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State releases first school letter grades

2022-23 success runs the gamut, here

By DAWN HANKINS dawn@t-g.com

The Tennessee legislature passed a law in 2016 which requires every school to receive a letter grade- A, B, C, D, or F- annually with the goal of making school performance more trans-

parent to parents and communi-

Some parents and educators across the state aren't really thrilled with this new ranking system. It was put on hiatus during the pandemic and has now reared its head for the first time out to the public.

It is much like the grading sys-

tem parents are use to seeing on school report cards. Much like their students, schools in TN receive a ranking between "A-F."

At times this law has been controversial in the education community. The letter grading system is never-the-less, in full force.

There's good news for some Bedford County schools and perhaps less thrilling news for others regarding this particular ranking. In Bedford County, Cascade High ranked an "A."

Cascade Middle, Harris Middle, Community High School and Community Elementary all ranked a "B."

See GRADES, 2A



Cathey Wade was honored on Wednesday, Dec. 20, on the occasion of her retirement from the Register of Deeds' office after 20 years of service. Register of Deeds Johnny Reed presented Wade, a deputy clerk, with a plaque. Various friends, family and co-workers stopped by to express their good wishes. Wade's 20th anniversary with the county was in September; she will retire effective at the end of 2023.

LOTS OF MEMORIES - Cathey Wade has retired from the county register of deeds office. Register of Deeds Johnny Reed presented Wade, a deputy clerk, with a plaque. Various friends, family and co-workers stopped by to express their good wishes last week to Cathey Wade who will soon retire.

CCA: 'God's School'

New facility to open in 2026

By DAWN HANKINS

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Editor's Note: This is the second and final installment introducing the new Cooper Christian Academy of Shelbyville.

Cooper Christian Academy principal Steve Bowers said recently that if parents want it, why would they not want to pour Jesus into their students' lives for 8 hours a day, every day, when they can.

But make no mistake, Bowers believes it is the parents' jobs to teach their children. CCA educators are there to walk the path with them with a strong, Christian education/curriculum.

First, and foremost, Cooper Christian Academy adheres to a Statement of Spiritual Beliefs. The very first of spiritual beliefs is "that the foundation of CCA's beliefs is that the Word of God contained in the Old and New Testaments of the scriptures was "God-breathed into the minds of many authors."

As well, the new Shelbyville Christian



academy believes the Bible is inerrant and infallible in its original writings and was carefully and reliably translated into our language by men and women of God over the years who were led by God's spirit. The Bible is the supreme and final authority as the Word of God in all matters of our faith and practice, CCA states.

CCA also believes that Jesus Christ is

the same yesterday, today, and forever. Since Jesus does not change, His teachings found in the Word of God do not change.

CCA will follow the example of Jesus. CCA will strive to always stand for truth.

The remainder of the spiritual beliefs can be found on the academy's website at ccacubs.org/statement-of-spiritual-be-

The CCA board has also placed near the statement of spiritual beliefs the following sentence, "Since these core beliefs are based on the Bible, they shall not be amended under any circumstances as long as the academy shall exist."

Founder Barry Cooper said recently that the spiritual beliefs of Cooper Christian Academy are ecumenical, but they are fundamental Protestant beliefs that most mainstream denominations agree

"This statement of beliefs deliberately avoids those matters of diversity in de-

See CCA, 2A

State distributes billions in opioid epidemic

Bedford County agencies could benefit

> By DAWN HANKINS dawn@t-g.com

With the word "opioid" attached to it, the first Bedford County Opioid Settlement Board might be looked upon as a necessary evil. Though, in actuality, it could prove, financially, to be an angel in disguise.

As part of a national opioid abuse lawsuit, Bedford County will be receiving funds, along with other counties, over the next 18 years. Part of the settlement requirements is that a local board will be appointed to oversee the distribution of funds.

During the recent Bedford County Board of Commission meeting, Mayor Chad Graham announced those board appointments. Fredia Lusk, who already serves as executive director of the local Community Clinic, has agreed to chair Bedford County's Opioid Settlement Board.

Lusk said recently that she is working closely with assistant director, Shanna Gaither, a local nurse practitioner, who also works at the Community Clinic. The local opioid committee will be working in conjunction with the University of Tennessee on projects.

Most of all, she said this committee plans to be very transparent. The meetings are open to the public, though there will be no public comments allowed.

The main purpose of this board is to support this County, its residents and agencies in need. "I want to be transparent and concerned about the trust of the County," the chair recently told the Times-Gazette.

Serving on the board with Lusk will be: Mark Potts, Mayor Graham, County Commissioner Janice Brothers, Yesenia Garcia, Johnny Poff and Dr. Michael Talbot, a medical provider and expert in opioid treatment.

"This is something that I have a passion for," said Lusk, explaining she sees a lot of drug-related health problems at the clinic.

She said one continuous issue is what is called "meth mouth," that is, drug abusers with decaying or no

See OPIOID, 2A



CCA From page 1

nominational practice like baptism methods, speaking in tongues, and such. All our teachers, administration, and board members contract to strictly adhere to our Statement of Spiritual Beliefs or resign their position. There is nothing mushy in our beliefs," said Cooper.

CCA opened this fall and is renting space at First Christian Church. Plans are to build a new facility by 2026 just off Madison Street on Bethany Lane.

CCA's educational nuts and bolts

First off, the state of Tennessee is not involved in the education of CCA children. Steve Bowers, head of the school, has put in over 30 years in private, Christian, education.

This is the type of education he prefers.

Hired 2 years ago to run the school, Bowers took a leap of faith and moved his family here to start a new

Sitting in his office at First Christian, Bowers said CCA will be using a program, which was formerly very popular among homeschoolers. Abeka is used at CCA for kindergarten and first graders.

Bowers said some schools he's previously worked used Abeka, but they had to stop as it was, at the time, rather outdated. He said thankfully, Abeka is now owned by a "data-driven" person and has been updated.

He said over the years, Abeka has produced some excellent readers and spell-

Bowers said he's never been afraid of accountability and he and his great "rock star" teachers are trying to provide the very best education possible.

"I think we can grow quickly," said Bowers. "Our goal is to have two classes per grade level. Our max enrollment, per class, is 15 kids. Small class sizes will always be something we desire, even when we move to our new campus."

He said if CCA is maxed out in the future, the most will be 30 kids per grade level. So, if CCA is K-9, the most students total at CCA, would be 270 studentsagain, if they get maxed out.

"When we move to our new campus and we have the space, we are considering starting a pre-K, 4, program. One thing I hear from a lot of parents is that there is a great need in Bedford County for more preschool options."

Bowers said it is anticipated that the new facility will take at least 2 years to construct. The new facility will be located at 308 Bethany Lane, in the fall of

"By then, we'll have kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth and will be opening up fifth, that year," advised Bowers.

He said the new campus is guaranteed to have a "strong steel" look to it. Barry Cooper, CCA founder, worked aside his family for many years at Cooper

Barry sold his interest in the company 6 years ago. He recalled how his dad, Kenneth, before he passed away in June, strongly supported the school, personally. Barry's wife, Pam, who just recently passed away, was a CCA board member.

A little about the principal

Bowers said when he went to college, he chose to go into a career where he could "to touch the hearts and lives of kids."

"I really felt I had a better opportunity to do that in Christian education."

In the past, he's been an athletic director of a large school in Illinois. He received his master's degree in education, then became a middle school principal in Illinois. He and his wife, Stacie, later moved to Tex-

Bowers said he has also spent time as a caregiver for his wife, who has had a pretty serious battle with cancer. He wasn't sure if he was ready to step out of education. As it turned out, a friend was looking for a secondary principal. Though it was a "step back," Bowers

took that job in Kansas.

He advised that Stacie is now 8 years out on her post cancer surgery. She's feeling good now, so he said it was time for him to step into the CCA head of school

Bowers said he just happened to be looking at a Christian school job site. There was Barry Cooper's ad for CCA principal and the rest is history.

The Bowers, who now make their home in Shelbyville, have three grown sons; his middle son just got engaged and graduated college this month. He has a degree in environmental

His oldest son is working in banking in Kansas City. The youngest works in Little Rock, Ark., for a film editing company.

