

The

Murfreesboro Diamond

Wednesday, November 20, 2024
Issue 20 • 1 Section • 6 Pages

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Local Senior Center offers dressing for thanksgiving

MURFREESBORO -- The Murfreesboro Senior Adult Center will again be holding their annual Thanksgiving fundraiser. Uncooked dressing will be sold in five pound (\$15) and 10 pound (\$30) varieties, Residents may also order uncooked rolls at \$6/ dozen. Orders may be picked up the week of November 25. Call (870) 285-2312 to place your order. The center will also repeat the effort in December for Christmas.

Wednesday deadline for Angel Tree applications

MURFREESBORO -- The Murfreesboro Angel Tree program is again seeking to help out local families with Christmas cheer in 2024. Forms have been left at 3 locations – Murfreesboro Elementary School, Murfreesboro City Hall and Murfreesboro Water Department – and must be submitted by Wednesday, November 20 for acceptance into this year’s program. After that date, the program will create the angels and place them on trees around town – locations will be announced at a later date. Event organizers Angie Strawn and daughter Kelsi Frachiseur said the program is accepting monetary donations for those who prefer not to shop for a specific angel. “Last year we had a few families who asked for decorations ... so, if anyone has any old decorations, an extra string of garland, Christmas lights, or even if you have extra trees, please let us know. We would love to make that available for the families who are in need and to help make their Christmas Day brighter for their kiddos!” said Strawn. For more information, please call (870) 285-5269 or (870) 582-3882.

Week of Thanksgiving brings changes to trash pickup in M’boro, county

MURFREESBORO -- The City of Murfreesboro has announced that the sanitation schedule for the Thanksgiving week of Nov. 24 will be modified as follows. Tuesday and Wednesday normal pickup will occur on Tuesday, Nov. 26. Thursday and Friday normal pickup will occur on Wednesday, Nov. 27. The next regular collection day will then be on Monday, Dec. 2. A pair of dumpsters will be available near the former chicken plant and will remain in use until full and then will be locked up and restricted from use. As for Pike County rural trash, collection on Monday-Wednesday, Nov. 25-27 will remain normal, while Thursday’s normal collection will be picked up on Monday, Dec. 2. For all other rural residents collection will be a day later than normal the week following Thanksgiving. Both Murfreesboro City Hall and the Pike County Courthouse and associated offices will be closed at noon on Wednesday, Nov. 27 and will remain closed until Monday, Dec. 2.

DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING WORTH TELLING?
Submit Your Local News to the Diamond!
mdiamond@windstream.net
Call (870) 285-2723 for More Information



Staff photos/John Balch

SECOND ROUND BOUND ... The Murfreesboro Rattlers defeated the Marked Tree Indians 52-16 at home last Friday night in the first round of the Arkansas Class 2A playoffs. The squad will host Mount Ida in the second round this Friday night at 7 p.m. Pictured (above left) Laytan Wilcher harasses Marked Tree quarterback Kenyon Carter while (above right) Kooper Caldwell catches a touchdown pass between a pair of Marked Tree defenders.

Rattlers advance, host Lions in second round tussle
Face former conference foe Mount Ida for right to move to semi-finals

MURFREESBORO -- The Murfreesboro Rattlers (8-3) have successfully moved into the second round of the state Class 2A playoffs following their 52-16 (6-5) win over Marked Tree last Friday night at home. Head coach Brad Chesshir said that the team was ready to go following their lackluster performance last week against Mineral Springs to close out the regular season. “I was confident in what our response would be – the focus and attention to detail was obvious from Monday through the game. We just flew around.” The win also satisfied a bit of a revenge factor for the squad after Marked Tree eliminated the then 12-0 Rattlers 28-14 in the second round of the playoffs last season. “We wanted a little payback, and we achieved that.” Chesshir said the Rattlers moved the ball well on offense, to the tune of 493 yards, and defensively allowed only three big plays to the normally high scoring Indians – including a long TD rush early in the second half – who average better than 35 points per game during the regular season. “We talked all week about how we had to limit the big plays, because I didn’t think they could consistently drive on us. The kids really responded – but I knew they’d be ready for the moment. We’ve seen the highs, the lows and the big games. Nothing fazes them and now it’s on to round two.”

