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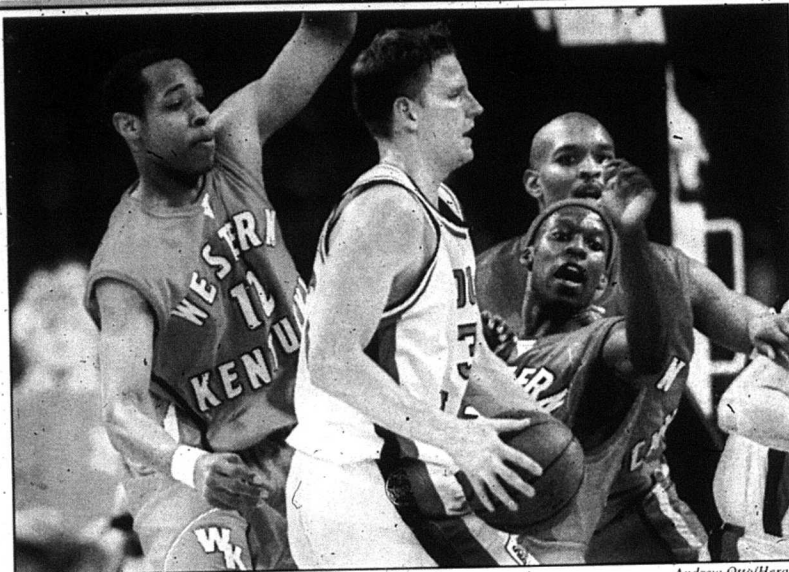
WKU Student Affairs

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Andrew Otto/Herald

Western junior guard Nashon McPherson (left) and sophomore guard Derek Robinson trap South Alabama senior forward Dusty Dubbs during the first half of last night's game.

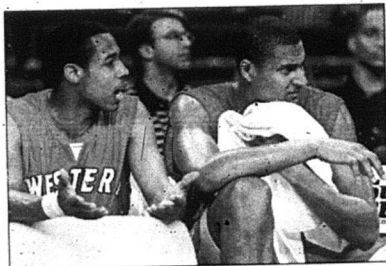
Silence & Sorrow

Tops lose 64-61 in Sun Belt semifinals

BY TRAVIS MAYO
Herald reporter

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Seven metal staffs tapped against the concrete aisle leading to the Alltel Arena floor last night, as Western cheerleaders ranted spirit for the few dozen fans with red towels.

Each giant red flag waved with each clank, each white letter bouncing in succession, eventually spelling out WESTERN as they swirled out during a dash around the court in front of the Hilltoppers. The hopes that the charge would keep rolling, over the Sun Belt Conference Tournament No. 1 seed South Alabama and



Andrew Otto/Herald

While getting a rest, junior guard Nashon McPherson talks strategy with sophomore center Chris Marcus.

into the tournament finals. But the charge was hushed to a grinding halt. What began as a Western storm ended a Western disappointment, 64-61.

In the end, in a gym as

quiet as a sudden-death playoff here in The Masters, the only tapping was the basketball nudging off the rim. Three different trips to the free-throw line in the final 30 seconds, three different

chances to tie, and three different faces of disappointment.

Close just wasn't enough. "Hats off to South Alabama," Western coach Dennis Felton said. "They showed real championship grit in the game tonight. As disappointed as we are about losing the ballgame, I'm still proud of our team. We did a lot of growing and came a long way this year."

"We played championship caliber ball tonight." The Hilltoppers (11-18) stormed off the visitors' bench as if they were the ones atop the conference mountain. Western dominated early, charging to a 7-0 shutout just more than two minutes into the contest.

The fuse began to crackle with 16:16 remaining in the first half. That's when junior

SEE SILENCE, PAGE 20

Thefts are an unpleasant trend at Preston

Seventeen have been reported this semester

BY JASON RAGAN
Herald reporter

Bowling Green senior Michael Loftis said he will use a little more caution in the future.

At least, that is, when it comes to bringing belongings to the Preston Health and Activities Center.

On Feb. 21, Loftis put his wallet and clothes in a bag, stuffed it in his locker in the Preston Center's locker room and started working out.

When he came back, his bag was thrown in a stall in the bathroom and about \$15 was stolen from his wallet.

"I kind of feel violated that they went through my bag," Loftis said.

Several other patrons at the Preston Center have felt violated this semester as well, after an unusual amount of looting has plagued the popular workout center. Seventeen thefts have been reported there so far this semester, compared to 13 reported all of last semester.

On average there are about 15 thefts per semester at the Preston Center, according to Brad Stinnett, facility coordinator and night manager for the Preston Center.

But there are ways to prevent these thefts, according to Preston Center

administrators and campus police.

Fred Gibson, Intramural and Recreational Sports associate director, said a major problem with thefts in the health center is that students do not secure their lockers.

Gibson is planning to post big signs to promote bringing a lock and making patrons aware that thefts can easily occur if they are not cautious.

"As much as we preach and put signs up and say, 'Please do not put your belongings in here,' we will have students who come in and put \$200 worth of cash in their wallets hanging in a pair of pants and just close the locker door, and hope that nobody saw them do that."

SEE PRESTON, PAGE 8

Insurance debt debate heating up

Western must find \$1 million

BY JIM GAINES
Herald reporter

Initial plans for changing Western's health insurance package for faculty and staff sparked e-mail blasts, but came no closer to covering the \$1 million debt the program ran its first year — a debt that must be paid within four months.

Estimates in fall 1998 projected a cost of no more than \$3.4 million, with a \$600,000 surplus the first year. But more claims and higher prescription costs than expected pushed the total to \$6.54 million.

"What happens is, when June 30 rolls around, the auditors are going to make us find the money," said Ann Mead, chief financial officer. "When we say, 'We have a deficit in health insurance,' it is our bill, no one else's."

Western is self-insured, meaning the university covers its own faculty and staff health care costs under a selection of plans. The system is administered by MedBen and provides a list of doctors that accept Western's health plan.

Roy Howsen, an economics and marketing professor, sent an e-mail to all faculty and staff on March 1 saying that Human Resources Director Tony Glisson, who oversees the insurance plan, told him the insurance committee wanted to save money by changing Western's provider network on July 1. Glisson confirmed this by e-mail the following day.

That sparked about 100 e-mails and numerous phone calls to Human Resources, Glisson said.

"Obviously, we've hit a hot button that we didn't feel was as big of an issue as it apparently is, and we want to be sensitive to that," he said.

The insurance committee will meet tomorrow, and based on that Glisson will give his recommendation to President Gary Ransdell and the Administrative Council. After the burst of negative comments, Glisson doesn't think the insurance committee will vote to change the list of doctors.

SEE DEBT, PAGE 8

INSIDE

Women's Sun Belt tourney



A preview of the women's Sun Belt Conference Tournament, which begins tomorrow in Diddle Arena. SportsExtra, Pages 13-18

<http://herald.wku.edu>

Weather forecast

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
80° 50°	76° 54°	69° 44°	63° 44°	61° 38°
Mostly sunny	Chance of t-storms	Chance of showers	Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy

T: 79°/54°
W: 79°/54°
R: 61°/41°
S: 60°/41°

• Louisville

• Lexington

• Owensboro

T: 79°/52°
W: 72°/52°
R: 60°/42°
S: 59°/38°

• Paducah

• Nashville

• Nashville

• Nashville

Weather information provided by StormCenter 12 where you can get an updated forecast at 6 tonight

STORM 12



Daniel Wallace/Herald

Tuckered out Topper: Despite the roar of the crowd, 6-year-old Molly Lamb sleeps through Saturday's Lady Topper game in Diddle Arena. Molly was with her parents, Stacy and Connie Lamb of Bowling Green.

Crime Reports

Arrests

• Billie Jo Sanders, Central Hall, was charged Sunday with disregarding a stop sign and DUI under the age of 21. She was released the same day from the Warren County Regional Jail on a \$1,000 unsecured bond.

• Kyle Ellington Richardson, Versailles, was charged Sunday with speeding and DUI. He was released the same day on a \$1,000 unsecured bond.

• Chad William Speed, Stonebrook Court, was charged

Saturday with public intoxication. He was released from the Warren County Regional Jail the same day on time served.

• William Clay Franklin, Gallatin, Tenn., was charged Friday with disregarding a turn lane, no insurance and DUI. He was released the same day from the Warren County Regional Jail on a \$1,000 unsecured bond.

• Eric Lehy, Fredrick Salisbury Road, was arrested Friday for failure to give right of way to a vehicle in the opposite direction. DUI second

offense and driving on a suspended license. He was released from the Warren County Regional Jail the same day on a \$1,000 unsecured bond.

Reports

• Nikki Rae Stephens, Pearce Ford Tower, reported Thursday her purse stolen out of her car.

• Chuck S. Sebring, Keen Hall, reported Wednesday that two football helmets and two keys were stolen. Total value was \$176.

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Any Number of Toppings

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#110/111
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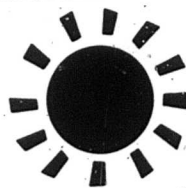
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Journalism and Broadcasting seeking program distinction

By JIM GAINES
Herald reporter

The School of Journalism and Broadcasting is on schedule to get a major funding boost this year, in time to buy equipment for its new building.

The school's approval as a Program of Distinction will be on the agenda of the May 8 meeting of the state Council on Postsecondary Education, Provost Barbara Burch said. Its budget will then be eligible for state matching funds, and Academic Affairs has put aside \$400,000 for that purpose.

That \$800,000 must be spent before the end of the fiscal year on June 30, said Jo-Ann Albers, director of the School of Journalism and Broadcasting. Since the academic year will be over by then, most of it will go for equipment.

The program will get more matching funds in the next fiscal year, Burch said. Money for the state to match can come from grants, donations and Western's budget.

"This current year, we'll be using a little bit of all of that," she said. "Over the next couple of years, I would guess that we will match close to a million and a half."

That much money is needed, Albers said, to meet the stan-

"We are doing pretty much all that can be done with the resources that are available."

— Jo-Ann Albers
director, School of Journalism and Broadcasting

dards the school wants for itself. "The situation is right now, in all of our majors, we are pretty well tapped out," Albers said. "We are doing pretty much all that can be done with the resources that are available."

The School of Journalism and Broadcasting wants to establish a continuing education program for graduates and area employers, which will also help faculty stay more up-to-date, Albers said.

She also wants to expand in another demographic direction: sponsoring programs in high schools. Some money would also go to support Western's forensics team, which is now defending its international championship. The forensics team is not part of the School of Journalism and Broadcasting, but is included in the Program of Distinction.

Programs of Distinction are supposed to be nationally prominent, serve the state and promote economic develop-

ment, said David Lee, dean of Potter College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

They should be "representative of the best kinds of things that a university is able to provide," he said.

Journalism and Broadcasting will be Western's second Program of Distinction. The first, established in spring 1998, is the Applied Research and Technology program in Ogden College of Science, Technology and Health.

Western put over \$1 million into Applied Research and Technology this year to be matched by state funds, said Blaine Ferrell, biology department head.

With that money, the program has doubled its number of research departments and plans to add three more in the next six months, said Ed Houston, program director.

A similar expansion is planned for the School of Journalism and Broadcasting, Albers said. Among the program's goals are setting up a broadcasting computer lab, expanding the student-run radio station WJHR to 24-hour, 7-day-a-week operation, and equipping the new journalism and broadcasting building, slated for completion in spring 2002.

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Opinion

Private health care useless for most

Do you hear that? Listen closely—it's the sound of a great big "I told you so," echoing from former Student Health Service Director Charles Lott.

Are you listening President Gary Ransdell and other administrators? It's for you.

Lott fought the privatization of the Student Health Service. He said it wasn't the best deal for students. It looks like he may have been right.

The construction of the new Collegiate Health Care clinic which was supposed to open this fall has been delayed at least five months.

But the price of health care on the Hill will still be going up next semester.

How much? Your guess is as good as ours.

Collegiate has yet to tell students how much more they'll be paying for various services.

They'll probably make that announcement over the summer so only a few students will be here to protest.

What we do know is that a new insurance plan will cost about \$500. And it seems Collegiate wants to trick some students into purchasing this plan.

As it stands, students will be mailed a reply card. If they don't want the service, they'll have to return the card.

Forget to reply, and you could get an expensive surprise on your next billing statement.

Students have enough to remember without having to worry about returning this reply card. Why not have those who want the service return the card?

As for services, health center Director Libby Greaney said prices will be lower than going to an off-campus doctor.

But paying anything at all will be more expensive than the service used to be, and not everything will be covered.

This new insurance plan doesn't cover injuries sustained playing intramural sports.

So what does it cover? This is one of the most likely scenarios for a student injury.

And if you're ill or injured after hours next semester, forget about it.

The issue: Western was warned about privatizing the Student Health Service.

Our view: Administrators should have thought more carefully about students' needs.

Without the new clinic, Collegiate won't be open after hours. If you're going to get sick, be careful to do it from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

A survey done last spring found that 90 percent of Western students have some form of health coverage.

Wow! That means a whopping 10 percent, give or take about 5 percentage points, will actually use the new service.

What a waste.

