Hayes to help families achieve homeownership

Rural Development Area Director Bobby Goode has announced Tyler Hayes will be the new Single Family Housing Loan Specialist for Dyer County. He will help eligible families and individuals utilize Rural Development financial and technical resources to achieve the dream of homeownership. Rural Development loan funds are currently available in Dyer County.

“Owning a home helps families build economic security through an asset that can be passed on to the next generation. It builds pride in the community and is an important part of the American way of life,” Hayes said. “At Rural Development we are committed to helping as many people as possible achieve the American Dream of owning their own home.”

A native of West Tennessee, Hayes currently lives in Martin. He holds a bachelor’s degree in agricultural business from the University of Tennessee at Martin. Hayes serves Crockett, Dyer, Lake and Gibson counties.

“With all that’s happening in the housing market right now, finding the right home loan for your family and circumstances can be a frightening prospect,” said Goode. “Fortunately for people in Dyer County, Tyler Hayes has the experience to help people reach their goal with confidence.”

Hayes maintains regular office hours to assist families in Dyer County on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 9-11:30 a.m. at the USDA Service Center located at 400 Community Park Blvd. in Dyersburg.

Rural Development’s housing programs are designed to increase homeownership by assisting eligible families and individuals in purchasing or building a home in rural areas of Tennessee. Loans may be made without a down payment, and eligible applicants may qualify for loan financing up to 100 percent of the appraised value. Depending on an applicant’s income, monthly payments may be based on an interest rate as low as 1 percent. Loans are typically made for 33 years at a fixed interest rate, with a maximum loan amount of $131,100 in Dyer County. Monthly payment assistance may also be available for those who qualify.

Eligibility for assistance is based on family income and varies by county. For example, a four-person household living in Dyer County with an adjusted household income up to $37,900 may qualify for a low-interest home loan through Rural Development. Rural Development staff will assist those interested in learning more to calculate adjusted family income and complete the application process.

Additionally, Rural Development offers a Guaranteed Home Loan program to help private lenders increase the number of affordable home loans they make in rural areas. Rural Development also has funds available for home repairs related to health, safety and accessibility.

USDA Rural Development is committed to the future of rural communities in Tennessee by investing financial and technical assistance through housing, community and business development programs. In Fiscal Year 2007 Rural Development assisted at least 800,000 Tennessee families and businesses with more than $306 million in financial resources including loans, loan guarantees and grants.

To schedule an appointment to discuss homeownership or for more information on the guaranteed home-loan program or business development programs available in the Dyer County, contact the Rural Development Area Office in Union City at 731-885-6490, ext. 4 or toll free at (800) 342-3149 ext. 1497. Information is also available online at http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tn.

Chelsey N. Brunner awarded scholarship

The Armstrong Foundation of Armstrong World Industries Inc. awarded a four-year college scholarship to Chelsey N. Brunner, a 2008 graduate of Madison Academic High School.

Brunner is one of 20 high school students nationwide to receive Armstrong scholarships. She is the daughter of Armstrong employee Stanley N. Brunner of Jackson, plans to study nursing at the University of Tennessee Martin. The Armstrong Foundation awards scholarships to the sons and daughters of Armstrong employees and retirees who achieve high scores on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. The Armstrong scholars, chosen by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, receive $2,000 annually for four years. Check out www.armstrong.com.
UTM assistant professor gets award

Joy Roach, University of Tennessee Martin assistant professor, Department of Computer Science and Information Systems, was awarded a national dissertation award in San Antonio, Texas. After a two-year blind review, the Delta Pi Epsilon Dissertation Award was bestowed on Roach for best dissertation in the nation in the field of business education for 2006. ‘Factors Affecting Written Business Communication Creation and Productivity Perceptions’ won first place in the field. Roach received the award at the Delta Pi Epsilon luncheon as part of this year’s National Business Education Association Convention. Delta Pi Epsilon is the graduate branch of NBEA and sponsors the award. Roach is pictured with her dissertation advisor, Marcia Anderson, of Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Rawls, Tharpe given Holley Credit Union scholarships

Jarrett David Rawls and Angelica Tharpe have been given $500 Holley Credit Union scholarships. The two are 2008 graduates of Henry County High School.

Rawls is the son of Mark and Tina Rawls of Paris. Tharpe is the daughter of Lutricia and Fred Tharpe Jr.

At HCHS, Rawls was a four-year member of the Patriot basketball team and a member of the tennis and baseball teams. He also was a member of DECA, Spanish club, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and a Patriot Pals mentor.

He is scheduled to attend the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and work toward a bachelor’s degree in marketing.

Tharpe was involved with the Publication Class and a member of the French club and Health Occupation Students of America.

She plans to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin where she will be studying in the social and medical fields in preparation of becoming a psychiatrist.
COLLEGIATE CHEMISTRY MEETING - The 31st annual Area Collegiate Chemistry Meeting organized by the Student Affiliates of the American Chemical Society (SAACS) and co-hosted with the Kentucky Lake Section of ACS at the University of Tennessee at Martin attracted 65 attendees from eight colleges in three states. Eighteen students presented their research—including six from UT Martin. Dr. Thomas H. Lane, president-elect of the world’s largest science organization, American Chemical Society, was the keynote speaker. Several of the participants from UT Martin pictured with Dr. Lane (seated, from left) UT Martin student presenters, Clint A. Ary, Joshua Potts, Tiffany A. Brewer, Kendra Salter, Carolyn U. Nguyen and Adam S. Thompson, and UT Martin SAACS president, Robert H. Mitchell; (standing, from left) SAACS faculty advisor and ACS Kentucky Lake Section councilor, Dr. S. K. Airee; Dr. Paul I. Higgs, Shuntaro Tsukiyama, Christy Lowe, Chad Waters, Dr. Robert L. Hartshorn, James Kempton, Lana Ferrell, ACS president-elect Dr. Thomas H. Lane, Jamie Price, Kiran Vaswani, Casey Ellington, Megan Molin, Kayla Poindexter, Dr. Carol Blanchard and Dr. Nancy Hinds.

Reading camp slated for June

The University of Tennessee at Martin Office of Extended Campus and Continuing Education will host Reading Enrichment Camp June 23-27.

“Adventures With Arthur” will meet from 9-11 a.m. for children in grades first through second. This camp provides a week of reading antics with the world’s most lovable aardvark—Arthur, by Mark Brown. Every day becomes an adventure, from camping out with space aliens to meeting the president. This camp is led by Sheena Rayburn, graduate teaching assistant, UT Martin Reading Center, licensed teacher and magician’s assistant.

Advance registration is required and space is limited. To register, call ECCE at 881-7082 or register online at http://www.utm.edu/departments/ecce/non_credit_registration.php. A brochure for downloading or viewing is also available online at http://www.utm.edu/departments/ecce/courses_nondegree.php.

Lego camps slated for June

The UT Martin Office of Extended Campus and Continuing Education will host LEGO Camp June 16-20.

“Junior Vehicles Using LEGO” is slated from 9 a.m.-noon for children ages 5 to 7 years old. The cost of this camp is $140. Students will build 14 different vehicles. Some of these vehicles haven’t even been invented in the “real” world yet.

“Elementary Engineering 1 Using LEGO” is slated from 1-4 p.m. for children ages 8 years and older. The cost of this camp is $140. Children will use LEGO Educational Division Materials and LEGO Technic elements. The course covers gears, levers, wheels, axles, structures, forces and simple machines. This is an integrated science and math class.

The students will work in a lab setting with one LEGO Technic kit for every two students. The objectives of each course are to encourage hands-on learning, promote team building, allow creativity in construction and to have fun with basic science and mathematics.

Advance registration for the camp is required and space is limited. To register, call ECCE at 881-7082 or register online at: http://www.utm.edu/departments/ecce/non_credit_registration.php. A brochure for downloading or viewing is also available online at http://www.utm.edu/departments/ecce/courses_nondegree.php.
LOCAL STUDENTS INDUCTED INTO PHI KAPPA PHI — UT Martin students (seated, from left) Nicole Sudberry, Jessica Breeden, Jana Ogg, Kristyn Roberts and Jennie Brooks; (standing, from left) Hannah Burcham, Rebecca Hinds, Matthew Cook, Eric Wilson, Clint Ary, Tiphaniie Erwin and B.J. Erwin, all of Weakley County, were recently inducted into the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Membership is based upon academic achievements and exemplary character. Those eligible include graduate students in the upper 10 percent of their class, seniors in the upper 10 percent, and juniors in the upper 7.5 percent. Also eligible are faculty members who possess outstanding academic, research, creative and service achievements. An internationally respected honor society, Phi Kappa Phi is the oldest and most selective organization that recognizes and promotes academic excellence in all fields of higher education. The society was founded at the University of Maine in 1897 and currently has chapters on the campuses of 282 colleges and universities in the United States, the Philippines and Puerto Rico.

HOOTEN HONORED AT UT MARTIN COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCES AWARD BANQUET — Carah Hooton, of Martin, received the Leslie Duke Outstanding Junior in PRA Award at the 20th Annual University of Tennessee at Martin College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences Awards Banquet. The award was presented by Dr. Jerry Gresham, chair of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

BROWNING HONORED AT UT MARTIN COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCES AWARD BANQUET — George "Trey" Browning III, of Dresden, received the Outstanding Natural Resources Management Student Award at the 20th Annual University of Tennessee at Martin College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences Awards Banquet. The award was presented by Dr. Jerry Greshman, chair of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.
SAACS AT NATIONAL MEETING - Twelve University of Tennessee at Martin Student Affiliates of the American Chemical Society (SAACS) and Dr. S.K. Airee, advisor, recently participated in the 235th national meeting of the American Chemical Society in New Orleans. Airee represented the Kentucky Lake Section at the ACS Governance Council meeting besides serving on the Grants and Awards Subcommittee of the Local Section Activities committee. Students helped supervise the undergraduate program. They also presented a demonstration at the "Chem Demo Exchange with Household Chemicals" and a poster in the Chemical Education division. At an awards ceremony, the UT Martin SAACS chapter received a plaque for an Outstanding rating and another one in recognition as a Green Chapter. The chapter has received 29 Outstanding ratings – more than any other of the more than 900 chapters nationwide and a green chapter recognition every year since the initiation of this designation. UT Martin SAACS chapter members with two plaques are (from left) Casey Ellington of Trenton, James Kempton of Martin, Christy Low of McKenzie, Dr. Airee, Tiffany Brewer of Greenbrier, Nancy Bakowski, ACS undergraduate programs manager; Dr. Bruce Bursten, ACS president (UT Knoxville College of Arts and Sciences dean); Dr. Katie Hunt, ACS past president; Hillary Crossett of Camden, Megan Malin of Holladay, Casey Unger of Martin, Chad Waters of Camden, Kayla Poindexter of Murfreesboro, Punam Patel of Martin, Robert Mitchell of Ripley and Kiran Vaswani of Franklin.

Local Students Participate in Math Contest

MARTIN - The 52nd annual Tennessee Mathematics Teachers' Association High School Mathematics Contest was conducted on April 15 at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Approximately 6,000 of the state's top mathematics students competed at 23 different testing centers located across the state. Examinations were given in six areas: Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre Calculus, Statistics and Calculus. Students from Hollow Rock-Bruceon Central High School who participated in the contest at the UT Martin testing site were first row (l-r): Julie Kelley, T.J. Simmons, Lauren Scott, Meagan Birdwell, Courtney Grooms, Jan Pardue, Shelby Taylor, Megan Kent, Ashley McCauley and Emily Tucker; second row: Jacob Edwards, Chance Ragatle, Tiffany Cathey, Emily Davis, Shelby Haviland, Kayla Wilkes, April Stepp, Brittany Hollingsworth, Jessie Hollingsworth and Sara Beth Eason; third row: Ethan Clifton, Jonathan Craig, Jeff Moore, Adam Douglas, Matt Lane, Dylan Casteel and Kurt Jann.
Bray claims Phi Kappa Phi fellowship

A University of Tennessee at Martin graduate has been selected to receive a Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship for 2008-09. Kathryn Yarbrough Bray, Maryville, who earned a bachelor of science degree in agriculture in spring 2008, will receive $5,000 to aid in her pursuit of graduate or professional study. She is one of 60 students nationwide to receive the Graduate Fellowship from Phi Kappa Phi, the nation’s oldest, largest and most selective all-discipline honor society.

Since its creation in 1932, the Graduate Fellowship Program has become one of the society’s more visible and financially well-supported endeavors, allocating nearly $380,000 annually to deserving students for first-year graduate study. Currently, 60 Fellowships of $5,000 and 40 Awards of Excellence of $2,000 are awarded each year.

The selection process for the fellowships and awards is based on the applicants’ undergraduate academic performance; leadership and service on the campus and in the community; evidence of graduate potential; personal statement of educational perspective, purpose and objectives; and the evaluation reports from three individuals who are in a position to attest to the student’s performance, citizenship and character.

Headquartered on the Louisiana State University campus in Baton Rouge, Phi Kappa Phi inducts approximately 32,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni annually from nearly 300 select colleges and universities.

The society’s mission is “to recognize and promote academic excellence in all fields of higher education and to engage the community of scholars in service to others.”

Milan’s Broach to compete in Miss Tennessee

Jordan Cole, of Martin, 2008 Miss University of Tennessee at Martin, and Elizabeth Looney, of Eads, 2008 Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival, will join contestants from across the state in the Miss Tennessee Pageant, June 18-21. Final competition is at 8 p.m., June 21, at the Carl Perkins Civic Center in Jackson.

Cole is a senior human learning major at UT Martin, and Looney is a Northwest Community College student.

Also included in the list of contestants are UT Martin students, Miss Metropolitan Hannah Wade Powell, freshman criminal justice major from Alano, and Miss Nashville Brittany Broach, senior biology major from Milan.

“The contestants will have their first official Miss Tennessee duty June 15 at the Old Hickory Mall in Jackson with a meet-and-greet session. The public is encouraged to attend. The Miss Tennessee Program books will be available for purchase and all contestants will spend time signing autographs and visiting with their fans,” said Lynn Gibson, Miss UT Martin/Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival director.

“Preparing for the entertainment part of the pageant will come first. Pageant preliminaries will begin Wednesday night as they get ready for the Saturday night finals. It would be great to see all the girls progress to the Saturday night event.”

For the talent segment, Cole will play the flute, and Looney, Powell and Broach will perform vocal selections.
Young Scholars Academy set for June 22-28

Underrepresented high school students will get a taste of college life during the seventh annual Young Scholars Academy, set for June 22-28, at the University of Tennessee at Martin. The event is sponsored by the Office of Minority Affairs.

A select group of 63 West Tennessee students will attend this competitive week-long summer residential program, designed for high school sophomores and juniors. The non-credit program seeks to introduce students to the college experience by focusing on three learning environments: special aptitude development; personal and social development; and college/major exploration.

"This year’s camp will focus on preparing the students for the optimal college experience,” said Teresa Woody, Office of Minority Affairs director. “They will be exposed to life on campus and challenged with individual coursework, a special-topics group seminar and a group class in raising their collegiate success by 85 percent. They will also meet with our administrators, faculty and staff.” She added, “In addition, the students will receive intensive standardized testing instruction, have lots of fun social activities and take a group field trip. The week will be full of great activities that highlight UT Martin as the campus that cares.”

From dorm life to the classroom to a culminating graduation ceremony, the academy offers a cross section of college life, with a variety of activities designed to develop creative and intellectual skills. Students will attend classes throughout the week, with about two-thirds of class time in an area of special academic interest. Students will be exposed to special aptitude areas from the following courses: mass communication, English composition and world literature, nursing, sociology, education and history. Extra curricular activities will include a community picnic, a community service activity, movie night, talent revue and a field trip to the Civil Rights Museum in Memphis.

For more information, contact the UT Martin Office of Minority Affairs at 731-881-7282.

Locals graduate from UT Martin

Gibson County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:
* Bradford – Jleston Smith Cowen, Jennifer Marie Hudkins, Joshua C. Little, Shanna Renee McCartney, Donald Wayne Proudfit, Deidre Ann Veasey, Benjamin Franklin Woods III;
* Milan – Patrick R. Barnes, Brittany Lynn Broache, Robert Justin Cagle, Margaret Clare Duncan, John B. Dunn, Amy Rebecca Gray, Brian Lynn Jones, Debbie Elaine Mays, Zachary Aaron McMinn, Amanda Marie Mitchell, Megan Aleece Pope, Judith Rebekah Robbins, Savannah Lee Seilers, Thomas McRee Sullivan, Angela Renee Winstead, William Patrick York II, Samuel Timothy Young;

The students receiving master’s degrees included:
* Medina – Lara I. Coleman;

Dr. David LaVelle, UT Martin alumnus and Memphis surgeon, was the keynote speaker. Chancellor Tom Rakes presided and conferred degrees.

Ary honored at UT Martin

Clint Ary, of Greenfield, received the Outstanding Animal Science Student Award at the 20th Annual University of Tennessee at Martin College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences Awards Banquet. The award was presented by Dr. Jerry Gresham, chair of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.
Professional development credits available online for educators

The University of Tennessee at Martin provides a variety of online courses for educators. Online courses meet the qualifications for professional development activities that can be used for renewal purposes. Prior to enrolling in a course, check with a supervisor to ensure the course can be used as part of a professional growth plan. If approved, participants will receive 24 renewal points per course. UT Martin will provide a certificate of completion showing the name of the course, course dates, and the number of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) awarded. Visit the Website at www.ed2go.com/utmecce.

Among upcoming courses offered is Microsoft PowerPoint 2003 in the Classroom. Participants will learn basic PowerPoint skills such as creating slides, using templates, inserting text, changing background colors, creating WordArt titles and adding slide transitions. They will also develop advanced skills such as inserting graphics, sound and video, custom animations, timed transitions and hyperlinks.

They will be able to publish a presentation on a school Website. Additionally, participants will be able to create presentations filled with scanned drawings created by students or digital photographs slide shows.

Tracy Loffer, who holds a master’s degree in education in curriculum and instruction, is the instructor. She has been involved in education for 20 years as a music educator and technology trainer of students and teachers. She has also worked in the private sector as a trainer of domestic and international technology franchises as well as a writer and developmental editor of educational technology materials using Office, Publisher and FrontPage.

This course and others last six weeks and include lessons, quizzes, hands-on assignments, a discussion area and supplementary links. Upcoming start dates are: June 18, July 16, and August 20. Registration fee is $95 per course.

For information about these courses, visit the online instruction center at http://www.utm.edu/departments/ecce/online-courses.php. Select Education To Go. Call ECCE at 731-881-7082 for more information.
West Tennessee Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory opens at UT Martin

Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture Ken Givens joined University of Tennessee at Martin Chancellor Tom Rakes and other state and local officials recently to dedicate the new West Tennessee Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory on the UT Martin campus. The facility will provide a variety of services in support of animal disease diagnosis and regulatory activities.