Laytan Wilcher rushed for 182 yards and 3 TDs, while passing for 83 yards and a TD. Cameron Stevens rushed for 124 yards and one score. Brody Maroon added 99 yards rushing and 2 TDs in the victory. In the second round, the Rattlers will face an old nemesis in Mount Ida. The Lions, who changed conference this season to 1-2A, are 8-3 overall and 5-2 in conference play behind Bigelow and Conway Christian this season. They defeated Bearden on the road in the first round of the playoffs last week by a 45-20 margin. “They are a younger team with a larger junior class that has much the same team as they did last year when we beat them 8-6 last year. We have similar ground and pound offensive philosophies that runs a lot of the same stuff,” Chesshir said of the Lions. He said the Lions are multiple in a formation standpoint in order to “allow them to get you where they want and attack your weaknesses.” Chesshir also said that the meeting of a familiar foe in the playoffs versus a team you rarely see was not a major factor, but that familiarity did perhaps provide a small advantage. “I’m just not big on rematches from a team in the regular season,” said Chesshir. “Otherwise, it’s pretty much just another football game.” Defensively, Chesshir said the Lions were also similar to the Rattlers with a four-front that “swarms to the ball and tackles well.” So, in an even battle that features two extremely similar teams, what will separate the victor by the end of the game? According to Chesshir, it’s simply a matter of execution and physicality. “They have a senior running back, Ben Woodfield, that deserves to be all-state. He’s hard-nosed and hard to stop ... he’s always moving forward and is hard to stop for no gain. Defensively, we will have to swarm tackle well in order to combat his efforts.” Offensively, the Rattlers will have to avoid



Staff Photos/John Balch

FIRST ROUND WIN ... (Above) Brody Maroon looks for space as he moves past the first level of the Marked Tree defense, while (below) MHS cheerleaders Kinleigh Sullivan (kneeling) and Ramsey Terrell do their best to inspire the crowd during the squad’s halftime performance.



negative play and secure the ball in order to win the game, said Chesshir. “We’ve reached the part of the season where you have to play as perfectly as possible in order to win. Mount Ida is strong and tough and

has a prestigious history, and I respect Coach [Mike] White and everything he’s accomplished there.”

RATTLERS Continued on Page 2

RATTLERS Continued from Page 1

To their credit, Mount Ida pulled off the only lower seeded upset in the first round of the Class 2A playoffs last week.

TAILGATE

Prior to the game, the school will host a tailgate starting at 4:45 p.m. that will soon be followed by the team’s “Walk to the Rock.”

Chesshir invited the community to come out and inject a dose of energy into the kids pregame.

“I hope to see the whole town in the stands for this game ... we love the energy and hope it will propel us to new heights as we look to move into the third round of the playoffs.”

RANKINGS

Scorebook Live ranks the Lions two spots behind the Rattlers in their Class 2A rankings (5/7), while maxpreps.com has the Rattlers 109th overall in the state of Arkansas, versus Mount Ida’s 116th. On3.com has the Rattlers at 124 in the state, while Mount Ida is at 127.

Perhaps the only one that sees the game with a clear-cut favorite is Hooten’s Arkansas Football (hootens.com) -- they rank the Rattlers as the fourth best team in Class 2A and predict them to defeat the Lions, the eighth best 2A squad, in a game that “could be one of the most physical games in the state regardless of classification.”



Staff Photos/John Balch



PLAYOFF INTENSITY ... (Above) Rattler head coach Brad Chesshir directs the action from the sideline; (left) Cameron Stevens gains the edge as part of his 124 rushing yards; (below) the Rattler defense continuously had multiple defenders swarm to the ball.



