR colleges and universities. Since its inception, the Media Consortium has saved TBR schools more than $2 million. Of that, MTSU realized savings of more than $250,000 last year on VHS and DVD purchases and an additional $7,700 savings on video streaming.

Many of the distributors who contract with the Media Consortium extend their discounts to individual departments as well. Departments

See ‘Video’ page 3

Satellite/Webcasting programs growing
by Randy Weiler

MTSU’s Satellite and Webcasting Center’s students’ enrichment programs and teachers’ professional development programs continue to grow across the state.

Live Webcasting became available statewide last fall, said Dr. Connie Schmidt, director of the Instructional Technology and Support Center.

Williamson and Knox counties recently agreed to join the other 14 city and county school systems that participate.

“We received excellent response to our Webcasting efforts, with teachers and students across the state participating in programs by Internet,” Schmidt said, adding that teachers need access to high-speed Internet and Windows Media Player. (A free plug-in is available from the center’s Web site).

This spring’s student programs, which will air live at 9 a.m. CST on Tuesdays starting Jan. 30, will cover a wide range of topics including history, social studies, geography, science, college entrance exam preparation, mental health and agriculture, Schmidt said.

“Many of our spring programs, such as ‘Paris: Walking the City of Lights’ on Feb. 27, ‘Discovering Primary Sources at the Tennessee State Library and Archives’ on March 27 and ‘Matisse, Picasso, and the School of Paris: Masterpieces from the Baltimore Museum of Art’ on April 3 make cross-curricular links among social studies, reading, writing and the arts,” Schmidt said.

Four programs addressing the environment, conservation and alternative fuel sources will be of interest to science and agriculture students, she added. These include “What is the Big Deal About the Rainforest?” Feb. 6, “Fueling the Future: Building Engines with Alternative Fuel Sources” on March 13, “Where Does Your Electricity Come From?” April 10 and “Zoning Out in the Glades” on April 17.

Presenters include educators from the Frist Center for the Visual Arts, the Tennessee State Library and Archives, the Mental Health Association of Middle Tennessee, the Southern Energy Conservation Initiative, regional K-12 schools and MTSU.

The teachers’ programs, which will air at 3:30 p.m. Thursdays starting Feb. 1, present excellent opportunities for earning in-service credit, Schmidt said.

Some of the programs are content-area specific, such as “Promoting Student Thinking: Using Poetry to Scaffold Student Creativity” Feb. 15, “Physical Activities on a Shoe-String Budget” March 15, “Pi in Your Face: Planning and Implementing a Family Math Night” March 29, “Becoming a Rocket Scientist: Getting Your Students Excited About Careers in Space” April 12 and “Inquiring Minds Want to Know” on April 19, she said.

Presenters include MTSU faculty and educators from the Marshall Space Flight Center/NASA, the Tennessee Department of Education, the Mental Health Association of Middle Tennessee, the Tennessee State Library and Archives and several K-12 school systems.

Tara Joyce (Center for Dyslexia), Cindy Cliche (Campus School) and Drs. Larry Burriss (journalism); Kathy Burris, Bobbie Sloley and Jeremy Winters (elementary and special education); Cliff Ricketts (agribusiness and agriscience) and Kim Cleary Sadler (biology) will be MTSU presenters.

For a schedule, visit www.mtsu.edu/~itsc.

Recognizing excellence

Groundhog Day Luncheon gets new digs

Fan demand for tickets sends baseball fund-raiser into Alumni Memorial Gym

from MT Media Relations

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he 34th Annual Groundhog Day Luncheon to benefit Blue Raider baseball has been set for Friday, Feb. 2, at 11:30 a.m., with a change of venue on tap this year.

The event will take place at Alumni Memorial Gym on the MTSU campus. The luncheon is hosted by the Blue Raider baseball team and the Blue Raider Athletic Association to kick off the 2007 season.

The change in site was made to accommodate more patrons for the event that draws more than 500 fans each year to hear head coach Steve Peterson talk about the upcoming Blue Raider baseball season.