The Bowers are now empty-nesters, enjoying and reportedly "loving" Shelbyville.

The couple have purchased a home near Motlow State Community College.

The families of CCA

'Our desire, as a Christian school, is to partner with families," advised Bowers. "We are not just open enrollment. We do ask that the parents, at least one, if not both parents, have a profession of faith. They're hopefully involved in a Bible-believing church."

With that being said, he

points to a three-legged stool located at the door of his office. He said his wife gifted him with the stool, but it has a greater meaning to them than as just decor.

"Our belief is that Christian education is a threelegged stool—one leg is the parents', one leg of that stool is the church and one leg of that stool is the school. And our desire is for our students to hear the same thing in all three plac-

As well, Bowers said it is the desire that CCA teachers and parents build partnerships. If there is an issue, they can work together for a solution, within that partnership, Bowers said.

"When a parent comes in I don't want it to be a confrontation, I want it to be a partnership, where they're working together for the best interest of that child. That's our desire-to partner with families. That's uncommon today."

He added that today, some parents are feeling left out.

Like goals with CCA

Bowers said he believes Barry Cooper was searching for a principal with his years of experience in private education. He said he's not sure what clicked between the two of them but perhaps it worked out well, because he is willing to do everything from lunch duty to unclogging toilets. Bowers said he's custodian right now, as the school grows.

"I think he saw me as someone that's not too big to do that kind of stuff. I'm willing to do whatever it takes to make this place go. That's the same exact attitude that he has. I think we had a kindred spirit when it came to that need."

The principal added, "We want Cooper Christian Academy to be a place that impacts lives. I tell parents, you're not allowed to just drop your kids off and say 'here you go, fix them."

The cost to attend

Bowers said CCA is transparent. It will cost parents \$7,000 a year in 2023. He said many parents find ways to pay that tuition and many are making great sacrifices for such an education for their children.

"We're not sponsored by a church. We don't have a church helping to fund the school. Our tuition is built to cover 80 percent of our budget."

Bowers said Barry Cooper is the one overseeing the financial aspect of operating the school.

Most important of all, to Bowers, and no doubt in his mind, CCA is "God's school." So it is going to be "what God wants it to be."

OPIOID

teeth. She praises the Meharry Dental team, which visits the clinic twice-aweek, as having been a life-saver for her dental cli-

"We normally would see in a year, 360 [dental] patients, or normally have that many encounters," said Lusk. "We have seen since July, 450. We will be in the thousands by the time we end June 30."

Lusk added, "We know there is a need in this community, because of the overdoses and the deaths from the abuse."

She sees and observes all of this throughout the week. So, she wants to help agencies to properly receive funds to promote their programs. Anyone with questions may email the committee at bedford-opioid@ shelbyvilleclinic.org.

"We are just trying to serve the ones that need help," advised Lusk.

She believes that people should be educated on the risks associated with drug abuse. She said grantees can provide drug prevention and education programs with opioid settlement funds.

But this board is going to hold its grantees to the highest standard, before they release any funds to their care. Lusk said after she and the assistant chair review the applications, they will send them on to committee members to

"The scoring will be based upon the quality of applications," the chair said. "It's going to involve an application and a work plan. It is a very involved application process. They're going to be made to submit everything together, with all the documentation the grant requires."

How did this all start?

A national lawsuit was filed a few years ago, due to the extensive damage and loss of life caused by unethical and over-prescribing of opioid medications. As a result of that national lawsuit, Tennessee is set to receive \$1 billion over the next 18 years in settlement funds from several large corpora-

Lusk said she's waiting on the board's budget to be

approved by the County finance department. The opioid committee's budget will also include some salaries, stipends for board member mileage and miscellaneous, including such things as office supplies.

The County finance department will issue a memo of understanding (MOU) with the board, according to Lusk.

In addition, the board's disbursements will be audited, so all documents must be in good financial order. She said the committee has also hired an accountant.

Following the County's budget approval, Lusk said the committee will disburse this year around about \$220,000 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. "We will have more money coming to us in March of 2024. Then we will have another cycle for FY '25."

She added, "If these grantees do a very good job, they can reapply the second year. They can have continued funding. We will do funding on a quarterly basis.

"They must give us a quarterly report to receive their second quarter funding. If their process is what we approve and is in order, then they will continue to get funding until the [yearly] cycle is over."

Eligibility for funds

Applications will be accepted from any organization that serves residents of Bedford County, Lusk said. However, funds will only be distributed to those that provide services that fall within the approved remediation uses set forth by the Tennessee Opioid Abatement Council.

Agencies could be called in to discuss with the board possible budget revisions. The funding period, Lusk said, is 12 months, beginning on July 1, 2024-unless an alternative project start due date is agreed upon by the awardee and Bedford County Opioid administrator committee.

The Bedford County Opioid Board will have its first meeting Monday, Jan. 29, at 1 p.m., in Bedford County Conference Room No. 110, located at 210 Dover St.

Grant applications will

be discussed at the board's Feb. 15 meeting and applications will be due from agencies by Monday, April

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15. Those grantees receiving funds will be notified by Monday, June 24, and disbursements of funds will be made by July 1.

Allowable and restric-

The list of opioid settlement rules states that awarded funds cannot be used for administrative or indirect costs. Activities must meet the definition of opioid remediation, be evidence-based strategies or promising practices.

Activities must also align with core strategies. Such

Naloxone or other FDA-approved drugs to reverse opioid overdoses

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) distribution and other opioid-related treatment

Address the needs of pregnant and postpartum women

Expanding treatment for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)

Expansion of warm hand-off programs and recovery services.

[A warm handoff is a transfer of care between two members of the health care team, where the handoff occurs in front of the patient and family. This transparent handoff of care allows patients and families to hear what is said and engages patients and families in communication, giving them the opportunity to ask questions.]

Treatment for incarcerated populations

Prevention programs Expanding syringe service programs Evidence-based data

collection and research analyzing the effectiveness of the abatement strategies within the state

GRADES

All other Bedford County schools ranked either a "C", a "D" or an "F." (Specific schools listed on TDE dash-

Due to implementation delays including testing administration issues and the COVID-19 pandemic, Tennessee is assigning letter grades to schools for the first time this year. All Tennessee School Letter Grades for Tennessee schools, along with other data, can be found on the public dashboard through Tennessee Department of

Education's website. Several factors determine each school, including student achievement, academic growth, growth of the highest need students, and a measure of college and career readiness for high schools.

School letter grades will also be visible in the fully refreshed State Report Card in early 2024, education officials note. "School letter grades will

provide Tennessee families with a clear rating system including student achievethat gives them a snapshot ment and academic growth of how their child's school is performing," said Lizzette Reynolds, commissioner of education. "No matter what school letter grades for your school's letter grade

is, everyone can play a role in supporting the success of our students and the success of our schools by engaging with your local school communities and joining the conversation."

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The Letter Grade Report is designed, TDOE officials note, to provide a provide a snapshot of how each school in the state is doing in meeting the state's expectations for learning, measures for all schools. As well, it measures college and career readiness for high schools.

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OPINION

AD VERITAS

Seek Clarity in 2024

Daniel Richardson

Well, here we are again. It's time to look out onto the coming year and turn the corner to a better life. I like the idea of the New Year and setting goals and resolutions because it provides a good reference point to look back on.

Like most people, I normally set resolutions for health and finances, and, like most people, I don't usually hold out quite all the way through the year. But it's better to try and fail, in my opinion, than to never have tried at all. The cynic never tries anything, and therefore never fails at anything. He never accomplishes or succeeds at anything either, but he doesn't like to focus on that. He's too busy criticizing all the losers who tried and failed. And those that succeeded? Well, they were just lucky. Plus, if the cynic looks hard enough, he can find something they're doing wrong and focus on that to appease their jealousy. After all, he's an expert at spotting faults – at least in other people.

Jesus spoke specifically to this type of behavior in Matt. 7 during the famous "Sermon on the Mount" when he warned readers and listeners about the danger of spotting a speck in your neighbor's eye when, indeed, there is a plank in your eye.