That same survey found that just about 30 percent of students had used the health service in the last year. And we're supposed to believe that anyone's going to use a clinic you actually have to pay for.

Ransdell himself said it best when he first learned of the insurance plan from a Herald reporter: This will affect a "relatively small number of students."

The biggest problem with this situation is the privatization of student health services.

Private companies are in business to make money. That's a fact of capitalism that Ransdell and other administrators forgot to consider when they jumped on the privatization bandwagon.

It's nothing new to the rest of the world, but at Western we're used to a service that puts student needs ahead of profits.

The new service may be great. The doctors and nurses may really care about the patients. But that comes with a price tag many students don't need and can't afford.



Letters to the Editor

Sandwiches weren't tainted

We would like to clear up any misunderstanding that may have been extended as a result of the February 29 article by reporter Brian Moore.

Members of the baseball team suffered some stomach-related sickness during the evening hours of Feb. 24.

The team did have O'Deli's ham and cheese subs from a Bowling Green O'Deli's location during the previous day's trip to Louisville.

Western Athletics made Minit Mart Food Stores aware of the possible connection so that they could internally investigate Minit Mart has very stringent guidelines for the handling of food products.

Not only was the ham and cheese well within date, it had just been purchased from the supplier the previous day and, after reviewing store videotapes, it was determined all guidelines were followed in the food preparation.

Western Athletics and Minit Mart have long had a wonderful working partnership and will continue to pursue mutually beneficial partnerships. This partnership involves a trade contract that specifically benefits baseball. O'Deli's supplies sandwiches in exchange for outfield wall advertising.

Please note that a raging virus caused neighboring Allen County/Scottsville schools to shut down in late February. Teams of ath-

letes such as these can easily spread a similar virus due to their close proximity.

We are obviously interested in protecting the reputation of Minit Mart and the relationship that exists between Hilltopper Athletics and Minit Mart, but we are also interested in giving the facts and not misleading the public based on rumor and assumptions.

Wood Selig
Athletics director

Jerry Goff
president, Minit Mart Food Stores

National anthem moves fan

I want to say thank you to Andrew Otto for his photo on the front page of the Feb. 24 Herald showing Western softball player Brandy Hawkins saluting the flag during the national anthem.

I hope it means that this custom is returning to the Hill. Every time the Hilltoppers retire to the locker room before the anthem is played before the basketball games, I feel upset, angry, agitated.

Are the fans the only people who are to be reminded of how lucky we are to live in America?

Susan Pribble
Western alumna
member, Hilltopper Athletic Foundation

► What kind of health insurance do you have?



"I have no idea."
Steven Hale
Nashville
freshman



"It's through my parents."
Stephen Hazlett
Evansville
freshman



"I have it through my parents."
Claire Hammond
Lexington
freshman



"I don't have any."
Eric Bietzinger
sophomore from
Neenah, Wis.



"It's military, through my dad."
Crystal Edsell
Radcliff
freshman

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Forum

Spring Break and vanity: they are one and the same

My favorite is the pre-tan tan. Spring Break is coming, so thousands of pale folks at Western are flooding tanning beds across the town. It's all about having a base tan so that you won't get burned somewhere south of here next week.

It's also about being dark enough to accentuate the rest of your body.

'Tis the season to be horny. And the gym, oh the gym. The Preston Health and Activities Center is packed. If you can lose five pounds, five ounces, five inches — it's all good.

All this for a week — the best week, the most well-planned week on the year — of getting drunk and getting on.

Then you come back to Western, act like nothing has changed and trudge through the rest of the semester.

It's good fun, I know. Great times, great memories, great secrets. But more than anything, Spring Break is the ultimate time of vanity.

Image isn't everything; it's the only thing.

No rules. Nothing counts against the record.

Everything is all good. It's a contest to see how many brain cells you can preserve and how instinctively you can act. Might as well just give guys a club and let them bop the woman of their dreams over the head. Give the women clubs, too, for that matter.

Me horny! Me take you home! But, again, what's so funny to me is the effort and planning that goes into about nine days of spontaneity. This is how the academic calendar should read.

August — return to school and drink beer. Dream about Spring Break.

September — invent new remedies for hangovers in chemistry class, sleep and drink beer. Talk with friends about Spring Break.

October — stop drinking beer, and do



Jerry Brewer
commentary

something to slow the weight gain only drink liquor for the next month or so. Visualize Spring Break, then prematurely do something really stupid as a sacrifice.

November — begin pre-Thanksgiving weight training put a hugger around your drink before gulping. Visualize the hot guy or gal in English class on a beach, half-naked, frying like bacon in the sun. Mmm mmm.

December — chill on the drinking — until New Year's. Then get so drunk you can't move. Tell your friends, "This move I've had since Spring Break and from all in one motion."

January — switch again to the liquor diet. Finalize your Spring Break plans. Start doing the pre-pre-tan tan.

February — start doing some lifting.

dammit. It's about time! Do the pre-pre-tan tan.

March — the season is upon us. Lift, lift, lift! Lift at 6 a.m., 6 p.m., 9 p.m. Lift until you can make your pecs dance, or at least not poke out like cones. Time for the pre-tan tan. Do this every day leading up to Spring Break, even if you can't get to a tanning bed until 1 a.m. Watch the butt, though. Fellas, watch the most important organ. Then go and have fun and be vain and take two years off your life.

April — Spring Break is about two weeks old. Sigh, give an embarrassing grin and frown all in one motion.

May — sigh, give an embarrassing grin and frown all in one motion.

June/July — tell all your high school friends about Spring Break. Make sure you avoid those whose mothers are town gossips.

And if you do get told on, I'm sure they'll use your name in vain.

Jerry Brewer is a senior print journalism major from Paducah.

Teen sensations are poisoning American music, pop culture

Would somebody please do the world a favor and stop allowing prepubescent children to dominate the music market?

We don't have musicians today, we have scantily clad men and women whose voices sound like the mating cry of a platypus. Not one person buys the albums or watches the videos for the content of the songs, they are just infatuated with the group members.

The boy bands are the modern black plague (this might be an overstatement, but not by much). The mastermind behind them should be beaten with a lead pole. I can't fathom why they do what they do, a king's ransom could not entice me to make a fool of myself in front of the entire world. Do these young squires not realize where they are headed?

So, you young stars, allow me to enlighten you. First, all that body hair you keep shaving away to impress the 10 and 11-year-old girls is going to come back with a vengeance. You are going to look like the illegitimate son of Chewbacca and Cousin Itt. All of your great songs (sarcasm) will stop being played and will be made fun of for the rest of your life. Sorry fellas, but finally all the little ladies who are fainting at your sight now will grow up and laugh at themselves for ever having a crush on you. There you'll be with no useful skills, stuck with an expanding waistline and desperate for money because you didn't save any of that cash.

I am not gender-biased, but the girls disgust me just as much as their scantily-clad counterparts. Christine, if you are truly a genie in a bottle, grant me a wish and never sing again. Britney, you are bothersome and maybe next time you could get brain implants instead. Sure, your dance moves are dope (sarcasm was dripping off that last state-

ment), but that's not enough to make what you're doing music.

Sure, these poor souls are sad and pathetic in their own right, but what really puzzles me are the people who tried to cash in on this music fiasco and failed. I mean, if 98

Degrees can make money, anyone should be able to.

Yet, there were those from New Kids on the Block who tried to make comebacks and promptly failed. They tried to cash in on the teen market for a second time and, like a free enemy, it bit them in the rear again.

Honestly, I thought every member of that group had stopped hanging tough and fallen off the face of the earth a long time ago. I don't see how these guys thought they could make money. They were 20-something back when I was in the teen market and all my companions were enjoying their mellow grooves. They're like 30 now — why would the little kids still be interested in them?

What really bothers me is that because of the dilution of the music market, thanks to these musical mistakes, what passes as real music today would never have been considered good before. Limp Bizkit and Korn are considered good music groups today. I'm sorry, but, no, they aren't good at all.

Tom Petty, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Pearl Jam — these are good bands, not some guy who yells out the words to a George Michael song. If you are a big fan of Limp or Korn, feel free to write a letter trying to convince me they are good musicians. It won't work at all, but feel free to try.

The bottom line is we need better music in the world. People need to stop ogling at some half-naked singers and start listening to the words of a good performer.

Rusty Broome is a freshman advertising major from Paducah.



Rusty Broome
commentary



Get the most out of your investment

"Why am I here?" — a good question to ask yourself whenever you feel challenged.

Are you here for a purpose, and do you have something specific you're trying to accomplish? Perhaps you're just going through the motions of an academic career because it's the right thing to do or because it's what everyone expects you to do. Maybe you're fortunate enough to actually enjoy school and can get pleasure from this learning experience.

Whatever your motivation may be, find it and thrive on it. We're all at a point in our lives where the people around us expect great things. It doesn't matter if you're a first or fifth-year student, your best is constantly expected.

School is a huge investment of our time, money and energy.

It is a series of tasks ranging from small and intricate to grand and outrageous.

But what is it all worth if we can't enjoy the journey?

School does not have to be a grueling experience for any of us. Yes, it's hard, but it's also an adventure.

There are many things that we can do to make school fun and intriguing.

Joining a club or an organization adds spice to the usual schedule. You can gain feel-

ings of importance and belonging while making contacts in your field and adding to your resume. Make this school work for you, and get what you need out of it. Above all, find that motivation that makes it easier to walk the Hill every day.

So why are you here? I'm here because I want to wake up every morning and go to a job that I love and am passionate about.

When my son looks at me, I want him to see pride and confidence. And whenever the workload seems to be too much, I just remember why I'm here and draw strength from it.

When you answer that question, maybe you'll find your strength too.

Pepper-Marie Russell is a junior mass communications major from Rochester, N.Y.



Pepper-Marie Russell
commentary

SGA congress seats up for cut

By REX HALL JR.
Herald reporter

The number of congress seats in the Student Government Association may be drastically reduced next semester.

A proposal from SGA's Legislative Research Committee calls for lowering the number of seats in congress from 106 to 74. The amendment will be up for vote today.

The recent lack of SGA enrollment is what prompted the proposal, said Dwight Campbell, chairman of the Legislative Research Committee. Only 48 of the 106 seats in Congress are currently filled. "Our number of open seats is larger by far than other schools," Campbell said. "Most schools have fewer seats per student than we do. We just have a ton too many."

SGA's election codes call for students to run for congress seats during spring elections, but there are never enough candidates to justify an election, Campbell said. Instead, students wanting to join congress only have to display their interest to get sworn in.

If it is harder to obtain seats, Campbell said, congress members

would probably take their roles more seriously. "It's like trimming fat," he said. "We're making (the structure) leaner and more efficient. I think 50-some people could be very effective, if we expected more of them."

Matt Bastin, SGA vice president of Public Relations, said during the four years he has been in SGA, the organization has never had more than 75 members in Congress.

"I feel that positions aren't being filled which means someone's not being represented," Bastin said. "One hundred Congress members is something that is really unattainable."

The proposed cuts would take the number of seats representing each class down from 10 to two in Congress.

"Hopefully, this will cause us to have to have elections for Congress and bring some interest to SGA," Campbell said. "That will bring focus to issues on campus because if you have to have an election for Congress seats you are going to have to debate issues."

Another five seats will lose their purpose when the Academic

Council is disbanded next year. Five congress members currently serve on the council, helping make decisions about curriculum and academic programs. Campbell said trying to decide what to do with those five seats is what caused the committee to review the entire size of Congress.

The Academic Council will be combined with the Faculty Senate starting next semester, forming a new University Senate.

SGA representation on the University Senate will be cut to three, and those seats will not be connected to seats in Congress, Campbell said.

Bastin said the proposal currently does not say how those three students will be chosen. But overall, Bastin said he feels positive about the situation.

"I feel the cuts still leave room for anyone to get involved who wants to get involved," Bastin said.

For the amendment to pass, two-thirds of congress must approve it, and the student body must vote for the amendment in the upcoming spring elections.

Campus News

Parking structure to close for Spring Break

The Parking Structure will be closed during Spring Break for cleaning and restriping. The structure will close on Monday, March 20.

Police warn about repair scams

Kentucky State Police are warning area residents to watch out for repair scams by people offering home or property

repair services.

A press release from the state police office said there are people passing through the area offering services like house and barn painting, driveway sealing, roofing, various types of inspections and tree pruning. They perform sub-par work and use inferior materials and may get a low estimate when beginning the job, then demand more money when their work is completed, the press release said.

Anyone contacted by these people can contact the Kentucky State Police at 782-2010.

Presentation on serial killers to be held

University of Louisville professor Ron Holmes will return to campus for an updated version of his lecture "Sociology of Murder" in DUC Theatre tomorrow at 7 p.m. Holmes also held his presentation at Western in 1994 and 1996.

Some material in the presentation is graphic in nature and deals with profiling murders and serial killers. Admission is free to everyone.