Last year, the program was dedicated to kicking off a capital campaign for a new stadium and amenities for the baseball program, an aspect that will come to fruition for the 2008 season.

“This luncheon is a great way to begin getting the fans excited about the season,” said Peterson.

“We have such great baseball fans at Middle Tennessee and it’s good to see the numbers keep increasing each year,” said Dr. Connie Schmidt, director of the Instructional Technology and Support Center.

That’s the biggest reason for moving the event—we outgrew the Tennessee Room at the James Union Building. Growth is always a good sign.”

The meal includes ham hocks, white beans, tomato salad, green onions, corn bread, chocolate cake and ice cream. All tickets for the event this year are $20.

Reservations may be made for the Groundhog Day Luncheon by calling the BRAA office at 615-898-2210 or the Middle Tennessee Ticket Office at 615-898-2103 or 1-888-YES-MTSU.

by Gail Fedak

GREAT WORK!—Christopher Crowell, left, chair of MTSU’s Employee Recognition Committee, presents Emma Hayes, grant clerk for Accounting Services, with the Fourth Quarter 2006 Secretarial/Clerical Award as Accounting Services Director Tim Hurst looks on. The Employee Recognition Committee salutes staffers who make outstanding contributions and demonstrate excellence in their roles. To nominate an administrative, secretarial/clerical, classified or technical/service co-worker for the quarterly award program, download an employee recognition nomination form at http://hr.mtsu.edu/forms.htm and submit it to Human Resource Services in CAB 217.

photo by J. Intintoli

by Randy Weiler

Photo by Randy Weiler

Groundhog Day Luncheon gets new digs

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**Student researchers to present posters at capitol**

**by Randy Weiler**

Six MTSU students will be among 36 statewide participating in the second Posters at the State Capitol, which will be held Wednesday, Feb. 7, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. in Nashville, said Dr. Tom Cheatham, dean of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences and event coordinator.

“I think it will be a great day,” Cheatham said of the posters event. “The first year (2006) was tremendous. The students had a terrific time. They left the capitol with a real sense of helping the universities spread the word about research. I think the legislature will be more comfortable with our students being there this year.”

The students will try to meet individually with their local legislators, have lunch with various legislators, have the poster session and also pose for a photo with Gov. Phil Bredesen, Cheatham said.

MTSU’s student presenters will include:
- Collin Davey, a senior English major from Murfreesboro, whose poster will be titled “Morphology, Mattiere & Marie.” His faculty mentor is Monica Wright.
- Lacey Fleming, a senior anthropology major from Nashville, whose poster will be titled “The Role of the Domesticated Dog in Prehistoric Middle Tennessee.” Her mentor is Tanya M. Peres.
- Brandy Dacus, a senior anthropology major from Nashville, whose poster will be titled “Lithic Analysis from Castalian Springs Mound Site.” Her mentor is Shannon Hedge.
- Teri Proctor, a senior psychology major from Murfreesboro, whose poster will be titled “College Adjustment & Retention in First Semester Traditional Students.” Her mentor is Michelle Boyer-Pennington.
- Adam Shulman, a senior physics major from Shelbyville, whose poster will be titled “Stretching of an Equine Red Blood Cell Using Optical Tweezers.” His mentor is Daniel Erenso.
- Richard Sharpe, a December 2006 graduate who majored in biology and graduate student concentrating in genetics and biotechnology from Antioch, whose poster will be titled “Preparatory Steps for Daucus carota Transformation with an O-Antigen Gene from Shigella sonnei for Possible Vaccine Use.” His mentor is Bruce Cahoon.

McNair Scholars Program Director Diane Miller is coordinating MTSU’s student presenters, Cheatham said.

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**Exemplary service**

Thirty-five-year employees, shown at right, also were honored. From left to right are professors Lon Nuell, art; Catherine Burnette, mathematical sciences; Thenaritis Ellis, economics and finance; and James Lea, mathematical sciences. Not pictured in the 35-year group are Joe Alexander, building services, Kiyoshi Kawaihito, economics and finance; and Ed Kimbrell, journalism.