2024 Arkansas Centennial Bank State Football Playoffs - 2A



| First Round Nov. 15 | Second Round Nov. 22 | Semi Final Round Nov. 29 | Championship Round Dec. 6 |
|--|--|--|--|
| <div>FINAL</div> <div>1st 3 Murfreesboro 52⁺</div> <div>4th 2 Marked Tree 16</div> <div>Game 1</div> | <div>NOV 22 - 7:00 PM</div> <div>1st 3 Murfreesboro</div> <div>3rd 1 Mount Ida</div> <div>Game 9</div> | <div>NOV 29 - 7:00 PM</div> <div></div> <div>Game 13</div> | <div>DEC 6 - 12:00 PM</div> <div></div> <div>Game 15</div> |
| <div>FINAL</div> <div>2nd 4 Bearden 20</div> <div>3rd 1 Mount Ida 45⁺</div> <div>Game 2</div> | <div>NOV 22 - 7:00 PM</div> <div>1st 2 East Poinsett County</div> <div>2nd 1 Bigelow</div> <div>Game 10</div> | | |
| <div>FINAL</div> <div>1st 2 East Poinsett County 26⁺</div> <div>4th 3 Gurdon 20</div> <div>Game 3</div> | <div>NOV 22 - 7:00 PM</div> <div>1st 1 Conway Christian</div> <div>2nd 2 Des Arc</div> <div>Game 11</div> | <div>NOV 29 - 7:00 PM</div> <div></div> <div>Game 14</div> | |
| <div>FINAL</div> <div>2nd 1 Bigelow 21⁺</div> <div>3rd 4 Poyen 0</div> <div>Game 4</div> | <div>NOV 22 - 7:00 PM</div> <div>1st 4 Carlisle</div> <div>2nd 3 Junction City</div> <div>Game 12</div> | | |
| <div>FINAL</div> <div>1st 1 Conway Christian 48⁺</div> <div>4th 4 Hazen 16</div> <div>Game 5</div> | <div>NOV 22 - 7:00 PM</div> <div>1st 1 Carlisle</div> <div>4th 1 Hector 6</div> <div>Game 7</div> | | |
| <div>FINAL</div> <div>2nd 2 Des Arc 38⁺</div> <div>3rd 3 Mineral Springs 24</div> <div>Game 6</div> | <div>NOV 22 - 7:00 PM</div> <div>2nd 3 Junction City 36⁺</div> <div>3rd 2 Cross County 22</div> <div>Game 8</div> | | |

The home team will be the higher seeded team or the top team on the bracket when both have the same seed. All play-off games will begin at 7.

Pay increases for state employees on tap for legislature

STATE CAPITOL WEEK IN REVIEW
Senator Steve Crowell

LITTLE ROCK – The governor unveiled a new pay plan for state employees that she will present for legislative approval during the 2025 regular session. At the announcement of the pay plan, she said it was the fulfillment of a promise she made when campaigning for office. Bringing salaries more in line with those in the private sector, the state will encourage people to apply for the jobs in state government that are hardest to fill, she said. The Secretary of Transformation and Shared Services urged people to go online and apply for jobs. “This new pay plan allows us to be flexible and competitive in the market both now and moving forward. Consider working with us – apply now at arcareers.arkansas.gov,” the secretary said. The President of the Arkansas State Police Foundation Board said that the higher pay would boost morale among state troopers and would improve efforts to recruit and retain the best law enforcement officers. That will make Arkansas safer, the foundation president said. The governor’s proposal would raise the salaries of about 14,539 state employees, who represent about two-thirds of the executive branch workforce. A stated goal of the pay raises is to bring state employees’ salaries closer to private sector salaries in comparable labor markets. Another goal is recruit and retain employees in categories in which the state has had chronic shortages, such as nurs-

ing staff, prison officers, social services workers and the State Police. Security officers at state prisons would see average entry-level salaries increase by 35.3%, from \$37,589 to \$50,845. Average salaries for all officers would increase by 17.1%, from \$50,461 to \$59,100. Some agencies, such as the Department of Human Services, hire staff who work with troubled teens and young people in broken homes. They have turnover among social workers, cause by stress and by caseloads much greater than recommended in national standards. Entry-level salaries would increase by 20.5%, from \$44,172 to \$52,442. The average salaries for all staff would increase by 15.3%, from \$48,733 to \$55,364. At the State Police, average entry-level salaries would go up by 19.8%, from \$56,498 to \$67,706. The overall average salary would go up by 10.4%, from \$73,318 to \$80,930. The state hires nurses at long-term care facilities. The average entry-level salary would increase by 8.3%, from \$51,032 to \$54,661, and the average pay for all nurses would increase by 9.6%, from \$57,686 to \$61,552. The cost of the pay plan is an estimated \$102 million, and will be included when the governor presents a balanced budget to lawmakers next week. According to the governor’s office, almost \$60 million will come from the general revenue fund, the state’s main source of spending for services. General revenue comes mostly from sales taxes, individual income taxes and corporate income taxes. Other state government funds will pay