"The new West Tennessee Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory is a prime example of how the Agricultural Enhancement Program is making a positive difference for our state," said Gov. Phil Bredesen, who was represented by Givens at the dedication. "I'm proud to join the Department of Agriculture in supporting this facility, which for the first time will make critical disease diagnostic and reporting services readily accessible to West Tennessee veterinarians, farmers and pet owners."

"I want to commend UT Martin for delivering on a promise to operate a first-class facility with first-class service," said Givens. "This is a great day for Tennessee agriculture and particularly for the livestock industry in West Tennessee. Not only will this facility function as an integral part of a statewide animal disease network, it will help to further diversify and support the development of our livestock in West Tennessee."

The partnership between the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and UT Martin was made possible by the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program, established in 2005 by Bredesen and supported by the Tennessee General Assembly. The goal of the TAEP is to help improve animal health and livestock production and to encourage farm diversification in Tennessee.

The laboratory opening follows an announcement in fall 2006 of a partnership between the TDA and UT Martin to improve cattle management and health in West Tennessee with a mobile, high-tech trailer funded by the TAEP that is being used as a tool to educate and demonstrate proper cattle management and care. In fiscal year 2006, a total of $750,000 from TAEP funded renovations and equipment for the new laboratory.

University of Tennessee President John Petersen was represented by Dr. Joseph DiPietro, UT vice president for agriculture. "With the establishment of the West Tennessee Animal Disease Diagnostic Lab at UT Martin, each region of the state is now equipped to identify and monitor animal health concerns such as foreign animal disease, herd disease outbreaks, secure the safety of the food supply, maximize animal health and assure public health," said DiPietro. "The lab will also further the commitment to increased communication among the public, producers and veterinarians in West Tennessee."

The West Tennessee Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory will function as a satellite facility of C.E. Kord Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory operated by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture in Nashville. Another regional laboratory operating independently is located at University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine in Knoxville.

The 2,200 sq. ft. facility will provide post-mortem tissue collection services only. Samples will be shipped overnight to Kord laboratory, where all defective diagnoses will be made by state veterinary pathologists. Veterinarians, producers and West Tennessee residents will be able to submit animals to the facility for necropsies.

"This is a great example of our continuing partnership with the state to ensure an increased level of special services to those within our region," said Chancellor Rakes. "We are fortunate to have this unique laboratory facility located in West Tennessee."

For more information about the West Tennessee Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, contact Dr. Janet Bailey, facilities manager, at 731-881-1071.

Young Writers Summer Camp at UT Martin slated for June

The University of Tennessee at Martin Office of Extended Campus and Continuing Education will host Young Writers Summer Camp June 16-20.

"Young Writers Summer Camp" is slated from 9:00 a.m. - noon for children interested in writing, poetry, storytelling and more. The camp includes writing workshops, mini-lessons on content and editing strategies, writing response groups, and one-to-one conferences with West Tennessee Writing Project Teachers.

Teacher-led activities will begin at 9:00 a.m. to help develop and improve each child's writing. A snack break is scheduled from 10:30-10:45 a.m. Following the break will be a creative writing session. Student pick-up begins at noon.

The registration fee is $70 per camper, which includes a T-shirt, writing notebook and an anthology of writing by campers. Students must register by June 6.

The camp will end with a "celebration of writing" called Friends and Family Day. On Friday at 11:00 a.m., family and friends are invited to join the children's writing groups to hear what the children have been writing during camp.

For additional information about the Young Writers Summer Camp or WTWP, visit the WTWP Website at www.utm.edu/www.wtwp or e-mail Brittan Sutherland, summer camp program director, at sutherlandb@k12tn.net.

To register call ECCE at 731-881-7081 or register online at www.utm.edu/departments/ecce/youthwriting/writingreg.php.
Local residents receive awards at Foreign Language Day

Four Gleason High School students recently won first place in the Spanish Language/Culture Bowl at the University of Tennessee at Martin High School Foreign Language Day. Pictured, left to right, are: Dr. Daniel Napp, chair of the Department of Modern Foreign Languages, Hunter Trevathan, Tyler Verdell, Amanda Kline, Meagan Goodlow, and Martha Ochoa, instructor of Spanish.

Two Dresden High School students recently won third place in the Spanish Bake-Off at the University of Tennessee at Martin High School Foreign Language Day. Pictured, left to right, are: Martha Ochoa, instructor of Spanish, Riley Moran, Elizabeth Thompkins, and Dr. Daniel Nappo, chair of the Department of Modern Foreign Languages.
Four Westview High School students recently won third place in the French Language/Culture Bowl at the University of Tennessee at Martin High School Foreign Language Day. Pictured, left to right, are: Dr. Daniel Nappo, chair of the Department of Foreign Languages, Derrick Fisher, Alicia Frazier, Alex Whiteman, Becky Lee, and Martha Ochoa, instructor of Spanish, right.

4-H State Honor Club inducts new members

At the May 15th Achievement Banquet, Weakley County 4-H was proud to announce the newest members of the State Honor Club. Pictured here (left to right) are Jesi Ogg, Lacey Bell, Monica Bell, Laura Bell, and 4-H Agent Erin Bragg.

Students earn this status based on 4-H involvement and leadership. These members gather for social events, and are planning to attend a Diamond Jaxx baseball game this spring. The Honor Club members have also worked to serve the community through assisting at We Care and collecting tops for the Ronald McDonald House.
Dresden High School
2008 Top Ten

Sarah Ann McAlpin

Sarah Ann McAlpin is the daughter of Mark and Judy McAlpin, and the older sister of Amy McAlpin. Sarah has always been an A student throughout her elementary, middle, and high school careers. She has maintained a GPA of 4.0 and has also maintained a cumulative average above 95. She has been recognized for academic excellence each year of high school, and is also a Tennessee Scholar. Sarah has been involved in many extracurricular activities and clubs during her high school career. She has been an officer for the Dresden FFA Chapter for three years. Her senior year, she held the office of Vice President for the FFA and The Weakley County Junior Livestock Association. Sarah has also raised and shown lambs for the past four years. She has also competed in many FFA Career Development Events such as Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Soil Judging, Horse Judging, Horticulture, Parliamentary Procedure, and Agricultural Sales and Marketing. She has also been a member of HOSA and competed in competitions at the national level for it. She has also been a member of Beta, Pep Club, Spanish Club, Mu Alpha Theta, FCA, Interact, Theater and Chorus, and FCCLA. She served as treasurer of her class and President of the Pep Club during her senior year. Sarah has been involved with many volunteer activities including those with her church, FFA, and her service learning class. She has become very active in helping her church with a project called “Magi” boxes, and in helping her service learning class with their project for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Sarah will be attending college at the University of Tennessee at Martin, majoring in Agricultural Business.

Keely Elizabeth Adams

Keely Elizabeth Adams is the daughter of Kerry and Renza Adams of Dresden, Tennessee. She ranks second in the 2008 Graduating Class of Dresden High School. Keely has received the "A Average" Award and been on the Honor Roll each year while in high school. During her four years at Dresden High School, Keely has participated in numerous school and community activities. Keely has been a DHS Cheerleader for four years. Keely is active in many clubs including the Beta Club, FCCLA, Mu Alpha Theta, the Interact Club, the Pep Club, the D Club, the Science Club, FCA, HOSA, and the Spanish Club. Keely has held office positions in many of the clubs. She has been chairperson, secretary, and president for FCCLA; treasurer and secretary for Fellowship of Christian Athletes; vice-president and president for the Spanish Club; treasurer of HOSA; class vice-president her junior year and a member of the executive committee her senior year. She also was on the annual staff her junior year and an editor her senior year. Keely was selected “Best Dressed” by her senior class. She participated in many club competitions. In FCCLA STAR Events, she competed in the regional and state competitions for Illustrated Talk her freshman year, the regional competition for Creed her sophomore year, the regional and state competitions for Chapter Showcase Manual her junior year, and the regional, state and national competitions for National Programs in Action her senior year. In HOSA, she competed in medical terminology her freshman year, physical therapy her junior year, and nutrition her senior year. In the Spanish Club competitions, she participated in a video skit her junior year and the Spanish Quiz Bowl her senior year. Keely also participated in the Weakley County Youth Leadership program her sophomore year. Keely has also been involved in many community service activities including volunteering for Santa’s Helpers, the Tennessee Iris Festival Flower Show and the Dresden Middle School Library. She also served as a volunteer worker to help build and repair homes for underprivileged people as part of World Changers. Keely is an active member of Dresden First Baptist Church and has been a Vacation Bible School teacher, a Mission Friend teacher, a volunteer worker for children’s church and the nursery and has served on the youth council. After graduation, Keely plans to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin and major in Biology in pursuing a career in physical therapy.
Brittany Elizabeth Duggin

Brittany Elizabeth Duggin is the daughter of Richard and Gail Duggin. She ranks third in her class at Dresden High School. She was involved in many clubs and extracurricular activities. She was a member of Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), Future Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), Future Farmers of America (FFA), National Beta Club, Spanish Club, Pep Club, Interact Club, Future Teachers of America (FTA), Science Club, and Mu Alpha Theta. She held officer roles in many of these clubs: FCA-Treasurer (11) and Vice President (12); FCCLA-Secretary (12); Pep Club-Treasurer (12); and FTA-Activities Director (11). She was on her senior class Executive Board. She is the graduate of the First State Bank Weakley County Youth Leadership Class of 2005-06. She was elected “Best All Around” of her senior class. She is a member of Dresden First Baptist Church. She participates in World Changers each summer with her youth group. She helped tutor at Dresden Middle School during after school tutoring and during summer school. She plans to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin in the fall.

Roe Hughes III

Roe Hughes III is the son of Roe and Andrea Hughes of Dresden, Tennessee. He ranks fourth in the 2008 graduating class of Dresden High School. Roe has received the “A Average” Award each year while in high school and was also selected by the faculty as the recipient of the Outstanding Student Appreciation Award both his freshman and sophomore years. Roe has been a member of the Dresden Lions baseball team for four years and a member of the DHS Lions Basketball team for two years. He was elected by his classmates as Class President his Freshman, Sophomore and Junior years and Best Dressed in the Senior Who’s Who. During his four years at Dresden High School, Roe has participated in numerous clubs and activities including Beta Club, Mu Alpha Theta, FCCLA, the Interact Club, Pep Club, D Club, Science Club, and the DHS Student Council. Roe has held officer positions in many of these clubs. This year, he serves as President of the Beta Club, President of Mu Alpha Theta and Vice President of the Pep Club. Roe is also involved in his community and serves as Student Representative for the Tennessee Iris Festival. He is an active member of Lebanon Church of Christ. After graduation, Roe plans to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin.

Austin Teill Blanton

Austin Teill Blanton is the son of Raymond and Barbara Blanton of Sharon, Tennessee. He ranks tenth in the 2008 Graduating Class at Dresden High School. Austin has received the “Outstanding Academic Achievement” Award each year while in high school. During his four years at Dresden High School, Austin has participated in numerous school clubs including Beta, HOSA, Mu Alpha Theta, Science Club, FCCLA, FFA, and Pep Club. He served as Sentinel for HOSA and was a DHS Student Council Representative. He also served on the senior staff for two years and was an editor his Senior year. Austin has also been involved in many volunteer activities throughout his clubs, classes, the Tennessee Scholar, and his church. Austin is a member of Victory Baptist Church of Sharon. After graduation, Austin plans to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin and major in Education.

UTM’s Cole, Broach, Powell join Looney in Miss Tennessee Pageant

Jordan Cole, of Martin, 2008 Miss University of Tennessee at Martin, and Elizabeth Looney, of Eads, 2008 Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival, will join contestants from across the state in the Miss Tennessee Pageant June 18-21. Final competition is at 8:00 p.m., June 21, at the Carl Perkins Civic Center in Jackson.

Cole is a senior human learning major at UT Martin, and Looney is a Northwest Community College student.

Also included in the list of contestants are UT Martin students, Miss Metropolitan Hannah-Wade Powell, freshman criminal justice major from Alamo, and Miss Nashville Brittany Broach, senior biology major from Milan.

"The contestants will have their final official Miss Tennessee duty June 15 at the Old Hickory Mall in Jackson with a meet-and-greet session. The public is encouraged to attend. The Miss Tennessee Program books will be available for purchase and all contestants will spend time signing autographs and visiting with their fans," said Lynn Gibson, Miss UT Martin/Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival director. "Preparing for the entertainment part of the pageant will come first. Pageant preliminaries will begin Wednesday night as they get ready for the Saturday night finals. It would be great to see all the girls progress to the Saturday night event!"

For the talent segment, Cole will play the flute, and Looney, Powell and Broach will perform vocal selections.
Business consultant at REED Center, June 12

Ron Acree, a consultant of the Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBDC), will be available in June at the University of Tennessee at Martin Regional Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (REED) Center in Martin. He will offer consulting services to local businesses and prospective entrepreneurs from 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., June 12.

This is an opportunity for existing business owners to get advice on marketing, customer service or cash flow issues. Budding entrepreneurs may receive advice on developing a business plan, marketing and record keeping. Acree is knowledgeable about state and national resources that are available for businesses.

The UT Martin REED Center is a service of the Horace and Sara Dunagan Chair of Excellence in Banking and the Tom E. Hendrix Chair of Free Enterprise.

The REED Center also offers consulting by appointment any time, any day. The consultations are one-on-one, confidential and free. Appointments may be made by contacting the REED Center at 731-587-REED (7333). The REED Center is located at 406 Lindell St., Martin, TN 38237.

For additional services offered by the REED Center go to www.utm.edu/reed.

Weakley County students receive scholarships to attend UT Martin

Four Weakley County students have been awarded scholarships for the 2008-2009 academic year to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin, according to Judy Rayburn, director of admissions.

* Austin Blanton, son of Raymond and Barbara Blanton of Sharon, will be a freshman. He received the Harold Connor Scholarship.

* Matthew Chappell, son of Mickey and Shirley Chappell of Dresden, will be a freshman. He received the Harold Connor Scholarship.

* Lauren Witherspoon, daughter of Ricky and Mitsie Witherspoon of Martin, will be a freshman. She received the Dean’s Scholarship.

* Heather Yarbro, daughter of Jason and Dava Yarbro of Dukedom, will be a freshman. She received the Dean’s Scholarship.

Additional information on scholarships and other types of financial assistance is available by contacting UT Martin Office of Student Financial Assistance, 205 Administration Building, UT Martin, Martin, TN 38238. In-state residents telephone 800-829-UT MART1; out-of-state residents should call (731) 881-7040.

Hughes recipient of UTM scholarship

An Obion County student has been awarded a scholarship for the 2008-2009 academic year to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin, according to Judy Rayburn, director of admissions.

Kassie Hughes, of South Fulton, daughter of Jere and Patty Hughes, will be a freshman. She received the Leaders-in-Residence Award.

Additional information on scholarships and other types of financial assistance is available by contacting UT Martin Office of Student Financial Assistance, 205 Administration Building, UT Martin, Martin, Tenn. 38238. In-state residents telephone 800-829-UT MART1; out-of-state residents should call (731) 881-7040.

Hooten honored at UT Martin

Carah Hooten, of Martin, received the Leslie Duke Outstanding Junior in PRA Award at the 20th Annual University of Tennessee at Martin College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences Awards Banquet. The award was presented by Dr. Jerry Gresham, chair of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.
Reading enrichment camp set for June 23-27

The University of Tennessee at Martin Office of Extended Campus and Continuing Education will host Reading Enrichment Camp June 23-27, "Adventures With Arthur" will meet from 9-11 a.m. for children in grades first through second. This camp provides a week of reading antics with the world’s most lovable aardvark - Arthur, by Mark Brown.

Every day becomes an adventure, from camping out with space aliens to meeting the president. This camp is led by Sheena Rayburn, graduate teaching assistant, UT Martin Reading Center, licensed teacher and magician's assistant.

"Silly Shenanigans" is slated from 12:30-2:30 p.m. for children in grades third through fourth. This camp includes funny stories, poems, and jokes designed especially for the eight-to-nine-year-old crowd. It is led by Ashley Raygon, graduate teaching assistant, UT Martin Reading Center, seeking her teacher's license and pizza professional. "Movers and Shakers" will be held from 3-5 p.m. for children in grades fifth through sixth.

Participating in a mock election and creating your own business are part of the action planned. This camp is led by Will Tate, graduate teaching assistant, UT Martin Reading Center, seeking his teacher’s license and movie aficionado. Advance registration is required and space is limited. To register, call ECCE at 731-881-7082 or register online at http://www.utm.edu/departments/ecce/non_credit_registration.php. A brochure for downloading or viewing is also available online at http://www.utm.edu/departments/ecce/courses_nondegree.php.

County students graduate from UTM

Gibson County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elum Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:

- Trenton: Lana Christine Carpenter, Matthew Blake Curtis, Geoffrey Andrew Fuentes, Candace Renee Gibson, Anessa LeAnn Inman, and Jana Suzanne Rhodes;
- Bradford: Jeston Smith Cowen, Jennifer Marie Hudkins, Joshua C. Little, Shanna Renee Mccartney, Donald Wayne Proudfit, Deidre Ann Veasey, and Benjamin Franklin Woods III;
- Dyer: Rachel Suzanne Coleman, Leslie Kay Harwell, Phillip G Hurley, Ashley Blair Johnson, and Chace Ashley-Mann Wimberley;
- Rutherford: Lindsey Nicole Flowers and John Gravette McCullar;
- Yorkville – Kimberly Ann Scott;

- Humboldt: Carmen Williams Corder, Daniel Scott DeHaan, Megan Lynn Laster, Leo Warren McCormick Jr, and Joshua Holman Richardson;

The students receiving master's degrees included:

- Humboldt: Richard Max Arnold Sr.;
- Medina: Lara I. Coleman;

Dr. David LaVelle, UT Martin alumnus and Memphis surgeon, was the keynote speaker. Chancellor Tom Rakes presided and conferred degrees.
Takes oath

University of Tennessee at Martin engineering graduates were inducted into the Order of the Engineer at a ceremony prior to spring commencement. Graduates pledged to be ethical and impartial and adhere to safety codes as they enter the engineering profession. Among those taking the oath and receiving a ring and certificate was Jeston Cowen of Bradford. Making the presentation was Dr. Richard Helgeson (left) Department of Engineering chair, and Dr. Doug Sterrett, College of Engineering and Natural Sciences dean.

