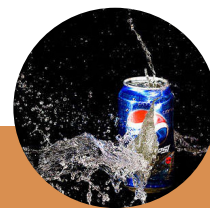


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News // p. 2
MTSU Students Find Three-Year-Old Drinks in Campus Vending Machines



Sports // p. 3
Where the Music Was: Murphy Center's History



Lifestyle // p. 4
Carolina Story A Family Affair



GOV. BILL HASLAM, PRESIDENT MCPHEE OPEN NEW SCIENCE BUILDING

by Sarah Taylor & Meagan White // Staff Writer, News Editor

Hailed as a game changer in the race to attract top science students, MTSU's gleaming \$147 million Science Building was officially opened Oct. 15 at a ceremony that attracted Gov. Bill Haslam, members of the Tennessee Board of Regents and a bevy of other elected officials who worked for years to bring the building to fruition. • More than 300 students, faculty and visitors filled the towering atrium on the north side of the building, with many getting a bird's eye view from floors above. • "Today, ladies and gentlemen, we made history," University President Sidney McPhee said at the opening. "We will build history for the state and for the future." • "This building is about our students and their future, but it is also about our community." • During most of McPhee's 13-year tenure as president of MTSU, a new Science Building has always been a priority. When it opened to students at the beginning of this semester, the 257,000 square foot facility replaced two decades-old buildings, the Davis and Wisner-Patton Science buildings, which only offered 72,000 square feet combined. • "This is a really great time to be true blue, but it's also a critical time to be true blue," Haslam said. "MTSU is a critical piece of [the Drive to 55]. "The Drive to 55 is a state initiative to raise the percentage of Tennesseans with a college degree or certificate to 55 by 2025. • "Attracting and growing jobs in Tennessee is directly tied to education, and if we are not prepared to fill those jobs of the future, they will go somewhere else. • "MTSU is right at the heart of the state's growth," said Haslam. "We all know about the increased focus on the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) discipline, so to have this science

building at the heart of this campus with this kind of investment, with state of the art facilities, we think will encourage more people to go that route then prepare them for the careers that we need more of in Tennessee." • State Sen. Bill Ketron, R-Murfreesboro, said the funding of the Science Building was a decades-long process that often pitted MTSU against the University of Tennessee, which also wanted state funds for new construction. He recalled a time when MTSU's building was threatened by pressure from UT, whose president at the time called the proposed new science facility a "big gorilla." • Ketron said that McPhee, at a meeting of university presidents, brought a large stuffed gorilla and told the assembled gathering that "the gorilla gets a seat at the table." • The construction of the new building was scheduled to be completed in Spring 2015, but finished both ahead of schedule and under the allotted budget for the project. • "It was an ambitious project by an ambitious team for an ambitious university," John Morgan, Chancellor of the Tennessee Board of Regents, told the crowd. • No one's smile was beaming brighter at the ceremony than Robert Fischer, dean of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences. • "The building is probably one of the greatest things that's ever happened on this campus to date," said Fischer. "It's allowed us to move light years forward in the sciences and offer our students an intellectual place to be a community as well as numbers of hands-on opportunities. • "The new building features state-of-the-art facilities that provide science majors areas in which to perform laboratory experiments, conduct research and consult with their peers. • "The people who designed it [the new building]

designed it with the idea that you would have enough soft spaces and enough areas for students to work with faculty that you could literally create a community of scholars," explained Fischer. • While the science building is certainly a haven for those who wish to fully immerse themselves in the sciences, non-majors reap many benefits as well. The new structure affords majors and non-majors alike the opportunity to take redesigned classes that are constructed to incorporate active learning, hands-on research and discipline specific labs that allow students the opportunity to understand what science is like in the real world, not just in the classroom. • "If you look at the old buildings what you see is that they're designed for students to come in, go take a class, and leave," said Fischer. "It really never gets students engaged with themselves, with other students, it never really gets them engaged with faculty members, it doesn't create that community." • According to Fischer, the communal atmosphere provided by the new building has already had a significant impact on MTSU students. • "That's probably been the biggest change in higher education, this move towards soft spaces, more gathering areas, more places where students and faculty have to go it's changed all of higher education, it's created this high level of engagement and community which didn't occur before." • Gabrielle Ashley, 23, a senior chemistry major from nearby Lebanon, Tennessee, said the new facility has opened opportunities for her. She helps teach classes and assists her adviser, Andrienne Friedli, with research on development of sensitive films that can better detect explosives in public spaces like airports. *continued to p.2*

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“The classrooms in this building are just so nice. They have a lot of ventilation hoods to work with and projection equipment that wasn't in the old building,” she said about the new classroom labs.