for the remainder of the costs of the pay plan. The governor said that much of the cost would be absorbed by agencies in their existing budgets, which have many positions that are vacant. **COMBATTING PREMIUMS** Arkansas legislators have been hearing from constituents about the rising costs of homeowners insurance premiums, so during the 2025 session they will explore numerous options for holding down rate increases. At a recent meeting of the Senate and House Committees on Insurance and Commerce, top officials of the Arkansas Insurance Department briefed lawmakers on rising rates, and what other states have done to control them. Several nearby states have begun mitigation programs, which provide financial incentives for strengthening homes to limit damage from during storms. For example, in Alabama homeowners can apply for \$10,000 to retrofit houses with features that can better withstand the high winds and flying debris caused by hurricanes. Insurance companies discount rates for homes with those features. In Arkansas, wind and hail are the major weather events that damage homes. In recent years, eight insurance companies have stopped selling policies in the state. According to Insurance Department officials, Arkansas property insurance companies had a loss ratio last year of 130 **LEGISLATURE** Continued on Page 5

Murfreesboro Diamond

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Staff photos/John Balch

WARM OFFICIAL WELCOME ... Audra Rhodes (above center, below left) has taken over Murfreesboro Dental Care from former owner Darwin Turner (below right). The above picture was taken at the Chamber of Commerce Coffee held at the business last Thursday morning.

There’s a new dentist in town

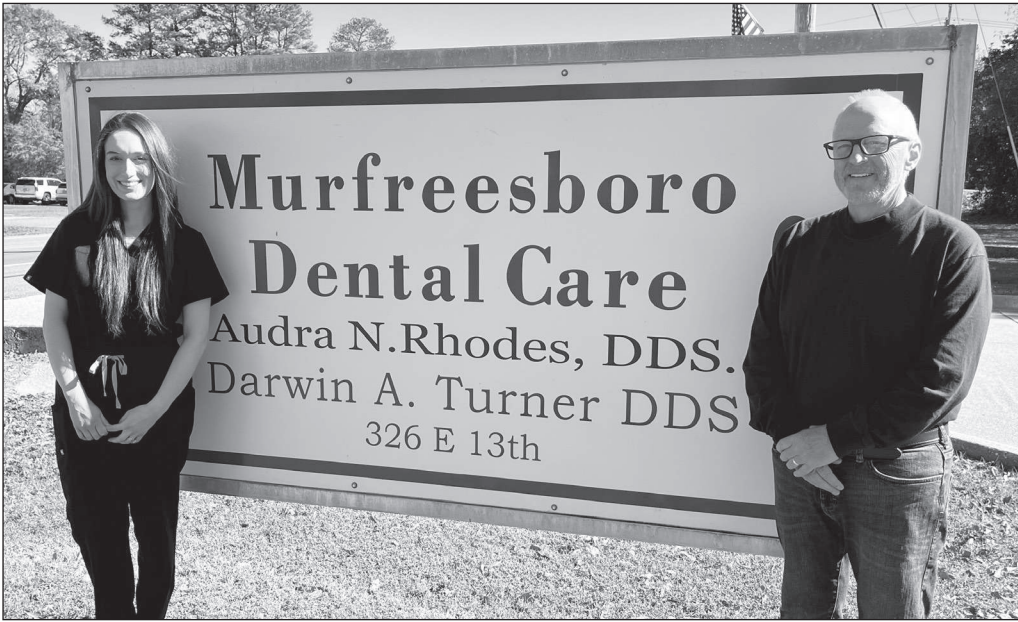
BY JOHN BALCH
Nashville News-Leader Staff

MURFREESBORO -- “She’s actually been the boss since July,” said Murfreesboro dentist Darwin Turner as he officially turned over his longtime business to new owner, Audra Rhodes of Nashville.

Murfreesboro Dental Care will keep the name, the employees and even Dr. Turner to a certain extent. Turner, 60, said he will “semi-retire” with plans to provide part-time orthodontic services at MDC.

In 1990, Turner opened his first dental practice in Murfreesboro, where he graduated from school in 1982, “downtown on the main drag.” He built and moved into the MDC’s current location just a few blocks away in 1999.

According Rhodes, a 2017 graduate of Nashville High School, the purchase of MDC



is her first business venture and her first dental job since graduating from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Dentistry.

Rhodes, 25, is the daughter

of Andrea and Randy Hughes of Nashville. She and husband and fellow NHS grad, Triston, have a new baby girl, Layton. Triston is the son of Julie and Mark Rhodes, also of Nashville.

The Murfreesboro Chamber of Commerce hosted a welcoming ceremony last Thursday, which was well attended by family, friends, patients

and local dignitaries.