I think it's worth noting that Jesus spoke these words generically and not to one specific person, which indicates that it is applicable to everyone. We all have a plank in our eyes in one way or another. The problem with this plank is that it is heavy and hard to carry. The bigger problem is that is distorts our vision, making us unable to see clearly. Each of us must really examine ourselves to find out what our particular plank is. There are often more than one plank, and, in some cases, an entire lumber yard.

And what can we do about the planks once we identify them? Well, we can cry about it, but that won't do anything except get the planks wet. The solution from Matt. 7 is simple

– remove the plank from your eve so that you can see clearly. And what is the benefit of seeing clearly? So that you can help your neighbor remove the spec from his eye.

So my New Years resolution is to seek clarity. To identify the planks in my eves so that I can remove them. With each plank removed, I'll be able to see more and more clearly. I'll use that enhanced vision

to identify and assist (with love) my neighbors in removing their specs.

How to seek clarity though? That expression is vague enough. Its almost like setting a resolution to "be happy." It doesn't carry any weight unless it comes with a prescription of activities one can undertake to become happy. For clarity, these prescriptions are as follows:

Mindfulness – take time on a regular basis to be silent and calm your mind from the worries and cares of everyday life. Some call this mindfulness meditation. It is important to do this on a regular basis because it is a skill that develops over time - not overnight.

Consider others – following a moment of mindful stillness, a great opportunity is presented to sit for another few moments and think of the people in your life. This includes those closest to you and those who aren't so close – family members, coworkers, those you interact with in the community. There are also those who you may not interact with but still need to be included here. Think of governmental and civic leaders, educators in the school system, etc.

Pray – while you've got these folks on your mind,

you may as well pray for them. If you're not a person of faith, you can send out "good vibes" to the universe or whatever you do, but it's not the same (the Universe doesn't care about you or your friends - God does). Think of things these people do that you're grateful for. Think of things they may struggle with. Try to mentally put yourself in their situation, whatever it is, for a moment and consider their perspective.

Act – having done the previous three steps, you are now equipped to act on your insights. Did you think of something that you really appreciate about someone or what they do? Let them know. Did you think of someone struggling with illness, depression, financial struggles, or anything else? Let them know you're thinking of them. You may have thought of something you can do to ease their burden – do that.

These four steps will (hopefully) give me more clarity as I practice them throughout the year, and I encourage you to consider adopting a similar strategy.

May 2024 bring you peace, joy, love, and clarity as we move into the next year. Happy New Year!

My Story

Submitted article.

The opinions of this editorial do not necessarily reflect any opinions of the Times-Gazette.

I am going to start my story with the morning that I got injured.

My partner and I had just returned from a 911 call and transported that patient to the hospital. I backed the truck into the station and parked it, then went to plug the shore line into the truck(the plug that hangs from the truck bay ceiling to keep the equipment in the back of the ambulance charged.) There was an exposed wire where the plug was attached to the power cord. When I went to plug the truck in, I got zapped. It shot me from the truck a couple of feet, made a loud pop and a large flash of light. Like any electrical shock it hurt alot, but I did not really think too much of it at the time. I have had burns before, no big deal it will heal. I was very wrong about that. This occurred on May 6, 2020 at around 2:30 a.m.

A few days following my injury, my hand was still hurting more than it should be and it was turning purple and was very swollen. Realizing that the electricity might have done more damage inside than I originally thought, I went to my supervisor and he sent me home and told me that I would need to seek medical attention.

Since I had been electrocuted, I decided that the best place to be treated for an electrical burn was to see a doctor that specializes in burns. So, I made an appointment with the Vanderbilt burn unit. After making that appointment I was told by the workers comp insurance company Bedford county carries that if I went to that appointment and not their approved doctors that they would be able to deny my claim and would not cover my medical expenses.

Having learned this, I agreed to see one of their doctors. The first sent me to a general practice doctor who does not specialize in burns or traumatic injuries.

While you may think a doctor is a doctor, that is not true. That's why doctors have specializations. You should not go see a gynecologist for a broken ieg; just as you snould not go to a general practice doctor for electrical burns.

That being said, a general practice doctor can refer you to a specialist. Which the doctor eventually did after weeks of guessing what was wrong and thinking time would heal

Once I did finally get to a more specialized doctor for treatment, I finally learned what was wrong, I developed Chronic Regional Pain Syn-

drome(CRPS.) My new doctor began treating me for CRPS. During this treatment my condition worsened when I tried to return to work for light duty. My entire hand started to turn purplish black. When this happened the doctor I was seeing sent me to Vanderbilt because there was concern that my hand was literally dying.

After being treated at the Vanderbilt ER, I was then able to start being treated by the doctors at Vanderbilt, which is still treating me to this day.

During the time that I have been being treated by Vanderbilt, I have had to fight with my attorney's help to receive the medical treatments.

The first treatment was a nightmare to get pushed through. It was a neuro stimulator implant for help with pain management, which eventually was approved.

Then I had to have my attorney fight for me to seek mental health to help me handle the fact that I went from a very active healthy person with a great career to permanently disabled and living with more pain than most people could

imagine. I was told by my case manager (works for the insurance company) that because I requested the help I didn't need it, even though my doctor felt that it was a good idea and was happy that I asked for

Thanks to the help of my attorney I did eventually get to go to therapy for a short time. I have not been able to get them to approve any further mental health assistance. I am now paying for that help out of my own pocket. My doctor and I have also discussed alternative medicine treatments (acupuncture, different physical therapies, dry needling and other mental health ways) to help me deal with and hopefully reduce my pain levels more. He has sent in at least six referrals for this and they will not approve them.

If I wanted to take opioids, they would pay for that. I will not go that route for my treatment. I worked in EMS and FIRE for 17 years. I know what opioid addiction does and how it starts. I will not start down that road.

They initially were paying me \$700 every two weeks and claiming that it was 66and2/3rds% of my pay which was not even half of what I made. I had to get an attorney to get them to pay me what was actually 66and2/3rds% of my pay which was just under \$1400 every two weeks. Once I had the attorney that's when it got really bad and they started to refuse medical treatments and never paid me on time. As if living off of a fraction of your regular pay was not bad enough they decided that they should send checks at random intervals. If you have ever had to live paycheck to paycheck imagine living paycheck to paycheck on half of what you normally make then don't get those checks in a timely manner. To this day I do not get checks in a timely manner.

First, I get paper checks in the mail and they never arrive on time, while the workers comp company tries to blame the USPS. It seems awfully convenient that when my attorney files papers the check magically shows up three days later. It is not the post office, I can read postmark dates on the envelopes. I'm not an idi-

Now that my case has already been to a judge and I have been awarded a settlement that is to be paid out every two weeks until I am 67, they seem to have an even harder time sending checks every two weeks.

I suggested they be required to pay via direct deposit to solve the problem of the "post office" being late but they are not required to pay through direct deposit per TN state

So, they get to play with the money you are awarded for your injury. Technically it's not even their money that's been awarded to me. The least they can do is send it to me in a timely manner.

I have tried to cover most things in this statement but I am sure I am leaving things out. It has been such a difficult 3 almost 4 years and I am so mentally, emotionally and physically exhausted.

I have decided to share my story because I am blessed with a family that is there for me and supports me fully, so I have not given up all hope yet. Since I do have the support of my family I decided that there are others that don't have that support that I do and if someone doesn't stand up and start making some noise to get these things changed it's going to destroy even more lives than just mine.

While I still have the strength to fight, I am going to fight not just for myself but for everyone else that is being hurt by the ridiculous system they have in place in the state

3 months \$46.30

Christina LaGasse

Democrats Are Censoring the Truth **About Their Radical Judicial Nominees**

Sen. Marsha Blackburn ing our country "so deeply

Free speech is at the very core of our American and Tennessee values, empowering us to speak our minds, challenge our beliefs, and pursue the truth. But as we've seen too often in Congress, free expression and transparency are shut down by the Left to keep the American people in the dark.

That's exactly what happened late last month when Democrats did something unprecedented in the history of the Senate Judiciary Committee: they blocked Committee Republicans from voicing our opposition to President Biden's far-left judicial nominees before we voted on them.