For a list of all the Employee Service Awards honorees by division and length of service, visit www.mtsunews.com.

**TIMELY RECOGNITION—MTSU recently recognized employees with 10 or more years of service at the annual Employee Service Awards ceremony in the Tennessee Room of the James Union Building. Among those honored were staffers with 40 years’ service to the university; shown at left are professors Phil Harper, accounting; Jim Cook, physics and astronomy; Mario Perez-Reilly, political science; and Aubrey Moseley, educational leadership.**

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**Stones River Symposium set**

Mark your calendar for the fourth Legacy of Stones River Symposium, to be held in Murfreesboro Saturday, March 31, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. “Remembering the Civil War” will address battlefield preservation and Civil War commemoration during the 80th anniversary year of the establishment of Stones River National Battlefield.

The symposium will consist of scholarly talks and living-history programs. Morning sessions at the Rutherford County Courthouse will feature several presentations, while afternoon activities at the battlefield will include tours of the National Cemetery and walks to the Hazen Brigade Monument (the nation’s oldest intact Civil War memorial).

Sponsors of “Remembering the Civil War” include the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University and MTSU’s Department of History. Registration is $10, and more information is available on the Web at histpres.mtsu.edu/hcnrwar or www.nps.gov/strn or by calling 615-893-9501.

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**Video from page 2**

who purchase educational video programs are encouraged to contact me at gfedak@mtsu.edu before placing their orders to take advantage of available discounts.

IMR will purchase additional FMG titles in spring 2007 to expand the streaming offerings at MTSU. Faculty interested in requesting specific titles from the FMG streaming collection can browse and preview their titles at www.films.com. Faculty may request specific FMG titles be purchased to add to this collection for MTSU by contacting Jean or me.

As we have been doing for the past 31 years, the Instructional Media Resources staff are available to assist faculty and students in obtaining and using multiple audiovisual resources. We look forward to hearing from you!

Gail Fedak is manager of Instructional Media Resources and station manager of EREChT, the Education Resource Channel at MTSU.
TV Schedule

“Middle Tennessee Record”
Cable Channel 9
Monday-Sunday—5 p.m.
News Channel 5+
Saturday—1 p.m.

Jan. 29

Jan. 29-Feb. 1
Film: “Running with Scissors”
7 and 9:30 p.m., KUC Theater
Admission: $2 per person
For information, visit
www.mtsu.edu/~events/films.html

Jan. 30

Tuesday, Jan. 30
Murfreesboro Youth Orchestra
7 p.m., Hinton Music Hall
For information, contact:
615-898-2493.

Jan. 31

Wednesday, Jan. 31
Men’s Tennis vs. Kentucky
1:30 p.m., Racquet Club of M’bоро
For information, visit
www.goblueraiders.com
or contact: 615-898-2103.

Jan. 1

Thursday, Feb. 1
Men’s Basketball vs. Denver
7 p.m., Murphy Center
For information, visit
www.goblueraiders.com
or contact: 615-898-2103.

Feb. 2

Friday, Feb. 2
Groundhog Day Luncheon
benefiting MTSU Baseball
11:30 a.m., Alumni Memorial Gym
Tickets: $20 per person
For information, contact:
615-898-2210.

Feb. 3

Saturday, Feb. 3
Men’s Tennis vs. Virginia Tech
Noon, Racquet Club of M’bоро
For information, visit
www.goblueraiders.com
or contact: 615-898-2103.

Feb. 4

Monday, Feb. 5
Honors Lecture Series
Dr. Bob Glenn, “Sherlock Holmes: The First CSI”
3-3:55 p.m., HONR 106
For information, contact:
615-898-2152.

Feb. 5

Feb. 5-8
Film: “The Departed”
7 and 9:30 p.m., KUC Theater
Admission: $2 per person
For information, visit
www.mtsu.edu/~events/films.html

Feb. 6

Monday, Feb. 5
Honors Lecture Series
Dr. Bob Glenn, “Sherlock Holmes: The First CSI”
3-3:55 p.m., HONR 106
For information, contact:
615-898-2152.