Turner said he is not sure what he plans to do in semi-retirement but working on the farm and being outdoors with youngest daughter, Kristina, 17, will certainly be in the plans. Turner’s wife, Cheryl, is already retired and oldest daughter, Olivia, 23, is about the start a job in Northern Ireland.

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LETTER TO EDITOR POLICY

All letters to the editor must be signed, along with a phone number (that will not be published) provided for confirmation purposes. The Murfreesboro Diamond reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity. Letters must not be libelous or contain any profanities.

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UAMS HOUSE CALL

Dr. Bala Simon is an associate professor in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine in the College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

Q: Is there a way to prevent shingles?

A: Shingles is a viral infection in which the main symptom is a painful rash. It is caused by the varicella-zoster virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox. Even after a person recovers from chickenpox, the virus remains in the body. The reactivation of the virus results in shingles. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 million people in the U.S. get shingles each year.

Pain in an area on the skin may be felt a few days before the rash appears. Shingles normally presents on one side of the body and starts as a group of small bumps. In three to four days, they turn into blisters filled with fluid. The blisters dry out and crust over in within 10 days in many instances. Postherpetic neuralgia is the condition in which pain is felt after blisters have cleared.

In addition to previously having chickenpox, those at risk for shingles are people over the age of 50 and those with weakened immune systems. Some people experience fatigue, fever and headaches as well as the rash.

Adults 50 and over, as well as adults 19 and older with weakened immune systems, are recommended to get the shingles vaccine to prevent the illness. Contact your health care provider if you have symptoms and to determine the best method of treatment.

Email your health questions to housecall@uams.edu.

Obituaries

Jack Junior ‘Bo’ Johnson, 84, Ben Lomond



grandchildren Tony “T.J.” Johnson and wife Tara of Northport, AL, Darley Norris and husband Eric of Tuscaloosa, AL; two great-grandchildren Trace Johnson and Levi Norris; one sister Betty Lynn Moore of Daingerfield, Texas; as well as a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Visitation was held on Saturday, November 16, at Latimer Funeral Home in Nashville.

Funeral services began at 2:00 p.m., Saturday, November 16, at Latimer Funeral Home in Nashville, with Bro. Jimmy Woods officiating, burial followed in Ben Lomond Cemetery, under the direction of Latimer Funeral Home in Nashville.

Pallbearers were Wes Ware, George Adams, Ronny Smith, Ron Smith, Russel Smith, and Tracy Gentry.

Honorary pallbearer Stacy Day.

The family would like to express a special thank you to the staff at Little River Nursing and Rehabilitation, Stacey, Barbara, Jaelin, Felecia, and Velma.

Memorials may be made in his honor to the Ben Lomond Cemetery Fund, P.O. Box 52, Ben Lomond, AR. 71823, or First Baptist Church of Hicks, 507 Little River 29, Ashdown, AR. 71822

You may send an online sympathy message at www.latimerfuneralhome.com

Jack Junior “Bo” Johnson, age 84, of Ben Lomond, Arkansas passed away Wednesday, November 13, 2024 in Ashdown, Arkansas. He was born September 13, 1940 in Kirby, Arkansas the son of the late Dewey Johnson and Opal Ward Johnson.

Mr. Johnson was a member of the First Baptist Church of Hicks. Jack was strong in his faith. He enjoyed studying the Bible and having deep in-depth conversations about the scriptures with his son Tony or anyone that he came across.

He loved fishing, hunting, his cows and being outdoors.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife Betty Ann Copeland Johnson, his son, Dewey Jack “Jackie” Johnson, his great-grandson, Tripp Samuel Johnson, and one sister Charlotte Buck.

Survivors include his son, Tony Johnson and wife Lynn of Tuscaloosa, Alabama; two

School board member resigns

MURFREESBORO -- The South Pike County School Board is now short one member following the resignation of Matt Henderson of Delight during the board’s November meeting last week.

In a short letter dated the day of the meeting, Tuesday, Nov. 12, Henderson thanked the district for allowing him to represent them on the board, but added “I feel currently it is best for me to resign with (the) resignation effective immediately.”

In other school business last week, the board took the following action:

- Approved to use Presence as a purchase service for speech therapy; and
- Approved the hiring of tutors using a High Impact grant at \$35 per hour.

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Former Delight pastor charged

MURFREESBORO -- The former Delight church pastor arrested last month on charges of child pornography has officially been charged in Pike County Circuit Court.