This was a blatant abuse of power. But it's easy to see why Democrats don't want me and my colleagues talking about their nominees. For months, we have exposed that their radical picks have no business being a county fair judge—let alone serving on the federal bench with a lifetime appointment.

Just look at the track record of Judge Mustafa Kasubhai, one of the nominees Chairman Dick Durbin blocked us from speaking about. Judge Kasubhai has defended Marxism, going so far as to say in a 1994 legal essay that "property incites ... rebellion." He's denigrated America, call-

Islamophobic." And he's promoted the radical, leftist view that all heterosexual relationships are infused with violence, and that all sexual acts should be viewed as rape—an appalling argument that silences women who have actually been victims of sexual as-

Democrats and President Biden want Kasubhai to serve on the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon. But how can litigants-especially women and sexual assault survivors—possibly expect to be treated fairly in his courtroom given his clear biases and poor judgement?

Unfortunately, Kasubhai is not the only deeply unqualified nominee Democrats are trying to install on the federal bench.

When I questioned Judge Edward Sunyol Kiel during a Judiciary hearing last month, President Biden's nominee for the District of New Jersey blatantly refused to condemn Hamas-a designated terrorist organization—and their unconscionable attacks against Israel. A judicial nominee who refuses to condemn such acts of evil has no place on the federal bench.

Next is Todd Edelman, a soft-on-crime associate judge for the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, who once used his authority



SEN. BLACKBURN

to release a known criminal who went on to participate in the murder of a 10-yearold boy at a July 4th cookout. Think about that. Yet, Democrats want to reward Edelman's failures with a lifetime appointment to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

Some of the President's nominees have been so unqualified that they have had to withdraw their names from consideration. Earlier this year, President Biden's nominee for the First Circuit, Michael Delaney, was forced to drop out over revelations that he threatened to expose a 15-year-old sexual assault survivor if she came forward with her story.

But rather than learn his lesson from this shameful debacle, the President nominated someone with a similar disregard for victims to fill the seat. Seth Aframe, the President's new nominee for the First Circuit, once recommended a sentence far below guidelines for an offender who kidnapped a 14-yearold girl with a hearing impairment to an abandoned motel in Vermont, where he brutally raped her. When recommending the sentence, Aframe said that the offender-who had just been released from prison for sexually assaulting minors-would "hopefully" no longer be a threat after finishing his sentence.

Can you imagine telling this little girl's family that hopefully their daughter's rapist won't do it again? That hopefully this criminal would be too old and frail to continue raping little girls? This case alone should be disqualifying for federal service, yet Senate Democrats want to give Aframe a lifetime appointment to one of our nation's highest courts.

I understand why Democrats don't want us talking about Aframe, Delaney, Edelman, Kiel, Kasubhai, and the numerous other far-left nominees who lack the judgment and character to take the oath of office. But no matter the tactics the Left tries to use to silence the truth, I will continue to raise the issue of appropriate qualifications for the federal bench.

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OBITUARIES/NEWS

Gas prices tick up 6.4 cents after 13 weeks of decline

Average gasoline prices in Tennessee have risen 6.4 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$2.79/g today, according to GasBuddy's survey of 3,821 stations in Tennessee. Prices in Tennessee are 5.6 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 10.3 cents per gallon higher than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has risen 0.6 cents in the last week and stands at \$4.00 per gallon.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Tennessee was priced at \$2.33/g yesterday while the most expensive was \$3.89/g, a difference of \$1.56/g. The lowest price in the state yesterday was \$2.33/g while the highest was \$3.89/g, a difference of \$1.56/g.

The national average price of gasoline has risen 2.9 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.07/g today. The national average is down 13.8 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 1.8 cents per gallon higher than a year ago, according to GasBuddy data compiled from more than 11 million weekly price reports covering over 150,000 gas stations across the country.

Historical gasoline prices in Tennessee and the national average going back ten years: December 26, 2022: \$2.69/g (U.S. Average: \$3.06/g) December 26, 2021: \$2.97/g (U.S. Average: \$3.25/g) December 26, 2020: \$2.01/g (U.S. Average: \$2.25/g) December 26, 2019: \$2.28/g (U.S. Average: \$2.54/g) December 26, 2018: \$2.03/g (U.S. Average: \$2.30/g) December 26, 2017: \$2.22/g (U.S. Average: \$2.44/g) December 26, 2016: \$2.08/g (U.S. Average: \$2.28/g) December 26, 2015: \$1.76/g (U.S. Average: \$2.00/g) December 26, 2014: \$2.15/g (U.S. Average: \$2.30/g) December 26, 2013: \$3.06/g (U.S. Average: \$3.26/g)

Neighboring areas and their current gas prices:

Chattanooga- \$2.70/g, up 9.8 cents per gallon from last week's \$2.60/g. Nashville- \$2.90/g, up 12.0 cents per gallon from last week's \$2.78/g. Huntsville-\$2.79/g, up 4.9 cents per gallon from last week's \$2.74/g.

"After 13 straight weeks of decline, average gasoline prices have edged higher due to optimistic comments from the Fed on cutting interest rates in 2024, coupled with Houthi attacks on vessels in the Red Sea, boosting concerns of a disruption to global shipping, including oil shipments," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "For

now, the price of gasoline has already jumped, but could ease slightly this week ahead of the New Year. For now, I'm optimistic that we may still have a chance of seeing the first \$2.99 national average since 2021 sometime before spring arrives. We'll have the full details on what we expect for gasoline and diesel prices in 2024 later this week. Hopefully motorists will be able to celebrate a New Year with good news at the pump!"

GasBuddy is the authoritative voice for gas prices and the only source for station-level data. GasBuddy's survey updates 288 times every day from the most diverse list of sources covering nearly 150,000 stations nationwide, the most comprehensive and up-to-date in the country. GasBuddy data is accessible at http://prices. GasBuddy.com.

Constance "Connie" Pepera May

Constance "Connie" Pepera May, age 82 of Shelbyville, passed from this life December 20, 2023, at the Carriage House Inn after an extended illness.

Graveside funeral service will be held 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 27, 2023, at Willow Mount Cemetery with Pastor Jeff Collet officiating.

Visitation with the family will be held 11 a.m. until 12 p.m. Wednesday, in the chapel of Doak-Howell Funeral Home prior to graveside service.

Mrs. Connie was born on August 3, 1941, in Madison, FL to the late Constantine Pepera and Telka Wimberly Pepera. Along with her parents she was preceded in death by her beloved husband of 56 years, Michael Scott May.

She is survived by her niece, Susan Cragin of Orlando, FL.

Doak-Howell Funeral Home is serving the family.



Margaret June Yates

Margaret June Yates 73 of Shelbyville died December 17, 2023.

Funeral Services were held 2:00 P.M. Wednesday, December 20th, at Hillcrest Funeral Home Rev. Jonathan Sims officiating. Burial followed at Hillcrest Memorial Gardens.

She was born January 11, 1950 in Coffee County, TN.; retired employee of Newell Rubbermaid formerly Empire Pencil Co. and a member of Wartrace Baptist Church. She loved her family, fishing, traveling and playing with her grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Marlin Hodges and Ethel Jane McCullough Hodges and a brother James Marlin Hodg-

Margaret is survived by her husband of 56 years, James Boyd Yates; her children, James Boyd Yates Jr. (Lisa), Matthew Lee Yates and Michelle Crowell (Carl); seven grandchildren, Joshua Yates (Shana), Jeremy Yates (Holly), Tyler Wood (Alyssa), Emily Yates, Justin Neeley (Brittany), Jordan Neeley (Brittany), James Yates (Madison); seven great grandchildren, Ava Yates, Ivy Yates, Mason Yates, Oliver Wood, Roman Yates, Kinsley Yates and Remington Uland.

Tennessee's community and technical colleges collected 128,039 food items, cash

Students, faculty and staff at Tennessee's public community and technical colleges collected and donated the equivalent of 128,039 food items during the College System of Tennessee's 25th Annual Food Drive Challenge, which wrapped up last week. The food and cash donations collected during the six-week challenge go to campus food pantries for students and to local organizations, programs and food banks serving their communities.

