

Soaring From a Golden Eagle to the Cubs

EVERY NETTLES
Sports Editor

On April 4, 2022, former Tech pitcher Ethan Roberts made the Opening Day roster for the Chicago Cubs completing a journey to the major leagues with a stop along the way at Tech.

As a junior at Tech in 2018, Roberts went 6-1 with a 2.41 ERA and had 14 saves over the span of 71 innings pitched.

Jason Hinchman Tech outfielder and first baseman said “He was one of the nicest players I have ever played with. We could always count on him to close the game out. He was the most dominant pitcher I have ever seen and he was a model of consistency day in and day out.”

Roberts made his way through the minor leagues in prepa-

ration for his chance in the majors. In 2018, Roberts began his pro career with the Eugene Emeralds. His stay in Eugene was short, and in 2019 he began the year with the South Bend Cubs. Roberts continued his climb in the minor leagues, and on July 7, 2019, he was promoted to the Myrtle Beach Pelicans

Hinchman also said “That his call up to the big leagues is well deserved. He will be a great addition to the Cubs bullpen. We can’t wait to see what he’ll do!”

As Roberts continued his climb through the minor leagues, the COVID pandemic of 2020 hit and all minor league baseball was canceled for the season. Sports began to return in 2021, Roberts was promoted again, this time



Ethan Roberts played college baseball at Tech 2016-2018. Roberts made his way through the minor leagues and on April 4, 2022 the Chicago Cubs announced Roberts made the Opening Day roster. Photos provided



to the Tennessee Smokies. Another big breakthrough to the major leagues happened in October of 2021 when Roberts was activated to the AAA Iowa Cubs.

Roberts’s biggest break yet happened on November 19, 2021, when the Chicago Cubs picked up his contract from the Iowa Cubs, and Roberts finally had the opportunity to make it to the major leagues.

Roberts played baseball at White County High School in Sparta, Tennessee before coming to Tech in 2016.

Tennessee Tech baseball said in a series of tweets “Congratulations Ethan for making his MLB and Cubs debut in the 9th inning against the Brewers!

Roberts is also the programs all-time career saves leader and single season record holder, and helped lead Tech to the 2018 NCAA Oxford Regional title! Welcome to the big leagues Ethan Roberts.”

Ramadan, Goats and French Are Just a Part of Dr. Barnard

HAYLEY LEMING
Reporter

A bright, curious young woman sits on a toilet in Tunisia, nervously tossing popcorn in the corner of the hay-covered bathroom in hopes of keeping the ram occupied while it awaits its Ramadan sacrifice.

Through the power of French, Dr. Debbie Barnard was the fortunate soul to experience the true Ramadan tradition of keeping the sacrificial goat safe in the bathroom from possible thievery.

Barnard is the associate professor of French at Tech and is celebrating her 16th year with the campus community in the fall. Although she stays busy teaching all levels of French literature and language, she still finds time to tell a good story.

Barnard saw her future involving foreign languages from a young age. At 10, she began learning Spanish from her parent’s missionary friend. Originally hating French, she focused on Spanish in high school until her “amazing” teacher took a group of students on a school trip to France.

The students did a homestay with a French family in Tours, France and attended classes there for three weeks.

“It was fantastic, and that experience flipped my whole perception of French,” she said.

Upon graduating from high school, she left her hometown of Concord, North Carolina, and headed to an in-state college called Western Carolina University. Western allowed Barnard to combine economics, foreign language and political science into one degree in pursuit of a foreign embassy career.

Toward the end of her undergraduate

degree, she realized working for the government meant portraying their values over her own.

“I did not think that the ideas I would be portraying overseas would not be my values but the government’s. It was inevitable. I was going to have to represent things I didn’t believe in,” she said.

She found the same strife doing an internship with a non-profit organization.

“Not everyone had the same goal in mind, which was helping as many people as possible,” she said.

Close to completing her degree, she realized she had to change her path and pursue education.

“I wanted to make a difference, and I thought, ‘Well, who made a difference in my

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Renovations Heating up at Local Fire Station

ANDREW REEVES
Reporter

The Cookeville City Council unanimously passed on March 17 a motion to begin renovations to one of the Cookeville Fire Department’s stations as soon as possible.

In order for the station to get the attention it needs, City Manager James Mills said, “Mayor, council members, funds were included in this year’s budget for the development of plans to either reconstruct or renovate Cookeville Fire Stations 2 and 3.”