“The old building had just one lab. It was old and run down. Because of past experiments the air was thought to be contaminated, or just plain dirty. These films are very sensitive to contamination,” she explained.

The atrium of the Science Building was officially named on Wednesday during the opening ceremonies. The lobby of the building is now the Liz and Creighton Rhea Atrium, named after two MTSU basic and applied science professors who lobbied for the development of the project, according to McPhee.

Representing students at the ceremony was Kenneth Ball, a senior general sciences major, from Savannah, Tennessee. Ball was chosen to speak based on what he said in an interview about the building.

“When I got here for the first time, I was blown away,” Ball said. “The building is stunning inside and out, but it's what's inside that makes me believe that this is the best-equipped building on campus.”

Chemistry professor Tammy Melton said the new building is an improvement due to the variety of spaces and resources available for students, noting that only a year ago she and other professors had to “take students into the hallway” for group sessions because the classrooms and offices did not provide enough space.

“This beautiful building is a magnet for students. This is a very happy day for MTSU students and faculty and we are genuinely, deeply thankful for those who made this possible,” Melton said.

This sentiment was echoed by Ball, who noted that in the old science labs he often was “shoulder to shoulder with my lab partner” in his classes.

“I'd like to thank everyone who had a hand in this,” Ball said. “I don't think you could have made it any better.”

Levi Hill contributed to this report.

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MTSU Students Find *Three-Year-Old Drinks* in Campus Vending Machines

by Sarah Taylor // Assistant Lifestyles Editor

After finding drinks with unsettling expiration dates in campus vending machines, some students are beginning to question the care that goes into stocking MTSU's drink machines as well as campus dining options.

When MTSU freshman Gabby Pearson purchased a Gatorade on Feb. 17 from a vending machine in Cummings Hall, she found that it had expired on June 17, 2012. Pearson looked more closely at the drink and discovered several clumps of white mold on the inside of the bottle.

“Every time I have gotten a drink out of one of the machines (on campus) it has been expired,” said Pearson. “Usually it's only a few months old, but this was ridiculous.”

Pearson said she “almost threw up” after receiving the nearly three-years expired drink.

Pearson posted photos of the drink to Facebook in a call to action to MTSU faculty. “Someone PLEASE give me a number to contact about this. I'm not the first person to complain about our drinks being out of date,” the post reads. “Further actions will be taken if this issue is not resolved in a timely manner.”

As Pearson mentioned, she is not the only student who has received extremely outdated beverages from a machine on campus.

“I don't get drinks too often because I know that if I do, it's going to be old,” said freshman Nisha Smith. “It makes me feel like food services at MTSU in general is subpar.”

“I think it's just negligence,” said freshman Dwight Harris. “Don't they have a schedule of when they're supposed to change the drinks out? They need to try and get more on top of things like that.”

Vice President for Marketing and Communications Andrew Oppmann commented on Pearson's Facebook post saying, “Gabby, we have asked the Cummings staff to unplug the machine and put an ‘Out of Order’ sign on it.

We'll sort this all out when the full campus reopens for business. Thanks for the alert.”

Though the university offered Pearson a refund, as of Friday, Feb. 19, no sign has been placed on the machine and drinks with expiration dates in 2012 and 2013 are still available in that machine, other machines in Cummings, and machines in Corlew Hall, Peck Hall and Kirksey Old Main.

“I don't think (the administrators) really care. Because if they cared, when we've all complained all the other times, they would have done something,” Pearson said.