Mattias Karen



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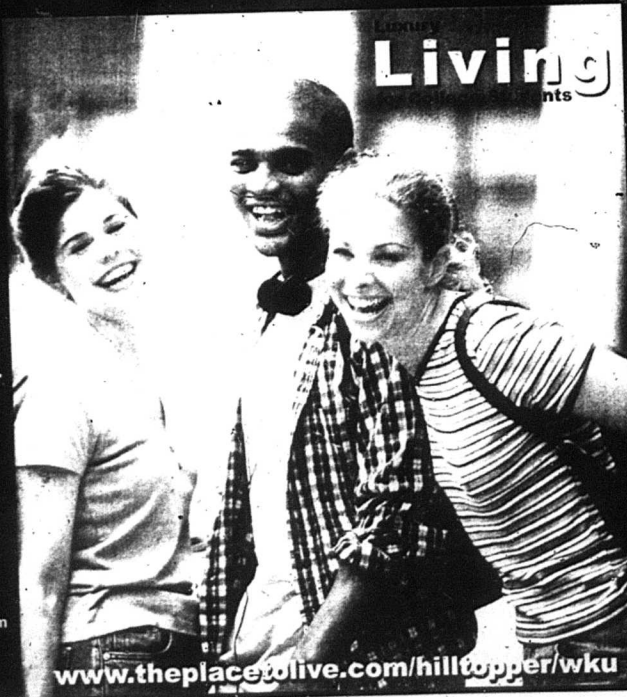
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Gated parking lots to stay

By Abbey Brown
Herald reporter

The Parking and Transportation committee voted Friday to keep the gated parking lots, despite many of the spots in the lots going unused.

To fill more spaces, the committee will now oversell each of the lots, excluding Snell Lot, by 20 percent.

Campus police Capt. Mike Wallace said a police officer inspected the lots three times a day for a week, and found an average of 109 out of about 200 spots in the gated lots sitting empty at 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

The gated lot tags will still cost \$360, but because they are being oversold, there is a chance tag holders will not be able to find a spot. Tag holders will still not be allowed to park outside the gated lots, but if someone runs into repeated problems, Wallace said they will be able to get a partial refund for the permit.

Patty Witty, Downing University Center senior operations manager, said because the university invested so much money and time into the gated lots, they shouldn't just be done away with after only a trial run.

"We should at least give it

"I think with the inside/outside loop parking the way it is, there isn't a lot of need to keep the gated lots."

— Bob Cobb

Parking and Transportation committee co-chair

another year and see how it will pan out," Witty said. "It is a substantial amount of money to just do away with in one year."

But not everyone was as enthusiastic about the decision.

"We don't have the luxury to have spaces sit empty," Institutional Research Director Bob Cobb said.

Cobb, who is committee co-chair, and Wallace were the only members to vote against the motion to keep the gated lots.

"I think with the inside/outside loop parking the way it is, there isn't a lot of need to keep the gated lots," Cobb said.

The demand for parking is too large to waste spaces, Cobb said.

Matt Bastin, the only student representative on the committee, said money was the main reason to keep the gated lots. The committee treasurer's report said revenues to the committee, which mainly comes from parking permits and parking tickets, will be about \$128,000 less than expected, leaving the committee about \$19,000 in the red, a figure that is

projected to grow to \$31,000 by the end of June.

"As a student I don't like (gated lots)," Bastin said. "However, I realize the big investment in making, purchasing and installing them and that it is a big revenue source."

Bastin said he hoped that revenue could go towards improving student parking.

Because of the money shortage, the committee voted to freeze all spending for the rest of this fiscal year. This means the plans to renovate Normal Lot, which would cost about \$160,000, will be delayed, something Bastin said was a big disappointment.

"I was hoping the students would be able to see 100 new spots next fall," he said.

Cobb said he was not very worried about the shortage, however, since the committee's account will be refilled in July.

"If we are behind a little bit, we will catch up at the end of July," Cobb said. "We don't want to spend anything right now until we get some more money."

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Spring Break safety worth \$2,500

By Jacob Bennett
Herald reporter

A condom, a pen, some leaflets, a keychain and some Ben-Gay should remind students to be safe and responsible over Spring Break.

That, and a chance to win \$2,500 if they promise not to drink and drive during their vacation.

At least that's what Western's Peer Encouraging Responsible Choices chapter is hoping as it passes out "Safe Spring Break Kits" this week at Downing University Center. The kit is passed out to all students who sign the responsible drinking pledge.

Western is one of many universities nationwide taking part in the Safe Spring Break Campaign, a program of the Bacchus and Gamma Peer Education Network and InterCollegiate Communications. Students that sign the pledge will be entered in a nationwide drawing for a \$2,500 scholarship.

"(Students) can drink, and they can drive, but we don't want them to do them together," said Kim Warren, a junior from Cross Plains, Tenn., who was taking pledges and passing out kits at DUC.

Many students who took the pledge were planning on taking trips over the break. Louisville freshman Kasper Husband said he was going to Florida.

"I'm headed to the beach — I'll hopefully be partying, meeting a lot of chicks and having a good time," he said. "That's what Spring Break's all about."

He said it was possible to have fun and be safe.

"You can be as smart as you want to be or as dumb as you want to be."

The leaflets in the kit include information and tips to prevent sunburn, alcohol poisoning and binge drinking, along with an instructional brochure on condom use.

The items were selected to get students to think before engaging in the risky behavior traditionally associated with Spring Break, especially drunk driving.

"The stuff we're giving out has a lot of information," said PERC President Valerie

McPherson. "We're hoping they take it home and read it."

The condom, a popular item among students receiving the kits, was included because PERC promotes safe sex, and college students are often sexually active during Spring Break.

"We know that college students are going to have sex," McPherson said. "Of course, abstinence is the only 100 percent way to prevent disease and pregnancy, but if they choose to have sex, then we want them to use a condom to cut down the risk."

The Ben-Gay, perhaps the most peculiar item in the kit, doesn't signify anything in particular, said Theresa Edmundson, a health educator and PERC advisor.

"We just happened to have it," she said. "Someone donated it. I guess for volleyball or extra exercise it might help, but I wouldn't put it on a sunburn."

She said the Ben-Gay would draw extra circulation to the burned area and cause discomfort to the already irritated skin.

Western hopes to have 525 students sign the pledge by the end of the week.

Last year, a Western student won the national prize drawing, which was a sailboat instead of a scholarship.

There is also a photo contest where students can win a \$50 gift certificate from Shutterbug and possibly \$250 from Bacchus and Gamma.

Edmundson said the picture should show students on break enjoying themselves responsibly.

"We don't want a picture of someone with a beer can in their hands," she said.

Brandi Taylor, a junior from Nashville, said the campaign was a good way to promote safety during a week when people often behave dangerously.

"If everyone was careful, that would be a great thing," she said. "Unfortunately, we're not in as great a world that that can happen. But at least you can plant the seed and make sure the example is out there."

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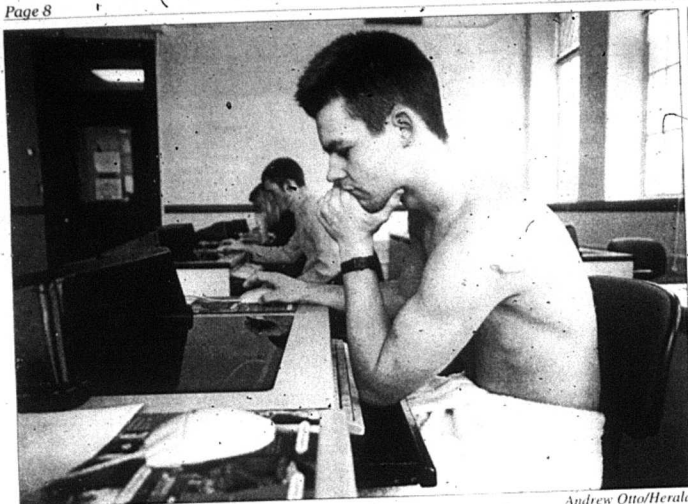
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Louisville sophomore Michael Kearns was showering in Barnes-Campbell Hall Friday when the fire alarm sounded. He was locked out of his room and was unable to dress for his English 300 class in Cherry Hall.

Fire deemed suspicious

A fire broke out in a trash chute in Barnes-Campbell Hall Friday morning at 11:15, sending smoke out on several floors and forcing students to wait outside the building for several hours.

Firefighters from the Bowling Green Fire Department had to cut through a concrete wall in the trash chute to reach the fire, causing an estimated \$5,000 in damage.

According to Brian Kuster, director of Housing and Residence Life, some blocks had to be removed from the wall surrounding the chute.

The cause of the fire was undetermined and marked suspicious on the police report. But that does not necessarily mean foul play, said Assistant Fire Chief Richard Storey.

said it could have just been someone throwing a smoldering ashtray down the chute.

"We didn't have trouble getting smoke out of the building," Storey said. "It just took a while in a case like that the sprinkler system (in the trash chute), it probably paid for itself several times over."

— Jason Ragan

PRESTON: 'Thefts of opportunity'

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Gibson said

Campus police Capt. Mike Wallace calls these crimes 'thefts of opportunity.'

"They're not planned," he said. "I am not aware of hand of any time a locker has been forced into."

Gibson is trying to do what he can to help prevent the thefts. The Preston student supervisors now make locker room checks as

a part of their regular walk through, especially during the busy afternoon hours.

This semester, lockers can be rented for \$10, which will give students a lock to keep on a locker for the entire semester. Quarter lockers, which are paid for on a time-to-time basis, are also available.

Every time we have this happen we preach. Look you guys, you have got to start bringing a lock, but it doesn't seem

to happen," Gibson said. "That is like laying a wallet full of money on the floor."

Gibson said while the university is trying everything it can to prevent the thefts, in the end it's up to the people to make sure their belongings are secured.

"We don't want this to become a haven for thieves," Gibson said. "But we are pretty limited on what we can do other than to warn people and continue to do our walk through."

DEBT: Shortfall looms for 2000

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Changing the doctor list would not change services, said accounting and finance professor Ed Wolfe, who is on the insurance committee. Choosing a cheaper preset package of doctors from MedBen would shorten the list by about 10 percent and save an estimated \$200,000, Glisson said.

Many faculty and staff complained that Western made a deal with its employees to maintain the system unchanged through this year, and that altering the list of doctors mid-year violates that deal. Among them is Brian Goff, an economics and marketing professor, who sent an e-mail to all faculty and staff on March 3, denouncing Glisson's "spin control" and "duplicitous."

Glisson responded with another public e-mail admitting he's "not comfortable" with mid-year changes, but that "given the current cost issues and circumstances, this was a matter which I felt I had to consider."

Meanwhile, Western must come up with far more than \$200,000 to cover last year's deficit. Despite efforts to reallocate funds and keep costs down, the plan ran a deficit of about \$2.1 million. About \$1.03 million was covered by various forms of reinsurance, Mead said. That

means Western has to come up with \$1.07 million on its own.

And Mead doesn't know where it's going to come from. She said the university usually has some funds left over to reallocate at the end of the year, but the amount varies widely. She has no estimate of the amount available this year, if any.

Some insurance money set aside for jobs that went unfilled will be available, she said, but again does not know how much.

Last year's inaccurate estimate was not made by Western, Glisson said, but by Fidelity Security, the reinsurance company.

"Certainly we'll be able to get it (reinsurance policy), but I have not a clue what the premiums will be."

—Tony Glisson
Human Resources director

That will count against Western when the reinsurance policy comes up for renewal in July, Glisson said.

"Certainly we'll be able to get it, but I have not a clue what the premiums will be," he said.

No changes have been made to the program yet, and Western is already over its cost estimates for this year, Mead said. Barring substantial changes, the insurance plan will be in the red again. But all forms of cost-cutting will be tried first.

"We're not going to change benefits," Mead said.

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Features

9



On Saturday, Feb. 19, the first parade through the French Quarter, known as "Krewe de Vieux," marches down Royal Street.

Mardi Gras

The French Quarter comes alive during New Orleans' famous party

Photo by Jonathan Kirshner

Story by Kenesha Johnson and Kate Corocoran

Throw all morals out the window for a week and enjoy one of the biggest bashes of the South: Fat Tuesday has come at last.

March 7 marks Fat Tuesday, the culmination of the Mardi Gras celebration. It's the last chance to get all your indulgences in before Lent starts tomorrow on Ash Wednesday.

"Mardi Gras is characteristic to Catholic communities," said Erika Brady, anthropology and folk studies department head. "It is a period of religious preparation. During Lent, there is much fasting and praying, so Mardi Gras gives people a chance to let the fun out."

Brady said most people associate Mardi Gras with the raucous week-long party in New Orleans, where the celebration is more popular for its French influence. People fill the streets dancing and watching the parades.

One of the most talked about parts of Mardi Gras are the parade floats. Throughout the parades, masked float-riders distribute "throws" to the people in the streets. Throws are colorful beads, doubloons (fake coins) and hand-painted coconuts.

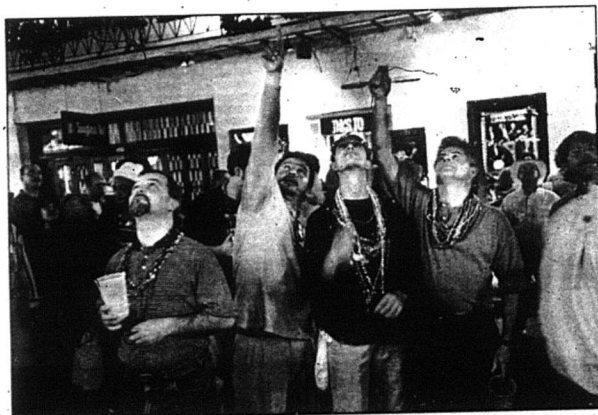
Brady said some of the costumes are so beautiful, they are put in museums to be viewed for years to come.