Feb. 7

Wednesday, Feb. 7
Women’s Basketball vs. South Alabama
3 p.m., Murphy Center
For information, visit
www.goblueraiders.com
or contact: 615-898-2103.

Feb. 8

Thursday, Feb. 8
MTSU Jazz Artist Series:
A-P-S-9 (The Aliquo, Purcell, Simmons Nonet)
7:30 p.m., Hinton Music Hall
For information, contact:
615-898-2493.

Feb. 9

Friday, Feb. 9
Women’s Tennis vs. Virginia
1 p.m., Racquet Club of M’bоро
For information, visit
www.goblueraiders.com
or contact: 615-898-2103.

Feb. 10

Saturday, Feb. 10
MT Track & Cross Country
Valentine Invitational
Murry Center
For information, visit
www.goblueraiders.com
or contact: 615-898-2103.

MTSU Double Reed Day
9 a.m.-6 p.m., Hinton Music Hall
For information, contact:
615-898-2493.

Presidential Concert Series:
Blair String Quartet
7:30 p.m., Hinton Music Hall
For information, contact:
615-898-2493.

Feb. 11

Sunday, Feb. 11
Men’s Tennis vs. Louisville
Noon, Racquet Club of M’bоро
For information, visit
www.goblueraiders.com
or contact: 615-898-2103.

Women’s Basketball vs. Western Kentucky
2 p.m., Murphy Center
For information, visit
www.goblueraiders.com
or contact: 615-898-2103.

MTSU Choral Concert
3 p.m., Hinton Music Hall
For information, contact:
615-898-2493.

NEWS & FEATURES
Join ‘girl who could not wait’ for children’s performances

by Ryan Chittaphong

T he MTSU CenterStage Series will get under way in 2007 with the children’s theater production of “Ramona Quimby,” which will be presented at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 23-24 in Tucker Theatre. One of the most memorable characters in American children’s fiction will come to life on stage in this entertaining adaptation of Beverly Cleary’s beloved children’s book series. Theatergoers can follow 8-year-old Ramona through her adventurous third-grade year as she faces some of life’s difficult obstacles with wit and humor. Dr. Jette Halladay, professor of speech and theatre, did her research before selecting “Ramona Quimby” as this season’s children’s theater production.

“I visited various elementary schools to ask teachers what some of the students’ favorite books were and what they might be interested to see on stage, and ‘Ramona Quimby’ was a popular suggestion among many teachers,” she confirmed. Adapted for the stage by Obie-winning playwright Len Jenkin, the play incorporates several familiar events from the Ramona book collection. For Ramona, third grade can’t get much worse. Her teacher is angry with her and her friends make fun of her. Her father loses his job, and her mother has to go back to work. Her sister picks on her. And to top it all off, her Aunt Bea is getting married and moving to Alaska. Life just isn’t fair! But with the help of her loving family and friends, Ramona conquers life’s challenges and audiences will laugh and cheer for her.

“I’m really excited about doing the show,” Ben Dawson, a sophomore theater major who portrays Ramona Quimby, said. “I grew up watching the old Ramona cartoons when I was little, and now I get the chance to bring those characters to life on stage for children.”

Halladay said some 20 MTSU students will portray characters whose ages range from 8 years old to 70-plus.

“This show is going to be very different from other children’s productions we have done in the recent past,” Halladay said. “It deals with real family issues that children can relate to in their own lives.” “Ramona Quimby” also will be performed in daytime matinees for school groups at 9 and 10:30 a.m. Feb. 20-23.

Tickets to evening performances of “Ramona Quimby” may be purchased at the door. Ticket prices range from $4 to $8; MTSU students will be admitted free with a valid ID.

Ramona Quimby is a senior majoring in theatre performance.
by Doug Williams

The Career Center is sponsoring two distinct careers fairs next month—one for underclassmen looking for summer jobs and one for upperclassmen and alumni jump-starting a career search.