Mills requested approval to enter into a professional service

agreement with the company AEI for architectural engineering services to inspect and evaluate Fire Department Station 1 at City Hall. After discussions with Chief Benton Young of the fire department on the matter, the council determined the renovations at the city hall should be the first priority.

In the council meeting, they discussed the plans for renovations. The deliverables from the agreement would include an existing development of an existing floor plan, a report on existing conditions that will identify areas in need of repair or renovation.

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The fire station’s lounge area is undergoing renovations. Firefighters are awaiting a new washer and dryer, along with other safety and interior upgrades. Photo by Sarah Aku.

“Divisive Concepts” Bill is a Disservice to Students

Tennessee is set to enact a law controlling how “divisive concepts” are addressed on college campuses.

Counseling Center Hosts Support Groups

Tech’s Counseling Center is holding a support group for coping with current events every week.

Tech Softball Sweeps SIUE Edwardsville

Playing over the weekend, Tech won the three games by a combined run total of 23-6.

“Divisive Concepts” Bill is a Disservice to Students

MEGAN REAGAN
Reporter

With its newly passed legislation, Tennessee is sure to become the next state to enact a law controlling how “divisive concepts” are addressed on college campuses.

Over the last year, lawmakers across the country have largely focused on the K-12 level when introducing such laws — but, as the Tennessee legislation demonstrates, proponents of “divisive concept” restrictions now have their sights set on higher education.

The bill identifies 16 divisive concepts, including the idea that Tennessee or the U.S. are “fundamentally or irredeemably racist or sexist,” and the idea that “an individual, by virtue of the individual’s race or sex, is inherently privileged, racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or subconsciously.” The bill also requires that any university employee whose role is focused on promoting diversity must also work on strengthening intellectual diversity on campus.

The bill would allow students to take legal action against the university if the “divisive concepts” are taught and faculty could be at risk of losing their jobs.

This isn’t particularly surprising, but the more I let the idea stew in my brain, the more frustrated I become — especially as an active college student.

While I don’t necessarily agree with the similar legislation being passed at the K-12 level, it is at least a little understandable at that level of learning and parents wanting a

say in their children’s curriculum. Republican lawmakers are claiming the legislation is for “the protection of the students.” However, lawmakers are forgetting one thing about the students of higher education: we are adults, and we don’t need your protection.

Academic institutions serve to educate on the raw truths of history. As students, it is important that we are challenged in our own perspectives and taught to think critically and flexibly about the implications of such concepts in today’s society. However, this piece of legislation is threatening our rights as students to learn, discuss and come to our own conclusions about these topics within classrooms.

I believe the lawmakers who have suggested this piece of legislation do genuinely care about the sanctity of truth in education, but they have been greatly misled to believe that we are being “forced” to ascribe to certain ideals.

Places of higher education — in my experience — have been a place where adults, of all ages and backgrounds, can discuss these divisive topics and explore perspectives different from their own in a safe environment. I have had my own beliefs challenged by my peers when discussing such divisive concepts in history, philosophy, English literature, sociology, and I can go on.

This bill, however, will restrict our ability as students to openly discuss such matters and will take away the opportunity for us to challenge each others’ perspectives because



Pictured is Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee. Tennessee law makers are moving legislation forward to ban what they call divisive concepts. The bill would require Lee’s approval in order to become law. Photo provided.

the educators, as well as the institutions, will fear repercussions for entertaining topics seen as divisive.

This legislation, and all those that support it, will be committing a disservice to the students and truth itself. The notion that as students we could potentially lose the right to learn the truth about past events is insane.

What good is that education if it is based on inaccuracies and omissions? And what good is education if we’re not challenged in our beliefs?

Freshmen Shouldn’t Be Forced to Live On Campus

CASSANDRA PRATT
Copy Editor

Living in a dorm tends to be a rite of passage for college students everywhere. Unfortunately for many freshmen at Tech, they aren’t given a choice in the matter.

Tech’s housing policy states all freshmen are required to live on campus their first year. However, students may be granted a waiver under specific conditions, such as commuting from a parent or legal guardian’s house within a 50-mile radius.

To the unlucky students forced to get a dorm, it is yet another financial burden to worry about.

Per semester, the cost of a regular double occupancy resident hall for incoming undergraduate students is \$2,880. In comparison, Apartments.com states the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Cookeville is \$571, which is \$2,855 for a semester.

While apartments are only slightly less expensive than dorm rooms, the benefits of a larger space and a personal

kitchen and bathroom make the small difference worth it.

Freshmen residents are also required to buy a meal plan. For meal plans, the most popular dining option, Gold Plus, is \$2,477. Research from the Education Data Initiative shows college students in Tennessee spend an average of \$219 a month on groceries.