THE WEAKLEY COUNTY PRESS

THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2008
Local Residents Receive Degrees From UT Martin

McNairy County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:

- Adamsville – Lena Marie Hembree, April C. Orso
- Bethel Springs – Ross Gordon Moore, Cathy Lynn Nasalroad
- Finger – Whitney Durbin Chandler
- Hopper, John Stewart Price, Steven Thomas Price, James Lucas Wilds
- Milledgeville – Clinton Ross Smith
- Selmer – Dolly Jane Barnes, Jessica Dawn Butkovic, Rachel Lee Crump, Kelly A. Jackson, Alisha Brooke Kiddy, Joe A. McCombs, John Adam Mitchell, Jennifer Johnston Price, Megan King Shelton, Charles Austin Young
- Stantonville – Susan Anita Davis

Among students receiving master's degrees were:

- Bethel Springs – April Yvonne Hart Hamm
- Guys – Daniel Eric Holcombe

Dr. David LaVelle, UT Martin alumnus and Memphis surgeon, was the keynote speaker. Chancellor Tom Rakes presided and conferred degrees.

The Martin Kiwanis Club recently presented two Westview Seniors with scholarships. Erin Miles (left) and Lauren Burress (right) are pictured here with Martin Kiwanis President Frank Black. Both young ladies were active in the Kiwanis Key Club at Westview where Miss Miles served the past year as vice-president and Miss Burress served the past year as President. Both received a $500 scholarship and will be attending UT Martin in the fall.
UTM names local students to dean's list

The outstanding academic achievements of undergraduate students at the University of Tennessee at Martin have been honored with publication of the spring 2008 dean’s lists for the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, College of Business and Public Affairs, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, College of Engineering and Natural Sciences and the College of Humanities and Fine Arts. To be eligible for dean’s list recognition at UT Martin, a student must take at least 12 hours of credit (pass-fail courses are not included) and achieve a 3.2 (B) grade point average based on a 4.0 scale. Students can make the dean’s list with Honors; (3.2 through 3.49), High Honors; (3.5 through 3.79) or Highest Honors; (3.8 through 4.0). UT Martin is a comprehensive public university that maintains an excellent reputation for its high-quality undergraduate programs, its beautiful campus and caring professors.

**Campus:**
- Ahmed Alyosif, Highest Honors; Jui Chiang, Highest Honors; Nuala K. Deans, High Honors; Scott J. Gladstone, Honors; Sol Heo, Highest Honors; Hiromi Hirai, Highest Honors; Chih-Fan Huang, High Honors; Jung-Hyun Kim, Honors; Ernestine Koornhof, Highest Honors; Alfredo Krywacz, Highest Honors; Sarah Leavy, Highest Honors; Justine L. Malingrey, Honors; Britney D. Mathis, High Honors; Taraq J. Mayahi, Honors; Sachie Sato, Highest Honors; Munemasa Tokihiro, High Honors; Andrey Yesipov, Highest Honors.
- Dresden: Zachary O. Baker, Highest Honors; Kimberly D. Barnett Sledd, Highest Honors; Daniel W. Bartley, High Honors; George N. Browning, High Honors; Alexander J. Bynum, Honors; Albany D. Cianfarani, High Honors; Kristin N. Copeland, Highest Honors; Adam S. Corum, High Honors; Betheny N. Dane, Honors; Lacey M. Darden, Highest Honors; Stacey L. Darden, High Honors; Justin N. Davidson, Highest Honors; Christina P. Dilday, Honors; Jake H. Doster, High Honors; David P. Dunn, High Honors; Wendy D. Elliott, Highest Honors; Boyd J. Erwin, Highest Honors; Tiphanie M. Erwin, High Honors; Mercy M. Ford, Honors; Lea Ann Hayes, High Honors; Matthew S. Hewett, Honors; Justin A. Hutcherson, High Honors; Sunni C. Jackson, High Honors; Leah R. Kerassidis, Honors; Kurtiss T. Lamb, Highest Honors; Travis L. Lewis, High Honors; Jessica K. Mathis, High Honors; Emily S. Moon, High Honors; Jeremy M. Moss, Highest Honors; Jessica M. Neisler, High Honors; Charles R. Nichols, High Honors; Shonna R. Parker, High Honors; Allison L. Paschall, High Honors; Kayla R. Peeler, Honors; Cody W. Perkins, Honors; Kristi A. Petering, Honors; John B. Roland, Honors; Krista S. Suddath, Honors; Matthew A. Thomas, Highest Honors; Evan M. Trevathan, High Honors; Andrea F. Wade, High Honors; Allison E. Webb, Honors; James B. Whaley, High Honors.

**Dukedom:**
- Charles V. Bailey, Highest Honors; Matthew T. Dacus, High Honors; Jeremy L. Robertson, High Honors; Brittany S. Shopher, Honors.

**Gleason:**
- Heather L. Allen, High Honors; Lacy D. Arnold, High Honors; Adam T. Bennett, High Honors; Andrew R. Francis, High Honors; Tiffany B. Frazier, High Honors; Haley A. Hudson, High Honors; Merrie J. Joyner, Honors; Graham J. Oliver, Honors; Kody T. Owen, High Honors; Richard H. Rogers, Highest Honors; Brian A. Taylor, Honors; Joshua V. Verdeli, Highest Honors.

**Greenfield:**
- Clint A. Ary, High Honors; Christina R. Brock, Highest Honors; Monica D. Collins, Honors; Chelsey P. Engler, High Honors; Shelley C. Featherston, Honors; Jennifer B. Goodlow, Honors; Zeke E. McAdams, Honors; Robert L. McCall, Highest Honors; Emily L. Meadling, Honors; James H. Moore, High Honors; Alyse A. Page, Honors; Allison E. Puckett, Honors; Candace A. Robinson, Honors; Kelly A. Stewart, High Honors; Jennifer K. Tharp, High Honors; Kimberly K. Tharp, Highest Honors; Christopher L. Turbyville, Highest Honors; Samantha E. Willis, Highest Honors.

**Martin:**
- Kassi L. Abney, Highest Honors; Bethany C. Adams, Highest Honors; Emily A. Adams, High Honors; Fahad Alanazi, Highest Honors; Abdullah Albrahim, High Honors; Ali Aldarwish, Honors; Sadiq Alhawaizi, Highest Honors; Mohammed Alyami, Highest Honors; Joseph S. Anderson, Honors; Debra J. Barker, High Honors; Dustin M. Barner, High Honors; Brandon N. Beck, High Honors; Christopher N. Bell, Highest Honors; Christopher D. Belote, Honors; Jessica S. Betts, Highest Honors; Kaylin C. Bishop, Honors; Darla A. Bondurant, Highest Honors; Sylvester Boyd, Highest Honors; Jessica K. Breeden, Highest Honors; Lauren A. Breland, Honors; Christopher E. Brewer, Highest Honors; Tiffany A. Brewer, Honors; John S. Britton, High Honors; Shawn W. Britton, Honors; Jennifer L. Brooks, Highest Honors; Kyle H. Brooks, Highest Honors; Philip L. Brooks, High Honors; Amy B. Brundige, Highest Honors; Bradley A. Bugg, High Honors; Hannah S. Burcham, Highest Honors; Jessica D. Butkovic, Highest Honors; Clarinda M. Cannon, High Honors; Christopher M. Cates, Honors; Lindsey R. Cates, Honors; Charles R. Cavin, High Honors; Kayla A. Cazeneuve, High Honors; Nam Cha, Highest Honors; Shawn A. Coleman, Highest Honors; John A. Collins, Honors; Matthew R. Cook, Highest Honors; Tameika L. Dancy, Highest Honors; Olivia M. Daniel, Honors; Monica L. Davidson, High Honors; Cory S. Davis, High Honors; Cheryl L. Deyeso, High Honors; Jennifer L. DeYeso, Highest Honors; Nicholas D. Dilda, Honors; Michael L. Dobson, High Honors; Micky L. Dobson, Highest Honors; Bernhardt T. Dotson, Highest Honors; Misty L. Dunlap, Highest Honors; Jordan R. Easterwood, Highest Honors; James C. Eisterhold, Honors; Mancel C. Fischer, High Honors; Logan W. Flood, High Honors; William H. Freeman, Highest Honors; Jessica E. Fuqua, Honors; Melissa N. Gant, Honors; Lauren K. Glascio, High Honors; Alishia D. Glover, Honors; Crista M. Glover, High Honors; Victor S. Gosser, High Honors; Dahlia M. Haddad, Honors; Amy V. Hall, Highest Honors; Cassandra L. Hamilton, Honors; Kellie Jo N. Harden, High Honors; Grant R. Harper, Honors; Angela K. Harris, High Honors; Walter R. Harris, Highest Honors.
Jackie W. Hauhe, High Honors; Jennifer R. Havener, Highest Honors; Sarah Hensley, Honors; Thomas H. Hester, Honors; Heather L. Higgs, Highest Honors; Rebecca K. Hinds, Honors; Margaret A. Hinson, Highest Honors; Amelia D. Hollenberg, Highest Honors; Megan N. Hollis, Honors; Stephanie C. Holmes, High Honors; Carah L. Hooten, Highest Honors; Jordan W. Howell, Honors; Lenetta R. Humphrey, High Honors; Justin C. Hunt, High Honors; Sarah R. Hunter, Honors; Michael A. Hutsell, High Honors; Chandra M. Jacobs, High Honors; Seong Yeop Jeong, Highest Honors; Jeremy J. Johnson, High Honors; Rebecca N. Johnson, Highest Honors; Jonalee S. Kagels, High Honors; Austin L. Kendall, Honors; Ha Jung Kim, Honors; Alisse K. Kirk, Honors; Amelia S. Kosta, High Honors; Marlena D. Landry, High Honors; Jennifer M. Laster, High Honors; Kimberly J. Laster, Honors; Benjamin L. Lux, Honors; Laura J. Leahy, High Honors; Eun Sung Lee, Honors; Joshua S. Lemons, High Honors; Willie P. Lemons, High Honors; Su Lin, High Honors; Brandi A. Long, Honors; Nikita M. Louis, Honors; Alyssa F. Lowery, Highest Honors; Loren K. Mallari, Honors; Joshua D. Manning, Highest Honors; Rickey L. Mask, High Honors; Latonya N. Mays, Highest Honors; Adam J. McCammon, Highest Honors; Matthew M. McCarron, Honors; Katie J. McCracken, High Honors; Candace L. McDaniel, Honors; Lindsey N. McDaniel, Honors; Rebecca A. McDonald, High Honors; Lori F. McDunn, Highest Honors; Sara M. McIntosh, Highest Honors; Sarah J. McPeak, High Honors; Brittany L. McPeake, High Honors; Jason C. Middleton, High Honors; Erica C. Miller, Honors; Ashley N. Mitchell, High Honors; Robert H. Mitchell, Highest Honors; Sara A. Mitchell, Highest Honors; Darius D. Moore, High Honors; Sierra J. Moseley, Honors; Nicholas A. Mounts, Highest Honors; Michael L. Musser, Highest Honors; Cory B. Nethery, Honors; Andrew K. Nielsen, Highest Honors; Jana E. Ogg, High Honors; Paul E. Orr, Highest Honors; Brandon H. Pate, High Honors; Manish P. Patel, Honors; Punam Patel, Highest Honors; Suzanne M. Peckham, High Honors; Scott W. Penick, High Honors; Amanda F. Phillips, Highest Honors; Stacey E. Phillips, Honors; Chauntia O. Pollard, High Honors; Ross E. Pope, High Honors; Samantha M. Porter, Highest Honors; Joshua D. Rainey, Highest Honors; Ross A. Ratkowski, High Honors; Nathaniel T. Reinhard, Honors; Lee A. Revell, Honors; Jonathan D. Richwine, Honors; Jeffery W. Rinks, Honors; Sarah M. Roberts, Highest Honors; Ryan W. Rockholt, Honors; Rachel Sandifer, Highest Honors; Eric W. Seavers, Honors; Stuart N. Shaw, Honors; Jinyan She, Highest Honors; Grant T. Simmons, Highest Honors; Heather M. Sowell, High Honors; Matthew H. Spellings, High Honors; Sara B. Stewart, Honors; Michael B. Stigall, Honors; Rex H. Stoker, High Honors; Nicole M. Stout, Highest Honors; Mandy L. Sturdivant, Highest Honors; David B. Sudberry, Highest Honors; Nicole T. Sudberry, Highest Honors; Nicole T. Sudberry, Highest Honors; Krista N. Swafford, High Honors; Christopher K. Taylor, Honors; Cara M. Thomas, Honors; Candace E. Thweatt, High Honors; Jake E. Todd, Honors; Joseph B. Travis, Highest Honors; Mary K. Unger, Highest Honors; Robert C. Unger, Highest Honors; Regina F. Vancleave, High Honors; Laura K. Vaughn, Honors; Hunter T. Vincent, Highest Honors; Emily D. Wall, Honors; Nathanial J. Walters, High Honors; Nicholas R. Walters, High Honors; Kevin J. Ward, High Honors; Whitney L. Ward, High Honors; Hillary J. Watson, Honors; Carter W. West, High Honors; Gregory T. West, Honors; Harlin G. Wilkin, High Honors; Rachel E. Wilkinson, High Honors; Elizabeth A. Williams, Highest Honors; Mallory K. Williams, Highest Honors; Brandon M. Wilson, Honors; Christopher W. Wilson, High Honors; Eric C. Wilson, Highest Honors; Kelly L. Wilson, Highest Honors; Lauren E. Wilson, High Honors; Savannah M. Wilson, Honors; Brad E. Winter, Honors; Megan L. Witherspoon, Highest Honors; James L. Wright, High Honors; Wesley R. Yates, High Honors.

Palmersville: Ashley J. Donoho, Highest Honors; Christy D. Fincher, Highest Honors.

Sharon: Johnny M. Branson, High Honors; Amber N. Carson, High Honors; Jessica D. Dallalco, High Honors; Barbara P. Ferrell, Highest Honors; Jennifer Gale, Honors; Christopher R. Johnson, High Honors; Erika C. Kluts, Honors; Kristie L. Newsom, High Honors; Jon B. Sipes, Highest Honors; Jared L. Vowell, High Honors; Jacob D. Waterfield, High Honors; Krystal A. Wood, High Honors.

Business consultant to be at Reed Center
Ron Acree, a consultant of the Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBDC), will be available in June at the University of Tennessee at Martin Regional Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (REED) Center in Martin. He will offer consulting services to local businesses and prospective entrepreneurs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., June 12.

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For additional services offered by the REED Center go to www.utm.edu/reed.
LOCAL STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN MATH CONTEST – The 52nd annual Tennessee Mathematics Teachers’ Association High School Mathematics Contest was conducted on April 15 at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Approximately 6,000 of the state’s top mathematics students competed at 23 different testing centers located across the state. Examinations were given in six areas: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre Calculus, Statistics and Calculus. Students from Greenfield High School who participated in the contest at the UT Martin testing site were in the first row from left to right: Meagan Porter, Katie McColl, Kandi Sawyers, Mallory Robinson and Laura Croom; in the second row: Brittany Morgan, Melissa McCartney, Kelsey Potts, Wes Clark, Justin Allen and Anna Marie Usery; and in the third row: Linda Farmer, teacher, Kelsey McDonald, Hunter Martin, Dalton Potts, Adam Mitchell and Dakota Bettis.

UT Martin Student Takes Talent To Nashville Star

Last Update: 6/06 5:11 pm

Alyson Gilbert of Jackson, Tennessee is one of the top 12 music acts that will be featured on this year’s Nashville Star.

When she’s not singing, she’s a senior animal science major at UT Martin.

Nashville Star begins its first season on NBC on June 9th at 8pm on NewsChannel 6.
EVENTS SOCIAL STUDIES

UT Martin announces local graduates and dean’s list

Twelve Henry Countians received degrees during the May 10 commencement at the University of Tennessee at Martin. In addition, there were 45 local students who made the university’s spring 2008 semester dean’s list.

Receiving bachelor’s degrees during the commencement were:
- Nicholas Ryan Aston, Eric Michael Haldeman, Ryan Lee Hamlin, Alex Ryan Herbison, Frank Russell Holcomb, Beth Anne Killion, Karen Lynn Kriesky, Rebecca Suzanne Primrose and Jacob Benjamin Wilson, all of Paris; and Gabrielle Jean Lorbiecki of Como.
- Penny Lea Parsons of Buchanan and Staci Marie Rhodes of Paris were awarded their master’s degrees.
- David LaVelle, a UT Martin alumnus and Memphis surgeon, was the keynote speaker.

Tom Rakes, university chancellor, presided and conferred degrees.

On the dean’s list students named with highest honors earned a grade-point average from 3.8-4.0, with high honors, 3.5-3.79, and with honors 3.2-3.49.

Named with highest honors are:
- From Cottage Grove — Cristina L. Manning.
- From Henry — Summer D. Gladwin, Dustin G. McClure, Jamie L. Page and Michelle L. Roberts.
- From Springville — Mary Beth French.

With high honors are:
- From Buchanan — Kayla R. Parsons.
- From Cottage Grove — Roger D. Spicer.
- From Henry — Elizabeth A. Snead.
- From Puryear — Ryan L. Hamlin.
- From Springville — Pamela J. Corbin and Jonathan B. Rounton.

With honors are:
- From Paris — Gary A. Ashlock, Benjamin L. Burkhart, Lauren N. Dunning, Jade M. Johnson, Lauren L. Kesterson, Nicole M. Parke, Rachel N. Perry, Jacob H. Robinson, Sarah E. Scott, Zachary K. Shoultis, Thomas W. Stoker and Brandon T. Wimberley.
- From Buchanan — Richard I. Ellison and Jade N. Stearnes.
- From Como — Gabrielle J. Lorbiecki.
- From Cottage Grove — Beth A. Killion and Justin R. Morton.
- From Mansfield — Angela S. Ray.
- From Puryear — Autumn S. Sullivan.
- From Springville — Amanda L. Goforth.

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Area Resident Honored at UT Martin ROTC Awards Ceremony

MARTIN - Cadet Amanda Allen of McKenzie recently received the ROTC Alumni Scholarship Fund Award at the University of Tennessee at Martin ROTC Awards Ceremony. Lt. Col. Janet Kirkton, professor of military science, presented the award.
Local talent aspires to be 'Nashville Star'

BY ASHLEY ANTHONY
AANTHONY@JACKSONSUN.COM
* JUNE 9, 2009

Local singer Alyson Gilbert, a favorite at the Downtown Tavern and Redbones Bar and Grill in Jackson, is one of 12 music acts that will compete on the country music reality series "Nashville Star." The show's sixth season premieres at 8 p.m. Monday on NBC.

Gilbert's producer, Wes Henley, a local musician and former guitarist with Cari Perkins, said she deserves this opportunity. Gilbert and Henley write songs together, record at his studio and perform in Jackson usually twice a month.

"I've always believed in her talent," Henley said. "We play unplugged at Redbones and the Downtown Tavern. They love Aly. She's got this great big voice like Ann Wilson or Martina McBride."

Gilbert's husband, Brian Harms, describes her as a contemporary country artist and songwriter with a blues influence. The couple lives in Jackson.

Jackson-based singer Alyson Gilbert is one of the competitors in the sixth season of 'Nashville Star,' premiering at 8 p.m. Monday on NBC. (JOHN RUSSELL /NBC)

Harms can't believe his wife is going to be on 'Nashville Star.' They're fans of the show.

