

# CITY/STATE

## Lame Monkey hobbling along



**HEAD MONKEY MAN:** Christopher Gray, editor of the Lame Monkey Manifesto, works in his office at Universal Printing on 19th Street.

RICK SCHWEINHART/The Knoxville Journal

### Underground paper's editor not looking for big bananas

By RANDY KENNER

The Knoxville Journal

Gimpy the monkey drew his first shallow breaths in Christopher Gray's mind when Gray's image of college life clashed with the real thing.

Nearly four years later, Gray is still very much the keeper of the little guy whose picture adorns each page of the Lame Monkey Manifesto. The underground newspaper appears twice a quarter (sometimes) at the University of Tennessee.

"I do everything. I do all the layout, the typing, ad sales, everything," said Gray, a 21-year-old Clinton native who also writes for the paper, delivers it and serves as its editor, publisher and owner.

The paper debuted a little more than a year ago, but the idea had been kicking around in the back of his mind almost from the first day Gray stepped on the UT campus.

"When I first came to school here, I had all these grand ideas about what college life was all about," said Gray, who is in UT's College Scholars program. "All my dreams were shattered."

Instead of finding a campus full of students actively taking part, Gray said he mostly found apathy.

"There would be a 15 percent increase in tuition and people would say, 'Well, I'd better have Dad write a bigger check,' instead of asking why it was going up," Gray said.

He and a friend, Paul Mozingo, decided to try and change that by producing a paper that examined life at UT.

"We wanted to make a voice available by having a paper with no full-time staff but students and no control above but students," Gray said.

The paper, which revels in satire, has at various times offered a Lame Monkey chair of excellence, a date with Johnny Majors contest,

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and a fictional story about forcing current UT President Ed Boling out of office.

A regular feature is a cartoon strip by Bret Wood starring a goat-tee-adorned character named JIT, who resembles a tough smiley face with hands.

To date, JIT has murdered several fraternity members, a few UT administrators and Spuds McKenzie.

There are also a handful of serious articles in which writers have debated everything from U.S. involvement in Central America to condom ads on television.

Developing the paper was no easy task.

"The first time, it took all of Christmas break to put the first issue together from scratch," Gray said.

It's gotten quicker but not much easier during the past year for Gray, who now is the sole owner of the Lame Monkey.

Mozingo, with a new degree and a young family, left the paper for more lucrative pursuits.

The Lame Monkey starts to come together about two weeks before it's published.

"The first step putting up posters around campus saying 'The new Monkey's coming out. Submit (articles) to the monkey.' I make killer posters," Gray said.

Anywhere from eight to a dozen people will take Gray up on his offer each issue.

Almost all the contributions are laced with humor and not a little bit of sarcasm.

"It's just a warped sense of humor," Gray said. "It's not meant to be a radical paper or one with one issue or focus. I hope it's the opposite of that."

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## UT underground papers mostly 'one-shot deal'

By RANDY KENNER

The Knoxville Journal

Underground publications in the University of Tennessee-Fort Sanders area are a little like falling stars.

They tend to flash briefly across the scene before disappearing into oblivion.

"They usually have very short life spans," said Rand Cabus, the owner of Universal Printing and Publishing, where several of the papers are printed.

"They have no money behind them, and it's a labor of love."

The papers range from slick publications to thin little booklets held tenously together by a few staples.

Most turn out fewer than 250 copies per issue.

"Most will last a year or so, maybe two or three issues will come out," said Jay Nations, the owner of Raven Records. "They're usually a one-shot deal, if you see more than three issues it's unusual."

The store is an outlet for most of the publications.

All of them are editorially controlled by UT students or ex-students who dwell in the Fort Sanders neighborhood.

Few of the creators of the papers realize what they're getting into.

"They have high hopes when they start out," Nations said. "They say,

'We're going to have a regional newspaper one day,' and then it begins to fall apart."

Usually the papers are produced by one or two people with the help of a few contributing writers.

"It's mostly students and Fort Sanders people doing it," Nations said.

There are usually two to four underground papers circulating at any one time.

"There are always some; after all, it is a campus area, and there are always new students coming in here," Cabus said.

The majority work out of the facilities at Universal, where Cabus tries to

help out as much as he can.

"If someone knows what's going on 75 percent of the time, I'll help them out with the other 25 percent," Cabus said.

By most accounts, there are five underground publications currently making the rounds including:

■ The Lame Monkey Manifesto, the elder statesman of the group. The 10- to 12-page paper thrives on humorous articles and a slew of cartoons and fake ads.

It debuted in January 1987 and has a circulation of 5,000 copies per issue.

■ Neo is a poetry magazine that features the work of a different artist each

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