Sinning

Other major cities have created similar Mardi Gras traditions. Madisonville sophomore Misti Chamness recently went to Mardi



Just off Bourbon Street, a friendly tourist displays a often-seen greeting on the streets of the Big Easy.



Men barter for the chance to see skin flashed from a balcony above Bourbon Street.

SEE MARDI GRAS, PAGE 10

Affleck should sit this game out

"Reindeer Games" Grade: D+

By MICHAEL COMPTON
Herald reporter

"Reindeer Games" is a movie full of guns and violence that manages to throw in a warm Christmas message.

Too bad it was released in late February.

The release date is just one reason that the film has the aura of leftover fruitcake. The plot is loaded with so many standard action movie clichés that even when it tries to be interesting, you are still left with an empty feeling when the movie ends.

The movie stars Ben Affleck — who must be trying to star in every movie opening this month — as Rudy. As the movie opens, Rudy and his cellmate, Nick, are both a few days from being released.

Yes, this is an amazing coincidence. But trust me, in this movie, it's one of the more believable ones.

Nick is killed before he gets out. Rudy decides that since his cellmate is dead, he will pretend to be Nick so he can meet Ashley

(Charlize Theron), the girl his friend has been corresponding with over the last year he has been in jail.

Since Ashley has never seen Nick, it works. Remember, this is Hollywood reality — their ways are not our ways.

Things are going well until Ashley's brother Gabriel (Gary Sinise looking a lot like Steve Buscemi) shows up.

Gabriel's a gun-runner who decides that since Nick has inside knowledge on an Indian casino he worked at, that Nick will be able to help rob it on Christmas Eve. The problem, of course, is that Rudy's never seen the inside of the casino.

The Christmas theme is about as subtle as a jackhammer throughout the film. While it may be an effective marketing tool in December, a soundtrack featuring Christmas music doesn't work two months after the fact. I can imagine the problems this must have given the movie's distributor, Dimension Films.

"Hey, look, we have this movie made already. We at least need to try and make a profit from it."

"So what's it about, an armed robbery with people in Santa suits?"

"Maybe no one will notice. After all, 'Snow Day' is making money."

To their credit, the cast tries. Theron has shown she is capable of doing good work, she just has a character that is very unbelievable here. I like Gary Sinise, but all he gets to do is sneer at the camera and threaten Affleck. Affleck can act too, but I don't think he is ready to step into the action genre just yet. He just comes across as too passive to be in a movie with so much violence.

John Frankenheimer is a respectable director who is slumming here. I still find it hard to believe that the same man who directed a classic like "The Manchurian Candidate" has resorted to work like this and "The Island of Dr. Moreau." I will give Frankenheimer this: he still knows how to pace an action sequence.

It is Ethan Krueger's screenplay that just doesn't work. His script tries to throw a couple of curves at the audience, but neither are effective. One is so obvious that you can see it coming before you buy your tickets. The other one is absurd. It's so completely out in left field that if one character had done even one minor thing differently, the rest of the movie would have never happened.

Now that is a redeemer game I would have paid to see.

Bearno's sticks to your ribs — and your wallet

Bearno's Little Sicily Grade: C

By KATE CORCORAN
Herald reporter

I like cheese.

But I hate fat, both on me and in my food. Therefore, I am puzzled as to why fat-free cheese was left off the "greatest inventions of the 20th century" list.

Those were the thoughts going through my mind as I ate at Bearno's.

Their appetizers include breadsticks (or as the menu says "breadstix" for the phonetically challenged) and cheese breadsticks, made with either fat-free or regular cheese.

My friends and I ordered the fat-free version and waxed poetic about the beauty of fat-free mozzarella when we tasted them. That was lasted a full five minutes until our blushing waiter came out and admitted to us that he'd mixed up our order and ours were the full-fat kind. I was a little hurt.

The fat-free ones (that we got for free, because of our pain and suffering) were pretty good.

Bearno's main menu covers the bases of Americanized Italian food: you've got your pasta, pizza and salads. However, the food is as far as the Italian motif is carried.

The main course took a while to get to us. Their excuse was that all their stuff is "made fresh." But it was worth it. Sorta.

One of my friends got the Italian roast beef sandwich, which she said was a good size, but a little bland and the bread was a little too crusty.

The hard crusts carried through to their pizza. They put on lots of toppings, and can use fat-free cheese, but the crust is hard enough to gash open the roof of your mouth. In short: it was good, but not gourmet enough to be \$10.50 for a medium without toppings (those will run you \$12.50 each).

I got the veggie lasagna, which was anything but substantial. The noodles were doughy. And the whole thing had too many vegetables, especially big chunks of broccoli. Weird texture, weird taste.

The "award-winning" pizza was the best thing on the menu by far, but even that was barely worth the price.

MARDIS GRAS: Roots in religion

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Gras in St. Louis and said she was pleasantly surprised.

"It was like nothing I'd ever seen," Chamness said. "The parade lasted three hours and people of all ages were there, from little kids to 80-year-old people. I would definitely do it again."

Chamness said Mardi Gras wasn't as wild as she thought it would be, but there were shows in which people went to great lengths to stun the viewers.

"There was this guy that dislocated every bone in his body," she said. "Everyone there kept covering their eyes. There was another guy there that ate fire. I was in complete shock watching it."

Brady said some Mardi Gras celebrations can get outrageous.

"There was a lot of music," she said of her experience at a parade in Mobile, Ala. "The crowd got very worked up to get the throws. Women exposed themselves to get things thrown at them."

Remembering

Here's a shocker: priests don't hate Mardi Gras.

"It's gotten a bad reputation."

the Rev. Darell Venters said "In its original sense, it's a positive thing."

The Catholic Newman Center's priest believes that Mardi Gras and the release that comes with it are good contrasts to Lent.

"To really appreciate either one, you have to experience the other," he said.

But that doesn't give anyone a license to head to New Orleans for some sinning. Traditionally, it's an opportunity to clean out the old kitchen cabinets to prepare for the 40 days leading up to Easter.

Although it is an important time for churches on the religious calendar, it sneaks up on many students.

"Aw, crap, is this Wednesday Ash Wednesday?" asked Bowling Green freshman Brittan Kirby. "I'm going to give up cussing! Can I still say 'crap'?"

Lent, celebrated by the Methodist, Lutheran, Catholic and Episcopal churches, represents the 40 years they believe the Israelites wandered in the desert and the 40 days that Jesus spent there.

During this time of year, we live in a desert of our own making," Venters said. "We rearrange our priorities with more

prayer time, fasting and by doing works of charity."

In addition to such daily sacrifices, the church asks members to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays during Lent. Venters said the idea is to give the money that would have been spent on meat to a charity instead.

"I'm going to give up candy and sweet things in general this year," Louisville sophomore Kelli Nall said.

While candy, gum and soda are all popular choices to give up of your life, Venters recommends adding something instead, like a hobby or more study time.

"It may make you give up something else like extra TV time," she said.

Paducah freshman Laura Partin plans to make time for God.

I'm going to try to start praying daily," she said. But this holy time of year is not supposed to be all gloom and doom as Venters said it might appear.

"It gives the congregation something in common, and helps us renew our baptismal promise in preparation for Easter."

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Talbot International Seminars
Dallas International Seminars
National Christian Women's Guide
Student Body
Arizona's Goodwill Ambassadors
Phoenix
Nationally Televised Miss USA Pageant



In a society that tells women they have to look and act a certain way, Stacey Kole offers hope through telling her story to women across the country. During her reign as Miss Teen Arizona, Stacey personally battled an eating disorder. Stacey has spoken to women across the country, telling her story and offering hope to those who have struggled with body and image issues.

Wednesday, March 8
8 pm
Garrett 103 - Auditorium

The governor's office and the Phoenix State organization recently recognized Stacey Kole's commitment to eating disorder prevention and her book *Self-Defeating the Starving Soul* as she was honored with the prestigious Arizona Quality of Life Award.

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Around Campus

Luncheon will feature women in power

The Western Women's Alliance and Women's Studies are co-sponsoring "Women and Power at WKU" from 11:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. today in Downing University Center, Room 226.

The program is a luncheon lecture featuring the female members of the board of regents, Karen Adams, dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Science, and Provost Barbara Bureh.

Though it is too late to register for the luncheon, the sponsors encourage interested students and faculty to bring a bagged lunch.

Kentucky artist's work coming to Western

The Kentucky Museum will exhibit the work of Kentucky artist Joe Dudley Downing starting April 2.

Downing is the 1999 recipient of the Governors' Awards in the Arts' National Award.

His art will be shown in Galleries K and L until July 23. Admission is free.



John Lok/Herald

Lexington freshman Elizabeth Lawrence takes advantage of the warm weather yesterday by blowing bubbles outside Bates-Runner Hall.

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March 23 Certification Meeting

April 6 Primary Elections

April 13 General Elections

Any questions call 745-4354



STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

WKU

Internships provide life experience

By KATE CORCORAN
Herald reporter

Face it

Interns have gotten a bad reputation: if they aren't fetching coffee for a junior executive, they're showing the president their thong underwear.

But that's an image that many Western students hope to dispel this summer.

From the U.S. Senate to nationally-known newspapers to Fortune 500 companies, many students from the Hill plan to spend their summer vacations getting a foot in the door of some of the most exciting places in the country.

"It's a great real life experience," said Henderson senior Parvin Greene, who is currently a sports marketing intern at Diddle Arena. "I've learned how to talk to people from big companies."

Because companies want to hire employees with on-the-job training, more and more college students are trading summer vacation for the chance to develop their job skills.

Students also get a taste of what their job might be like after

graduation and whether they're cut out for their chosen profession.

"It's very valuable because you get to see if you'd like to work (at that job) someday," said Louisville sophomore Kathleen Speicher, who is still hunting for the perfect internship.

But it is not only the students who benefit from the training. Employers are helped, too.

"Right now, it is a bad job market for employers and a good one for employees," said Carol White, the associate director for Western's Career Services Center. "More companies than ever are opening the door to interns because they provide a good opportunity to get future employees."

This need for employees has translated into students getting more respect.

"Organizations are seeing that students are more capable, and they are giving them more decision-making positions," said government associate professor Sandra Audrey.

Audrey will be leading a group of interns to Capitol Hill this summer to do public service, as well as two-week stints at

either the Democratic or Republican conventions.

Although unpaid, these students will earn three to six credits as well as "having the chance to network and seeing the selection of the next president." Any student with at least a 2.5 grade-point average and an interest in government is eligible for a Washington, D.C., internship.

The journalism department also works to place students in summer jobs. Positions are available for those interested in becoming reporters, editors and photojournalists. The students work out of the newsroom, collecting valuable experience and examples to fill their portfolio. Most of the internships last for eight to 12 weeks, but some are available during the school year for those willing to take a semester off.

"We send them everywhere from Fort Knox to San Francisco," journalism professor James Highland said.

Although teachers are available to help put together cover letters and resumes, the ultimate responsibility rests with the students, Highland said.

"We don't get the job for them," he said. "We're here to help them develop their skills."

Developing students' skills is also White's job.

Last year, the Career Services Center helped more than 700 Western students land internships and co-op positions. The difference between the two, according to White, is that internships are usually considered the "capstone," when students have finished most of their course work.

Co-ops can be applied for after freshman year and are usually for credit hours.

The Career Services Center has a listing of positions in and out of Kentucky that can be found on Western's Web site, www.wku.edu.

White recommends talking to a local company or an organization that interests the student so they can find an internship in a profession they enjoy.

Once that internship or co-op has been landed, White recommends talking with supervisors as well as present or former interns and making a list of objectives so that the experience is all that it can be.

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Campus movie schedule

in every Tuesday edition of the
College Heights Herald

Tuesday, March 7
9 a.m. Krippendorff's Tribe
10:45 a.m. It's My Party
1 p.m. Universal Soldier
2:45 p.m. Life is Beautiful
5 p.m. Inspector Gadget
6:30 p.m. Mad City

Wednesday, March 8
9 a.m. My Fellow Americans
11 a.m. Mulholland Falls
1 p.m. Dick
3 p.m. American Pie
4:45 p.m. Bowfinger
6:45 p.m. Down in the Delta

Thursday, March 9
9 a.m. Cop Land
11 a.m. The General's
Daughter
1 p.m. Like Water for
Chocolate
3 p.m. Summer of Sam
5:30 p.m. Fresh
7:30 p.m. The Love Letter

Friday-Weekend, March 10-12
9 a.m. The Postman
11:15 a.m. Mickey Blue Eyes
1:15 p.m. The Long Walk
Home
3 p.m. Krippendorff's Tribe
4:45 p.m. Fools Rush In
6:45 p.m. Affliction

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SportsExtra

Coverage of the women's Sun Belt Conference Tournament

The Lady Toppers have looked doubt and adversity straight in the face, proving critics wrong. Now they will play for ...

all the Marbles



Cara VanLeuven/Herald

Seniors Jamie Britt (left) and Jaime Walz have guided Western to a 19-8 regular season record, including 13-3 in the Sun Belt Conference. Western has earned the No. 2 seed in the Sun Belt Conference Tournament, which begins tomorrow at Diddle Arena.