"It's going to be a little bizarre, seeing her face in high definition on television," Harms said. "I'm happy for her."

In May, a camera crew from "Nashville Star" filmed Gilbert at the Downtown Tavern and the University of Tennessee Martin, where she is an animal science student, Harms said.

In March, Gilbert, 29, traveled to Austin, Texas, to audition for "Nashville Star" after sending in a video showcasing her talent, Harms said. She had a second audition in April in Nashville, he said.

Gilbert is unable to talk to anyone outside the show, including Harms. The last time they saw each other was on May 31, when Harms dropped her off in Nashville for the show, he said.
"It was like giving her over to witness protection," Harms said. "We had a few minutes to say our goodbyes. They took her cell phone, her computer. I have no idea when I'll be able to see or talk to her."

The couple, who married in 2002, moved to Jackson from Charleston, S.C., the same year.

Gilbert was born in Texas and raised in Minnesota, where she was Miss St. Paul.

While living in Charleston, Gilbert often went to Nashville to work with musicians.

"She was travelling back and forth from Nashville," Harms said. "It wasn't working."

So, he quit his engineering job in Charleston to help make things convenient for his wife's music career.

Since then, Gilbert has worked with Jackson's own The Grove. She was also on a USO tour in Japan, performing for military troops there.

In her biography on her Web site, she said the experience was one of her favorite gigs.

"If I could, I would sing for troops all the time - they're by far the best audience," Gilbert wrote.

Henley, who is a co-owner of Jackson's Highland House Productions recording studio, said Gilbert loves being on stage.

"I consider her a true artist," Henley said. "A lot of people get in this business for the wrong reason, to make money and get rich. Aly just wants to sing and perform in front of lots of people. She was born for this."

Since "Nashville Star" has moved from the USA Network to NBC, Henley is confident many will get the chance to see Gilbert.

"People need to hear her, so that's the thing I'm most pleased about," he said. "This is huge for anyone from our area. Hopefully this will encourage others to go after their dreams.

"We're covered with talent in West Tennessee," Henley said.

Last year, Scotts Hill native Whitney Duncan competed on "Nashville Star." She was eliminated before making the final four on the show.

In order for Gilbert to stay on "Nashville Star" past its first episode, she must impress the show's judges, which include multi-platinum singer/songwriter Jewel and John Rich, an award-winning singer, songwriter and producer of the country duo, Big & Rich, according to a press release from NBC Entertainment.

Afterward, America will decide who stays on the show.

Harms hopes Gilbert can take the competition in good stride. Music is her passion and gift, he said.

"She has a very distinct, powerful voice," Harms said. "Looking at her, you wouldn't know a big voice could come out of this little woman. She's got so much range that she can meld into any kind of band or sound.

"You can play a song for her once or twice, and she'll know that song," Harms said.

Henley and Gilbert's friend, Constance Lunsford, plan to have "Nashville Star" viewing parties in Jackson.

Lunsford first heard Gilbert sing at Barley's.

"She is unbelievable," she said.

Lunsford met Gilbert during a girl's game night. They played bunco, a dice game, together, she said.

Instead of having their weekly game night, the group plans to have a "Nashville Star" party, Lunsford said.

"We're all excited for her, and we hope she makes it to the end," she said.
Local talent aspires to be ‘Nashville Star’

Jackson-based singer to compete
Monday on NBC’s reality show

By ASHLEY ANTHONY
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Local singer Alyson Gilbert, a favorite at the Downtown Tavern and Redbones Bar and Grill in Jackson, is one of 12 music acts that will compete on the country music reality series “Nashville Star.” The show’s sixth season premieres at 8 p.m. Monday on NBC.

Gilbert’s producer, Wes Henley, a local musician and former guitarist with Carl Perkins, said she deserves this opportunity. Gilbert and Henley write songs together, record at his studio and perform in Jackson usually twice a month.

“I’ve always believed in her talent,” Henley said. “We play unplugged at Redbones and the Downtown Tavern. They love Aly. She’s got this great big voice like Ann Wilson or Martina McBride.”

Gilbert’s husband, Brian Please see GILBERT, 2A

Gilbert
Continued from cover

Harms describes her as a contemporary country artist and songwriter with a blues influence. The couple lives in Jackson.

Harms can’t believe his wife is going to be on “Nashville Star.” They’re fans of the show.

“It’s going to be a little bizarre, seeing her face in high definition on television,” Harms said. “I’m happy for her.”

In May, a camera crew from “Nashville Star” filmed Gilbert at the Downtown Tavern and the University of Tennessee Martin, where she is an animal science student, Harms said.

In March, Gilbert, 29, traveled to Austin, Texas, to audition for “Nashville Star” after sending in a video showcasing her talent, Harms said. She had a second audition in April in Nashville, he said.

Gilbert is unable to talk to anyone outside the show, including Harms. The last time they saw each other was on May 31, when Harms dropped her off in Nashville for the show, he said.

“It was like giving her over to witness protection,” Harms said. “We had a few minutes to say our goodbyes. They took her cell phone, her computer. I have no idea when I’ll be able to see or talk to her.”

The couple, who married in 2002, moved to Jackson from Charleston, S.C., the same year.

Gilbert was born in Texas and raised in Minnesota, where she was Miss St. Paul.

While living in Charleston, Gilbert often went to Nashville to work with musicians.

“She was traveling back and forth from Nashville,” Harms said. “It wasn’t working.”

So, he quit his engineering job in Charleston to help make things convenient for her wife’s music career.

Since then, Gilbert has worked with Jackson’s own The Grove. She was also on a USO tour in Japan, performing for military troops there.

In her biography on her website, she said the experience was one of her favorite gigs.

“If I could, I would sing for troops all the time — they’re by far the best audience,” Gilbert wrote.

Henley, who is a co-owner of Jackson’s Highland House Productions recording studio, said Gilbert loves being on stage.

“I consider her a true artist,” Henley said. “A lot of people get in this business for the wrong reason, to make money and get rich. Aly just wants to sing and perform in front of lots of people. She was born for this.”

Since “Nashville Star” has moved from the USA Network to NBC, Henley is confident many will get the chance to see Gilbert.

“People need to hear her, so that’s the thing I’m most pleased about,” he said. “This is huge for anyone from our area. Hopefully this will encourage others to go after their dreams.

“We’re covered with talent in West Tennessee,” Henley said.

Last year, Scott Hill native Whitney Duncan competed on “Nashville Star.” She was eliminated before making the final four on the show.

In order for Gilbert to stay on “Nashville Star” past its first episode, she must impress the show’s judges, which include multi-platinum singer/songwriter Jewel and John Rich, an award-winning singer, songwriter and producer of the country duo Big & Rich, according to a press release from NBC Entertainment.

Afterward, America will decide who stays on the show. Harms hopes Gilbert can take the competition in good stride. Music is her passion and gift, he said.

“She has a very distinct, powerful voice,” Harms said. “Looking at her, you wouldn’t know a big voice could come out of this little woman. She’s got so much range that she can meld into any kind of band or sound.

“You can play a song for her once or twice, and she’ll know that song,” Harms said.

Henley and Gilbert’s friend, Constance Lunsford, plan to have “Nashville Star” viewing parties in Jackson.

Lunsford first heard Gilbert sing at Baby Bay’s.

“She is unbelievable,” she said.

Lunsford met Gilbert during a girl’s game night. They played bocce, a dice game, together, she said.

Instead of having their weekly game night, the group plans to have a “Nashville Star” party, Lunsford said.

“We’re all excited for her, and we hope she makes it to the end,” she said.

On the Net:
www.nbc.com/Nashville_Star/
www.alysongilbert.com
Visit jacksonsun.com and share your thoughts.
— Ashley Anthony, 425-9631
Ragsdale promoted at Reelfoot Bank

Laurie Ragsdale has been named executive vice president and chief financial officer at Reelfoot Bank in Union City. A licensed certified public accountant, Mrs. Ragsdale has been with the bank since February 2000 and prior to that worked at a local CPA firm.

She earned a bachelor of science degree in accounting from the University of Tennessee at Martin after graduating from Obion County Central High School in 1993.

A native of Obion County, Mrs. Ragsdale is the daughter of Kenneth and Paula Sanders of the Cloverdale area and Tim and Debbi Howell of Medina. She is married to Tab Ragsdale and they are the parents of two sons, 5-year-old Chase and 2-year-old Will.

Mrs. Ragsdale is a member of the Tennessee Society of Certified Public Accountants and has served for several years on the Future Business Leaders of America advisory board at Union City High School. She is also actively involved in Hometown Walk of Hope fundraisers through Reelfoot Bank.

Reelfoot Bank is a locally-owned community bank that marked its 100th year of service in 2004. The bank’s main office and two branch offices are located in Union City, with other offices also located in Hornbeak, Martin and Fulton.

Student employee award was presented to Aiesha Clayton

The Spring 2008 Beth Maloon Outstanding UT Martin Student Employee Award recently was presented to Aiesha Clayton, a UT Martin Office of Human Resources employee. Clayton is a pre-med major and has been employed for three years.

Among her many tasks, Clayton, of Johnson City, enters and verifies work study payroll, completes HR paperwork, enters Outside Interest Disclosure Forms and Employee Evaluation Forms and trains new student workers. Clayton devised a system to keep track of all incoming paperwork on new hire and rehire student employees. She has learned the various E-forms of IRIS and their uses, making her qualified to answer questions and fill in for other office employees.

According to her supervisor, "She is the type of worker who comes in and just does her job. I do not have to constantly check on her to make sure she is working. She knows what needs to be done and just does it. This is invaluable. Also, she has learned many things on her own so that she is able to fill in as a substitute when I must be out of the office."

This award, given every fall and spring semester, is a memorial for Beth Maloon, longtime UT Martin director of budgeting and payroll, who during her years of service, was a strong advocate for student employment. Maloon had a vision that more positions would be developed on campus that would challenge students and make them significant contributors to the university’s mission. Recipients of this award exemplify a strong work ethic and commitment to the university, and they receive a $1,000 cash award, an engraved plaque and a nameplate on the perpetual plaque in a place of honor in the Boling University Center.

Contributions to this scholarship award may be made through payroll deduction by employees of UT Martin or by sending a contribution to the Office of Development at UT Martin.
Seminar to explain assistance program

The Small and Minority-Owned Business Assistance Program will be the focus of a seminar planned by the Regional Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Center of the University of Tennessee at Martin.

The seminar, planned for 10 a.m.-noon, June 12, at the REED Center, 406 S. Lindell St., Martin, is free. Registration is required by June 9. Call 587-7333 to register or for more information.

Those attending will learn about the program, what types of businesses are eligible and how the loans can be used, interest rates, qualifications and how to enroll in the program.

The Small and Minority-Owned Business Assistance Program was created to support outreach to new, expanding and existing businesses in Tennessee that do not have reasonable access to capital markets. The program consists of two components: loans and technical assistance. The loans must be used for specific projects such as acquisition of machinery and equipment, working capital, supplies and materials, inventory and other specific business-related activity. Loans will be made through community-based lending organizations identified in the three regions of the state. The lenders are sensitive to challenges of small and minority-owned businesses and will review loan applications using underwriting criteria that conventional lenders typically do not use. Business loans are capped at $125,000.

On the technical assistance side, current or potential business owners can receive assistance with business plans, operations and personnel policies and procedures, financial assessments, cash flow analysis, marketing and other business assistance they may need to successfully launch or improve a business.

“This small-business program is for people who are thinking about starting a business and need a business plan; and also for those who have a business but need help developing the company to make it more competitive,” said Sherry McClellan, SMOB program director.

Young Scholars Academy set for June 22-28 at UTM

Underrepresented high school students will get a taste of college life during the seventh annual Young Scholars Academy, set for June 22-28, at the University of Tennessee at Martin. The event is sponsored by the Office of Minority Affairs.

A select group of 63 West Tennessee students will attend this competitive weeklong summer residential program, designed for high school sophomores and juniors. The non-credit program seeks to introduce students to college experience by focusing on three learning environments: special aptitude development; personal and social development; and college/major exploration.

“This year's camp will focus on preparing the students for the optimal college experience,” said Teresa Woody, Office of Minority Affairs director. “They will be exposed to life on campus and challenged with individual coursework, a special-topics group seminar and a group class in raising their collegiate success by 85 percent. They will also meet with our administrators, faculty and staff.” She added, “In addition, the students will receive intensive standardized testing instruction, have lots of fun social activities and take a group field trip. The week will be full of great activities that highlight UT Martin as the campus that cares.”

From dorm life to the classroom to a culminating graduation ceremony, the academy offers a cross section of college life, with a variety of activities designed to develop creative and intellectual skills. Students will attend classes throughout the week, with about two-thirds of class time in an area of special academic interest. Students will be exposed to special aptitude areas from the following courses: mass communication, English composition and world literature, nursing, sociology, education and history. Extra-curricular activities will include a community picnic, a community service activity, movie night, talent review and a field trip to the Civil Rights Museum in Memphis.

For more information, contact the UT Martin Office of Minority Affairs at 881-7282.

County students receive scholarships

Four Weakley County students have been awarded scholarships for the 2008-09 academic year to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin, according to Judy Rayburn, director of admissions.

• Austin Blanton, son of Raymond and Barbara Blanton of Sharon, will be a freshman. He received the Harold Connor Scholarship.

• Matthew Chappell, son of Mickey and Shirley Chappell of Dresden, will be a freshman. He received the Harold Connor Scholarship.

• Lauren Witherspoon, daughter of Ricky and Mitzie Witherspoon of Martin, will be a freshman. She received the Deans Scholarship.

• Heather Yarbro, daughter of Jason and Dava Yarbo of Dukedom, will be a freshman. She received the Deans Scholarship.

Additional information on scholarships and other types of financial assistance is available by contacting UT Martin Office of Student Financial Assistance, 205 Administration Building, UT Martin, Martin, TN 38238. In-state residents telephone (800) 829-UT MARTIN; out-of-state residents should call (731) 881-7040.
UT Martin students to be contestants in Tenn. pageant

Jordan Cole, of Martin, 2008 Miss University of Tennessee at Martin, and Elizabeth Looney, of Eads, 2008 Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival, will join contestants from across the state in the Miss Tennessee Pageant, June 18-21. Final competition is at 8 p.m., June 21, at the Carl Perkins Civic Center in Jackson.

Cole is a senior human learning major at UT Martin, and Looney is a Northwest Community College student.

Also included in the list of contestants are UT Martin students, Miss Metropolitan Hannah-Wade Powell, freshman criminal justice major from Alamo, and Miss Nashville Brittany Broach, senior biology major from Milan.

"The contestants will have their first official Miss Tennessee duty June 15 at the Old Hickory Mall in Jackson with a meet-and-greet session. The public is encouraged to attend. The Miss Tennessee Program books will be available for purchase and all contestants will spend time signing autographs and visiting with their fans," said Lynn Gibson, Miss UT Martin/Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival director.

"Preparing for the entertainment part of the pageant will come first. Pageant preliminaries will begin Wednesday night, as they get ready for the Saturday night finals. It would be great to see all the girls progress to the Saturday night event."

For the talent segment, Cole will play the flute, and Looney, Powell and Broach will perform vocal selections.

International students receive degrees

International students were among those who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus. The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:

- Germany - Burena Jervene Smith;
- Japan - Hiromi Hirai;
- South Korea - Sae Ho Chung, Jung-Hyun Kim;
- Taiwan - Chi-Yun Huang, Chen Lan Lu;
- Zimbabwe - Melody Chido Mafa.

The student receiving a graduate degree was:

- South Korea - Do-Kyoung Kim.

Dr. David LaVelle, UT Martin alumnus and Memphis surgeon, was the keynote speaker. Chancellor Tom Rakes presided and conferred degrees.

McNairy County students receive scholarships to attend UT Martin

Two McNairy County students have been awarded scholarships for the 2008-2009 academic year to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin, according to Judy Rayburn, director of admissions.

Spencer Bean, son of Pamela Hazelwood of Adamsville and Tom Bean, will be a freshman. He received the Chancellor's Award.

Brittney Carnagey, daughter of Brian and Rena Carnagey of Selmer, will be a freshman. She received the Harold Conner Scholarship.

Additional information on scholarships and other types of financial assistance is available by contacting UT Martin Office of Student Financial Assistance, 205 Administration Building, UT Martin, Martin, Tenn. 38238. In-state residents telephone 800-829-UT MARTIN; out-of-state residents should call (731) 881-7040.
Alyson Gilbert risks elimination, stays on ‘Nashville Star’

By STANLEY DUNLAP
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A dozen friends gathered at Alyson Gilbert’s North Jackson home to watch her national television debut Monday night.

Just minutes before her appearance on NBC’s “Nashville Star,” husband Brian Harms said he was nervous yet optimistic.

“It’s kind of like a culmination of everything she’s done up to this point,” he said.

The Jackson-based singer was picked to be one of 12 acts on the sixth season of the country music reality competition. The show is airing on NBC for the first time this year after previously airing on the USA Network. Viewers can vote for contestants by phone, online or by text message after the show airs each Monday at 8 p.m. The winner or winners will receive a recording contract with Warners Bros. Nashville and get to perform at the Summer Olympic Games in Beijing.

Based on her first-week performance Monday, the judges called Gilbert down as one of two contestants up for elimination. But they chose to send contestant Charley Jenkins home instead, so Gilbert will return next week.

“I’m anxiously awaiting the outcome,” Harms said before Gilbert’s performance. “I think once the show goes on, then she’ll pick up momentum.”

Gilbert, 29, is a student at the University of Tennessee Martin. She has performed at local spots including the Downtown Tavern.

Carly Shaw and her daughter, Sophia Shaw, cheer when Alyson Gilbert makes an appearance on Monday night’s episode of ‘Nashville Star.’

Please see GILBERT, 2A

“Suds in the Bucket.”
“Great voice, great range,” Steele said. “You remind me of a little bit of Martina McBride, and that’s a good thing and a bad thing,” he said, urging Gilbert to be herself.

Jewel said Gilbert overdid it and became more like “a pageant singer” during her performance, which prevented her from displaying her true talent.

“I think the stakes at this point have never been higher,” she said.

Judges on the show are multi-platinum singer/songwriter Jewel; songwriter Jeffrey Steele; and John Rich, an award-winning singer, songwriter and producer of the country duo Big & Rich.

Gilbert’s first-week performance drew some praise and criticism from the judges.

She sang the Sara Evans hit

On the Net:
nbc.com/Nashville_Star
www.alysongilbert.com
Visit jacksonsun.com and share your thoughts.
— Stanley Dunlap,
425-9668
UTM’s Mrs. Gilbert vies for ‘Nashville Star’ title

University of Tennessee at Martin student Alyson Gilbert of Jackson is one of the top 12 music acts as “Nashville Star” began its first season on NBC Monday.