The annual Summer Jobs and Internship Fair will be on the MTSU campus from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 7. The fair will be held in the James Union Building.

“Though it’s still the middle of winter, now is a prime time for students to seek summer employment and internships that may lead to full-time careers, said Karen Austin, assistant director of the MTSU Career and Employment Center.

A new addition this year is the special room for mass communications job seekers. “This year we have a special room dedicated to the communications and broadcast industry,” Austin said. “We will easily have 10 to 12 companies, from radio stations to other communications firms, looking for students to fill summer jobs and internships.”

Austin said she expect over 60 employers to be on campus recruiting students from all majors.

“Some of the top companies in the Nashville area will be here including the Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Target, Youth Villages and the YMCA. We feel this opportunity, plus a little advance planning on the part of the students can pay big dividends in the future.”

The fair is a free service to MTSU students. Over 400 employers from business, government and education will be providing opportunities to MTSU students and alumni at the Nashville Career Center sponsoring 2 job fairs in February

‘We expect to have a large crowd again this year.’

Martha Turner
director, MTSU Career & Employment Center

McNair, Honors programs plan dual recruiting reception Jan. 31

from Staff Reports

The McNair Scholars Program and University Honors College will hold a joint recruiting reception for current MTSU students Wednesday, Jan. 31, from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. in Honors Room 106, representatives from both organizations said recently.

“(Current McNair and Honors College) students will talk about their experiences, and the deans or directors of the programs will offer a welcome and talk about general information about their programs,” said Michelle Arnold, program coordinator and adviser in the Honors College.

“It’s very informal. People in the audience will ask questions. It was a great success last year,” Arnold said either McNair Director Diane Miller or Coordinator Steve Saunders and Honors College Dean Phil Mathis or Associate Dean Scott Carnicom would discuss their programs.

Saunders said food will be provided, and the event is open to students with a 3.0 grade point average or higher and who meet respective McNair and Honors College qualifications.

20,797 return for spring ’07

First-day totals included 20,797 students enrolled in classes for the spring 2007 semester, Dr. Sherian Huddleston, associate vice provost for enrollment services, said. The Day One headcount was 350 more than the 20,447 students who attended the first day of classes Jan. 16, 2006, Huddleston said, adding that it is a 1.68 percent increase.

The 14-day census report date will be Monday, Jan. 29. Huddleston will submit final enrollment totals to the Tennessee Board of Regents that day.

Huddleston and the academic affairs and student affairs offices reported no problems as classes resumed. Lines were evident at several key places.

“I did see several people in financial aid, and in admissions, students trying to get admitted,” Huddleston said. There also was a line of students at the business office in the Cope Administration Building.

Huddleston said Jan. 29 also will be the same day students can receive a 75 percent fee refund if they drop below full time and the deadline for them to drop a course without a grade being recorded on their transcript.”

STATE FARM IS HERE—State Farm Insurance Companies recently donated funds to the MTSU Foundation for the Jennings A. Jones College of Business and the 2007 Regional Science Olympiad. C. Ron Nichols, State Farm vice president-operations for Tennessee, shown at left in the photo above left, presents a $25,000 check to Dr. Jim Burton, MTSU business dean, to enhance an endowment fund established in 2003 for an insurance professorship. In the photo above right, chemistry professor Dr. Pat Patterson, director of the Science Olympiad, joins Dr. Tom Cheatham, right, dean of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, to accept a $3,600 gift from Nichols and State Farm. Over the last 13 years, gifts to MTSU from State Farm Insurance Companies and the State Farm Foundation have amounted to nearly $1 million. The 2007 Regional Science Olympiad will be held Saturday, Jan. 24, at various campus locations. The event is a competition for middle- and high-school students; more information is available at www.mtsu.edu/~collins/ScienceOlympiad/

photos by News & Public Affairs
Jeff Gibson, assistant professor of speech and theatre at MTSU, recently was named chairman of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival’s Region IV, which includes 10 states in the southeast.