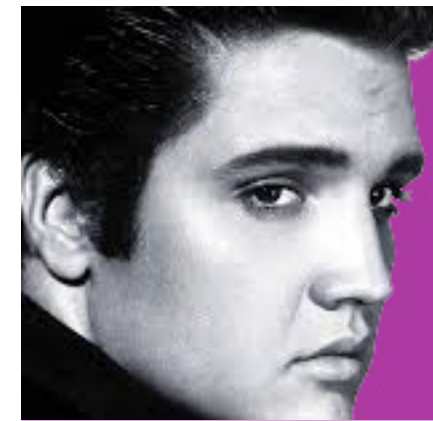
“It kind of makes me wonder (about) the food at McCallie and (the James Union Building),” Pearson continued. “Because if they're willing to give us expired drinks, how do we know the food there is in date.”

In response to us posting this article on Facebook, MTSU Vice Provost of Student Affairs Dr. Deb Sells said, “Both of the responsible vendors have advised that they understand the negative-implications of these type of occurrences and will do whatever needs to be done to avoid a repeat in the future.”

“Further, they both have assured us their product refresh should be completed by the end of the week in all their vending machines,” Sells said.

Sells also said in her comment that MTSU will be placing stickers with procurement's contact information for future product issues on the campus vending machines.

For more campus news updates, follow us at www.mtsusidelines.com, on Facebook at MTSU Sidelines and on Twitter at @Sidelines_News. To contact news editor Max Smith, email newseditor@mtsusidelines.com. Photos by Sarah Taylor and Max Smith.



Where the Music Was: Murphy Center's History

By Dylan Aycock // Features Editor

The house lights ease down, the stage lights slowly creep up and a cloud of smoke invades the stage, creating a barrier between the audience and the evening's headlining act.

Finally, a crisp, familiar voice escapes the speakers and drowns out the uproar of applause coming from the packed arena.

Although it may sound like a sold-out concert at Madison Square Garden, the show is actually taking place closer to home in a venue called The Monte Hale Arena inside the Charles M. Murphy Athletic Center.

During the height of its popularity, Murphy Center was the ideal place in the Middle Tennessee area to perform, with some of the most celebrated names in music history playing in the building now better known for hosting Blue Raider basketball.

Elvis Presley, Elton John, Tina Turner, George Strait and U2 are just a few of the performers that have graced the stage since the building opened in 1973.

MTSU Student Programming helped fill a vast number of seats for more than 25 years, fabricating Murphy Center into the epicenter of music in Middle Tennessee. From 1973 until 1999, students had the opportunity see the best known professional entertainers and internationally acclaimed acts, all without having to leave campus.

In 1994, the MTSU Student Concert Committee reached over 300 members, requiring the school to form a governing board of elected representatives to make decisions for the student body.

The committee operated on two programming levels—one with outside promoters and one through self-promotion. Many of the self-promoted, college circuit programs were free to students, while the co-promoted events allowed other promoters to rent out the venue and charge students a ticket price of around \$12 in 1995.



One step closer to the stage

Along with the committee, the university also trained students to work as ushers, stage crew and supervisors on the day of the show.

In 1986, former MTSU alumnus Keith Palmer seized the opportunity to

work backstage as part of the stage crew, a place where he says “all the magic happened.”

Palmer, now the development director of WMOT, began working on what was then called the Special Events Committee as a member of the stage crew during his first year as a student.

“One week we did Whitney Houston, Fleetwood Mac and U2 all within seven days,” Palmer said. “The shows were massive, so it was an exciting time on campus that week.”

Each show, Palmer and the rest of the crew were paid \$100 to unload equipment, assemble the set and, in an essence, ensure the night went as planned. Palmer says the crew received a few perks such as two free meals and a tour T-shirt, but he sometimes had the opportunity to take one step closer to what he says really mattered: the music.

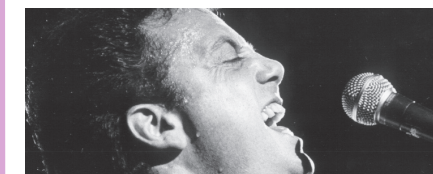
“I occasionally got to meet the artists,” he said, referring to his encounter with comedian Eddie Murphy in 1987, “but I'll never forget the night Billy Joel played Murphy Center.”

Palmer's final jobs for the evening was to polish Joel's baby grand piano, the one the artist would later play his hit song “Piano Man” on for a sold-out arena.