Sun Belt tournament provides final arguments for Western

BY LINDSAY SUTTON
Herald reporter

Good afternoon, ladies and gentleman. After much time and consideration, we, the jury, have reached our verdict. We find the Western Kentucky Lady Toppers guilty on two counts: one count of imitating a team worthy of the NCAA Tournament, and one count of playing a weak schedule, underscoring of an invite to the Big Dance.

We recommend one year of probation during which the Lady Toppers are obligated to mastermind a more challenging non-conference schedule and thus prove their worthiness.

That message is a year old today.

Three hundred sixty-six days ago, the NCAA Tournament selection committee sentenced Western, a program built on three Final Fours and a national runner-up finish in 1992, to a year of questioning and subsequent action. One way to ensure an at-large bid this year could be to advance to the Sun Belt Conference Tournament championship finals on Saturday.

But what incriminating evidence prohibited Western from an invitation last season?

"Last year, the arguments they (the selection committee) made were not valid," Western coach Steve Small said.

♦ Exhibit A: The NCAA selection committee claimed the Lady Toppers failed to advance past the first round in the Sun Belt Conference Tournament.

Objection! Western defeated South Alabama 91-70 in the first round of last year's conference tournament before falling 76-65 to Florida International in the semifinals.

"Well, that wasn't very good homework," Small said. "For a group that does all their homework, they didn't even realize that, yes, we didn't lose in the first round. We lost in the second round."

♦ Exhibit B: Who the committee actually did invite and why remains a mystery. Maine was a team Western beat by 21 in the regular season and who finished second in the America East conference, and it still got into the tournament.

"Last year was one of the biggest disappointments of my coaching career... not only that we didn't get in, but who they let in," Small said.

♦ Exhibit C: The most stinging of all accusations, that Western's strength of schedule was too weak for an NCAA Tournament team. Non-conference opponents included Southern California, Wisconsin and Vanderbilt, none of which received invitations to the Big Dance. Even though the Lady Toppers were 21-7 and 47th in the Ratings Percentage Index, it wasn't enough; the committee believed Western stood guilty before them.

Though Western considered itself unfairly judged, the coaches and the team wiped the embarrassment off their faces and embarked on a quest to justify their validity as a Division I program this season. The Lady Toppers (19-8, 13-3 Sun Belt Conference) have crafted their appeal this season with a tougher schedule and gritty performances.

SEE FINAL, PAGE 18

Inside

La Tech Rules

Who's the most consistent team in the Sun Belt? We'll give you one guess. They've won four conference tournaments in a row and they're ready to do it again. La Tech is good — but that isn't anything new.

Page 14

Meet the Conference

Did anyone else know Denver was in the Sun Belt? They are — and so are eight other teams. Find out who makes up the Sun Belt's happy family and when they will all start to beat up on each other. The rumblin' starts in Diddle tomorrow.

Page 16



Lady Techsters show they're still the one to beat

Perennial champion goes for fifth straight tournament crown

By TRAVIS MAYO
Herald reporter

If iron is the element of choice for a syllable of consistency, the thickest iron is in Ruston, La.

The name should not be deceiving — there is nothing rusty about the women's basketball program that reigns supreme in the Sun Belt Conference. There is no rust on the program that is as familiar to the women's top 5 national rankings as a White House is to loafers after midnight. If there were ever any rust, it's been shaken off in violent fashion.

In high Tech style, Louisiana Tech is so full of iron, it could market its own vitamins.

Almost every year La Tech has the weapons to win a national championship. Lady Topper coach Steve Small said.

The Lady Techsters have captured eight consecutive regular season conference crowns.

Iron. They have left four straight conference tournaments as the champions.

Under Coach Leon Barmore, La Tech has had 11 30-plus win seasons.

But there are no boundaries to La Tech's success. That iron curtain winds around the entire nation, proved by the Lady Techsters competing against and beating traditional national powerhouses. A quick example: handling Tennessee at the beginning of this season, in

Knoxville.

La Tech has been to 13 NCAA Final Fours since Barmore arrived, including two straight. It was a championship ring from 1988, and the title game is a frequent stop along the iron ride. Barmore has 514 victories. The man still hasn't lost 100 games. He's only at 76 after 17 seasons.

Iron. "Since the beginning of time, since the mid 1970s, La Tech has had an administration that has fully and totally supported women's basketball and their objectives," said New Orleans coach Joey Favaloro, inside a

"They're probably the best La Tech team that I've seen. Everybody plays aggressive, from the point guard to the five spot. But they can be beat."

— ShaRae Mansfield
Western All-American forward

"We enjoy coming here, even though the odds are greatly stacked against us every time we come here. It's a great atmosphere. And they can keep it going year after year. It's just great tradition, just great tradition."

Non-stop tradition. There never seems to be that much of a down year for the Lady Techsters — a true sign of iron. It's aggravation to others, the ones who wear opposing colors, the enemy. They have to take the floor

against the same team that can finish off the Lady Vols or scrap with Connecticut.

"It's kind of frustrating, because they're always one of the top teams in the country," said Western senior guard Jaime Walz. "They might lose an All-American, but then they get one in. They're just a tough team, and year in and year out they're one of the top teams in the country, but we've just got to learn to deal with it."

Off the court, that could be done through voodoo dolls. The La Tech versions are probably lurking around Sun Belt locker rooms, sitting on team buses and

in coaches' back pockets. But the pins have to be strong enough to penetrate iron.

"We carry that with us all the time," Favaloro said. "We obviously have the voodoo dolls for them."

That's standard — standard for them and standard for Western Kentucky.

Western junior forward ShaRae Mansfield added while chuckling. "We don't have one yet, but that's a good idea. We might have to work on one of those. They're just a good team. When you play them, you've just got to come out and play your best game. Everybody does, not just one person."

Neither Walz nor Mansfield



Jeremy Lyverse/Herald

Louisiana Tech forward Ayana Walker catches her breath during the game against the Lady Toppers on Jan. 23 in Diddle Arena.

fear La Tech. They relish the opportunity to rise, just like Favaloro and Small love the chance to roam the sidelines against the iron team. It makes their teams better, win or lose. But that's how most coaches look at both La Tech and Western.

"When the game's over, we know darn good and well where our strong points are and where our weak points are," Favaloro said.

To beat the Lady Techsters, Small said, it takes a lot of luck. It takes a great shooting night, a flawless time at the free-throw line, balls bouncing out of bounds off Lady Techster knees. It takes playing above your usual level and La Tech playing below theirs.

It takes iron. "You've got to get yourself in position with five minutes to go and then anything can happen."

Small said. "Then, the magic happens."

The kind of magic that can knock off the mighty one. That's what the host Lady Toppers are wanting to flood onto the Diddle Arena floor at this week's women's Sun Belt Conference Tournament. But it will take extra magic to send another dominant La Tech squad home without another trophy.

With two All-America caliber guards and a lineup that can be jumbled but effective all the time, La Tech is more venomous than usual. Eight of the 13 Lady Techsters already have played in a Final Four.

"They're probably the best La Tech team that I've seen," Mansfield said. "Everybody plays aggressive, from the point guard to the five spot."

"But they can be beat." Iron can be broken.

These local businesses and organizations support the Lady Toppers and the Sun Belt Conference.

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**Cole, Moore,
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These local businesses and organizations support the Lady Toppers and the Sun Belt Conference.

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843-4518 / 843-9266

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1232 31 - W Bypass
796-2683

Little Caesars Pizza

1703 31 - W Bypass
782-9555

Ace Lube

644 31 - W Bypass
745-7181

Vette City Liquors

2037 Russellville Rd.
782-5551

Guthrie's

In front of Wal-Mart
1723 Campbell Ln.
846-9003

Western Realty/Better Homes and Gardens

2530 Scottsville Rd.
781-1234

Ceres Women's Fraternity

2136 Stonehenge Apt D
846-2270

Toot's

2500 Scottsville Rd.
843-2335

Jim Johnson Pontiac/ Nissan Mitsubishi

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781-6770

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781-7680

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842-0827

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Nat's Outdoor Sports

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842-6211

A Fan's Guide to the Sun Belt Tournament

Arkansas-Little Rock

Coach: Tracy Stewart-Lange, first season
Record: 5-22, 1-15 Sun Belt

SCOUTING THE LADY TROJANS

This is the first year of women's basketball at UALR in 14 years and the Sun Belt conference hasn't been easy on them. They've won just one game in conference play, an 83-71 victory over South Alabama Jan. 20. But they show promise. Mica Harris, a freshman guard, hit up Western for 28 points two weeks ago in Little Rock. She is fourth in the conference in scoring, averaging 16.7 points a game. They play South Alabama tomorrow night at 7 in Biddle Arena.



Tracy Stewart-Lange

Arkansas State

Coach: Brian Boyer, first season
Record: 17-10, 8-8 Sun Belt

SCOUTING THE LADY INDIANS

Arkansas State started out hot with first-year coach Brian Boyer, blazing to an early 11-1 record and a No. 25 national ranking. The Lady Indians jumped into the polls with a 72-70 win against then No. 20 Kansas on its home court. But things haven't gone so well in conference play. They dropped three of their first five conference games and fell to Louisiana-Lafayette 74-71 in Jonesboro Feb. 17. The Lady Indians play Denver in the quarterfinals on Thursday at noon. The two teams split the series during the regular season.



Brian Boyer

Denver

Coach: Pam Tanner, four seasons
Record: 16-10, 10-6 Sun Belt

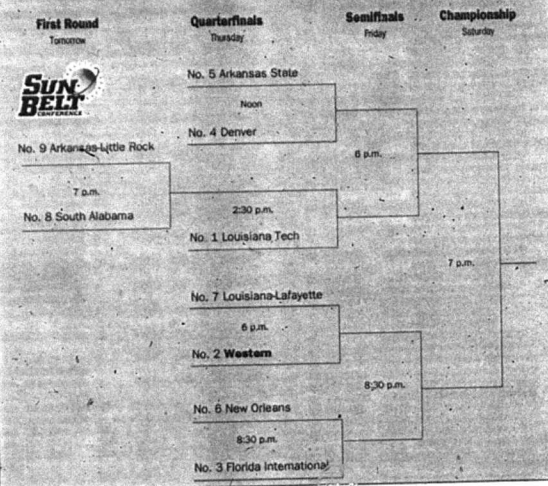
SCOUTING THE LADY PIONEERS

Picked to finish sixth in the preseason conference poll, the Lady Pioneers have surprised a lot of people. In just their second year of Division I basketball and their first year in the Sun Belt, they tied Florida International for third, finishing 10-6. Michaela Pavlickova, a junior center, is the team's leading scorer, averaging 12 points a game. Denver plays Arkansas State at noon on Thursday in Biddle Arena.



Pam Tanner

Sun Belt Tournament



Florida International

Coach: Cindy Russo (20 seasons)
Record: 15-12, 10-6 Sun Belt

SCOUTING THE GOLDEN PANTHERS

The Golden Panthers are not the same team that finished last year's regular season ranked No. 24. FIU has struggled this year after losing seven players from last season's 23-7 squad. Sophomore guard Gergana Slatcheva is the team's leading scorer and third in the league, averaging 17.5 points a game. The Golden Panthers are riding a six-game win streak entering the conference tournament. They play New Orleans Thursday night at 8:30.



Cindy Russo

Louisiana-Lafayette

Coach: Gay Nix (three seasons)
Record: 12-15, 5-11 Sun Belt

SCOUTING THE RAGIN' CAJUNS

It's March Madness time, and the school formerly known as Southwest Louisiana could be the Cinderella team in the conference tournament. Though they won just one game last year and lost all 12 conference games, they edged Arkansas State 74-71 on its home court Feb. 17. The team is led by Billie Popovska's 10.7 points a game. The Ragin' Cajuns meet Western Kentucky for the third time this season Thursday night at 6. The Lady Toppers beat the Ragin' Cajuns both times by an average of 24 points.



Gay Nix

Louisiana Tech

Coach: Leon Bamore (17 seasons)
Record: 25-2, 16-0 Sun Belt

SCOUTING THE LADY TECHSTERS

Does anyone remember the last time the Lady Techsters lost a conference game? Neither do we. Domination is an understatement for the No. 4-ranked team with two Naismith candidates in senior guards Tamicha Jackson and Betty Lennox. La Tech was scheduled to host the Sun Belt Tournament but lost out when they announced they were moving to the Western Athletic Conference beginning in the 2001-2002 season. The Lady Techsters have not lost a game since Jan. 2 when they fell to No. 1 UConn 90-63. They will play the winner of tomorrow night's UALR-South Alabama contest at 2:30 p.m. Thursday.