James Vincent Henry, 43, is charged with 20 counts of counts of distributing, possessing or viewing matter depicting sexually explicit conduct involving a child.

Henry was intially arrested and booked in the county jail the night of Oct. 15 on suspicion of 100 counts. Monday, Vincent pled not guilty to the charges and public defender Derrick McFarland was assigned his case. A Jan. 27 date was set for Vincent’s pretrial.

Vincent remains in the county jail this week and is being held on \$50,000 bond.

According to an affidavit prepared by Special Agent Christopher Harper with the Arkansas State Police, an investigation involving Henry began in August when Harper was assigned two “cyber tip” reports from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The reports involved the uploading of CSAM (child sexual abuse material) using Kik and Snapchat messaging applications.

The material was allegedly uploaded from an account belonging to Henry and his official church email IP address was used.

The state police investigator was able to determine that the one IP addresses involved in the CSAM was assigned to Henry at his Cherry Street home in Delight and that another address was assigned to Crossroads Assembly of God Church.

A residential search warrant was executed at the Henry home on Sept. 25 and numerous electronic devices were seized. Henry was then escorted to the church where more electronic devices were seized.

An extraction of one of Henry’s phone showed his phone number was allegedly associated with the CSAM and several photos were recovered. Another phone, owned by Henry’s wife, Brittney, was also extracted and showed she made numerous calls and sent numerous messages to and from the phone number at the center of the investigation. Henry’s phone number was labeled “vacation phone” in his wife’s phone contacts.

Brittney Henry has not been arrested or charged in connection with this case.

According to the Delight church’s website, Henry is original from Dumas and he has served as youth pastor at Assembly of God churches in Lacey, McGehee and Mountain Pine, as well as Newsong Church in Centerton, where served on the “media team.”

The website also states the Henrys served as foster parents for New Beginnings Children’s Home in Centerton and they were foster parents to 76 children in four years before they moved to the “transitional living program for young ladies 18-25” for two years.

Also Monday in Pike County court, Roy Oleyte, 46, of Glenwood, pled not guilty to one count of distributing, possessing or viewing of matter depicting sexually explicit conduct involving a child. He is being held int he3 county jail on \$100,000 bond.

Oleyte is accused of using BitTorrent to download child pornography.

A search warrant was executed at the defendant’s Lakeshore Street apartment on Oct. 29 and his phone was seized. A forensic search found child sexual abuse material and a further evaluation of the phone is pending.

CHARGE FILED

Natasha Lynn Holman, 38, of Glenwood, was charged Nov. 14 with felony possession of methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia following a traffic in August by the Murfreesboro Police Department.



TAILGATE/RATTLER WALK TO THE ROCK FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15 • M’BORO HIGH SCHOOL



The public is invited to a pregame tailgate party and team Walk to the Rock prior to the Mount Ida playoff game this Friday, Nov. 22 at 4:45 p.m.



SOUTH PIKE COUNTY SCHOOL MENU

| | |
|--|--|
| THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21 Breakfast: Chicken biscuit or cereal, fruit, juice, milk Lunch: Chicken tenders, seasoned corn, sweet peas, 7-12 cornbread muffin, pears, milk | TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3 Breakfast: Breakfast pizza or cereal, juice, fruit, milk Lunch: Burrito, refried beans, seasoned carrots, salsa, pineapple, milk |
| FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22 Breakfast: Cinnamon bun or cereal, fruit, juice, milk Lunch: Pepperoni pizza, savory carrots, steamed broccoli, applesauce, milk | WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4 Breakfast: Sausage biscuit or cereal, juice, fruit, milk Lunch: Vegetable beef soup, grilled cheese sandwich, celery sticks w/ranch, strawberry cup, milk |
| MONDAY, NOV. 25 - FRIDAY, NOV. 29 THANKSGIVING BREAK MONDAY, DECEMBER 2 Breakfast: Poptart w/cheese stick or cereal, juice, fruit, milk Lunch: Corn dog, potato smiles, baked | <i>*Due to food item shortages menus are subject to change without notice. Any changes to the menu will be posted on the website at www.rattlers.org</i> |

MURFREESBORO CADC SENIOR LUNCH MENU

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| MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25 Chicken fajita salad, corn/black bean salad, tortilla chips/salsa | WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27 Pork carnitas,Mexican rice, pinto beans, tortilla, frosted spice cake |
| TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26 Vegetable beef soup, grilled cheese sandwich, mixed veggies, chunky fruit medley | <i>Lunch served at 11:30 a.m. For more information (870) 285-2312. Open Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 8 a.m. Transportation available</i> |

‘Dear Preacher’ By Buddy Ray, Murfreesboro Church of Christ

I WAS ONLY JOKING

Proverbs 26:18-19: Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows and death, is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, “I was only joking!”