Mrs. Gilbert, 28, is a native of Crookstown, Minn. A former Miss St. Paul, she has a passion for music and animals. Her husband quit his job so she could pursue her dream of music. When not performing, Mrs. Gilbert is a senior animal science major at UT Martin.

The top 12 finalists performed during the taping of the “Nashville Star” premiere June 2 (subsequent episodes will be live) in front of a packed audience at the Acuff Theater, part of the Opry Entertainment Complex, in Nashville.

In episode one, the performers had to impress the show’s judges/mentors multi-platinum singer-songwriter and three-time Grammy nominee Jewel and John Rich — multi-award-winning singer, songwriter and producer and one half of the country duo Big & Rich — and award-winning songwriter and hit-making producer Jeffrey Steele to make it to the next round. Beginning week two, America decides who will return to the stage next week and who will pack up their guitars and head home.

The sixth season premiere also will feature a performance by 2008 ACM Best New Female Vocalist Taylor Swift as well as showcase highlights from the nationwide casting calls.

Kenyatta P. Reaves, daughter of Linda M. Reaves of Union City and the late Robert H. Reaves, recently graduated with honors from the University of Tennessee at Martin with a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice and a minor in sociology.

She is a 1994 graduate of Union City High School.

While attending UT Martin, Ms. Reaves was a member of the Criminal Justice Society. She was also certified by the American Red Cross in advanced first aid, CPR and AED.

She plans to pursue a master’s degree in forensics in the fall.
STUDENT HONORED — Cadet Bo Pate of Troy recently received the Sons of the American Revolution Award at the University of Tennessee at Martin ROTC Awards Ceremony. Lt. Col. Janet Kirkton, professor of military science, presented the award.

LEAVING FOR IRAQ — Lt. Col. Janet Kirkton (back row, center) is joined by members of the University of Tennessee at Martin Skyhawk Battalion before leaving for Iraq later this month. She will serve as a senior planner, working under the commanding general of the multinational forces. Among those visiting with Kirkton were (from left, front row) 2nd Lt. Tyler McAnally and 2nd Lt. Travis Payne, both recent UT Martin graduates; and (back row) Maj. James Lacy and Capt. Donny Hebel.
UT Martin student vies for ‘Nashville Star’ crown

A University of Tennessee at Martin student, Alyson Gilbert of Jackson, was one of the top-12 music acts as “Nashville Star” began its first season on NBC, 8-10 p.m., June 9.

Gilbert, 28, is a native of Crockett County, Tennessee. A former Miss St. Paul, Gilbert has a passion for music and animals. Her husband quit his job so she could pursue her dream of music. When not performing, Gilbert is a senior animal science major at UT Martin.

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In episode one, the performers have to impress the show’s judges/mentors multi-platinum singer-songwriter and three-time Grammy nominee Jewel and John Rich, multi-award-winning singer, songwriter, and producer One half of the country and Big & Rich, and award-winning songwriter and hit-making producer Jeffrey Steele to make it to the next round. Beginning week two, America decides who will return to the stage next week and who will pack up their guitars and head home.

The sixth season premiere featured a performance by 2008 ACM Best New Female Vocalist Taylor Swift as well as showcase highlights from the nationwide casting calls.

Hayes to help families achieve home ownership

Rural Development Area Director Bobby Goode today announced Tyler Hayes will be the new Single Family Housing Loan Specialist for Gibson County. He will help eligible families and individuals utilize Rural Development financial and technical resources to achieve the dream of homeownership. Rural Development loan funds are currently available in Gibson County.

“Owning a home helps families build economic security through an asset that can be passed on to the next generation. It builds pride in the community and is an important part of the American way of life,” Hayes said. “At Rural Development we are committed to helping as many people as possible achieve the American Dream of owning their own home.”

A native of West Tennessee, Hayes currently lives in Martin. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Business from University of Tennessee at Martin. Hayes serves Crockett, Dyer, Lake, and Gibson counties.

“With all that’s happening in the housing market right now, finding the right home loan for your family and circumstances can be a frightening prospect,” said Goode. “Fortunately for people in Gibson County, Tyler Hayes has the experience to help people reach their goal with confidence.”

Hayes maintains regular office hours to assist families in Gibson County on the first and third Thursday of each month from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Agri-Plex located at 1252 Manufacturers Row in Trenton.

Rural Development’s housing programs are designed to increase homeownership by assisting eligible families and individuals in purchasing or building a home in rural areas of Tennessee. Loans may be made without a down payment, and eligible applicants may qualify for loan financing up to 100 percent of the appraised value. Depending on an applicant’s income, monthly payments may be based on an interest rate as low as one percent. Loans are typically made for 33 years at a fixed interest rate, with a maximum loan amount of $131,100.00 in Gibson County. Monthly payment assistance may also be available for those who qualify.

Eligibility for assistance is based on family income and varies by county. For example, a four-person household living in Gibson County with an adjusted household income up to $37,100.00 may qualify for a low-interest home loan through Rural Development. Rural Development staff will assist those interested in learning more to calculate adjusted family income and complete the application process.

Additionally, Rural Development offers a Guaranteed Home Loan Program to help private lenders increase the number of affordable home loans they make in rural areas. Rural Development also has funds available for home repairs related to health, safety and accessibility.

USDA Rural Development is committed to the future of rural communities in Tennessee by investing financial and technical assistance through housing, community and business development programs. In Fiscal Year 2007 Rural Development assisted at least 600,000 Tennessee families and businesses with more than $308 million in financial resources including loans, loan guarantees and grants.

To schedule an appointment to discuss homeownership or for more information on the guaranteed home loan program or business development programs available in Gibson County, contact the Rural Development Area Office in Union City at 731-885-6480, ext. 4 or toll free at (800) 342-3149 ext. 1497. Information is also available online at http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/in.
rotc
head helps
in Iraq

Lt. Col. Janet Kirkton is accus-
tomized to changes of scenery
during her 19-year U.S. Army career.
However, going from the
UT Martin campus to the U.S.
Embassy in Iraq just might be her
most dramatic change to date.

She has recently left her posi-
tion as professor of military sci-
ence and head of the university’s
Army ROTC Program to assist
with planning efforts for the Iraq
War. It’s an assignment that will
bring her in daily contact with
top multinational military and
Iraqi leaders in the war on ter-
ror.

Kirkton, of Troy, Tenn., will
leave June 21 to become a senior
planner working under Gen.
David Petraeus, the command-
ing general of the multinational
forces in Iraq.

Petraeus was recently
appointed head of U.S. Central
Command by Defense Secretary
Robert Gates, which means that
Kirkton will then report to Lt.
Gen. Raymond Odierno, who
will become the new command-
ing general.

Before coming to UT Martin in
fall 2005, Kirkton was an opera-
tions officer for the 1st Engineer
Brigade at Ft. Leonard Wood,
Mo.

She also previously taught at
the U.S. Military Academy at
West Point, so when the UT
Martin assignment opened, the
Skyhawk Battalion and Martin
appeared to be a perfect fit.
Kirkton recalled that she “felt
really close to the community
when I got here,” and some pro-
ductive years for the program
followed.

Kirkton found the Skyhawk
Battalion “on an upswing” but
not reaching recruiting goals,
something the battalion has
achieved each year since her
missioned as an Army second
lieutenant, was a member of the
Ranger Challenge team. He said
that Kirkton helped to make the
Skyhawk Battalion successful
by offering ways for cadets to
improve themselves. “She did
this by giving us the opportunity
to go to Air Assault and Airborne
schools and others as well,” he
said. “These slots were given
to the most qualified cadets, so
competition was high.”

Kirkton leaves UT Martin
with plenty of enthusiasm for
her new assignment.
Specific duties will evolve
after she arrives in Iraq, but
she does know that she will
participate in strategic and con-
tingency planning for the war
effort at the highest level. For
example, it won’t be unusual
for her to observe discussions
between the Iraqi president and
commanding general. “I don’t
know,” she said. “I might be
making coffee or making slides,
but certainly I’ll be in and
around the area and hopefully
making a good contribution to
that team.”

The challenges of her new
assignment include some very
real dangers. Indirect mortar
fire is a concern, with some
700 attacks recorded around the
embassy in recent months.
“We have all the safe equip-
ment. ... I’m just going to go to
work every day and not worry
about that part,” she said.

Kirkton joins many other
members of the military in mak-
ing personal sacrifices to serve
her country. During her year-
long deployment, she will leave
behind her husband, a retired
infantry officer, and four chil-
dren, including a son who will
begin college this fall. Despite
the pending separation, her fam-
ily is supportive, and Kirkton
sees much for which to be
thankful. “...I’m so blessed in
my career to have only had to
deploy twice,” she said. “Many
of my peers have gone three
times, and so I have certainly
nothing to complain about
compared to everybody
else’s workload.”

Kirkton is optimistic about
the future of the Skyhawk Battali-
ton that will be led by her replace-
ment, Lt. Col. Angela Odorn.
She is also positive about the
military and sees service to
country as a noble calling.
“My father was in the military.
I’m just very proud of our ser-
vice,” she said. “Selfless service
to the nation, though, I think
takes a special calling, and so
I think our young people could
only be optimistic about that
service and be very proud about
that decision.”

Trivia Night to be
held at UT Martin

The University of Tennessee at
Martin Relay for Life Team will
host a trivia night at 6:30 p.m.,
June 26, in Paul Meek Library
on campus. “Are You Smarter
Than a UT Martin Librarian?”
is the theme. It is open to the public.
Admission is $5 per person, and
teams will include six or eight
people. Refreshments will be
available for a donation. For
more information, contact Cindy
Gaylord at 881-7078.
UCHS grad accepts appointment

Lt. Col. William R. Duffy II was on hand at a ceremony recently to present Taylor Bruff, son of Tracy and Jennifer Bruff of Union City and a member of the Class of 2008 at Union City High School, his appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Duffy is retired from 20 years of active infantry duty in the U.S. Army and is himself a 1979 graduate of the academy. He is executive director of the office of extended campus and continuing education at the University of Tennessee at Martin and is the West Point field representative for District 8.

Duffy noted that 13,000 outstanding young men and women applied to the academy this year, but fewer than 1,200 will be admitted. The average ACT for those selected is 29, 80 percent are varsity high school athletes and 70 percent completed their high school education in the top 20 percent of their class.

The value of a West Point educational experience is estimated to be worth in excess of $450,000 and graduating seniors receive a commission as a 2nd lieutenant in the Army.

Since the number of students admitted to the academy is so small,

(See Page 11, Col. 2)

UCHS...

(Continued from Page One)

Duffy noted that Bruff’s acceptance was also a tribute to the high academic standards of UCHS, its leadership and faculty. He also praised the recent graduate’s family for their support and assistance.

Duffy added that West Point graduates are privileged to lead in the greatest and most professional military the world has ever seen — both during time of peace and, at times, in harm’s way.

“Here is an appropriate saying about military service,” he added. “It is this, ‘The real act of heroism is raising your hand and taking the oath, the rest is line of duty.’”

West Point is the nation’s oldest service academy and is rich in historic traditions. Gen. George Washington, later elected the first president of the young nation, selected the academy site and President Thomas Jefferson directed its formal opening July 4, 1802.

Duffy said a popular slogan used by the staff and faculty at West Point is, “Much of the history we teach was made by the people we taught.”

He urged the audience to consider the names Lee, Grant, Pershing, MacArthur, Eisenhower, Bradley, Patton and Schwarzkopf and, turning to the purpose of his visit, added, “Now the newest member about to join that ‘Long Gray Line’ of our country’s true heroes is Taylor Lawrence Bruff.”

He then gave the official offer of admission to the Class of 2012 at West Point, “On behalf of the President of the United States of America and the Admissions Committee of the United States Military Academy.”

Bruff responded with words of praise and appreciation to the teachers and coaches for their guidance and their instruction in courses that challenged him and to guidance counselor Winnie Logan for her assistance in completing his application.

Bruff, who is the grandson of Johnny and Patsy Bruff of Union City and Larry and Beverly Doring of Memphis, will report to West Point June 30 for six weeks of basic training.

Acceptance Day will be held in August for those being welcomed “into the fold.”

WEST POINT WELCOME — Lt. Col William R. Duffy II of Jackson presented the formal appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point to Taylor Bruff of Union City at a ceremony recently. Bruff will report to the academy June 30 for six weeks of basic training.
Contestants in the Miss Tennessee Scholarship Pageant share memories and lessons learned from their fathers and grandfathers.

My great-grandfather taught me a lot of things as I grew up. I never would have thought five years ago that I would be getting ready to compete for Miss Tennessee. Because of him, I was able to believe in myself and have enough determination to keep competing in preliminaries for Miss Tennessee.

My great-grandfather, Alex Leech, was Madison County mayor for 20 years. Part of the way through his last term as mayor, he decided to run for state senate. Unfortunately, his election process was not a success.

However, this did not get him down. He lived the last part of his life as a very happy man. He loved his family and enjoyed doing things for others.

He had an enormous impact on the community of Jackson and the rest of Madison County.

He helped design the Madison County Criminal Justice Complex, which has now been dedicated to him in his honor. I have been taught very strong values and principles through his life.

Giving my time and doing things for others is very important to me. I found this because of him. I remember looking out at him as I competed in Miss Madison County in 2004. He was sitting in the front row in the audience with his camera waiting for me to come out on stage. His love and support helped shape me into the strong and independent young woman I am today. As he looks down upon me during Miss Tennessee week, I know I will make him very proud.

— Alexis Jordan Cole, Miss UT Martin

At the University of Tennessee at Martin's 44th annual Honors Day, several area residents were recognized:

Bartlett resident Chad W. Humes received the Outstanding College of Business and Public Affairs Lower Division Student Award and also was recognized as a University Scholar;

Charles H. Mitchell of East Memphis received the Chemistry Department Award; Downtowner Charrice L. White received the Chi Omega Sorority Award, presented to a woman excelling in one of the social sciences; Brittany A. Infield of Southeast Memphis was presented the George and Ruth Horton Curricula Award, given to the pre-health sophomore with the highest academic average; Erica N. Cole of Southeast Memphis was given the Information Systems Award, presented to an outstanding senior — as chosen by the faculty of the department of Computer Science and Information Systems — majoring in information systems; Cheryl L. Lockhart of Brighton, Tenn., received the Lower Division Chemistry Award; Cordovan Drew H. Candelab was presented the David S. Loebbaka Award, given to an outstanding astronomy or physics student; Southeast Memphian Harold D. Johnson was given the Allison Nelson
Stunningly beautiful, Alyson has a passion for music and animals. A former Miss St. Paul, her husband quit his job so Alyson could pursue her dream of music. When not performing at local bars and parties, Alyson studies veterinary science at the University of Tennessee in Martin, TN.

SAGS PERFORMED

"Every Breath you Take" by The Police

"Suds in the Bucket" by Sara Evans

ALYSON GILBERT
AGE: 28
HOMETOWN: CROOKSTOWN, MINNESOTA
CURRENT HOME: JACKSON, TENNESSEE
Stunningly beautiful former Miss St. Paul, Alyson has a passion for music and animals. Her husband quit his job so Alyson could pursue her dream of music. When not performing at local bars and parties, Alyson studies veterinary science at the University of Tennessee in Martin.

Miss Metropolitan Wins Swimsuit Preliminary
by Wendy King
posted June 26, 2008

Miss Metropolitan Hannah-Wade Powell, a cousin of former Presidential candidate Mike Huckabee, won Thursday’s swimsuit preliminary at the Miss Tennessee Pageant in Jackson.

The swimsuit victory was the second in as many nights for an area contestant. Miss Scenic City Ellen Carrington won last night’s preliminary.

Miss Powell, a 19-year-old criminal justice student at the University of Tennessee-Martin who sacrificed her beloved McDonald’s French fries to prepare for the swimsuit competition, wore a hot pink two-piece to earn the judges’ accolades.

Miss Capital City Kelley Duggan sang the Elvis Presley classic “I Can’t Help Falling In Love” to capture the talent award.

Miss Powell is making her first appearance at Miss Tennessee this year. She wants to pursue a career as a country vocalist after graduation. She planned to audition for NBC’s Nashville Star this season but declined due to her school and pageant commitments.

Preliminaries will conclude tomorrow night and Miss Tennessee 2008 will be crowned at the conclusion of Saturday’s finals. The pageant is being web cast starting at 9 p.m. ET on www.epistv6.com.
Local songbird ‘stars’ in Nashville

Fans of local ‘Nashville Star’ contestant Alyson Gilbert watch this week’s performance at Redbones Bar and Grill, one of the local venues where Gilbert has performed.

Gilbert makes the cut, returns next week to ‘Nashville Star’

By TAJUANA CHERSHER

Redbones customer Curtis Cain programmed the number to vote for Jackson’s Alyson Gilbert in his phone after her performance on “Nashville Star” on Monday night.

“She did a heck of a lot better than she did last week,” Cain said excitedly as he reminded the folks around him to vote for Gilbert as well.

“She was nervous last week performing that Sara Evans song,” he said. “But she came back tonight determined to be better than she was last week.”

Every flat-screen television in the restaurant was tuned in to Monday night’s episode of the NBC country music competition. Gilbert is one of 10 acts who remain as finalists on the sixth season of reality show after trio Third Town was eliminated this week.

Before appearing on “Nashville Star,” Gilbert flexed her vocals at the Downtown Tavern and Redbones in Jackson.

“Whenever she performed, it was packed in here,” said Mary Beth Crompton, a server at Redbones. “I started working here in February. I remember the first time I heard her perform. I thought her voice was beautiful and that she had a lot talent.”

In between waiting tables, Crompton watched the television and waited on Gilbert’s performance.

“She scoffed at judge John Rich’s comment that “either America was going to love or hate” Gilbert.

“I don’t think that’s true,” Crompton said. “I think she was nervous last week. But she can really kill it.”

Wearing a blue dress and singing “Every Breath You Take” by The Police, Gilbert held back tears during her performance on this week’s show.

Judge and singer/songwriter Jewel commented on Gilbert’s tears.

What to know

- Viewers can vote for their favorite contestants by phone, online or by text message after the show airs each Monday at 8 p.m.
- The winner or winners will receive a recording contract with Warner Bros. Nashville and get to perform at the Summer Olympic Games in Beijing

On the Net

- nbc.com/
- Nashville_Star/
- alysongilbert.com

Please see STAR, 2A
FCE Scholarships Awarded

The Carroll County Family, Community, and Education clubs have chosen the two recipients for this year’s Sue Alexander scholarships, Lawson Johns and Colin Laman, both of Huntingdon. Both students want to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin. One of the requirements is that the college be in Tennessee. The two $800 scholarships are awarded to two seniors in Carroll County going into the fields of Agriculture or Economics.

FCE clubs hold fundraisers throughout the year to raise funds for the scholarships. This year FCE will be selling a cookbook for $15 called “Cooking Through The Years” available at the extension office.