The Food Drive Challenge was conceived in 1999 by the Student Government Presidents Council - student leaders from across the state - as a project to help fellow students and others in their communities in need. A new report by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission cites research concluding that students experiencing food insecurity are less likely to excel academically and more likely to report stress levels that hinders their ability to focus on their

The colleges and students have kept the food drive going for 25 years. They compete, in tiers based on enrollment size, to see who can collect the most. Cash donations are counted as

More than 1.7 million items have been donated and collected during the 25 years.

This year, 15 Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs) and 10 community colleges submitted their collection and donation information for the competition. The top institutions in each enrollment tier:

Community Colleges

Tier 1 (smaller enrollments): Roane State Community College - 8,968 items

Tier 2 (larger enrollments): Pellissippi State Community College 43,058 items

Colleges of Applied Technology

Tier 1: TCAT Crossville, 12,421 items

Tier 2: TCAT Hartsville, 3,575 items

Tier 3: TCAT Dickson, 10.104 items

In addition to the campus food pantries, some items were also donated to local food banks, other community organizations, and churches. Many institutions also participated in

two items per dollar raised. ki donated items to the Pulaski Elementary Backpack Program, and TCAT Shelbyville donated items to the Tullahoma VFW for broader distribution. Pellissippi State also collected pet food, household & hygiene items, and school supplies.

> "Every year, the generosity of the campus communities exceeds expectations. This outpouring of support is a true sign of how much they care about their campus and local communities. As we conclude the 25th annual TBR Food Drive Challenge during this holiday season, we celebrate collecting more than 1,743,500 items to date," said Dr. Heidi Leming, Tennessee Board of Regents vice chancellor for student success.

> "The food drive is just one of the many ways our campus communities are supporting efforts to address student food insecurity. It is also a reminder of the importance of supporting students outside the classroom to help ensure their success," Leming said.

TBR's Office of Student

insecurity. The last survey nearly two years ago indicated that all 13 community colleges have food pantries and some have food gardens, while nine TCATs have their own on-campus pantries, 13 provide emergency grants, and one has a community garden.

"Community partners are also important to our TCAT students. TCATs have also established relationships with community agencies to enhance support," said Kristina Krau Waymire, director of student initiatives in TBR's Office of Student Success. "Through community partnerships, 13 TCATs refer students for transportation assistance, 11 for counseling services, and 7 for child care. Seven TCATs also connect students with community partners who provide food assistance through food pantries and seven provide referrals to agencies who can help a student apply for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits."

Any college in the system will connect students to local services when students indicate need.

Anyone wishing to contribute to food pantries at Tennessee's community and technical colleges may do so at anytime here: https:// www.tbr.edu/advancement/ college-system-tennessee-food-pantry-campaign



prepared for the busy holiday season, new data from the Department of Labor

and Workforce Development showed more Tennesseans were available to work in November 2023 when compared to the previous month. While the state's season-

ally adjusted Labor Force Participation Rate remained steady at 59.4%, estimates show the number of Tennesseans not working increased by slightly more than 5,000 individuals. That change caused the unemployment rate to inch up to 3.5%, from 3.3% percent in October.

In a year-to-year comparison, Tennessee's latest seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained unchanged and matched the November 2022 rate of 3.5%.

Tennessee employers increased their payrolls 0.2 of a percentage point

tions over the last year. The healthcare and social assistance sector saw the most year-to-year growth. The professional, scientific, and technical services sector added the next highest number of jobs and was followed by the local government sec-

Between October and November, Tennessee did experience a decrease of 4,400 nonfarm jobs. The administrative, support, and waste services sector lost the most positions. The retail trade sector accounted for the next highest job loss, followed by the transportation, warehousing, and utilities sector.

The nation's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for November came in at 3.7%, 0.2 of a percentage point higher than Tennessee's rate for the month. The new national rate dropped ous month's rate of 3.9% but was up 0.1 of a percentage point from the 3.6% rate in November 2022.

Tennesseans looking to start the new year with a new job can begin that search at one of nearly 80 American Job Centers across the state. Career specialists work oneon-one with job seekers to help them find employment, training for new career opportunities, and programs that can help remove any barriers that are keeping them from advancing in the workforce. All the services the state offers come at no cost to Tennesseans. This interactive map will guide job seekers to the American Job Center that is closest to them.

The state of Tennessee will release the November 2023 County unemployment data on Thursday, December 28, 2023, at 1:30 p.m. CST.

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AAA Activates 'Tow to Go' for Year-End **Holidays**

Don't Drive Impaired; Call (855) 2-TOW-2-GO for a Safe Ride

AAA is working to keep impaired drivers off the road this holiday season. Friday night, the Auto Club Group will activate its Tow to Go program in Tennessee and other select states.

"If you're faced with the decision of driving impaired, put down those keys and pick up the phone to call Tow to Go," said Megan Cooper, spokeswoman, AAA -The Auto Club Group. "We'll dispatch a truck to take you and your vehicle to a safe location within a 10-mile radius."

It's important to note, AAA service technicians expect to rescue more than 937,000 drivers with car trouble during the upcoming holidays. So treat Tow to Go as a last resort. Plan ahead and identify a designated driver or ride sharing service before you party.

Tow to Go is active from 6 p.m. Friday, December 22nd to 6 a.m. Tuesday, January

Available in FL, GA, IA, MI, ND, NE, TN, WI, CO (Denver), NC (Charlotte), IN (Fort Wayne/South Bend).

This is the 25th year The Auto Club Group has provided the Tow to Go program. When called upon, The Auto Club Group dispatches a tow truck to transport the impaired person and their vehicle to a safe location within a 10-mile radius for free. Since its inception, Tow to Go has removed more than 25,000 impaired drivers from the road.

ABOUT TOW TO GO

Free and available to AAA members and non-mem-

Confidential local ride for

one person and their vehicle to a safe location within a 10-mile radius.

Appointments cannot be scheduled in advance to use Tow to Go. It is designed as a safety net for those that did not plan ahead. Always choose a designated driver before celebrating.

In some situations, AAA may need to make other arrangements to get an impaired individual a safe ride home.

Tow to Go may not be available in rural areas or during severe weather conditions.

SERVICE AREAS

FL, GA, IA, MI, ND, NE, TN, WI, CO (Denver), NC (Charlotte), IN (Fort Wayne/ South Bend)

PHONE NUMBER (855) 2-TOW-2-GO or (855) 286-9246

About AAA - The Auto Club Group

The Auto Club Group

(ACG) is the second largest AAA club in North America with more than 13 million members across 14 U.S. states, the province of Quebec and two U.S. territories. ACG and its affiliates provide members with roadside assistance, insurance products, banking and financial services, travel offerings and more. ACG belongs to the national AAA federation with more than 64 million members in the United States and Canada. AAA's mission is to protect and advance freedom of mobility and improve traffic safety. For more information, get the AAA Mobile app, visit AAA.com, and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and

Board of Parole Chairman Montgomery Announces Retirement

Former State Representative from Sevier County had served in role since 2013

After a dedicated 40-year career of public service, including the last 10 years as Chairman of the Board of Parole, Richard Montgomery announced he will leave state service and retire effective Dec. 29, 2023.

Montgomery's Under leadership, the Board has undergone several enhancements to the parole consideration process including investing in new technology, such as video conferencing and web cameras, which has especially critical to completing the Board's mission

during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board has also successfully transitioned to a paperless file system that allows board members and hearing officers remote access to large volumes of information.

"We are grateful for all the contributions Richard has made since joining the Board in 2013," said incoming Chairman Roberta Kustoff, who was recently appointed by Governor Bill Lee. "Throughout his public service Richard has always considered all sides of the issues. He has shown compassion making very difficult decisions, including whether to grant parole or not to parole eligible offenders. Richard's leadership will be greatly missed by all the Parole Board Members

best."

Montgomery, 76, was appointed to the Board of Parole in January 2013 by Governor Bill Haslam (and later reappointed as Chairman by Governor Lee in 2019) after serving 14 years in the General Assembly representing Sevier County. He also served as a member/Chair of the Sevier County School Board from 1982 to 1998.