Created in 1969 by founding chairman Roger L. Stevens, the KCACTF is a national theater program currently involving 18,000 students from colleges and universities nationwide that assesses artists’ bidding for improving the quality of college theater in the United States.

“I am honored to serve such a wonderful program that truly enriches the educational experience for our students,” remarked Gibson, referring to his KCACTF regional chairman-ship. “It is a lot of work and time, but the benefits for our students make it worth every minute.”

According to its Web site, the KCACTF has grown into a network of more than 600 academic institutions throughout the coun-try, where theater departments and stu-dents showcase their work and receive outside assessment by KCACTF respondents. Through state, regional and national festivals, KCACTF participants celebrate the creative process and share experi-ences and insights within the commu-nity of theater artists.

“With funding and support from the Kennedy Center, the regional chairman coordinates the adjudica-tion of productions on the regional level,” Gibson said of his duties. The region includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Additionally, he noted, “In February of each year, a regional festi-val showcases the finest of the region’s productions and offers a vari-ety of workshops, symposia and regional award programs.”

A native of Pulaski and a 1989 graduate of Giles County High School, Gibson joined the MTSU speech and theatre faculty in 2002, where he teaches courses in arts man-agement and stage management and directs the theatre senior seminar. He’s also responsible for marketing, stage management and financial man-agement for MTSU Theatre & Dance.

From 2002 to 2006, Gibson also served as chairman of the theater division of the Tennessee Governor’s School for the Arts, a program for gifted and talented high school stu-dents from across the state.

Prior to joining MTSU, Gibson worked in the management depart-ment of the nationally acclaimed Alabama Shakespeare Festival. He received a master of fine arts degree in theater management/arts adminis-tration from the University of Alabama.
Distance runners still recovering 1 year later

by Jo Jo Freeman

Major college sports are seen by many as part of a glamorous life—TV cameras, reporters, the paparazzi, money. But the majority of collegiate athletes toil in relative anonymity before sparse crowds of family and friends.

That is, until something unforeseen happens.

Nothing could be more accurate when recounting the story of three Middle Tennessee distance runners who had their lives changed forever on a rainy and dreary afternoon one year ago. Tiffany Sawyer, Catherine Chester and Kaitlyn Hammond became the victims of a freakish accident the afternoon of Jan. 17, 2006, on South Rutherford Boulevard in Murfreesboro, with two young women tramped under an SUV and another thrown into a ditch after the accident. Chester trapped beneath the SUV. In that instant, Sawyer, Chester and Hammond went from anonymity to the Nashville news and into the hearts and minds of Blue Raider fans everywhere.

The list of ailments for each runner is long. Sawyer suffered the most extensive injuries, including a fractured right forearm, a dislocated right pelvic wing broken in half, a fractured left hip and fractured tailbone, a sprained right knee and ankle, and third degree burns on both legs around the knee. She spent two weeks in the hospital and almost a month in rehab in Nashville. The Powell, Tenn., native has three plates still in place and three scars around her knees from the burns made by the exhaust pipe on the bottom of the vehicle.

“The first question I asked was, ‘Am I paralyzed?’ Then I asked if I would run again and then if I was the worst (of the three),” Sawyer said.

“The last two answers were yes, but all that mattered at that point was they were OK,” Chester tore her anterior and posterior cruciate ligaments and her medial collateral ligament, as well as suffering a sprained ankle, fractured hip and minor concussion. Later her dentist discovered a fractured jaw that required her mouth to be wired shut for six weeks.

“I am just thankful that we are here a year later and able to do just as much physically as before,” Chester said. “Before [the accident], I took advantage of running and being able to do the things that I can do, ... Once you can’t walk, you realize how fortunate you are to be physically able to participate in normal activities, let alone running,” said Chester. “I say our families and teammates presence and patience throughout the last year has made everything a little easier to deal with.”

Sawyer and Chester were back in action right away, with the Blue Raider Invitational at Murphy Center. Hammond should return for the last home meet Feb. 10 at Murphy Center.

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