Lawson Johns is the son of Brandon and Marsha Johns. He is a member of the student council, participant in the 1st place State Land judging team, placed 4th in state Trap Shoot, among Who’s Who in American High School students, and won the National English Merit Award. Lawson has been involved with Habitat for Humanity, Relay for Life, Youth Leadership, and the Mayor’s Teen Advisory Council. He plans to obtain a degree in Agricultural Business.

Colin Laman is the son of Kellea McCartney and Cary Laman. Colin is a member of the FFA Land judging team, named to Who’s Who Among American High School students, and a member of the winning Mustang baseball team. Colin says he would like to give back to the community by helping with youth baseball programs. He plans to go into the study of soil evaluation and re-forestation.

FCE is an equal opportunity organization. If you would care to join an FCE club contact the extension agent, Ms. Gwen Joyner at 986-1976.
LOCAL STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN MATH CONTEST - The 52nd annual Tennessee Mathematics Teachers' Association High School Mathematics Contest was conducted on April 15 at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Approximately 6,000 of the state's top mathematics students competed at 23 different testing centers located across the state. Examinations were given in six areas: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre Calculus, Statistics and Calculus. Students from Westview High School who participated in the contest at the UT Martin testing site were in the first row from left to right: Cory Sandefer, Tim Bergman, Matt Caldwell, Rachel Coleman, Mercedes Rubio, Jessica Forsythe, Matthew Fitzgerald, Falak Patel, Kyeongmee Kim and Julie Reddick and Margaret Greer, teacher; in the second row: Matthew Emery, Tony Tang, Ezra Nance, Noah Towe, Robert Davis, Joseph Hailey, Kelsey Gibson, Buddy Legens, Derek Ahn, Hailey Kayser, Lyndsey Jackson, Sydney McClure, Krishna Patel and Mariamela D'Aprile; and in the third row: Blake Hooten, Joseph Hicks, Kristin McCloud, Joe Thomas, Alex Campbell, Chris Fowler, Christy Lee, Breanna Pitcher, Magen Pate, Caitlin Simpson, Angela Reddick, Michelle Bergman and Heidi Saunders. Tony Tang, a student of Carol Stephan, received the first place trophy in the Geometry competition. Tim Bergman, a student of Margaret Greer, received the first place trophy in the Algebra II competition. Ezra Nance, a student of Margaret Greer, received the first place trophy in the Pre Calculus competition. Derek Ahn, a student of Margaret Greer, received the first place trophy in the Calculus competition.

WEST TENNESSEE ANIMAL DISEASE DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY DEDICATION - Attending the West Tennessee Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory dedication on the University of Tennessee at Martin campus, May 22, are, from left, Dr. Jim Byford, UT Martin College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences dean; Dr. Ronald Wilson, state veterinarian; Dr. Joseph DiPietro, University of Tennessee vice president for agriculture; Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture Ken Givens; UT Martin Chancellor Tom Rakes; Tennessee Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture Terry Oliver; and Dr. Jerry Gresham, UT Martin Department of Agriculture chair.
UT Martin names local students to spring semester Dean's List

The outstanding academic achievements of undergraduate students at the University of Tennessee at Martin have been honored with publication of the Spring 2008 Dean's Lists for the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, College of Business and Public Affairs, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, College of Engineering and Natural Sciences and the College of Humanities and Fine Arts.

To be eligible for dean's list recognition at UT Martin, a student must take at least 12 hours of credit (pass-fail courses are not included) and achieve a 3.2 (B) grade point average based on a 4.0 scale. Students can make the dean's list with honors (3.2 through 3.49), high honors (3.5 through 3.79) or highest honors (3.8 through 4.0).

UT Martin is a comprehensive public university that maintains an excellent reputation for its high-quality undergraduate programs, its beautiful campus and caring professors.

Adamsville
Crystal M. Austin, High Honors
Jennifer P. Burks, Honors
April C. Callicott, Honors
Robin H. Daniel, Highest Honors
Susan A. Davis, Highest Honors
Blake J. Gibbs, High Honors
Shaynna L. Johnson, Honors
Holly R. Spencer, Highest Honors
Autumn M. Waller, Honors

Bethel Springs
Eric W. Allen, Honors
Lacie D. Hill, Honors
Matthew D. Moore, High Honors
Ross G. Moore, Highest Honors
Marsha Parsons, High Honors
Jennifer M. Perrigo, High Honors

Finger
Shannon D. Johnson, High Honors

Guys
Paul A. Durr, Honors
Amber L. Hamm, Highest Honors
Kayce J. Howard, Highest Honors

Michie
Dustin M. Browder, Honors
Tina A. Carroll, Highest Honors
Brian J. Fullwood, Highest Honors
Parrick L. Fullwood, Highest Honors
Joseph S. Hopper, Highest Honors
Pamela A. Horner, High Honors
Adam Z. Jones, High Honors
Wendy K. Pittman, High Honors
John S. Price, High Honors
Steven T. Price, Highest Honors
Randall K. Shadbourn, Honors
Breathna S. Squatt, Honors
Donna J. Surratt, Honors

Milledgeville
Courtney A. Weatherford, High Honors

Ramer
Sarah L. Conrad, Highest Honors
James F. Murphey, High Honors
Anita C. Nichols, Highest Honors

Selmer
Brandi M. Adams, High Honors
Heather R. Albritton, Highest Honors
Dolly D. Barnes, Honors
Christopher B. Carroll, Honors
Melissa W. Carroll, High Honors
Rachel L. Crump, Highest Honors
Elizabeth S. Davis, High Honors
Linda F. Davis, High Honors
Jenny L. Drumright, Highest Honors
David M. Duncan, Honors

Megan R. Evans, Highest Honors
Cathy L. Ferguson, Highest Honors
Amy N. Goodman, High Honors
Barton P. Hamilton, Honors
Leilani K. Hansen, High Honors
Kelly A. Jackson, Honors
Alisha B. Kidd, Honors
Ben F. King, High Honors
Denise W. King, High Honors
Megan P. King, Highest Honors
Wesley D. Landreth, Honors
Corrie N. Linton, Honors
Elyse A. Martin, Highest Honors
Joe A. McCombs, High Honors
Jonathan D. Mehr, High Honors
Stacey D. Montgomery, High Honors
John B. Pickle, Honors
Rowena B. Pope, Highest Honors
Feishia N. Porter, High Honors
Jennifer J. Price, Highest Honors
Jessica L. Redmon, High Honors
Sarah R. Rowland, Honors
Sonya A. Ruby, Highest Honors
Gracie A. Stackens, Highest Honors
Sandra K. Thompson, High Honors
Sarah A. Thompson, High Honors
Brooks L. Weatherford, High Honors
Mary E. Weaver, Honors
Amanda J. Whitaker, High Honors
Jenny E. Whitaker, High Honors
Daniel L. Wozick, Honors
George S. Zakharchenko, Highest Honors

Stantonville
Gerry L. Hamm, Highest Honors
Lena M. Hembree, Highest Honors
Daniel A. Pittman, High Honors
Rhianna C. Pitts, Highest Honors
UT Martin ROTC Head to assist war effort in Iraq

Lt. Col. Janet Kirkton is accustomed to changes of scenery during her 19-year U.S. Army career. However, going from the UT Martin campus to the U.S. Embassy in Iraq just might be her most dramatic change to date. She has recently left her position as professor of military science and head of the university’s Army ROTC Program to assist with planning efforts for the Iraq War. It’s an assignment that will bring her in daily contact with top multinational military and Iraqi leaders in the war on terror.

Kirkton, of Troy, Tennessee, will leave June 21 to become a senior planner working under Gen. David Petraeus, the commanding general of the multinational forces in Iraq. Petraeus was recently appointed head of U.S. Central Command by Defense Secretary Robert Gates, which means that Kirkton will then report to Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno, who will become the new commanding general.

Before coming to UT Martin in fall 2005, Kirkton was an operations officer for the 1st Engineer Brigade at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. She also previously taught at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, so when the UT Martin assignment opened, the Skyhawk Battalion and Martin appeared to be a perfect fit. Kirkton recalled that she “felt really close to the community when I got here,” and some productive years for the program followed.

Kirkton found the Skyhawk Battalion “on an upswing” but not reaching recruiting goals, something the battalion has achieved each year since her arrival in Martin. Other achievements under her leadership include the battalion’s entry into Jackson and the cadets’ success in the Ranger Challenge.

The program’s expansion into Jackson allows the battalion to offer Army ROTC scholarships to students at Union University, Freed-Hardeman University, Lambuth University, Lane College and Jackson State Community College. There is also now a Skyhawk Battalion office at the UT Martin Jackson Center located on the Jackson State campus.

The Ranger Challenge is a skills and endurance competition for ROTC cadets held annually at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina. In addition to vying for bragging rights with other universities, the Ranger Challenge offers a way to measure the success of the battalion’s training programs. “We might be small, but the cadets we produce are simply outstanding,” Kirkton said. “So, I’m very proud of my cadre and the training that they do.”

Tyler McAnally, who received his bachelor’s degree in May from UT Martin and was commissioned as an Army second lieutenant, was a member of the Ranger Challenge team. He said that Kirkton helped to make the Skyhawk Battalion successful by offering ways for cadets to improve themselves. “She did this by giving us the opportunity to go to Air Assault and Airborne schools and others as well,” he said. “These slots were given to the most qualified cadets, so competition was high.”

Kirkton leaves UT Martin with plenty of enthusiasm for her new assignment. Specific duties will evolve after she arrives in Iraq, but she does know that she will participate in strategic and contingency planning for the war effort at the highest level. For example, it won’t be unusual for her to observe discussions between the Iraqi president and commanding general. “I don’t know,” she said. “I might be making coffee or making slides, but certainly I’ll be in and around the area and hopefully making a good contribution to that team.”

The challenges of her new assignment include some very real dangers. Indirect mortar fire is a concern, with some 700 attacks recorded around the embassy in recent months. “We have all the safe equipment, I’m just going to go to work every day and not worry about that part,” she said.

Kirkton joins many other members of the military in making personal sacrifices to serve the country. During her year-long deployment, she will leave behind her husband, a retired infantry officer, and four children, including a son who will begin college this fall. Despite the pending separation, her family is supportive, and Kirkton seems much for which to be thankful. “...I’m so blessed in my career to have only had to deploy twice,” she said. “Many of my peers have gone three or four times, and so I have certainly nothing to complain about compared to everybody else’s workload.”

Kirkton is optimistic about the future of the Skyhawk Battalion that will be led by her replacement, Lt. Col. Angela Odom. She is also positive about the military and sees service to country as a noble calling. “My father was in the military, I’m just very proud of our service,” she said. “Selfless service to the nation, though, I think takes a special calling, and so I think our young people could only be optimistic about that service and be very proud about that decision.”


Students earn UTM degrees

Gibson County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:
- Humboldt - Carmen Williams Corder, Daniel Scott DeHaan, Megan Lynn Laster, Leo Warren McCormick Jr., Joshua Holman Richardson
- Bradford - Eston Smith Cowen, Jennifer Marie Hudkins, Joshua C. Little, Shanna Renee McCartney, Donald Wayne Proudfit, Deidre Ann Vessey, Benjamin Franklin Woods III
- Dyer - Rachel Suzanne Coleman, Leslie Kay Harwell, Phillip G. Hurley, Ashley Blair Johnson, Chace Ashley-Mann Wimerley
- Milan - Patrick R. Barnes, Brittany Lynn Broach, Robert Justin Cagle, Margaret Clare Duncan, John B. Dunn, Amy Rebecca Gray, Brian Lynne Jones, Debbie Elaine Mays, Zachary Aaron McMinn, Amanda Marie Mitchell, Megan Aleese Pope, Judith Rebekah Robbins, Savannah Lee Sellars, Thomas McRee Sullivan, Angela Renee Winstead, William Patrick York II, Samuel Timothy Young
- Rutherford - Lindsey Nicole Flowers, John Gravette McCullar
- Trenton - Lana Christine Carpenter, Matthew Blake Curtis, Geoffrey Andrew Fuentes, Candace Renee Gibson, Anessa LeAnn Inman, Jana Suzanne Rhodes

The students receiving master's degrees included:
- Humboldt - Richard Max Arnold Sr.
- Medina - Lara I. Coleman
- Milan - Donna Mascherielle Bradford

County students receive UTM scholarships

Five Gibson County students have been awarded scholarships for the 2008-2009 academic year to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin, according to Judy Rayburn, director of admissions.
- Matthew Bobbitt, son of John and Kathy Bobbitt of Dyer, will be a freshman. He received the Deans Scholarship.
- Paige Ellison, daughter of Tammy Barron of Dyer and Todd Ellison of Denton, Texas, will be a freshman. She received the UT Martin McWhorter Scholarship.
- Morgan Spelling, daughter of Billy and Beverly Spelling of Dyer, will be a freshman. She received the UT Martin McWhorter Scholarship.
- Kiara Champion, daughter of Tony and Darla Champion of Humboldt, will be a freshman. She received the Deans Scholarship.
- Bradley Matthews, son of David and Debra Matthews of Humboldt, will be a freshman. He received the Ed Scholar Scholarship.

Additional information on scholarships and other types of financial assistance is available by contacting UT Martin Office of Student Financial Assistance, 205 Administration Building, UT Martin, Martin, TN 38238. In-state residents telephone 800-829-UT MARTIN; out-of-state residents should call (731) 881-7040.
‘Strategies for Success’ offered online for teachers

If you're a teacher looking for practical strategies to reach diverse learners, the University of Tennessee at Martin has what you need.

"Creating the Inclusive Classroom: Strategies for Success" is a new online course designed to help teachers unlock the learning potential in their classrooms.

"Many of today's teachers don't know how to reach kids with special needs and it's not for lack of trying," said Ellen Arnold, veteran educator and author of the course. "There's a set of techniques that any teacher can easily incorporate and my new course wraps them all into a tidy package that will empower teachers to deliver their best."

Participants will discover strategies that are effective, yet easy to implement. They'll find out how to help every child identify and build on personal strengths and challenge weaknesses.

The course includes a classroom that is open day and night. Students can interact with the instructor and their fellow students in Web-based discussion areas where they can ask as many course-related questions as they'd like. A response is usually promised within one business day and often arrives sooner.

Students can take "Creating the Inclusive Classroom: Strategies for Success" from the convenience of their home or office, at any time of the day or night. For more information about this course, visit UT Martin's Online Instruction Center at http://www.utm.edu/departments/eece/onlinecourses.php. Select Education To Go.

BAND CHAMP — Holly Pollock, a member of the Class of 2008 at Union City High School, claimed the UCHS Golden Tornado Band Arion Award at the recent band banquet. Miss Pollock, who is the daughter of Melissa Pollock of Union City, played clarinet in the prestigious symphonic band and the marching band and plans to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin on a music scholarship. She will major in music, with a concentration in piano. She had won several awards for music during her studies at UCHS, including All-West designation several years. She was also named to the UTM Honor Band each year of high school. The Arion Award is presented each year to the outstanding senior band member, as selected by members of the band. Congratulating Miss Pollock were (left) Union City Middle School band director and UCHS assistant band director Jason Deem and UCHS band director and assistant principal John Easley.
Engineering students’ design directly benefits local 3-year-old

The ‘‘real world’’ doesn’t get any more real than the experience several University of Tennessee at Martin engineering students had during their senior year.

They created a motorized assistive device for a local child. “We had an opportunity to make something for somebody. Someone can actually get use out of this,” Chris Edwards of Union City said of the motorized prone stander with an attached Sahara Slate PC created for Gracine Davidson of Martin.

Currently, there is nothing like it on the market, and it already has been very beneficial to Gracine and her parents, Kevin and Stacy Davidson. “It’s wonderful,” Mrs. Davidson said. “It’s definitely beneficial, not only for her, but for us.” She explained that the motorized stander will allow Gracine to move about in their home and the unit can also be loaded in a vehicle so Gracine can accompany her family on outings and be mobile.

Three-year-old Gracine was born with 1p36 deletion syndrome, which can result in seizures, congenital heart defects and developmental delays. Most children with 1p36 walk between the ages of four and six. Gracine’s hips will not develop unless she spends time standing, something to this point she has had to do in a stationary location wherever her prone stander was placed. With the motorized unit, she can move a joystick propelling the unit in any direction.

Additionally, using the attached PC with touchscreen, Gracine can be entertained and master developmental skills with a variety of computer programs. “Gracine is small and there is little out there for her (in the way of assistive equipment),” her mother said. “For it to be motorized is wonderful.”

She added that the unit will help Gracine learn cause and effect.

As part of graduation requirements at ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology)-accredited colleges and universities, students must complete a capstone design project. At UT Martin, that requirement is fulfilled in a year-long course that culminates in the demonstration of the project in the spring.

Edwards was joined by Matt Jones of Paris and Tugce Goldemir of Turkey in designing and constructing the motorized prone stander, with the trio spending a total of 750 hours on the project. The project was funded by the Tennessee Department of Education and directed by Drs. Jeff McCullough and Somak Sukittanon, UT Martin assistant professors of engineering.

“I would like to thank the state of Tennessee for funding this project, which allowed UT Martin engineering students to design and construct a product that directly affects Gracine’s life in a positive way,” McCullough said.

Sukittanon also expressed appreciation for the funding and added, “It significantly helps our students to use their knowledge learned in the classrooms on a real-world problem.”

From the start, it was a challenge to design and build a motorized stander that would support the weight of the size batteries needed to propel it for an acceptable length of time and then find compatible motors and controller. Wheel hub motors had to be modified to fit the reconfigured unit. And then, tires to fit the hub motors were a challenge to find.

The motorized stander travels 4.5 mph and weighs 120 pounds, the weight of a light motorized wheelchair.

Engineering...

(Continued from Page One)

(See Page 2, Col. 1)

It even comes with consumer product testing. The students used Jones’ nephew to “crash” test it and put it through the paces from a youngster’s perspective. “We wanted it to be safe,” Edwards said.

The trio was undaunted last fall when the school year began and they started work on the project.

“Matt and I had worked out in industry, so we knew where we needed to start, and that it was going to work,” Edwards said.

He added that Diversified-Tamco Inc. of McKenzie was very helpful in bringing the project to fruition, welding and providing spare random parts that were needed during development.

“I enjoyed being able to use experience and knowledge gained at UT Martin to create a product that helped Gracine in everyday activities,” Jones said.

Earlier this year, the motorized unit was delivered to the Davidsisons’ home to try out and suggest any necessary modifications. The final delivery was made at the end of the semester.

“We are excited and grateful,” Mrs. Davidson said about the mobilized stander and the fact that UT Martin students chose to develop it for Gracine. “With each use, Gracine pushes the joystick even more and she loves the breezes on her face.”
BY DESIGN — Chris Edwards (left) of Union City, a recent University of Tennessee at Martin graduate with a degree in engineering, watches as 3-year-old Gracin Davidson of Martin tries out a motorized prone stander that he, along with Matt Jones of Paris and Tugce Gokdemir of Turkey, designed and built. Gracin's mother, Stacy, offers encouragement.