"I have been honored to serve the state as Chairman, and to work with so many like-minded individuals committed to minimizing public risk, while promoting lawful behavior with the prudent, orderly release of adult offenders back into the community," Montgomery said. "It's been a tremendous privilege to be able

and me and we wish him the to serve the citizens of this great state Tennessee."

Montgomery and his wife, Ann, look forward to spending more time with family.

The Board of Parole is an independent seven-member board whose members are appointed by the Governor. The Board makes decisions about which eligible offenders will be granted parole and placed on community supervision for the remainder of their sentences. The Board also can revoke parole of those offenders who do not abide by the conditions of their supervision. In addition, the Board reviews applications for executive clemency and makes non-binding recommendations to the Governor.

Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare achieves highest national recognition of excellence from ACC

Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare announces two hospitals earned the highest distinction possible from the American College of Cardiology (ACC) for treatment of heart patients. Methodist University Hospital

and Methodist Le Bonheur Germantown Hospital are now designated Heart-CARE Centers - the only Memphis-area hospitals to receive that distinction.

To earn this accolade, our hospitals had to meet stringent criteria, which included achieving three accreditations from the ACC in specialty areas. Through their respective journeys to become HeartCARE Center accredited, both Methodist

Le Bonheur Germantown Hospital and Methodist University Hospital became the only hospitals in the Mid-South to earn an ACC accreditation for heart failure patients in an outpatient setting.

"Being designated as an ACC HeartCARE Center is an honor everyone in our community can be proud said Michael McDonald, MD, medical director of cardiovascular services at Methodist Le Bonheur Germantown Hospital. "This

achievement recognizes premium comprehensive care for all heart patients who come to our facilities. Our staff members have spent months of focused determination delivering unmatched, consistent patient care to receive this elite accreditation."

The HeartCARE Center National Distinction of Excellence is awarded to hospitals with a proven track record of comprehensive process improvement, achieving specific accrediprofessional excellence and

community engagement. "Effectively meeting the needs of our patients requires excellence from multiple departments across our health system," said Oluwaseun Akinseye, MD, medical director of cardiovascular services at Methodist University Hospital. "From emergency room staff to

clinicians assigned to hospitalized heart patients or staff focusing on recovering heart patients, this prestigious accreditation is only possible through system-wide team-

About Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare

Based in Memphis, Tennessee, Methodist

Le Bonheur Healthcare has been caring for patients and families regardless of their ability to pay for more than 100 years. Guided by roots in the United Methodist Church and founded in 1918 to help meet

the growing need for quality healthcare in the greater Memphis area, MLH has grown from one hospital into a comprehensive healthcare system with 13,000 Associates supporting six hospitals, including nationally ranked

Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, ambulatory surgery centers, outpatient facilities, a hospice residence and physician and specialty practices serving communities across the Mid-South. From transplants and ad-

vanced heart procedures to expert neurology services and compassionate cancer care, Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare offers clinical expertise with a focus on improving every life we touch.

About the American College of Cardiology

The American College of Cardiology envisions a world where innovation and knowledge optimize cardiovascular care and outcomes. As the professional home for the entire cardiovascular care team, the mission of the College and

its 54,000 members is to transform cardiovascular care and to improve heart health. The ACC bestows credentials upon cardiovascular professionals who meet stringent qualifications and leads in the formation of health policy, standards and guidelines. The College

also provides professional medical education, disseminates cardiovascular research through its world-re nowned

JACC Journals, operates national registries to measure and improve care, and offers cardiovascular accreditation to hospitals and institutions. For more, visit

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. A way to injure
- 5. Mutual savings bank
- 8. Rock TV channel
- 11. Large number of fish swimming together
- 13. Military mailbox
- 14. Female of a horse
- 15. Category
- 16. City
- 17. Breezed through
- 18. Officer who bears a mace
- 20. Tax collector
- 21. "Cheers" actress Perlman
- 22. Pauses before acting
- 25. Extracted information from a wave
- 30. Tendency to revert to something ancestral
- 31. No seats available 32. Nocturnal rodents

- 33. Moves gently to and fro 38. Not good
- 41. A way to ready
- 43. One who makes something better
- 45. Things associated with American history
- 48. Ancient Phoenician fertility god
- 49. A continuous portion of a circle
- 50. Volcanic craters
- 55. Units of electrical resistance
- 56. Gamble on
- 57. Ethiopian town
- 59. One point east of northeast
- 60. Polynesian garland of flowers
- 61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- 62. State of fuss
- 63. Keyboard key
- 64. Partner to relaxation

CLUES DOWN

- 1. "The world's most famous arena"
- 2. Polite interruption sound
- 3. Private school in New York
- 4. Refuse of grapes
- 5. __ Tomei, actress 6. Adult beverages
- 7. Supporter
- 8. Papier-___, art material
- 9. Forests have them
- 10. Most ancient Hindu scriptures 44. About milk
- 12. Downwind
- 14. Marketplace
- 19. Flowering plant genus
- 23. Street where nightmares happen
- 24. Admirer
- 25. Dip lightly into water
- 26. When you hope to get there
- 27. Partner to cheese
- 28. Eggs

Α.

В.

D.

- 29. A way to disqualify
- 34. South American plant
- 35. Fold-away bed
- 36. Debbie Harry album "__ Koo"
- 37. Swedish krona
- 39. Displaying warmth and friendliness
- 40. Official orders
- 41. Bowling alley necessity
- 42. Stray
- 45. Expressed pleasure
- 46. Caribbean dance
- 47. If not

A B C D E F G H i J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to winter.

Each number corresponds to a letter.

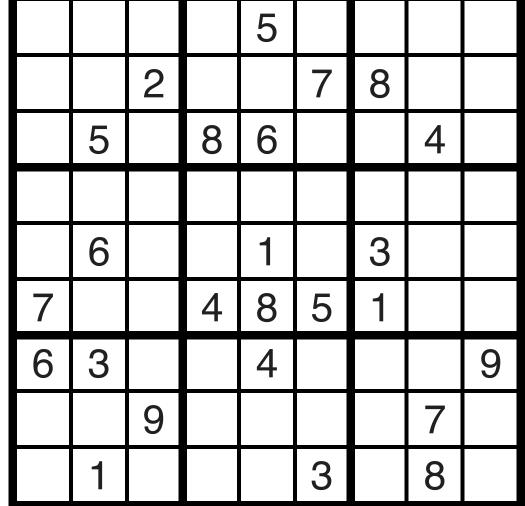
(Hint: 13 = I)

12 12

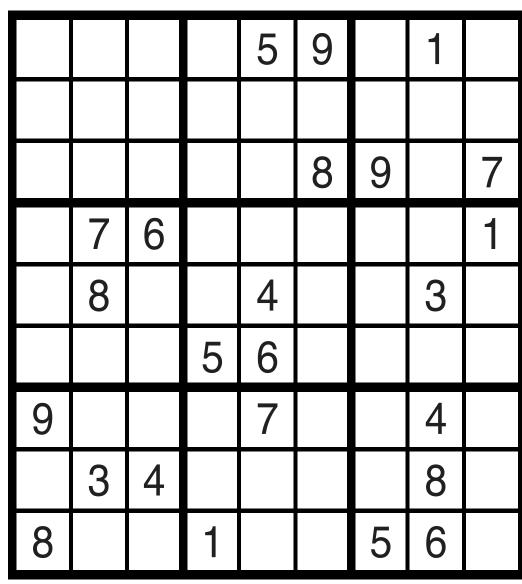
18

12 13 22 22 11

- 48. __ fide (Latin)
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Hebrew calendar month
- 53. One easily swindled
- 54. Point that is one point south of southwest
- 58. Small island (British)



Level: Intermediate



Level: Intermediate





DUDE WITH "TWO EYES MADE OUT OF COAL."

ANSWER: "FROSTY THE SNOWMAN"



There are four differences between Picture A and Picture B. Can you find them all?