Leon Bamore

New Orleans

Coach: Joey Favaloro (19 seasons)
Record: 11-16, 7-9 Sun Belt

SCOUTING THE LADY PRIVATEERS

New Orleans finishes the regular season with the same record they finished with last year, 11 wins and 16 losses. Junior guard Jen Ludwick leads the team in scoring at 15.7 points a game. She and senior guard Marylou Agustin have both been Sun Belt Players of the Week this season. The Lady Privateers, second in the league in steals, play Florida International at 8:30 p.m. Thursday. They have won just two of their last seven conference games.



Joey Favaloro

South Alabama

Coach: Cheryl Rice (three years)
Record: 7-20, 2-14 Sun Belt

SCOUTING THE LADY JAGUARS

Things haven't been pretty for South Alabama this season. A 67-66 win against New Orleans on March 1 broke a 16-game losing streak dating back to Dec. 31 against Texas Christian, also giving the Lady Jaguars their first win in the new year. Bowling Green native Jamene Curd, a sophomore guard, has shifted between starter and reserve status this season for South Alabama who will play UALR tomorrow at 7 p.m.



Cheryl Rice

Tired of watching channel 12 to find out what movies are playing on channel 10? Just clip and save the



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Other Sun Belt teams trying to be high Tech

Without La Tech, what will league be like?

By JERRY BREWER
Herald reporter

Here's a new one: Louisiana Tech is expected to win the Sun Belt Conference Tournament.

The Lady Techsters' conference win streak is now at 41.

Western was the last Sun Belt team to beat them, two years ago, on a last-second layup by guard Katashia Witcher.

La Tech, which is leaving for the Western Athletic Conference after next season, finished the conference regular season at 16-0.

So here we are at this tournament, which begins tomorrow, and some are wondering why we're even playing.

"It won't happen," Denver coach Pam Tanner said of the possibility of a team other than La Tech winning this thing. "I think La Tech is at another level. They are one of the best teams in this country. Tennessee, UConn... La Tech is in that class. There's no

"We are definitely looking forward to the possibility of playing La Tech if we can get to the finals. We're ready to end their winning streak."

— ShaRae Mansfield

Western All-American forward

question." So, what's left for everyone else?

Well, Western has a shot at the NCAA Tournament. Arkansas State, Denver and Florida International all will be contenders for the Women's National Invitational Tournament, the little dance. The Sun Belt, much maligned over the years, could have five teams in the postseason.

"This conference, I think, is underrated in a lot of respects," Tanner said. "There's so many teams in here who can battle."

Denver, in its first season in the Sun Belt, finished 10-6 in the conference and will be the No. 4 seed.

To some, that speaks highly of

Denver. To others, it says the conference has a long way to go if a program in the-making can jump in and be near the top.

The Sun Belt, which traditionally has some of the lowest rated teams in all of women's college basketball in its cellar, always has a bad rap nationally.

For annual NCAA Tournament invites Western and La Tech, it sometimes means bad seeding. For annual fringe teams like Arkansas State, it means no invitation to the Big Dance.

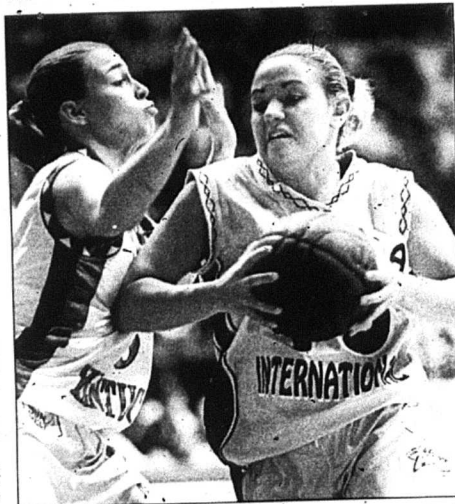
With the Lady Techsters' departure, so goes the glamour program of the conference, the one on national television playing Tennessee and Connecticut.

Suddenly, a conference that has pushed to get at least three teams into the Big Dance now may only be able to get the automatic bid.

But for now, teams will grapple with how to dethrone the Lady Techsters.

"We are definitely looking forward to the possibility of playing La Tech if we can get to the finals," Western junior forward ShaRae Mansfield said. "We're ready to end their winning streak."

Or at least try



Jeremy Lyverse/Herald

Florida International guard Ivelina Vrancheva drives to the lane against Western sophomore guard Natalie Powers during their February 5 game in Diddle Arena.

Lady Toppers change, become Little Team that Did



PLAYGROUND NOTES

Jerry Brewer

They did not change the makeup of women's basketball at Western, they made sure it didn't smear, kept sweating to a minimum.

There is beauty in the Lady Toppers' mortality, beauty in their lack of height, weight and numbers. In showing mortality, then transcending mortality, they have become immortals. And it's not because they're so great you'll never forget them.

It's because they are classic overachievers, winning despite the don'ts and won'ts and can'ts. And keep in mind the shouldn'ts and couldn'ts and wouldn'ts.

But now, at the end, they are again in position to make the NCAA Tournament.

We named them the Little Team that Could upon this season's birth. But that's not good enough anymore. Now, it's time for a new name.

The Little Team that Did. Of course, Western has the opportunity for a lot more doing

before this season is over. My highly-educated guess is that they'll do it.

"We're not finished," Lady Topper coach Steve Small said.

So we head into this postseason feeling the same way we have for the past 18 years — like Western will go to the Big Dance. Fifteen of the previous 17 times, we've been right. This time, if the Lady Toppers can at least make it to the Sun Belt Conference Tournament finals and finish 21-9, the NCAA Tournament selection committee should grant them an at-large bid.

If the committee doesn't, it should lose all credibility. Not that it has much anyway.

But let's not dance right now. Let's get in a circle, sit and reminisce.

What's your favorite Lady Topper story?

Senior guard Jaime Walz dropping 26 points, 18 in the final 8-1/2 minutes, to beat Florida International?

Senior forward Jamie Britt's 31 points in a 90-63 drubbing of Arkansas State?

Sophomore center Katie Wulf taking that charge on BIG South Alabama sophomore center Bell Jordan?

My favorite story involves junior guard LaVonda Johnson, whose name should be a synonym for little, who should have her picture next to "smallish" in the dictionary.

Remember when she exploded for 19 points against New Orleans? Remember all her electric drives? Remember how she went from seldom used to a starter?

It's called personnel progression. For the program, it's called maintenance, which you need during the tough times.

If Western can make the Big Dance, it may just propel this program, which hasn't seen the top 25 in two years, up from perceived mediocrity. A nifty

recruiting class joins these returning warriors next season, and if these Lady Toppers can instill these intangibles in future players, we may be talking about the big time — Sweet Sixteens, Elite Eights, Final Fours — in future years.

"I think it's a storybook ending," Walz said of her senior season.

And it's a wonderful legacy. People said the Lady Toppers were not talented enough, and they won anyway. Two players

suffered knee injuries, and they won. The center quit, and they won — starting four guards and a forward.

"Everything after this is gravy," Small said. "I'm not even thinking about the NCAA Tournament. We've done what we need to do, and we're going to take it one game at a time and see what we can do in the (Sun Belt) tournament. It's not our hands. I'm going to enjoy this team."

We should all enjoy them.

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FINAL: Lady Tops making case for NCAA Tourney

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

"Western Kentucky is known for the NCAA," senior guard Jaime Walz said. "And we got left out last year, and the people returning, we don't want to have that feeling again. We had that empty feeling. We just want to go out and go after people and show people that Western Kentucky is still on the map and we're still that top 20 program."

Six of Western's 11 non-conference opponents participated in the 1999 NCAA Tournament and one played in the Women's National Invitational Tournament. By the end of its non-conference schedule, Western's strength of schedule was ranked as high as 12th by the RPI.

In its final arguments to this year's selection committee, Western has called adversity to the stand as the strongest witness and testimonial of this season, having battled to a 19-8 regular season record and playing most of the season with nine players.

◆ **Exhibit A:** The loss of Kristina Covington. The sophomore guard tore her anterior cruciate ligament with 35.7 seconds in the first half of the Lady Toppers' season opener against Indiana Nov. 19.

She left the game with eight points, four rebounds and three assists; the Lady Toppers left the game with a 96-80 win.

Not long after, freshman guard Elisha Ford tore her ACL in practice. Even before Covington went down, freshman guard Jennifer Slaughter had been sidelined with a stress fracture.

"We've played through it all," senior forward Jamie Britt said. "There's nothing we haven't seen. We've lost players. We've had people hurt, people play hurt. We've been able to overcome adversity all year long."

◆ **Exhibit B:** The loss of Kenosha Chastang. The sophomore center, a transfer from Pittsburgh, left the team for per-

sonal reasons the same day the Lady Toppers, 6-6 at the time, played Miami (Fla.).

Adversity busted the door open even wider that night when sophomore guard Natalie Powers fell on her left ankle in the first half, mildly spraining it. She didn't return for the rest of the game, but the Lady Toppers returned a 75-68 loss to the Hurricanes.

"We've had one of the toughest schedules in the country and have fought back through being 5-6 to come all this way," Powers said. "That's just incredible for us. We're playing with nine players. We had some girls that were injured along the way. But we didn't dwell on it and we came back and played with a lot of heart."

◆ **Exhibit C:** The temporary loss of Mansfield, Western's newest member of the 1,000-point club. Mansfield suffered a bruised left knee with 8:33 left in a Feb. 5 conference matchup with Florida International. So

when Mansfield exited the game, the Lady Toppers did what they do best in those situations: they exited from the closely contested game on top, 84-75.

"We've opened up a lot of eyes," junior forward and All-American ShaRae Mansfield said. "We've been through so much adversity and that in itself shows the strong team. The injuries that we've had, people leaving the team, the low expectations, we've

been through so much.

"And I think that in itself says a lot about the team, and I think the committee's going to take that into account, too."

But the committee will also take into account how the Lady Toppers take the stand this week in the conference tournament at home in Diddle Arena. Will they waver if adversity saunters into the courtroom again, or will they exhibit the kind of mettle they've shown all season?

Western was picked to finish third in the conference but finished three games ahead of Denver and Florida International, who tied for third.



H. Rick Mach/Herald

Louisiana-Lafayette junior guard Lisa Moore lunges for a loose ball as Western senior forward Jamie Britt participates in the pursuit during their game at Diddle Arena on Jan. 13.

place. Besides losing to No. 4 La Tech twice, the only other conference loss came against then-No. 25 Arkansas State, which was 11-1 at the time.

But the coaching staff and its players believe they must make a run at the conference tournament title to secure an invitation, an invite that would throw out last year's verdict in a mistrial.

This undermanned team

hopes it's done what's necessary to return to the national spotlight, and they hope the committee takes everything into account.

They hope the committee sees the Lady Toppers not just as the Little Team that Could, but as the Little Team that Did.

The undermanned team that has an All-American.

The undermanned team that has three starters averaging dou-

ble figures.

The undermanned team that won 19 of 27 games overall and 13 of its last 15 games.

"They (the committee) look at how you've overcome obstacles," Small said. "You just put all those little ingredients into a bag. This year, more than ever, we feel like we've done everything we can to set the table."

"But we're not in charge of the meal."

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College Heights **Herald**

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Toppers frustrated with missed opportunities

Western fails to hit free throws at end

By TRAVIS MAYO
Herald reporter

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Perched on top of the Alltel arena lobby desk, Lee Lampley

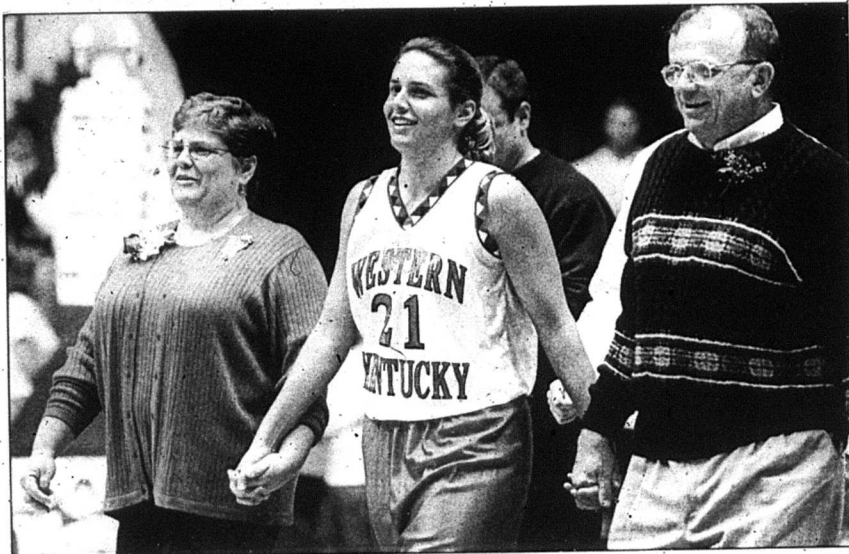
let his legs dangle, let them hang in the air of disappointment. The senior forward hadn't reached his goal the NCAA Tournament. He hadn't finished a single season of his college career with a winning record. He hadn't redeemed that statistic with a second shot at college basketball's biggest dinner table. Western had been denied its chance at making the 64 settings

Lampley sat idle on the court, while his teammates chilled idly on probably the most silent bus in Little Rock. Ironically, South Alabama granted by the Hilltoppers 64-61. "The locker room was pretty silent, but nobody's heads were down," said sophomore guard Tremain Rowles as he strolled to that idled bus. "Everybody was disappointed, because everybody

knows it's a game we should've won." Should've become could've when the final hoops hour was most near. Freshman forward David Boyden connected on just one of two free throws with 30.7 seconds remaining. It could've tied the game. Instead, the Jaguars kept their noses in front, 61-60. Twenty seconds later, sopho-

more center Chris Marcus hit one free throw and missed the second. A strong layup rolled out, preventing a three-point opportunity. Both free throws could've tied the game. Instead, South Alabama's finger-crossing worked, 62-61. And when junior guard Nashon McPherson was fouled

SEE TOPPERS, PAGE 23



Daniel Wallace/Herald

For her final regular-season game, Western guard Jaime Walz takes the court in Diddle Arena with her parents Janine and Roger Walz from Fort Thomas.