The man in our text who was rebuked was one who deceived his neighbor! Perhaps the man he deceived or lied to had been a longtime friend. The lie damaged their otherwise profitable association. A relationship that had taken years to develop and cultivate was destroyed by not telling the truth or simply misleading someone that had always been trusted. The apology sounded something like this, “I was joking.” Something said that sounded sincere was not the truth. So much is at stake in our relationship as sons and daughters of God. We are divinely connected and when



one of our fellow Christians is wounded, we all suffer. Nothing we do or say is without immediate and eternal consequences. Sincerity and truthfulness binds us together as surely as the great truth that Jesus is the head of the body. Each individual member supplies the life’s blood for those whose lives are touched by our own. Fools mock the idea that sin exists. They choose not to believe that our actions, thoughts and intents can and

will save or destroy our eternal soul. Sin is not a joke! It is not now, nor has it ever been a joke in God’s sight. Jehovah holds us responsible for what we do or fail to do. We are the servants of God, who is always faithful to His own will. He promises that our wellbeing is important to Him. He always keeps His word to us. None of His promises have ever failed. Whatever we have promised to this true and faithful Father we must resolve that it will be done. It is not a joke that God takes us at our word. He expects that we will make good on the commitment that we have made to be faithful and true to Him. Our salvation depends on it and so may the salvation of those we love. It is not a joke!

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Facts About The **BIBLE** BY JOHN LEHTI

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A VILLAINOUS OPPONENT!

GESHEM WAS AN ARABIAN AND ONE OF THE MOST VOCIFEROUS AND ACTIVE OPPONENTS OF THE JEWS, AFTER THEIR RETURN TO JERUSALEM FROM CAPTIVITY! HE NOT ONLY OPENLY RIDICULED THE PROPOSAL OF NEHEMIAH TO REBUILD THE RUINED WALLS OF JERUSALEM BUT ACTED AS IF IT WAS REBELLION ON NEHEMIAH'S PART TO DO SO — AS IF NEHEMIAH DID NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO DO SO! (NEH. 2:19) NOT FINDING ANY SUCCESS IN DETERRING THE JEWS BY THIS MEANS, GESHEM THEN JOINED WITH OTHERS IN PLOTTING ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST NEHEMIAH — IF NOT ACTUAL MURDER AGAINST THIS LEADER OF THE JEWS!

FAILING IN THIS PURPOSE ALSO, HE CIRCULATED THE REPORT, FAR AND WIDE, THAT NEHEMIAH WAS ACTUALLY FORTIFYING THE CITY PREPARATORY TO REBELLING AGAINST PERSIA AND PROCLAIMING HIMSELF KING! (NEH. 6:1 SEQ.) BUT NO MATTER HOW HE PLOTTED AND PLANNED, GESHEM'S EFFORTS WERE IN VAIN — AS THE STORY IN THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH SO FORCEFULLY BRINGS OUT!!

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Submitted photo

SUCCESSFUL HUNT ... Samuel Hoover, age 9, harvested this five-point buck with a 6.5 Creedmoor on November 9 while hunting with his dad, Brad Hoover.

Local group invites community to join them for Thanksgiving

MURFREESBORO -- The local Celebrate Recovery Group -- Victory In Christ -- will be opening its doors again this Thanksgiving for anyone who is looking for a place to eat with company.

"We know the holidays can be difficult for many and we invite the community ... or if your family is far away, come join ours!" said a group press release.

The groups asks that anyone who feels led to donate any of the following items for the dinner, or money to purchase items,

please contact Christina Myrkle through First Christian Church at (870) 285-2511 or at her cell (870) 925-3413.

The group also is welcoming volunteers to help cook/serve the meal Thanksgiving day, Thursday, Nov. 28.

Items still being sought include ham, dressing, mashed potatoes (or just uncooked potatoes), gravy, deviled eggs, rolls, and cheesecake. Green beans, chocolate cake, pumpkin pie and sweet potato pie have already been donated.