Students would save hundreds of dollars a semester if they were to get their own food instead of relying on a meal plan. Buying their own groceries also gives them more freedom to buy the food they enjoy. While there is a variety of foods to choose from at The Caf, the quality might not be the best and it may even become boring after a while.

Living in dorms takes as much of a mental toll as it does a financial toll.

One of the biggest disadvantages of living in a dorm is the lack of privacy. Freshmen tend to live with a roommate their first year. In some residence halls, bathrooms are shared among the entire floor. These conditions can make personal



Pictured is residence hall New Hall South. Tech’s housing policy states all freshmen are required to live on campus their first year. Photo by Oracle staff.

space difficult.

Stefanie DeLuca, a sociologist at Johns Hopkins University, said, “Living in crowded conditions not only increases the risk of infection but can also impose serious emotional and mental health costs. The ability to retreat into one’s own space is a way to cope with conflict, tension and anxiety.”

Freshmen shouldn’t have to pay for something they can find cheaper elsewhere, especially if it might be a risk to their mental health.

Ultimately, students need the freedom to choose where they are going to live their first year of college. Forcing them to live in a small room could negatively impact their college experience.

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The Oracle encourages readers to write letters and commentaries on topics of interest. A few guidelines:

Letters should not exceed 300 words. Commentaries should not exceed 500 words and include a picture of the writer.

Originality is required, no plagiarism. For verification, letters and commentaries must include your name, email, hometown and classification or title.

Letters may not run every edition due to space. The Oracle reserves the right to edit for style, grammar, length and clarity.

Submissions must be sent to oracle@gmail.com and received by 3 p.m. the Wednesday before publication.



Fall Publication Dates

April 12 April 26

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News content and photographs for The Oracle are provided by the JOUR 2220, JOUR 3370, JOUR 4820 and JOUR 4930 classes.

Counseling Center Hosts Support Groups

AVERY EVANS
Reporter

Tech’s Counseling Center is holding a support group for coping with current events every Friday from 10-11 a.m. in RUC Room 387.

“There is a lot going on in the lives of our students personally, but there is a lot going on in the world that could really impact their stress levels,” Dr. Christina Mick, host of the group and counselor at Tech, said.

The group will discuss current events going on in the Cookeville community, on campus or in the world.

“The group is really about current events, and when I say current events, anything talking about the tornado that went through in 2020 – several students are still impacted by that. COVID-19 is still a current event. I have had students impacted by natural disasters this year like the Waverly floods, and then we have the conflict currently going on in Ukraine that is impacting students,” Mick explained.

The group is open to anyone who wants to destress or talk about how current events are affecting them. They plan to meet every Friday for the rest of April.

The Counseling Center also offers walk-in, scheduled and rapid access appointments.

“I have been working here for 10 years, and that last month of school for everybody is extra stressful. So, we are doing what is called rapid access appointments,” Mick said.

Rapid access appointments are drop-in



From left: Ben Higgins counselor, Rebecca Wilkerson Graduate Clinical, and Ravi Patel Clinical Coordinator stand outside Tech’s counseling center on the third floor of the RUC. Photo by Luke Hayslette.

appointments at the Pinkerton classroom every Monday and Wednesday during the month of April between 1-2:30 p.m.

“That last month is stressful, and sometimes it’s hard for some students to get an appointment when they need it. Sometimes it can be two weeks out until a student can get an appointment,” Mick said.

Students can go to the appointments to discuss the stresses of the closing semester, plans after graduation or anything that the students feel they need to talk about. Those needing urgent care or crisis appointments will need to go to the counseling center for a normal appointment.

Many students are supportive of what the counseling office is offering.

“I think the support group is a good idea because maybe some students are afraid to go to a one-on-one appointment because it sounds scary to them,” Macey Rector, a nursing student, explained. .

When the counseling office is closed, there is an after-hour student hotline that anyone can call at 931-372-3331. WellTrack, a self-guided therapy app, was created for Tech students.

For more information regarding resources from the counseling center, visit Tech’s website at ntech.edu/counsel/index.php.

Dr. Barnard Continued From Page 1



Since a young age, French professor Dr. Debbie Barnard knew she had a passion for learning foreign languages. Besides French, she has also studied German and Spanish. Photo by Sarah Aku.

Entering her senior year of college, she took as many French classes as possible without majoring in French because she also had German and Spanish courses. It was not long after she began applying for French graduate programs.