AIRO, EGYPT. 1929: A FOUR-ALARM FIRE BREAKS OUT IN THE EST WING OF THE WHIT HOUSE IN WASHINGTON

1951: LIBYA BECOMES AN INDEPENDENT NATION AND IDRISTIS PROCL-



3. Extra olives in dish at right 4. Missing flame Answers: I. Front glass has juice 2. Cherry in pie

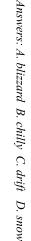


SPANISH: Familia ITALIAN: Famiglia FRENCH: Famille

GERMAN: Familie







25 3 10 14

Clue: Frozen precipitation

5 13 24

Clue: Big snow storm

21 16 13

Clue: Pile of snow

Clue: A bit cold

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OFFICE MANAGER

Open Position: Office Manager

Job Description: The Shelbyville Times-Gazette is seeking an organized and detail-oriented Office Manager to oversee daily administrative operations. As the Office Manager, you will play a critical role in maintaining office efficiency, managing office supplies,

and providing support to staff members. **Key Responsibilities:**

Manage office logistics, includsupplies.

ments, and meetings for the editorial and sales teams.

and financial recordkeeping.

Coordinate with vendors and

service providers.

Help with human resources tasks such as onboarding and payroll.

Maintain a clean and organized

ing mail, phone calls, and office

Assist in budget management

Support the publisher and editor with administrative tasks as needed.

office environment.

Qualifications:

High school diploma or equivalent; associate or bachelor's degree is a plus.

Previous office management or administrative experience preferred.

Strong organizational and multitasking skills.

and basic computer skills.

Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

Ability to work independently

and as part of a team. To apply:

Email your resume and cover letter to daniel@t-g.com

IMES-GAZETTE

ADVERTISING SALES

Position: Advertising Sales Representative

Job Description:

The Shelbyville Times-Gazette is looking for a motivated and results-driven Advertising Sales Representative to join our team. As an Advertising Sales Representative, you will be responsible for generating advertising revenue by selling print and digital advertising solutions to local businesses.

Key Responsibilities:

Prospect and acquire new advertising clients through cold calling and networking.

Maintain and grow relationships with existing clients. Understand clients' advertising needs and develop customized

advertising solutions. Prepare and present advertising proposals and contracts. Collaborate with the creative team to create effective ad cam-

paigns.

Meet or exceed monthly and quarterly sales targets. Keep up-to-date with industry trends and competitive offer-

ings.

Qualifications:

Proven sales experience, preferably in advertising or media

Strong communication and negotiation skills. Goal-oriented and self-motivated with a passion for sales.

Knowledge of the local business community in Shelbyville, TN.

Proficiency in digital advertising and marketing concepts. Valid driver's license and access to a reliable vehicle.

Email your resume and cover letter to daniel@t-g.com

IMES-GAZETTE

LASSIFIEDS

Holiday Thoughts

By NOAH MADDOX noah@t-g.com

This week's column will take a break from sports for once, and instead we'll dabble in some festive Holiday talk for the week. This week's edition easily could have had more Ja Morant talk as the Grizzlies look like a completely different team since he has returned, as outlined in last week's column about the potential for such, but we'll hold off for another day.

This week, we want to hear from you, the reader, about almost anything and everything as it pertains to Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and even the upcoming New Year's celebra-

What are some of your favorite things about (or to do during) the Holiday season? Favorite Christmas movies, interesting family traditions, awesome food ideas, (just to name a few examples) and much, much more.

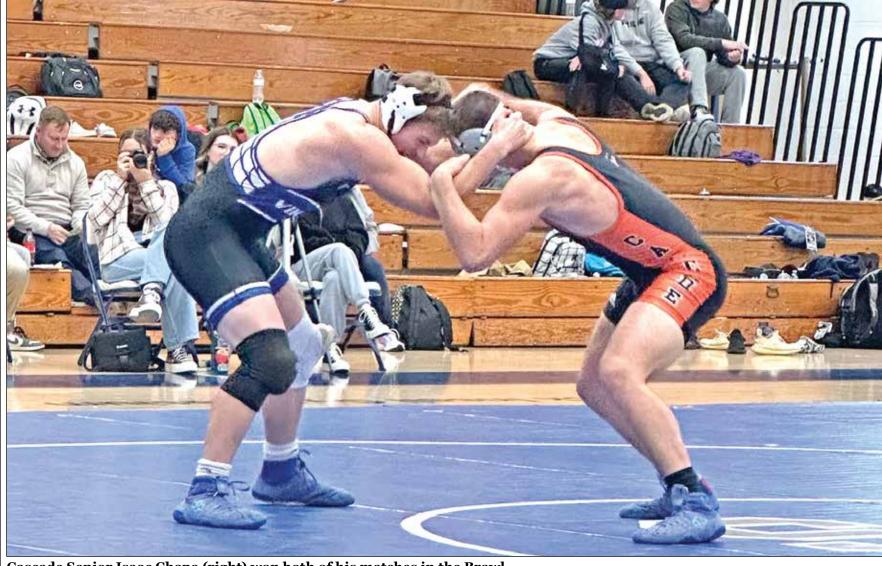
Of course, Christmas fell on a Monday this year, so many folks were able to celebrate over the course of a three day weekend. With Monday being the special day this year, it meant that the NFL took full advantage of the special timing, scheduling three stand alone games for the Holiday that ended with the highly anticipated MNF clash between the favorites of both conferences in the Baltimore Ravens and the San Francisco 49ers.

To go back to actual Christmas activities however, I'll start by offering up some of what my family and I indulged in this past week before we ask y'all to chime

We did many of the usual things you would expect, such as watching "Elf" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" while making a Christmas Day feast that began with some delicious ham. We exchanged gifts as well, but the bigger positive was all the family time we were able to spend together. That's really what this time of year is all about anyways, isn't it? Spending quality time with family and friends if possible?

Now, we would love to hear from you guys, our loyal readers, about your own fun Holiday traditions? It doesn't even have to be super grand, it can be something as small as "I enjoyed the extra day off." Whatever it might be, send us an email at noah@t-g.com for a chance to be featured and highlighted in next week's issue!

In a time of swirling uncertainty and negativity, we would love to highlight and express anything and everything that makes the Holidays such a special time to each one of you. So from all of us at the Times-Gazette, we wish you a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Happy New Year!



Cascade Senior Isaac Chapa (right) won both of his matches in the Brawl

Cascade Wins Second Annual **Bedford County Brawl**

The second annual Bed- win over Cascade to close ford County Brawl was held at Shelbyville Central High School on Monday, December 18, with Cascade taking first place by scoring the most team points.

In the round-robin style, each school wrestled against each other, and Shelbyville would open the night at home with a 50-30 win over Community. Community would follow that up with a surprise 42-39

the Vikings evening on the

Cascade would end the evening with a surprising blowout of the hosts, beating Shelbyville 48-29 and creating a three way tie on the night.

Unlike last year, none of the teams won outright, so it was decided that the winning team would be determined by who scored the most points. Thus, Cascade

beat out last year's winners, the Golden Eagles, and a Vikings program in their third season, by a score of 87-79-69, respectively.

Perhaps the biggest surprise was the stark improvement from last year by the Community Vikings. Despite finishing in third place, they beat Cascade outright and closed the gap on the scoreboard against Shelbvville.

After losing to the Cham-

pions 54-6 in last year's Brawl, Community returned this season with a lot more bodies, having at least one wrestler for every weight class. Because of this, Cascade had to forfeit in the 106 lbs class as the Champions had nobody to compete at that weight. Unfortunately for Cascade, and fortunately for the Vikings, forfeits are worth six points (same as a pin), and

that ended up being the big-

gest difference in what was an unexpected nail biting Community win.

Cascade followed up the disappointing loss with a very impressive and clinical beating of the Golden Eagles, and in the end were declared winners of the second-annual Bedford County Brawl due to team points.

Bedford County Basketball Weekly Roundup

The Shelbvville Central Past week result(s): 12/22 Golden Eagles play three 50-27 L vs Pineville (KY), games this week at the Music City Hoopfest at Page High School starting on Wednesday. We will have all of those scores and results in next week's print edition.

Shelbyville Central Girls: 8-2 (0-0)

Upcoming Game(s): OFF

Past week result(s): OFF WEEK.

Shelbyville Central Boys: 3-8 (0-0)

Game(s): Upcoming Three games in the Music City Hoopfest at Page High School.