Seniors sizzle on special day



Daniel Wallace/Herald

Western forward Jamie Britt holds up her display jersey for the crowd in Diddle Arena Saturday during her last regular-season game.

Britt, Walz each score 22 in win

By LINDSAY SUTTON
Herald reporter

Jamie Britt and Jaime Walz danced in perfect symmetry against Denver on Senior Night last Saturday.

They shot the ball as though they were complementary angles. They defended the Lady Pioneers like they were sides in a trapezoid.

Western's lone seniors closed out the regular season in amazing alignment with one another, an alignment that threw off Denver for an 86-71 victory.

Both Walz, a guard, and Britt, a forward, nailed all of their free throws in the game, each attempting four. With 6:36 left in the second half, they both had five field goals and had hit half of their three-pointers. Together, they accounted for almost half of the Lady Toppers' 86 points, each finishing with 22 points.

"Well, we share the same name. We share the same class. We might as well share the same points," Britt said.

Britt and Walz brought the crowd to its feet late in the second half on

a series of plays during a two-second span. Walz swiped the ball from a Lady Pioneer and swiftly passed it to sophomore guard Natalie Powers. Powers tossed the ball back to Walz, who sent a no-look touch pass to Britt for a layup and her 21st and 22nd points.

"I was thinking, 'Thank goodness she made it,'" Walz said of the pass. "I mean, that's about it. I'm just glad I could get her the pass, and the crowd just erupted."

The crowd of 2,900 offered a standing ovation when the two seniors left the game for good with 1:57 remaining.

"That's always good when the crowd gets on its feet. I love it when I hear them and see them up on their feet," Walz said. "It's such a great feeling out on the court. They're our sixth man here."

Walz scored first for the Lady Toppers (19-8, 13-3 Sun Belt Conference) with a three-pointer 14 seconds into the game. Western built a 12-0 lead before freshman guard Lika Black nailed a three-pointer. The Lady Pioneers (16-10, 10-4) held the Lady Toppers' lead under 10 points for the next eight and a half minutes.

Another three-pointer from Walz at the 7:26 mark started a 12-6 Western spurt to end the half, with the Lady Toppers leading 44-27.

SEE SENIORS, PAGE 24

Marcus receives postseason awards

Lampley snubbed from All-Sun Belt team

By TRAVIS MAYO
Herald reporter

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Chris Marcus is still a baby in basketball experience terms. He's just finishing his first college season, a drastic change from the high school game for newcomers. He's just finishing his 11th month of organized basketball.

The Charlotte native didn't play ball as part of a team until his senior year of high school and got out last season to focus on coursework. So he's still a baby baller, if the minutes played — lifetime — indicate anything.

But Friday in Little Rock, Marcus was named the Sun Belt Conference's newcomer and defensive player of the year, a revelation on how much he's developed this season. His 11.9 points, 9.5 rebounds and 2.5 blocks per game were also good enough to make the all-conference team, only the third time in Hilltopper history a sophomore has done so.

"It was nice, but I'm more concerned with team awards than individual ones," Marcus said Saturday. "I'm still focused on the team and Florida International."

One name left off the lists was senior forward Lee Lampley's. Western's lone senior averaged 14 points and nearly 5 boards per game, his best season on the Hill.

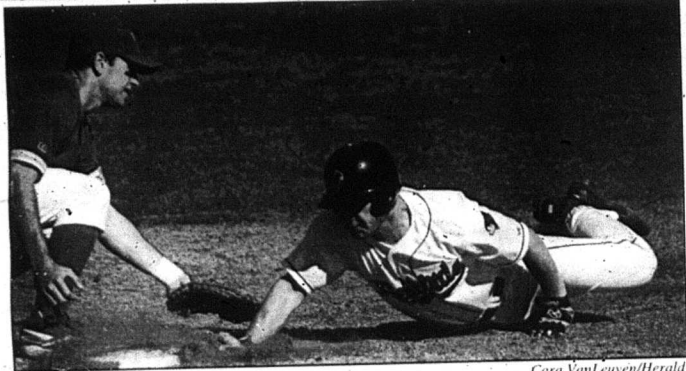
"Yeah, I was disappointed," Lampley said. "I thought I should've been on there. But I'm sure our record and us being in fifth place had something to do with it. Chris is very deserving of it."

"I'll just hopefully come out and play hard, and show these guys I should've been on the team." His teammates agreed that the snubbing was a mistake.

"I thought Lee should've made it over a couple of guys," Marcus said. "Stats don't always show what you can do on the floor, so Lee definitely should have made it."

Other awards

Although Lampley was not voted to the All-Conference team, sophomore center Chris Marcus was. See a complete listing of all Sun Belt Conference postseason awards on page 24.



Cara VanLeuven/Herald

Western sophomore first baseman, Tanner Townsend was unsuccessful at tagging out Illinois State's Seth Von Behren after several attempts to steal second during Sunday's game. The Toppers defeated Illinois State Friday, but lost Saturday and Sunday.

Two-run homer in fifth inning leads visitors past Toppers, 10-5

Illinois State wins weekend series

By BRIAN MOORE
Herald reporter

Illinois State senior catcher Ryan Duncanson doesn't mind traveling to Denes Field at all.

Duncanson tied off on Western junior Brian Houdek with a two-run homer in the fifth inning Sunday, helping the Redbirds to a 10-5 win over the Hilltoppers.

Duncanson has made the Western field his home away from home throughout his collegiate career. He hit four home runs in the three game series this weekend, which brought him to 51 career homers. Eight of those long balls have left the launch pad at Denes Field.

The Redbirds tallied five runs off four hits to jump on Western in the first inning Sunday. They grabbed early leads in each game, taking 5-1 and 6-1 advantages early in games one and two.

"They had an outstanding weekend," Coach Joel Murrie said. "Unfortunately on their part, they played poor defense Friday or they would've had a sweep. Not only did they hit the ball, but they got some quality pitching at the right

times." Western mounted their biggest threat in the fifth inning, trailing 7-1. Junior third baseman Justin Herrguth reached first on a fielding error and was driven in by senior catcher Kevin Clutter's two-run homer to left field.

Western (7-7) loaded the bases with two walks and a batter hit by a pitch, but left all three stranded.

"They're a good, solid club," junior pitcher Kevin Sadowski said. "We just didn't take advantage of any big innings."

Sadowski provided a bit of consolation to the loss.

He returned to the mound to see his first action in 13 months after being sidelined by laser surgery on his shoulder last spring, his second surgery in as many years. Sadowski closed in the ninth inning, retired the first batter on a fly out to center field and struck out the next two Redbirds.

"The doctor said there'd be a 50-50 shot I'd ever throw a baseball again, let alone come back and pitch," Sadowski said. "It was up to me to come back. I'm young and ready to get out there and finally contribute."

Sadowski said he didn't think he'd pitch in Sunday's game, but rather in today's game against Yale.

He (Coach Murrie) said that

if we were up by a lot I'd come in today, or in this case, we were down by a lot," Sadowski said. "It felt good. I felt like I was in a dream though. I haven't done it for so long."

Sadowski will gradually work his way back into the Toppers rotation, rather than jump back into the mix right away. He'd like to be the third conference starter by the third or fourth week of conference play.

"It's great to see him on the mound," Murrie said. "He's worked harder at rehab than any player I've been associated with in my coaching career."

Teams split first two

The Redbirds scored at least one run in each of the first five innings in Saturday's game to surge ahead 7-3. Junior outfielder Matt Fox's two-run double helped the Toppers draw within one in the fifth inning, but they would get no closer. Illinois State tacked on two runs in the ninth to win 9-6.

The Toppers used three runs in each of the sixth, seventh and eighth innings to come back from an early 5-1 deficit to win 10-7 in Friday's game. Junior Taylor Miller picked up the win closing in the final two innings. Clutter went three for five, scored twice and drove in three runs

SILENCE: 10 for 22 foul shooting fatal

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

guard Nashon McPherson nailed a three-pointer, then sophomore center Chris Marcus sent a South Alabama junior center Virgil Stanescu jumper the other way, and on the far end, sophomore guard Derek Robinson pondered firing from behind the arc, launched it, and with a roll Western was on top 10-2. Western's defense was working, feeding its offense in points.

"They played with a lot more energy and a lot more intensity than we did," South Alabama coach Bob Weltlich said. "To have someone do that was embarrassing, I think to all of us."

But the Jaguars (20-9) weren't the top seed by accident.

They quietly edged back to within three on a 7-0 spurt. And what was domination became a guessing game when South Alabama forward Michael Stewart scored and knotted the game at 16.

Western committed 12 turnovers before the break, a few of which came on flubbed inbounds plays. But its solid

defense kept the Jaguars' growl at a murmur, mostly by winning on the boards 17-9 and countering South Alabama's 42 percent shooting. Then the Jaguars bolstered out of the locker room. After a 7-0 run in less than two minutes, South Alabama grabbed its first lead of the game, 45-43.

That lead didn't switch uniforms again until Western matched the Jaguars with a 7-0 run of its own, and when Marcus swished a nifty turnaround jumper along the baseline, the Hilltoppers were nudging by 50-47 with 6:21 showing.

From then on, it was like a ping-pong match.

Senior forward Lee Lampley connected with a free throw with 1:58 remaining, giving Western a 59-55 lead. Then South Alabama closed the gap on a trey by freshman guard Demetrice Williams, and jumped in front again when Stanescu made good on a bucket and free throw.

And despite two more chances to tie by netting from the charity stripe, Western gasped in defeat. First, Marcus missed a second free throw with 10:3 ticks on the board

and the score 62-61. Then McPherson drew a foul from way outside with 5:4 seconds left. He missed the first one, then the second and the curtain came down.

"That's just the way the game goes sometimes," Robinson said. "Things like that happen."

It was a problem that plagued the Hilltoppers all night. They hit only 10 of 22 from the line.

"They just executed at the end and we didn't," sophomore guard Trehaun Rowles said. "Those shots Nashon had didn't lose us the game. They gave us a chance to come back and win."

He finished with six points on 2 of 3 three-point shooting. Lampley had 12 points and eight rebounds to end his college career, while Marcus scored 12 and Robinson chipped in 11 points. Stanescu was the top Jaguar with 14 points and nine boards.

And the tapping was replaced with whispering walks to a solitary bus waiting outside.

"It was a tough loss for us, for me," Lampley said. "It's the last time I played on a college floor. I wanted to go to the NCAA and it didn't work out that way."



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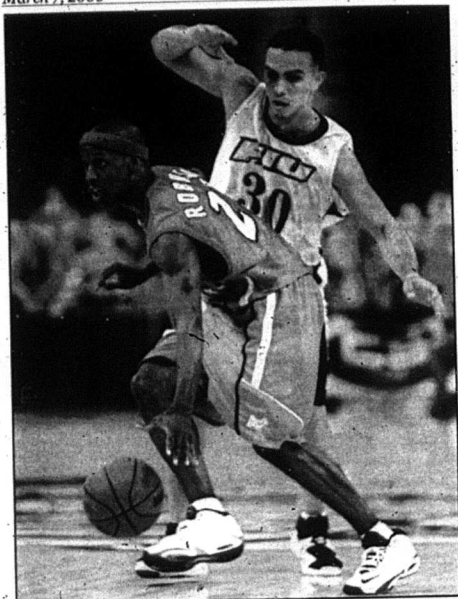
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Andrew Otto/Herald

Western guard Derek Robinson dribbles past Florida International guard Carlos Arroyo during Western's 79-60 win over FIU on Sunday night.

Hilltoppers defeat FIU in quarterfinals

By TRAVIS MAYO
Herald reporter

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — The basketball pinned against the backboard like a car packed in a parallel parking spot.

Western sophomore center Chris Marcus had denied Florida International junior guard Lucas Barnes of an easy deuce with 3:08 remaining in Sunday's Sun Belt Conference tournament quarterfinal game in Alltel Arena. It was symbolic of how the entire night had gone — Western pinned the Golden Panthers against the wall from beginning to end, sending them home to sunny Florida with a cloudy ending, a 79-60 drubbing.

"I thought we played confidently at both ends," Western coach Dennis Felton said. "The game is usually played in spurts, but tonight we really controlled the momentum of the game from beginning to end, which is rare, but we were able to do it because our guys played with good poise and consistency."