Gilbert advances in 'Nashville Star'

Alyson Gilbert, a University of Tennessee at Martin student, is among the remaining 10 acts competing to be named the next "Nashville Star."


The finalists were divided into three groups, female solo artists, male solo artists and groups. The celebrity judges were each assigned to mentor one of these groups through the remainder of the season, as America decides who will return to the stage the next week and who will pack up their guitars and head home.

Gilbert, 28, of Jackson, is a native of Crookstown, Minn. A former Miss St. Paul, Gilbert has a passion for music and animals. Her husband quit his job so she could pursue her dream of music. When not performing, Gilbert is a senior animal science major at UT Martin.
Online counseling program to start this fall at UT Martin

An online Master of Science in Education with a major in counseling — school or community — will be offered for the first time beginning Aug. 25 by the University of Tennessee at Martin.

It is available to individuals who have obtained a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university.

“We continue to provide accredited, instructional access to enable working professionals to expand their expertise and ultimately improve the level of services to citizens within the region,” said Dr. Tom Rakes, UT Martin chancellor. “This program is one more graduate-level program we are pleased to offer as part of our growing online program menu.”

Joining master of science in education degrees in administration and supervision, geoscience education and special education, all degree requirements for the new program may be completed online with the exception of the required four-day residency at the beginning of each semester. The residency for fall semester is Aug. 21-24; spring, Jan. 8-11; and summer, May 28-31. Candidates are admitted for each semester.

“We are very excited to be able to offer the master’s degree in counseling online,” said Dr. Mary L. Hall, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences dean. “This is an opportunity for those who are working full-time jobs and involved in family life to pursue a dream and goal of a master’s degree in counseling without the travel involved.

“The residency requirement will provide the face-to-face connection that is so critical for those interested in counseling for a career,” Hall said. “Faculty members will also work closely with a supervising mentor counselor during the internship to assure a quality experience.”

The counseling program coursework and course materials are accessible online 24/7, with discussion, email, chat, assignments, examinations and Web-conferencing capability. Students have access to free tech support through UT Martin’s Help Desk, (731) 881-7900, each day until midnight.

The program includes a graduate core of six hours, counseling core of 36 hours and a culminating internship experience of six hours. Total minimum hours required is 48. A student is permitted to take nine hours of degree course work each semester.

Typically, the online counseling program takes 24-30 months to complete, according to a spokesman.

Also required are a school internship (600 hours total) and/or a community/mental health internship (600 hours total) for completion of the program. The internship is the experiential component of the counseling program and it may be completed at a site where the student works or resides.

UT Martin is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelor’s and master’s degrees and the education curriculum is approved by the Tennessee State Board of Education and accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

For more information about the online counseling program or other online programs offered by the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, call (731) 881-7125.

For information about additional UT Online programs, call UT Online toll-free at 1-866-587-7589 or (731) 881-7589 or visit http://utonline.tennessee.edu.

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Students design motor device for child

Several University of Tennessee engineering students, during their senior year, devised a motorized assistive device for a 3-year-old child. Chris Edwards was one of the students working with the motorized prone stander with an attached Sahara Slate PC made for Gracin Davidson of Martin, daughter of Kevin and Stacy Davidson.

Gracin was born with a 36 deletion syndrome which can result in seizures, congenital heart defects and developmental delays, according to a press release. With the motorized unit, Gracin can move a joystick propelling the unit in any direction. Using the attached computer with touchscreen, Gracin can be entertained and master developmental skills with a variety of computer programs.

Edwards, of Union City, was joined by Matt Jones of Paris and Tugce Goldemir of Turkey in designing and constructing the motorized prone stander. The project was funded by the Tennessee Department of Education and directed by Jeff McCullough and Somsak Sukittanon, UT Martin assistant professors of engineering.
UTM among safest 4-year institutions

University of Tennessee at Martin students and their parents, as well as faculty and staff, can take comfort that UT Martin is one of the safest four-year public institutions in Tennessee in the most recent statewide crime statistics.

Additionally, for crimes that are committed, the UT Martin Department of Public Safety has the best crime clearance rate — substantially above the state average.

“UT Martin students continue to learn and grow in one of the safest environments in the South,” UT Martin Chancellor Tom Rakes said. “Our staff continues to work hard adjusting and improving public safety to ensure we are prepared for a variety of potential situations.”

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UT Martin’s clearance rate (cases solved) for group “A” offenses was tops, with 41 percent compared to the statewide average of 25.5 percent.

“The high rate of clearances is a direct result of folks being willing to get involved and report criminal activity, which leads to a successful investigation and resolution of the case by members of Department of Public Safety. It is a total team effort by everyone involved,” said Scott Robbins, UT Martin director of public safety.

“Not only can a parent of a student rest assured that their son or daughter is coming to one of the safest campus environments in the South, our stats show that they are more than likely moving to a safer environment than the town they live in,” he added.

In the 2007 Tennessee report, UT Martin had 74 index crimes with a clearance rate of 26 percent, more than double the state average of 10.5 percent clearance. Index crimes are the more serious crimes against people and property.

“I think it’s great that we have been able to keep our crime rate one of the lowest in the state even with the steady increase in campus population during the last few years,” Robbins added.

The UT Martin crime rate consistently has been lower than the national and statewide averages for college campuses and the index crime clearance rate consistently has been higher.

Area student finalist in ‘Nashville Star’

A University of Tennessee at Martin student is among the finalists competing in the “Nashville Star” television show.

Alyson Gilbert, 28, of Jackson, was chosen as one of 10 acts to compete in the nationally televised show.

The show, hosted by singer/actor Billy Ray Cyrus, features celebrity judges and mentors who shepherd groups composed of female and male solo artists and musical groups in their quest to become Nashville’s next star.

Judges for this season include singer, songwriter and producer John Rich; three-time Grammy nominee and multi-platinum singer-songwriter Jewel; and BMI Songwriter of the Year Jeffery Steele.

A native of Crookstown, Minn., Gilbert is a senior animal science major at UTM.

A former Miss St. Paul, her husband quit his job to help her pursue her musical career.

The show airs Mondays at 8 p.m. on the NBC network.

Mrs. Gilbert advances on ‘Nashville Star’

Alyson Gilbert, a University of Tennessee at Martin student, is among the remaining 10 acts competing to be named the next “Nashville Star.”


The finalists were divided into three groups — female solo artists, male solo artists and groups. The celebrity judges were each assigned to mentor one of these groups through the remainder of the season, as America decides who will return to the stage the next week and who will pack up their guitars and head home.

Mrs. Gilbert, 28, of Jackson is a native of Crookstown, Minn. A former Miss St. Paul, she has a passion for music and animals. Her husband quit his job so she could pursue her dream of music.

When not performing, Mrs. Gilbert is a senior animal science major at UT Martin.
ABOVE: Miss UT Martin, Jordan Cole, introduces herself during preliminaries for the 2008 Miss Tennessee Scholarship Pageant on Wednesday at the Carl Perkins Civic Center. BELOW LEFT: Miss Knox County, Miriam Wubneh, competes in the swimsuit portion of the evening. BELOW RIGHT: Contestants dance Wednesday.

Cordova resident Erin A. Dismuke recently received the Harriet Fulton Sigma Alpha Iota Award during the 44th annual Honors Day at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

The award is presented in recognition of outstanding musical performance ability by a member of Sigma Alpha Iota.

Business consultant available at REED Center

The University of Tennessee at Martin Regional Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (REED) Center is offering an opportunity for existing business owners to get advice on marketing, customer service or cash flow issues from Ron Acree, a Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBDC) consultant.

Budding entrepreneurs also may receive advice on developing a business plan, marketing and record keeping.

Acree is knowledgeable about state and national resources that are available for businesses.

He will be available from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. July 10.

The UT Martin REED Center is a service of the Horace and Sara Dunagan Chair of Excellence in Banking and the Tom E. Hendrix Chair of Free Enterprise.

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Appointments may be made by contacting the REED Center at (731) 587-REED (7333).

The REED Center is located at 406 Lindell St. in Martin.

To learn about additional services offered by the REED Center, visit the Web site www.utm.edu/reed.
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New online master of science counseling program starts this fall

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“This program is one more graduate-level program we are pleased to offer as part of our growing online program menu.”

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“We are very excited to be able to offer the master’s degree in community and school counseling online,” said Dr. Mary L. Hall, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences dean. “This is an opportunity for those who are working full-time jobs and involved in family life to pursue a dream and goal of a master’s degree in counseling with the travel involved.” She added, “The residency requirement will provide the face-to-face connection that is so critical for those interested in counseling for a career. Faculty members will also work closely with a supervising mentor counselor during the internship to assure a quality experience.”

The counseling program coursework and course materials are accessible online, 24/7, with discussion, email, chat, assignments, examinations and Web-conferencing capability. Students have access to free tech support through UT Martin’s Help Desk, 881-7000, each day until midnight CST.

The program includes a graduate core of six hours, counseling core of 36 hours and a culminating internship experience of six hours. Total minimum hours required is 48. A student is permitted to take nine hours of degree course work each semester. Typically, the online counseling program takes 24-30 months to complete.

Also required are a school internship (600 hours total) and/or a community/mental health internship (600 hours total) for completion of the program. The internship is the experiential component of the counseling program, and it may be completed at a site where the student works or resides.

UT Martin is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelor’s and master’s degrees, and the education curriculum is approved by the Tennessee State Board of Education and accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

“This program has been under development for online delivery for two years,” added Dr. Tommy Cates, director of UT Online. “The faculty have done a masterful job of preparing the courses and materials for this venture.”

For more information about the online counseling program or other online programs offered by the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, call 881-7125. For information about additional UT Online programs — master in agriculture and natural resources, systems management, master of science in engineering management, master of science in family and consumer sciences and master of business administration — call UT Online, toll-free, at (866) 587-7589 or 881-7589 or visit http://utonline.utm.edu.

'Strategies for Success' offered

Are you a teacher looking for practical strategies to reach diverse learners? The University of Tennessee at Martin has what you need.

“Creating the Inclusive Classroom: Strategies for Success” is a new online course designed to help teachers unlock the learning potential in their classrooms.

“Many of today’s teachers don’t know how to reach kids with special needs, and it’s not for lack of trying,” says Ellen Arnold, veteran educator and author of the course. “There’s a set of techniques that any teacher can easily incorporate, and my new course wraps them all into a tidy package that will empower teachers to deliver their best.”

Participants will discover strategies that are effective, yet easy to implement. They’ll find out how to help every child identify and build on personal strengths and challenge weaknesses. “What’s unique about this course is that it gives you the basic framework for reaching your kids,” says Arnold. “And you can use this framework over and over again across K-12 grades and subjects. If you’re wondering how to turn your daily teaching routine into a recipe for success, this course has just the action steps you need!”

The course includes a classroom that is open day and night. Students can interact with the instructor and their fellow students in Web-based discussion areas where they can ask as many course-related questions as they’d like. A response is usually promised within one business day, and often arrives much sooner than that.

Students can take “Creating the Inclusive Classroom: Strategies for Success” from the convenience of their home or office, and at any time of the day or night. For more information about this course — part of a growing catalog of more than 300 instructor-facilitated online courses — visit UT Martin’s Online Instruction Center at http://www.utm.edu/departments/ecce/onlinecourses.php. Select Education To Go.
‘Nashville Star’ keeps Jackson connection
Gilbert gets enough votes to return next week

By STANLEY DUNLAP
sdunlap@jacksonsun.com

Regulars at the Downtown Tavern know Alyson Gilbert as a former bartender with an extraordinary voice.
On Monday night, they gathered at the Jackson bar as Gilbert got set to perform for her third week on the country music reality TV competition "Nashville Star."
During Monday's episode, it was revealed that Gilbert received enough viewer votes to remain on the NBC show at least one more week. She is one of nine finalists competing after Justin Gaston was eliminated Monday. The winner will receive a recording contract with Warner Bros. Nashville and get to perform at the Summer Olympics in Beijing.
Gilbert, 29, began working as a bartender at the Downtown Tavern in 2004 and took the opportunity to take to the stage. The Tavern is where camera crews taped Gilbert for her first episode of "Nashville Star."
"We always thought she was awesome and are just proud of her," owner Molly Cole said Monday.
"She came here to follow her dreams, and now I hope she gets it," Cole said.
After receiving some criticism from judges in the first week, Gilbert was one of two contenders put up for elimination. She survived and bounced back last week with a performance that drew some strong praise from the judges — singer Jewel, songwriter/producer Jeffrey Steele and John Rich of Big & Rich.

What to know
- Viewers can vote for their favorite contestant by phone, online or by text message after the show airs each Monday at 8 p.m.
- The act who gets the fewest votes based on this week's performance will be sent home at the end of next week's show.

Before performing Monday at the Downtown Tavern, Josh Smith came inside to check out Gilbert singing with the other contestants on the show. 

GILBERT, 2A

Alyson Gilbert will return for next week's 'Nashville Star.' Photo courtesy of Kathy Plunkett.

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Gilbert
Continued from cover

Gilbert's big-screen television. Gilbert has sat in with Smith's band The Grove many times when they've played in Jackson.

Smith said he was confident that Gilbert would do well in the talent competition.
"They (judges) told her what they needed to tell her, and she took the advice and came back stronger," he said.

While gearing up this week's performance, Gilbert agreed that she needed to step up.
"I need to show them I can nail it every single week," she said in an interview on Monday's show.

This week, some of the judges considered Gilbert's rendition of the Tiffany hit "I Think We're Alone Now" to be "too pop." Steele said he felt Gilbert had the whole package but that he didn't know what to expect from her each week.
"This week was a little too much pop in my country," Steele said.

Gilbert took the criticism in stride.
"I'll take toughness as long as it's honest," Gilbert said. "I just hope that America keeps me around, and I'm just going to do everything I can to stay here."

Her friend Sheri Isbell said Gilbert's passion for being a star hasn't given her a big head.

"I just hope that America keeps me around, and I'm just going to do everything I can to stay here."

‘Nashville Star’ contestant Alyson Gilbert

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On the Net:
nbc.com/Nashville_Star/
www.alysongilbert.com
Visit jacksonsun.com and share your thoughts.
— Stanley Dunlap, 425-8663

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At the University of Tennessee at Martin spring graduation ceremonies in May, Paula Comerlato of Germantown, Andrea Cash of Southeast Memphis and Trenton resident Lana Carpenter were among the students who received diplomas.

Paula Comerlato
Andrea Cash
Lana Carpenter

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The Commercial Appeal
Sunday, June 29, 2008
UTM adds online master of science counseling program

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“We continue to provide accredited, instructional access to enable working professionals to expand their expertise and ultimately improve the level of services to citizens within the region,” said Dr. Tom Rakes, UT Martin chancellor. “This program is one more graduate-level program we are pleased to offer as part of our growing online program menu.”

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Ham Radio operators coming to UT Martin

Thousands of ham radio operators in the United States will showcase their emergency capabilities, June 28-29, during Field Day, which concludes Amateur Radio Week. The event is sponsored by the American Radio Relay League and will highlight the newest digital and satellite capabilities, voice communications and even historic Morse code.

In Weakley County, licensed amateurs will gather for Field Day at 1 p.m. this Saturday near Crisp Hall on the University of Tennessee at Martin campus. Visitors can see ham radio’s new capabilities and learn how to obtain an FCC radio license. The event runs continuously through 4 p.m. Sunday.

“Although throughout the year there are many ARRL-sponsored contests where hams vie to make as many radio contacts as possible to win awards, Field Day is officially an operating event and not a contest,” said Roger Elmore K4AJP, Weakley County amateur and the university’s telephone system technician.

Elmore said the event, which began in 1933, is intended “to demonstrate the communications ability of the amateur radio community in simulated emergency situations.” He said there are 650,000 amateur radio licensees in the United States and more than 2.5 million worldwide. Ham volunteers provide emergency communications for thousands of state and local emergency response agencies, all for free, he said.

Field Day is free and open to the public. Individuals can learn more about amateur radio at www.amateur-radio.org.
UT Martin alumnum inducted into ROTC Hall of Fame

Major General James R. Sholar, formerly of Stewart County, and commander, 88th Regional Support Command, recently was inducted into the University of Tennessee at Martin ROTC Hall of Fame.

"It is always such an honor and a privilege to induct our superior Skyhawk Battalion alumni," said Lt. Col. Janet Kirkton, professor of military science. "Major General Sholar and his wife, Linda, were absolutely an inspiration to cadets and cadre alike, as they graciously gave of their time and shared candidly about their 37 years of Army service to the nation."

The 88th RSC comprises a 19-state region in north central and north west United States. He is dual-hatted as senior mission commander, Ft. McCoy, Wis. The 88th RSC provides base support operations for more than 50,000 soldiers and 550 units.

Sholar was commissioned as a second lieutenant, field artillery, through ROTC in 1971 at UT Martin. He has served continuously for 37 years as a commissioned officer in the United States Army and Army Reserve.

Sholar began his active military career at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and subsequently served at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. Following a tour on active duty, he joined the Army Reserve with the 95th Division (training) in 1975 and has served in a wide range of staff and command positions since that time. He has commanded at the company, battalion and brigade levels, and twice at the two-star level. Military duties have taken him to France, Germany, Kosovo, Guatemala, El Salvador, Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq and Afghanistan.

He is a graduate of the Field Artillery Officer Basic and Advance Courses, Command and General Staff Officer College, and the U.S. Army War College. Among his awards are the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster and the Meritorious Service Medal with Silver Oak Leaf Cluster.

Sholar earned a bachelor's degree from UT Martin and holds master's and doctoral degrees from Oklahoma State University. He spent almost 30 years as an Oklahoma State University professor of agronomy and extension agronomist. His work has been recognized at state and national levels. He did international consulting work in China and several European countries.

He has been back on duty with the Army for most of the last five years.

His wife, Linda, received a bachelor's degree from UT Martin and master's degree from Oklahoma State University. She is a nationally board certified teacher in the Stillwater, Oklahoma, public schools and serves as chair of the Oklahoma Commission on Teacher Preparation.

They have two children, a son-in-law, and four grandchildren. When not at Ft. McCoy or somewhere in his 19-state region of responsibility, Sholar and his wife make their home in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Local student receives award at Engineering, Natural Sciences Banquet

Jonathan Mitchell, of Martin, recently received the Chemistry Teaching Assistant at the College of Engineering and Natural Sciences Awards Banquet, hosted at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Presenting the award is Dr. Doug Sterrett, Dean of the College of Engineering and Natural Sciences.
UT Martin one of safest institutions

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Ham Radio operators hosting field day at UTM

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The “real world” doesn’t get any more real than the experience several University of Tennessee at Martin engineering students had during their senior year. The students created a motorized assistance device for a three-year-old local child.