Past week result(s): 12/22 45-34 L @ Blackman and 12/21 60-44 L @ Lebanon Cascade Girls: 5-9 (0-

Upcoming Game(s): 12/29 @ Summertown,

LIVE on The Zinger 100.9.

12/21 55-24 W vs Carroll Co. (KY), 12/20 51-57 L vs Russell Co. (KY).

Cascade Boys: 4-7 (o-

Upcoming Game(s): 12/29 @ Summertown, LIVE on The Zinger 100.9.

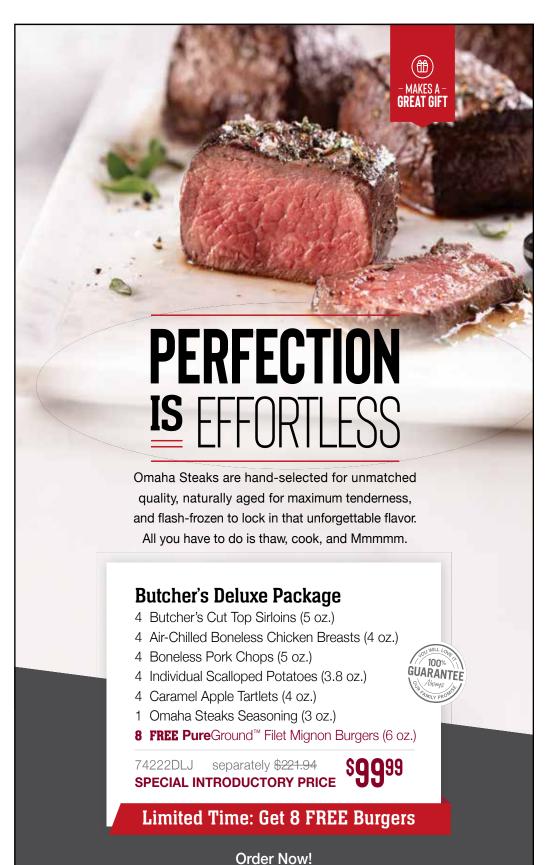
Past week result(s): 12/22 63-34 W vs St. Joseph (WV), 12/21 43-36 L vs Muhlenberg Co. (KY), 12/20 78-61 L vs Central Wise (VA).

Community Girls: 3-11 (0-0)

Upcoming Game(s): 12/29 @ Moore County. Past week result(s): 12/21 56-36 @ Huntland.

Community Boys: 6-9 (0-0)

Upcoming Game(s): 12/29 @ Moore County. Past week result(s): 12/21 63-60 W @ Huntland.



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Bedford County Fall Semester Perfect Attendance



Cascade Elementary School



Cascade Middle School

Perfect Attendance

With the 2023/24 school year's Fall Semester behind us, there were plenty of students from all around the county with perfect attendance.

around the county with perfect attendance.

Eakin, East Side, Learning Way, Liberty,
Southside, Thomas, Harris, Shelbyville Central,
Cascade Elementary, Middle, and High School, and
Community Elementary, Middle, and High School
(only one not pictured due to testing scheduling
conflicts) all had numerous perfect attendees and are
pictured below.

The fact that all 14 public schools in Bedford County had this many students with perfect attendance in the first semester of the year is an awesome sign, and all of us at T-G hope it continues!



Cascade High School



Eastside Elementary School



Eakin Elementary School

Bedford County Fall Semester Perfect Attendance



Shelbyville Central High School



Southside Elementary School



Community Elementary School



Community Middle School

Bedford County Fall Semester Perfect Attendance



Thomas School



Learning Way Elementary School



Harris Middle School



Liberty School

Misty's Ministries: sending love around the world

In the fall of 2022, Misty Guinn wanted to do something to "glorify God." Soon, she "began seeing the faces" on her Facebook page of the ones she who felt called to

"I began seeing small kids with cancer pop up on my Facebook page. I began to keep a binder of names, ages, and updates on each one. God showed me to make toboggans for these cancer patients."

She added, "They have enough to go through without trying to purchase hats. I would message the parents and explain that I have a ministry group on Facebook and Tik Tok (Misty's Ministries.) I would tell them it was completely FREE for

Misty says she prayed daily for the members in her group. "I started doing just cancer patients, then I started getting patients with severe/terminal illnesses and then transplant patients."

Since September 2022, she's made and shipped over 525 toboggans. She ships all over the world.

If the patient has siblings, she makes the siblings one. "These families go through this journey with them", Misty says.

She further advised, "The only money involved is people adopting the toboggans. That is \$7.00 per package and each package can hold up to 6 toboggans anywhere in the US. Outside the US is more. Before I ship them, I anoint each toboggan and pray over them."

Misty says this week how she always tells them if they need her day or night to message her.

"They are my family too. Misty's Ministries was made for updates, prayers, pictures of the people with their toboggans so I can tag the person who adopts the toboggan so they can see these precious faces."

Misty says she's been



To date, Misty Guinn has shipped over 500 handmade toboggans to cancer patients all over the world.

blessed to be able to get close to a lot of these families. She's had several, five plus, be healed from cancer. She lost her own dad to cancer so that has always had a place in her heart.

"I also lost my 34-day-old daughter to a home accident

"I am just a vessel for Jesus, doing what he called me to do. This ministry has blessed me in ways I never imagined."

People have "adopted" toboggans but they also donate yarn. The yarn I use is bernat blanket yarn, 10.5

'I am just a vessel for Jesus, doing what he called me to do. This ministry has blessed me in ways I never imagined.

Misty Guinn of Misty's Ministries

in 2001. Kids are special regardless of what they have or go through. No one fights alone. I do also send memo-

rial toboggans to families that have had a child pass Misty has 3-ring binders of names, ages, addresses,

and updates on each one.

God gets the glory, she notes.

oz/ 300g #6. As long as it is #6 I can use it. I also have receipts of shipping as proof for anyone who wants to know where the \$7 went. I have pictures of most of the recipients as well."

If anyone would like to "adopt" Misty says she has Pay pal,

misty9949@yahoo.com,



Venmo, @misty-guinn-2 and cash app, \$mistyGuinn.

"I recently did toboggans for a preschool and they donated money for more yarn. I absolutely love making these toboggans. So far, I have shipped all over the US, Canada, Germany, France, UK, Scotland, Poland, Ukraine, Haiti, Australia and New Zealand."

"Here's the best story I have been involved in and heard of this year, especially here at Christmas. I screenshot her story on Facebook. This is what she posted. To God be the glory! This lady received a toboggan from me. She had to go to Vanderbilt in Nashville for her sister. This story from Gwendie, a recipient brought tears to my eyes. She actually video chatted me to tell me the

All I did was be a vessel for Jesus, he deserves the glory," says Misty.

Misty's best story yet Well, I got the best Christmas anyone could ask for.

Back last year or so ago my sister was flown to Vanderbilt at Nashville, Tenn. Well one of my God sister Misty Ann Guinn and Rodney Guinn made a toboggan cause of me being sick. I was so excited about this tobog-

Someone had pick it up while we were putting my sister in her room or it got mix up in the laundry there.

Well, I left my information address and phone number for if they find it to get it back to me. I cry and cry when it come up missing.

So, Misty being God child and having a heart of gold, she made me another one an sent me a Bible.

I have been using this Bible for some time. She gave me a card and blessed it with oil and The Lord blessed this, Bible. I put that card

she gave me into the Bible with a Bible verse in the Bible, asking God to help find this toboggan.

Tell me that God don't work Vanderbilt Hospital . . . sent me my toboggan back . . through the mail today. Along with a Christmas card . . . wished me a merry Christmas. I received it after all these years.

The moral of this story? God does answer prayers and He might not be there when we want him but He is always on time. I have cried so hard. Cause I knew I would never see it again but they mailed it and got it home to me in time for Christmas . . . praise God. I am still bawling my eyes out . . . overwhelmed with the joy and happiness. So, I believe. With them being anointed, the devil was not winning this battle. Amen.



T-G Photos by Dawn Hankins

LIBRARY VISIT

Old St. Nick visited Shelbyville Bedford County Public Library last week. He read a few stories.

Children enjoyed refreshments and crafts.

Library personnel went over the December calendar.



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