Upon her acceptance into Vanderbilt University, she

deferred her enrollment for a year to teach junior high English in Paris through the Fulbright program, an international educational exchange program.

Barnard said, “It was also kind of scary because as soon as I got to France, I had to go through immigration and get a visa to go. But my visa said you have to

apply for a temporary residency card within two weeks of arrival and have to have an address. So, I ended up taking a job with a family as an au pair.”

Within months, she was able to find a top-floor apartment with another woman. The charming French apartment had sloped ceilings, making it impossible to stand upright in certain places, and the tiny kitchen was complete with a dorm-size refrigerator, a toaster oven, two hot plates, and a slender sink. Not to mention the lack of an elevator.

Upon returning to the states, she attended Vanderbilt for four years and obtained her doctorate. Barnard was considered ABD, or all but dissertation. To gather more research on her dissertation, she applied for a Fulbright program in Tunisia.

“I had been to Tunisia before, and I met my ex-husband on my first trip there. And I went back to study Arabic, and we got together and got married while I was on my Fulbright. I couldn’t even talk to my mother-in-law,” she said.

However, in time she learned a little. She knew enough Ara-

bic to ask her sister-in-law why there was a giant sheep in the bathroom, only for her sister-in-law to reply with a tiny bag of popcorn.

Upon completing her dissertation, Dr. Barnard received a position teaching French, specifically francophone literature and language outside of France, at the University of Tennessee Knoxville.

Although Barnard completed her doctorate at a large, prestigious school, her strong values did not align with the values upheld by the campus community.

“But here [at Tech] it really fit my career goals because I wanted to make a difference, and I wanted to help students understand that the world doesn’t belong to people that go to Vanderbilt or that type of people,” she said.

“Tech reminds me so much of Western Carolina because it is a rural school. It is an anchor of the town, like Tech is a cultural anchor in Cookeville. Many of the students were first-generation they wanted to learn, and both of their colors are purple and gold.”

Renovations Continued From Page 1

ation, and a budget of probable costs. The cost for this service agreement would be \$5,300.

There were photos shown at the meeting of the current condition of the fire department.

“You can see here we’ve got a washer and dryer within the bathroom there and then the showers there to the left, going some more here you can see the roof or the ceiling,” Mills said.

According to the photos, the condition of the ceiling was not in the best shape and could use renovations.

Although the department themselves have done quite a bit of work for the station, there are still a lot of areas that could use some touching up. In a picture shown in the meeting, there is a

storage area, which had been recently renovated by the department, with some leakage from the ceilings.

Mills also wanted to see the break room renovated. It is not in terrible shape but could use some updating. Mills pointed out the size of the fridge, the coffee maker and the lounge area in particular.

In the closing frames of Mills’ argument, he concluded with, “I believe since we’ve done so much work at city hall it makes sense that we go ahead and try to finish this section up and I’d request your approval to execute this agreement.”



Battalion Chief James Clouse expresses his gratitude for the new renovations at the Cookeville Fire Department. Some of the renovations will include a break room, leaking ceilings and new washer and dryer for uniforms. Photo by Sarah Aku.

Sports

Tech Softball Sweeps SIUE Edwardsville



Tech infielder Haeli Bryson steels home plate with a slide and scores a run, which started a three run scoring drive for the Golden Eagles against SIUE on Sunday April 10. Bryson was one of six Tech players who scored during the bottom of the 6th inning. Photo by Avery Nettles.

EVERY NETTLES
Sports Editor

Tech softball played a three-game series against SIUE and won all three games. They won Saturday, April 9, 4-0. On Sunday, April 10, they played a doubleheader and won their first game 12-0, and won their last game of this series 7-6. Tech took the three-game sweep against SIUE Edwardsville.

Nicolle Nysted, Tech’s catcher/first baseman, said, “I thought this weekend we fought very hard. It was a team effort to win! We never once quit even when we were down at the beginning of the game. This weekend showed us that we can beat any team when we are all playing for each other. It’s truly exciting to see what

is to come. This team does not quit, and it showed this weekend. When you put all 19 of us together, we are truly unstoppable, and I believe we are going all the way this year!” Tech had some great plays, as did SIUE. When Tech was up to bat, Mackenzie Fitzgerald Tech’s pitcher and infielder, and Sydney Dukes, Tech’s utility player, both got one RBI. Brooklin Richardson, Tech’s outfielder, had a sacrifice fly ball. And Tech had two fielding errors both by Love-Baker. Love-Baker homered