“We had an opportunity to make something for somebody,” Chris Edwards said of the motorized prone stander with an attached Sahara Slate PC created for Gracin Davidson of Martin. Currently, there is nothing like it on the market, and it already has been very beneficial to Gracin and her parents, Kevin and Stacy Davidson.

“It’s wonderful,” said Stacy. “It’s definitely beneficial, not only for her, but for us.” Stacy explained that the motorized stander will allow Gracin to move about in their home, and the unit can also be loaded in a vehicle so Gracin can accompany her family on outings and be mobile.

Gracin, 3, was born with 1p 36 deletion syndrome, which can result in seizures, congenital heart defects and developmental delays. Most children with 1p 36 walk between the ages of four and six. Gracin’s hips will not develop unless she spends time standing, something to this point she has had to do in a stationary location wherever her prone stander was placed. With the motorized unit, she can move a joystick propelling the unit in any direction. Additionally, using the attached PC with touchscreen, Gracin can be entertained and master developmental skills with a variety of computer programs.

“Gracin is small, and there is little out there for her (in the way of assistance equipment),” said her mother. “For it to be motorized is wonderful.” She added that the unit will help Gracin learn cause and effect.

As part of graduation requirements at ABET (Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology)-accredited college and universities, students must complete a capstone design project. At UT Martin, that requirement is fulfilled in a year-long course that culminates in the demonstration of the project in the spring.

Edwards of Union City was joined by Matt Jones of McKenzie and Tugce Goldemir of Turkey, in designing and constructing the motorized prone stander, and the trio spent a total of 750 hours on the project. The project was funded by the Tennessee Department of Education and directed by Drs. Jeff McCullough and Somsak Sukittanon, UT Martin assistant professor of engineering.

“I would like to thank the state of Tennessee for funding this project which allowed UT Martin engineering students to design and construct a product that directly affects Gracin’s life in a positive way,” said McCullough.

Sukittanon also expressed appreciation for the funding and added, “It significantly helps our students to use their knowledge learned in the classrooms on a real-world problem.”

From the start, it was a challenge to design and build a motorized stander that would support the weight of the size batteries needed to propel it for an acceptable length of time and then find compatible motors and controller. Wheel hub motors had to be modified to fit the reconfigured unit. And then, tires to fit the hub motors were a challenge to find. The motorized stander travels 4.5 mph, weighs 120 pounds, the weight of a light motorized wheelchair. It even comes with consumer product testing. The students used Matt’s nephew to “crash” test it and put it through the paces from a youngster’s perspective. “We wanted it to be safe,” said Edwards.

The trio was undaunted last fall when the school year began and they started work on the project. “Matt and I had worked out in industry, so we knew where we needed to start, and that it was going to work,” said Edwards. He added that Diversified-Tamco, of McKenzie, was very helpful in bringing the project to fruition, welding and providing spare random parts that were needed during development.

“I enjoyed being able to use experience and knowledge gained at UT Martin to create a product that helped Gracin in everyday activities,” said Jones.

Earlier this year, the motorized unit was delivered to the Davidsions’ home to try out and suggest any necessary modification. The final delivery was made at the end of the semester.

“We are excited and grateful,” Stacy said about the mobilized stander and the fact that UT Martin students chose to develop it for Gracin. “With each use, Gracin pushes the joystick even more, and she loves the breezes on her face.”

Chris Edwards, of Union City, recent UT Martin graduate with a degree in engineering, watches as Gracin Davidson, of Martin, tries out a motorized prone stander designed and built by Edwards, Matt Jones of McKenzie, and Tugce Goldemir of Turkey. Gracin’s mother, Stacy, offers encouragement.
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The program includes a graduate core of six hours, counseling core of 36 hours and a culminating internship experience of six hours. Total minimum hours required is 48. A student is permitted to take nine hours of degree course work each semester. Typically, the online counseling program takes 24-30 months to complete.

Also required are a school internship (600 hours total) and, or a community/mental health internship (600 hours total) for completion of the program. The internship is the experiential component of the counseling program, and it may be completed at a site where the student works or resides.

UT Martin is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelor’s and master’s degrees, and the education curriculum is approved by the Tennessee State Board of Education and accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

“This program has been under development for online delivery for two years,” added Dr. Tommy Cates, director of UT-Online. “The faculty have done a masterful job of preparing the courses and materials for this venture.”

For more information about the online counseling program or other online programs offered by the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, call 731-881-7125. For information about additional UT Online programs - master in agriculture and natural resources systems management, master of science in engineering management, master of science in family and consumer sciences and master of business administration - call UT Online, toll-free, at 1-866-587-7589 or 1-731-881-7589 or visit http://utonline.tennessee.edu.

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Business consultant at REED Center

The University of Tennessee at Martin Regional Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (REED) Center is offering an opportunity for existing business owners to get advice on marketing, customer service or cash flow issues from Ron Acree, a Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBDC) consultant. Budding entrepreneurs also may receive advice on developing a business plan, marketing and record keeping.

Acree is knowledgeable about state and national resources that are available for businesses.

He will be available from 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., July 10.

The UT Martin REED Center is a service of the Horace and Sara Dunagan Chair of Excellence in Banking and the Tom E. Hendrix Chair of Free Enterprise.

The REED Center also offers consulting by appointment any time, any day. The consultations are one-on-one, confidential and free. Appointments may be made by contacting the REED Center at 731-587-REED (7333). The REED Center is located at 406 Lindell Street, Martin.

For additional services offered by the REED Center go to www.utm.edu/reed.

UT Martin’s Powell among Miss Tennessee semifinalists

Miss Metropolitan, Hannah-Wade Powell, a University of Tennessee at Martin freshman criminal justice major from Alamo, was among the 10 finalists in the 2008 Miss Tennessee pageant. The weeklong competition ended Saturday night at the Carl Perkins Civic Center in Jackson.

Two others with ties to UT Martin were among contestants who won pageant scholarships.

Elizabeth Looney, Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival, which is part of the combined Miss UT Martin/Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival Pageant, won the $1,000 Public Relations Award. Also, Miss Nashville, Brittany Broach, received a $1,200 scholarship as a non-semifinalist.

Brockett is a UT Martin senior biology major from Milan. Looney is a Northwest Mississippi Community College student from Eads.

Also competing in the pageant was Jordan Cole, of Martin, who is the reigning Miss UT Martin.
UT Martin Among Safest Four-Year Public Institutions

Ranks First in Cases Solved

MARTIN - University of Tennessee at Martin students and their parents, as well as faculty and staff, can take comfort that UT Martin is one of the safest four-year public institutions in Tennessee in the most recent statewide crime statistics. Additionally, for crimes that are committed, the UT Martin Department of Public Safety has the best crime clearance rate - substantially above the state average.

"UT Martin students continue to learn and grow in one of the safest environments in the South," said UT Martin Chancellor Tom Rakes. "Our staff continues to work hard adjusting and improving public safety to ensure we are prepared for a variety of potential situations."

According to crime statistics for 2007 released by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, UT Martin ranked as the second safest campus in the state among Board of Regents and Board of Trustees institutions. UT Martin had a rating of 15 for group "A" offenses per 1,000 campus population with the statewide average at 22 for group "A" offenses per 1,000 campus population.

UT Martin's clearance rate (cases solved) for group "A" offenses was tops with 41 percent compared to the statewide average at 22.5 percent.

"The high rate of clearances is a direct result of folks being willing to get involved and report criminal activity, which leads to a successful investigation and resolution of the case by members of Department of Public Safety. It is a total team effort by everyone involved," said Scott Robbins, UT Martin director of public safety.

"Not only can a parent of a student rest assured that their son or daughter is coming to one of the safest campus environments in the South, our stats show that they are more than likely moving to a safer environment than the town they live in," he added.

In the 2007 Tennessee report, UT Martin had 74 index crimes with a clearance rate of 26 percent, more than double the state average of 10.5 percent clearance. Index crimes are the more serious crimes against persons and property.

"I think it's great that we have been able to keep our crime rate one of the lowest in the state even with the steady increase in campus population during the last few years," added Robbins.

The UT Martin crime rate consistently has been lower than the national and statewide averages for college campuses, and the index crime clearance rate consistently has been higher.

The McKenzie Banner, McKenzie, Tennessee, Tuesday, June 24, 2008

Engineering students' design directly benefits local 3-year-old

The "real world" doesn't get any more real than experiencing a local university.

University of Tennessee at Martin engineering students had during their senior year. They created a motorized assistive device for a local child. "We had an opportunity to make something for somebody. Someone can actually get use out of this," Chris Edwards, a Union City said of the motorized prone stander with an attached Sahana State PC created for Gracie Davidson of Martin. Currently, there is nothing like it on the market, and it already has been very beneficial to Gracie and her parents, Kevin and Stacy Davidson. "It's wonderful," Mrs. Davidson said. "It's definitely beneficial, not only for her, but for us." She explained that the motorized stander will allow Gracie to move about in her home and the unit can also be loaded in a vehicle so Gracie can accompany her family on outings and be mobile.

Three-year-old Gracie was born with 10-36 deletion syndrome, which can result in seizures, congenital heart defects and developmental delays. Most children with 10-36 will never talk, but six, Gracie's toes will not work like the other ones. She has difficulty sitting on her own. The machine stander was placed on the floor where her prone stander was placed. With the motorized unit, she can move a joystick to propel the unit in any direction. Additionally, using the attached PC with touchscreen, Gracie can be entertained and master developmental skills with a variety of computer programs. "Gracie is small and there is a little out there for her (on the way of assistive equipment)," her mother said. "For it to be motorized is wonderful." She added that the unit will help Gracie learn cause and effect. As part of graduation requirements at ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology)-accredited colleges and universities, students must complete a capstone design project. At UT Martin, that requirement is fulfilled in a year-long course that culminates in the demonstration of the project in the spring. Edwards was joined by Matt Jones of Paris and Yucel Gozdehan of Turkey in designing and constructing the motorized prone stander, with the trio spending a total of 750 hours on the project.

The project was funded by the Tennessee Department of Education and directed by Drs. Jeff McCullough and Somak Sukhatoran, UT Martin assistant professors of engineering. "I would like to thank the state of Tennessee for funding this project, which allowed UT Martin engineering students to design and construct a product that directly affects Gracie's ability to move," McCullough said. Sukhatoran also expressed appreciation for the funding and added, "It significantly helps our students to use their knowledge learned in the classrooms on a real-world problem." From the start, it was a challenge to design and build a motorized stander that would support the weight of the size batteries needed to propel it. For acceptable length of time and find compatible motors and controller. Wheel hub motors had to be modified to fit properly configured. And then, to fit the hub motors a challenge to find. The motorized stander travels 4.5 mph and weighs 120 pounds, the weight of a light motorized wheelchair. It even comes with consumer product testing. The students used Jones' nephew to "crash" test it and it put through the paces from a young man's perspective. "We wanted it to be safe," Edwards said. The trio was uncounted last fall when the school year began and they started work on the project. "Matt and I had worked in industry, so we knew what we needed to start, and that it was going to work," Edwards said. He added that Diversified-Tamco Inc. of McKenzie was very helpful in bringing the project to fruition, welding and providing parts and panes that were needed during development. "I enjoyed being able to use experience and knowledge gained at UT Martin to create a product that helped Gracie in everyday activities," Jones said.

By the end of the year, the motorized unit was delivered to the Davids' home to try out and suggest any necessary modifications. The final delivery was made at the end of the semester. "We are excited and grateful," Mrs. Davidson said about the mobilized stander and the fact that UT Martin students chose to develop it for Gracie. "With each use, Gracie pushes the joystick even more and she smiles with the success." Published in The Messenger 6/19/08.
UTM students build motorized stander for child
Device for disabled girl is equipped with a computer and 12 volt batteries

BY NED B. HUNTER
NHUNTER@JACKSONSUN.COM
• JUNE 25, 2008

Unlike most three-year-olds, Gracin Davidson of Martin rolls on the floor to get from one place to another.

Her only other choice is to wait until someone moves her stationary stander to help Gracin stand upright.

That was before three University of Tennessee-Martin students helped build a motorized, prone stander for their senior engineering project.

Gracin is afflicted with a rare congenital chromosome disorder called 1p36 Deletion Syndrome. The 1p36 designation indicates where the chromosome is missing on Gracin's DNA strand, according to www.1p36.com. The disorder affects approximately one in 5,000 to 10,000 children and is more prevalent in girls. Some common ailments are developmental delay, learning disability, low muscle tone, heart problems and seizures.

"She had a seizure when she was six months old," said Kevin Davidson, Gracin's dad. "We went to Vanderbilt, and they found the syndrome she has."

Gracin has had heart surgery. Her spine is curved.

She isn't talking yet, except to say "Mama" to Stacy.

And she is too weak to walk or sit up on her own.

That's what led Tennessee natives Matt Jones, Chris Edwards and Tugce Gokdemir of Turkey to develop the motorized stander for Gracin.

"There is not one of these on the market," said Jones of McKenzie.

The three engineering students purchased a stander from Lackey, a company that specializes in equipment for children with disabilities.

Jones and Edwards were in charge of adding the one-unit motorized wheels and wiring the stander's electrical system. The nearly 100 pound, three-foot tall stander has a five-speed, and will hit a top cruising speed of four miles per hour. It has two 12 volt, deep-cycle batteries that power the stander's 24 volt electrical system. The batteries will last up to five hours of continuous use at the highest speed.

"It's a lot like a wheelchair," Jones said, "except it holds you in an upright position."

Tammo Diversified in McKenzie did the fabricating and welding of the stander's metal parts for free.

Davidson said Gracin no longer needs to wait for assistance to go somewhere or risk rolling over a toy or other object that could hurt her.

"You can tell that when she gets on it, she likes to be able to move," he said. "She laughs when she likes something, and when she is on that, she is all smiles."

To help Gracin overcome her learning disabilities, Gokdemir mounted a computer on the stander. It is a touch screen that reads books to Gracin and has a coloring book program and other interactive games to stimulate learning.

Gracin's family hopes the stander will help strengthen Gracin's hip and back muscles so she can one day walk without help.

"Our doctors have told us to keep up with the therapy," Davidson said. "She should be able to sit up and crawl soon. If she can do that, we are hopeful she can walk soon."

The state gave Edwards, Jones and Gokdemir a $30,000 grant to build the motorized stander. It cost about $12,000 to build and complete another project. Jones said. The left over funds will be returned to the state unless another grant is approved to build more standers or other projects.

Edwards said they could have chosen a different project that could have been entered in competitions for more recognition and fame, but they preferred helping someone.

"It makes you feel good," Edwards said. "She can go with her family wherever they go, and not be stationed in one place anymore."

Visit jacksonsun.com and share your thoughts.

- Ned Hunter, 425-9641
Device for disabled girl is equipped with a computer and 12 volt batteries

By NED B. HUNTER
nhunter@jacksonsun.com

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See STANDER, 2A

Three-year-old Gracin Davidson of Martin who is afflicted with a rare congenital chromosome disorder, is shown in her motorized stander built by three University of Tennessee-Martin students for their senior engineering project.

"There is not one of these on the market," said Jones of McKenzie.

The three engineering students purchased a stander from Leckey, a company that specializes in equipment for children with disabilities.

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Visit jacksonsun.com and share your thoughts.

— Ned Hunter, 425-6641
Make the right decision, Ayers tells future scholars

By TYRONE TONY REED JR.
ttreed@jacksonsun.com

PARSONS — Building a strong foundation with faith, family and education was the theme shared with scholarship recipients during the ninth Ayers Foundation Scholars Banquet Thursday night.

The Ayers Foundation Scholars Program celebrated nine years of student success during the banquet, which was held at the Decatur County Fairgrounds.

The banquet honored the 75 Riverside and 58 Scotts Hill high school students who will attend a post-secondary institution this fall with assistance from the Ayers Foundation.

The 2008 high school graduates received scholarship certificates from Ayers Foundation founder and FirstBank Chairman Jim Ayers and Dr. Michael J. Price, director of schools and vice president of the Ayers Foundation.

"Make the right decisions, and you'll be fine," Jim Ayers said.

Students already in the program received special recognition for their accomplishments, and graduates from the program were also honored.

Jason Rushing, a former Ayers Foundation Scholar and University of Tennessee at Martin graduate, presented the Ayers Alumni Scholarship to Brent Blankenship, an Ayers Scholar who will attend the University of Tennessee at Martin this fall.

Blankenship was awarded the $1,000 scholarship "for his outstanding character," according to a press release.

Janet Ayers, president of the Ayers Foundation, said the number of students who have been helped by the program makes her feel that the foundation is on the right path.

"It makes me feel like we're doing what we are supposed to be doing."

Janet Ayers said. "We've seen students come back and help in their communities ... a hundred years from now, we hope the communities will be bigger, better and more prosperous because of the program."

According to program officials, nearly 750 students from Decatur and Henderson counties have pursued higher education as a result of the program.

Before the Ayers Scholarship was offered, less than 25 percent of high school graduates in each county were attending a four-year or two-year institution or technical school after graduation. Approximately 83 percent go on to higher education now.

Janet Ayers said that the program began in 1999 with Riverside High
Ayers
Continued from cover

School. Graduates of Scotts Hill High School were added in 2004.

Janet Ayers said that over $5 million in Ayers scholarship money has been given to graduates, while counselors, with the inclusion of the Hope Scholarship, have raised over $7 million for graduates.

Phyllis Qualls-Brooks, who heads the Education Initiative for the Tennessee Department of Tourism, said that the program offers the students a chance at having a prosperous and educational life.

"The students of Decatur and Henderson counties have a wonderful opportunity to continue their educations because of Mr. Jim Ayers and the Ayers Foundation," she said.

Three speakers spoke on the theme of the banquet Thursday night.

Union University President David Dockery spoke to the scholars about building a strong foundation with faith.

"You're going to face challenges in your college life," Dockery said. "It was our faith that sustained us (Union University) on February 5, when a tornado hit our campus. It will be your faith that will sustain you."

Dockery added, "We wish God's best for you in the days to come. Make sure your life is grounded in faith."

Woody Capley, the father of Ayers Scholar Sarah Capley, spoke to the scholars about building a strong foundation with family.

"My daughter's going to be the first member of our family who will get a bachelor of arts degree," he said. "The support of a family can make the difference between daydreaming about success and actually achieving it."

Gov. Phil Bredesen, the keynote speaker, spoke to the scholars about building a strong foundation with education.

"Never stop learning," Bredesen said. "You can do whatever you want to do, but you have to set your priorities and never stop learning."

Bredesen later added, "Some of the best rewards come after the rockiest times, just when you want to throw in the towel."

Visit jacksonsun.com and share your thoughts.
— Tyrone Tony Reed Jr., 425-9758

More than 750 students helped by scholarship program

Students from Riverside High School walk onto the stage to accept certificates for Ayers Scholarships during the ninth annual Ayers Foundation Scholars Banquet Thursday night at the Decatur County Fairgrounds in Parsons.