“I can now say I sat at the same piano as Billy Joel,” Palmer said while smiling.

A fan's perspective

From the other side of the stage, though, the experience was equally as



enjoyable. After a long day of classes, students filed into the venue, taking advantage of its close proximity and the lower student ticket price.

“Years ago, Murfreesboro was where the music was at,” said Stephanie Yocom, a former MTSU student. Yocom says she's long traded the days of standing in line for a packed show, but says that while she was in college, students took advantage of the opportunity.

“Nashville's always been a place where music has thrived,” she said, “but for awhile, Murphy Center shared some of the spotlight.”

She recalls seeing several artists during her two years on campus, but there's one show in particular that stands out among the rest.

“It was my first concert,” she said, recalling the first evening of Garth Brooks' four-night residency in Murphy Center in 1994. “He was the country music icon at the time, so there was no doubt it would be a sell-out.”

In fact, records cite Garth Brooks' four nights in Murphy Center accumulated over 40,000 tickets, outselling Elvis Presley's record for the highest ticket sales in the arena's history.

Larger venues, fewer shows

After 1999, concerts held in the arena became few and far between and eventually fizzled out due to newly constructed arenas in Music City. Student Programming's only choice was to schedule lesser-known acts in other locations on campus.

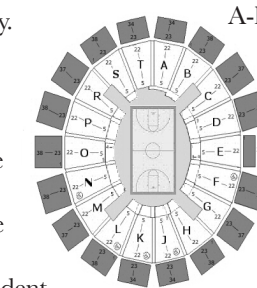
“With larger venues opening in Nashville, promoters no longer needed

Murphy Center to put on these elaborate shows,” Palmer explained. “It was all about the ticket sales.”

However, Murphy Center returned to the spotlight in 2005 when the activities committee brought in Kanye West to perform. The show sold close to 6,000 tickets and collected over \$58,000 in revenue.

Unfortunately, the cost to bring A-list artists is higher than ever, and Student Programming is no longer able to keep up. Still, thousands of fans fill the arena each year, but not for the same reason as before.

Now a place where basketball players score a winning-shot, Murphy Center will always carry out its legacy of being a premier music venue for over three decades.



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Carolina Story

A Family Affair

by John Connor Coulson // Lifestyles Editor

Almost seven years into their relationship, Nashville-based singer-songwriters Ben and Emily Roberts have gone through a series of milestones in the last year.

Under the name Carolina Story, the married couple has released two well-received, Americana-inspired EPs, “Chapter One” and “Chapter Two,” played the legendary Grand Ole Opry stage four times in three months and made their Americana Music Festival debut Friday night at the Listening Room Café.

“It doesn’t get any bigger of a stage than the Grand Ole Opry for a lover of [traditional country,]” Ben said in a telephone interview Wednesday afternoon.

While their careers seem to only be going up, the Roberts’ humble beginnings are still fresh in their minds. Meeting in a parking lot of Memphis’s Visible Music College in August 2007, Ben and Emily began dating and eventually performing together shortly thereafter, with Ben playing accompanying guitar for Emily’s solo performances. The couple then decided to formally start performing as a duo while on a trip to North Carolina, hence the name Carolina Story.

“It was the perfect marriage in my eyes,” says Ben. “A musical partner and a girlfriend.”

The duo followed Emily’s desire to pursue a career Music City settled into East Nashville four years ago and haven’t looked back. “Nashville just seemed like the next stop on the train,” Ben said. “Nashville has shaped who we’ve become musically so much in the last few years.”

Aside from their blossoming musical success, Carolina Story went through a life-changing event off the stage—the birth of their first child, Bruce, on September 12.

“Once he was born and everyone cleared out the hospital room at 4:30 a.m., we picked up a guitar and sang to him,” said Ben. “That was the first thing we did with him. He opened his eyes, and that was the first time we got to see his eyes.”

Becoming parents hasn’t slowed down Carolina Story’s trajectory. They played their Americana Fest showcase on September 18, just a week after Bruce was born.

“[We said] come hell or high water, we’re gonna play,” Ben said. “He’s healthy, happy, and Emily’s doing great...Now are we getting enough sleep? Probably not. But I think that comes with the territory.”

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