The Hilltoppers (11-17) opened the contest by hitting five of their first six shots, beginning with a quick three from junior guard Nathan McPherson. But on the other end, seconds after tipoff, Marcus swatted a Florida International jumper.

It was a quick spark on offense and stellar defense that kept Western's NCAA tournament dreams alive. The closest the Golden Panthers came was on the opposite side of a 19-16 score with 6:32 left in the first half, but that soon turned into 21-16, 27-18 and 27-21. Then freshman forward David Boyden hit a trailing three from the corner five seconds before the intermission, and the Hilltoppers drizzled into the locker room ahead 30-21.

"I just thought they played awfully well and took us out of everything we had," said Florida International coach Shakey Rodriguez. "We didn't have enough offensive weapons to counteract their defense."

Barnes was making his return

after missing the final 10 regular season games because of a knee injury. The Miami (Fla.) transfer first started practicing on Wednesday. He played 28 minutes, scored 21 points on 9 of 13 shooting and had seven rebounds, but threw the offensive chemistry off at times. Junior guard Carlos Arroyo, an all-conference team member, finished with 19 points, but never got into his usual groove.

"Arroyo's a great competitor, and I just had to come out and play as hard as I could and match his intensity," sophomore guard Derek Robinson said. "We came out with a win and I set the tone for our team. We've been talking all year about me setting the tone for my teammates, and that's what I did tonight."

He had 13 points, including three of seven from outside the arc, and was one of five Hilltoppers in double figures. Marcus completed his 10th double-double of the season with 15 boards and 15 points. The big man also blocked five shots.

Senior forward Lee Lampley, fresh off an all-Sun Belt Conference snubbing, finished with 14 points.

But it was sophomore guard Tremain Rowles who sealed the Golden Panthers' fate. When Florida International tried to make a run in the game's final eight minutes, Rowles dropped in a three. He rolled three long balls in about two minutes, dividends of an effective inside-outside offense. Western hit 10 of 21 shots for the game, a 48 percent mark close to its overall 49 percent shooting.

"I think it was just the right time," Rowles said.

And Western pinned the Golden Panthers farther and farther against the glass.

"We just look like a much more mature team than we did early in the season," Felton said, "and we ought to be, because now these guys have been playing enough games and been together long enough now where they've developed a chemistry."

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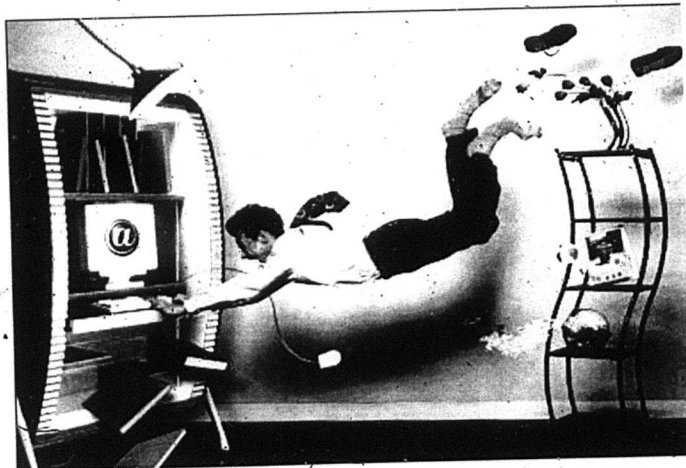
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Lady Toppers finish weekend feeling inexperienced

Softball drops four of six games

By Joe Cox
Herald reporter

Every time Katie Swertfager pitches, her glove slams hard into her thigh, yielding a resounding thud.

Monday it seemed like the freshman pitcher was smacking herself even harder than usual.

Swertfager and the Lady Toppers (8-5) entered the weekend with a six-game winning streak, fueled in part by a scheduled week filled with inexperienced opponents.

But the weekend often left the Lady Toppers looking inexperienced themselves, laboring to a 2-4 record, including a 1-3 showing at the Southeast Missouri Classic.

The weekend began on Friday

with a split of a home double-header against the Ball State Cardinals (4-3). Western won the first game 3-0 and dropped the second 9-3.

The first game was highlighted by the first career shutout by Amber Garlington, a freshman pitcher, allowed only four hits and struck out 10 in shutting down Ball State.

"I couldn't be happier with myself," she said. "I came out strong and ended strong."

The second game was not as kind to the Lady Toppers as Ball State scored the first nine runs and held on for a 9-3 win. The Lady Toppers stranded 11 runners on base in the loss.

"In the second game, we didn't do the little things," Western coach Leslie Phelan said. "If we don't do them, we don't win. We need to maintain intensity throughout the whole game, winning or losing."

Saturday, the Lady Toppers were defeated twice more at the

Southeast Missouri Classic. Creighton (5-4) took advantage of six Lady Toppers errors to win 7-4, and later, Southwest Missouri State (6-9) dropped Western by a 5-2 count.

In the opening game, the Lady Toppers out-hit Creighton 12-8 only to lose the game on defense. Garlington took her first loss on the season, but only two of the runs she allowed were earned.

Her own error gave Creighton a 2-0 lead in the second inning which the Blue Jays never relinquished.

Another error cost the Lady Toppers in the second game. A bad throw by junior second baseman Angela Dunhour prolonged the third inning for Southwest Missouri State, who went up 3-1 and would not trail again. The Lady Toppers managed only four hits.

On Sunday, the Lady Toppers split their last two games, beating Bradley (1-2) 2-0 and losing to Northern Iowa (6-9) 5-0.

Garlington's record moved to 6-1 in the win over Bradley, as she again pitched a shutout, allowing just three hits and fanning seven.

In the second game, Western managed only four hits against Northern Iowa as the Panthers lead was never seriously threatened in their 5-0 triumph.

"This weekend we played good teams," sophomore outfielder Sara Beth Heaton said. "We learned a lot of things, but when the time came, we just didn't come through."

Heaton also said that the team looked forward to "a confidence booster" playing at Belmont today and a 1 p.m. home doubleheader tomorrow against Tennessee-Martin.

"It was a great experience playing tougher competition," junior outfielder Laura King said. "We have a lot more we need to work on, but once we reach that point, I think we have a great team here."

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(Home games in all caps)

College Heights Herald

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TOPPERS: Western looks ahead

Continued From Page 19

from well-beyond the three-point arc, as he was heaving up a trey, the air of desperation seemed to shift into absolute deadlock. Three drops through the bucket could've tied the game.

Instead, South Alabama won 64-61.

"That's what it comes down to, it comes down to big shots and clutch plays," said guard Derek Robinson said in a dejected voice. "Free throws are one of them. You've gotta knock your free throws down."

"The rim didn't let us get the ball through there. It's tough, especially for the guys who missed the free throws."

"That's what it comes down to, it comes down to big shots and clutch plays."

— Derek Robinson
sophomore guard

but we've got to suck it up. It's over with now. Life goes on."

In the eyes of sideline-striding Western coach Dennis Felton, there was no questioning his team's intensity at one point during the game. When South Alabama's defensive pressure rattled the Hilltoppers at times, and when Jaguar shots tumbled in, he didn't see his squad drop its guard.

"All game long, I think both teams were trying to match each other's intensity," Felton said. "I thought the intensity came out in an absolute deadlock. There was no lack of effort by our guys at any time tonight."

Despite disappointment now, Western's life holds

promise in the minds of the ones straggling out of the arena last night. Only one senior will be gone when Western begins practice in October. Only one senior will be on the floor a couple of weeks before Halloween. And two more — guards Raynardo Curry and Mike Wells — will drop onto the roster.

There could have been voices of lost hope. Instead, there were shouts of future strength.

"We're about becoming a championship caliber program," Felton said. "My expectation level is still there to the degree it's always been. I've enjoyed watching this team grow up."

"We have to start doing some of our best work between right now and October 15. I believed our players will be focused on making a good step forward."

Then, could've become accomplished.

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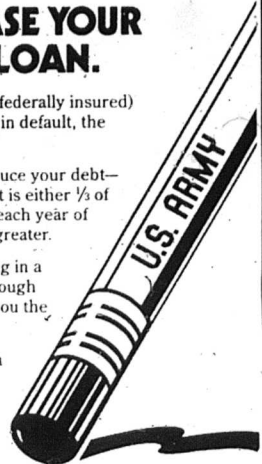
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CITY OF BOWLING GREEN

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Applications for employment with more information should be obtained from the Human Resources Department, City Hall, 1801 College Street, Bowling Green. Completed applications must be submitted by 4:00 pm, March 28, 2000.

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SENIORS: Lady Tops jump out early, wallop Denver 86-71

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

"Our goal as always at half time is to double the score," Western coach Steve Small said. "I thought the only weak part is we went through about a five minute span we should've changed defenses. As you can see, when they get open, they can shoot the ball."

Both teams shot 42 percent in the game, but Western out-rebounded Denver 52-32.

"We knew we couldn't give them second shots. They're a very good rebounding team," Denver coach Pam Tanner said. "They executed and we didn't. That's the bottom line."

Five Lady Toppers scored in double figures, including All American and junior forward ShaRae Mansfield. Mansfield passed Leslie

"That was a group that really started believing in themselves ... everything after this is gravy."

— Steve Small
Lady Topper head coach

Johns on the 1,000-point list with 13 points, the 51st consecutive game she's netted double figures. She also grabbed 13 rebounds for her 19th double-double this season.

"That was a group that really started believing in themselves and will accomplish about as much as they can accomplish," Small said. "I don't know if you can do anymore than that."

"Everything after this is gravy."

Box Score

Western (86)

Britt 8-12 4-4 22, Mansfield 4-14 5-7 13, Johnson 1-7 3-4 5, Powers 4-9 6-8 14, Walz 7-14 4-4 22, Wright 0-1 0-0 0, Hutcherson 5-10 0-0 10, Slaughter 0-1 0-0 1, Wulf 0-1 0-0 0.

Denver (71)

Benson 7-9 2-3 16, Dibella 3-5 0-0 7, Pavickova 4-10 1-3 8, Black 4-9 2-3 12, Garcia 5-14 0-0 13, Rhoads 0-0 2-4 2, Atkinson 1-6 0-0 3, Younger 4-13 0-0 8, Staton 1-3 0-0 2.

Three-point shooting — Western 6-16, Denver 7-21.

Rebounds — Western 52, Denver 32.

Turnovers — Western 13, Denver 13.

Assists — Western 11, Denver 14.

Attendance — 2,900.

Tennis sweeps Tennessee State 7-0

By JEREMY ATWOOD
Herald reporter

The men's tennis team added another win on Saturday as they swept Tennessee State 7-0.

Western's top two players, sophomore Andrei Makarevitch and junior Michael Lindskog continued to build on their doubles and singles records.

Both players won on Saturday,

moving their record to 10-3 and pulled together in doubles with a 10-3 record as well.

The match at Tennessee State was Western's first outdoor match of the season. Although they won, Coach Jeff True still sees room for improvement.

"Tennessee State is one of the weaker teams on our schedule," True said. "It takes three or four weeks to get ready and that's why

we scheduled them at this point in the season."

Freshman Wimal Wijenayake agreed.

"We played alright, but playing outside is going to take some time to get used to," he said.

The Hilltoppers will take a week off and resume play on March 23 as they host Austin Peay, a team that beat them earlier in the season.

WESTERN SPORTS SCORECARD

Team	W-L	Next
Men's basketball	11-18	season over
women's basketball	19-8	Thursday vs. Louisiana-Lafayette.
Men's Tennis	7-6	March 28 vs. Austin Peay
Baseball	7-7	Today vs. Yale
Softball	8-5-1	Today at Belmont

Sports News

1999-2000 Sun Belt Men's Basketball All-Conference Team

- ◆ Carlos Arroyo, FIU junior guard, 17.3 ppg, 5.3 apg, 41.7 percent 3-point shooting
- ◆ Orlando Butler, Louisiana-Lafayette junior guard, 13 ppg, 45 percent 3-point shooting
- ◆ Wahhab Carter, Denver sophomore forward, 17.8 ppg, 7.4 rpg
- ◆ Ravonte Dantzler, South Alabama junior guard, 12.7 ppg
- ◆ Chico Fletcher, Arkansas State senior guard, 12.2 ppg, 8.3 apg
- ◆ Gerrod Henderson, Louisiana Tech junior guard, 18.5 ppg, 4.2 rpg, 3.7 apg
- ◆ Craig Jackson, La Tech senior guard, 13.9 ppg, 4 rpg
- ◆ Chris Marcus, Western sophomore center, 11.9 ppg, 9.5 rpg, 2.5 bpg
- ◆ Virgil Stanesco, South Alabama junior center, 13.4 ppg, 6.7 rpg
- ◆ Lonnie Thomas, Louisiana-Lafayette junior forward, 11.2 ppg, 7.2 rpg, 57.3% FG

Player of the Year: Henderson

Newcomer of the Year: Marcus

Freshman of the Year: Antonio Meeking, La Tech (11 ppg, 6.9 rpg)

Defensive Player of the Year: Marcus

Coach of the Year: Bob Weltlich, South Alabama

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