to left field in the bottom of the 4th, and Fitzgerald also homered to left field in the bottom of the 5th inning. Fitzgerald and Love-Baker also had two RBIs. Haeli Bryson, Tech’s pitcher and infielder, and Sydney Dukes, Tech’s utility player, both got one RBI. Brooklin Richardson, Tech’s outfielder, had a sacrifice fly ball. And Tech had two fielding errors both by Love-Baker. SIUE faced Hae-

li Bryson number 4 and Tyler Erwin number 23. The pitcher-strikes were Bryson 81-55 and Erwin 14-11. The pitchers pitched an average of 7.0, with five errors, five hits, one base on balls, eight strikeouts, and only allowed six runs, and two home runs. Hitting Tech had 28 at-bats, one base on ball, seven runs, nine hits, one strikeout, six runs batted in, two left on base, and two home runs. Mackenzie Fitzgerald Tech’s pitcher/infielder said, ‘I thought we played well coming off a series of losses last weekend. We came out ready to compete. We fell behind in the games on Sunday but bounced back immediately. We had clutch hits when we needed them the most. I also think our pitchers and defense did well this past weekend. We were put in very tough situations the entire series but were able to work our way out of them each time!’ Tech faced SIUE pitchers, Kelsey Ray, and Sydney Baalman. Ray had 69-48 and Baalman 33-21 for pitching strikes.

The pitchers pitched an average of 4.2 per inning, with nine hits, four errors, one based on balls, one strikeout, and only allowed seven runs, and two home runs. For batting, there were two doubles hits: one by Bailey Concatto and the other by Grace Lueke. Two home runs were also hit by Lueke and Jenna Herron. Six RBIs were won by Concatto and Herron and four by Lueke. They had one sacrifice fly by Concatto. SIUE’s hitter had 29 at-bats, six RBIs, five hits, six runs, one ball on base, eight strikeouts, and two left on base. For fielding, they had two errors both made by Grace Lueke. Haeli Bryson, Tech’s pitcher/infielder, said, “I thought our teamwork this weekend was amazing! We really strung together hits when we needed them, and we stayed calm and got the job done when we needed it!”

Tech’s next game is at home Friday, April. 15 against the Belmont Bruins. It is a three-game series. The first pitch will be thrown at 6 p.m.

eSports Compete in Volan 22 Tournament

SETH JONES
Reporter

Tech’s eSports team competed in the Volan 22 tournament on March 25-27 hosted by the University of Tennessee (UTK) with a prize pool of \$700 placing third in Valorant and second in Overwatch. Tech esports have competed in this tournament every year. It has been two years since this tournament was held because of COVID-19 restrictions. Volan is a tournament held in person at UTK. They invite all collegiate level competitors to participate in their prize pool. Over 250 players from across the Southeast competed in the Student Union ballroom together. Jake Brown, Tech eSports vice president, began competing in 2016, but he found his passion for it while being a part of Tech’s team.

“Being in Tech’s eSports Club gives you the opportunity to be part of a large and active community within the school, that shares similar interests as you,” Brown said. Brown competed in the Valorant competition at Volan 22. Tech eSports went 5-3 which made them third place overall. Along with placing third in Valorant, Tech esports placed second in Overwatch. The winners of the tournament win a \$700 prize pool where first place received 70% of the prize while second place received 30%. Players competing in this tournament are required to bring their own gear, including peripherals and a 6-foot ethernet cable. Limited equipment is present at the site. Each competitive event has its own requirements, but overall, the tour-

namment is open to all ages and skill levels. PC games are open only to college students, and any player or team from any university are allowed to join in. Brown believes anyone can become a competitor in eSports at Tech. “When I first got to campus, I wasn’t sure what clubs or organizations I wanted to be a part of, but I ended up finding the eSports club and I am glad I did! Whether you enjoy playing casual games or competing against other top colleges across the nation, the eSports club has something to offer everyone!” Brown said. Jamison “Menti” Boyd, Tech esports alumni and former president, shared his insight to what the environment is like in esports. “The friendly environment, the adrenaline you get from competing, playing



Tennessee Tech eSports team members compete in the Volan tournament and placed third in Valorant and second in Overwatch. Photo provided

on a team can help you grow as an individual as well as a group” Boyd said. With three Valorant teams, one Overwatch team, one League of Legends team and one Rainbow Six Siege team, all gamers have a chance of finding a place for themselves in esports at Tech. Brown welcomes any new game options if there are enough members joining the team for it.



UTK announcers explaining the action at the Volan tournament. The competition was hosted at the University of Tennessee on March 25-27. Photo provided.