Reminder to be safe with the Thanksgiving turkey feast

BY REBEKAH HALL
U of A System Division of Agriculture

LITTLE ROCK — As families around the United States prepare for their Thanksgiving celebrations, practicing food safety guidelines when thawing the celebratory bird and storing leftovers can help ensure everyone stays safe and healthy.

Whether it's roasted, braised or fried, the Thanksgiving turkey should be prepared with food safety as a top priority.

"Believe it or not, keeping your bird safe begins immediately after the grocery store checkout," said Quad Whitson, extension culinary nutrition program associate for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. "Once a frozen turkey is purchased, you should take it home immediately and store it in the freezer. Frozen turkey should be kept where the temperature can be constantly monitored."

Whitson said frozen meat or poultry should be left at room temperature for no more than two hours, or no more than one hour if the outside temperature is above 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

"If left out for longer, this allows food to enter the 'temperature danger zone' between 41 degrees F and 135 degrees F, where foodborne bacteria can rapidly develop and cause illness," he said.

There are three methods experts consider safe for thawing a turkey: in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave.

Thawing in the refrigerator: If using this method, be sure to plan ahead. Allow 24 hours in a fridge set at or below 40 degrees F for every four to five pounds of bird. Place the turkey in a container to prevent juices from dripping onto other foods in the fridge and, ideally, thaw the turkey in the bottom portion of the fridge. A thawed turkey can remain in the fridge for one to two days before cooking. Turkey thawed using the refrigerator method can be refrozen without cooking, but there may be some loss in quality.

REFRIGERATOR THAWING TIMES

- 4 to 12 pounds: one to three days
- 12 to 16 pounds: three to four days
- 16 to 20 pounds: four to five days
- 20 to 24 pounds: five to six days

Thawing using the cold-water method: Allow approximately 30 minutes per pound of turkey. Place the turkey in a leak-proof plastic bag to prevent cross-contamination and prevent the turkey from absorbing water. Next, submerge the turkey in cold tap water. Set a timer to

HOW LONG TO THAW A TURKEY

| WEIGHT | IN FRIDGE | IN WATER |
|--------|-----------|----------|
| 4 lbs | 1 Day | 2 hours |
| 8 lbs | 2 Days | 4 hours |
| 12 lbs | 3 Days | 6 hours |
| 16 lbs | 4 Days | 8 hours |
| 20 lbs | 5 Days | 10 hours |

U of A DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

ensure the water is changed every 30 minutes until the turkey is completely thawed. This prevents the water from warming up and reaching a temperature where bacteria can multiply. Turkey thawed by this method should be cooked immediately. After cooking, meat from the turkey may be refrozen.

- COLD WATER THAWING TIMES**
- 4 to 12 pounds: two to six hours
 - 12 to 16 pounds: six to eight hours
 - 16 to 20 pounds: eight to 10 hours
 - 20 to 24 pounds: 10 to 12 hours

Thawing in the microwave: Follow the turkey producer's instructions. Once the turkey has defrosted and thawed using the provided directions, plan to cook it immediately. Some areas of the bird may become warm and cook during microwaving. "Storing your turkey after having been partially cooked is not recommended," Whitson said. "Partially cooking your turkey does not destroy all the bacteria, allowing the remaining bacteria to potentially multiply and cause foodborne illness while your turkey is in storage. Turkey thawed using this method must be cooked immediately to remain safe for consumption."

Whitson said one can tell if their turkey has thawed completely by touching the breast meat, which should feel soft and not frozen; wiggling the legs or wings,

which should move easily and not be stiff; or by measuring the temperature of the bird at the thickest part, which is typically the breast or thigh. This should read 30 to 40 degrees F when using a probe thermometer.

If preparing a turkey is too laborious, Whitson suggested making a pork roast, beef brisket, salmon or a Thanksgiving lasagna instead.

"For those looking for a vegetarian option or alternative, try Tofurkey, which is a plant-based roast modeled after a turkey, or a plant-based Wellington, often made with chickpeas or lentils," he said.

SAFELY STORE LEFTOVERS

Whitson said concerns for food safety do not end once the food is cooked.

"You should also be mindful when serving and enjoying the food that you worked so hard on," he said. "Discard any food left out at room temperature for more than two hours."

In general, cold foods should be kept cold and hot foods should be kept hot.

"Keep cold foods at or below 41 degrees F, and keep hot foods held at or above 135 degrees F," Whitson said. "Cold foods can be held in an ice bath, in a cooler with ice or ice packs, or stored in your refrigerator. "Hot food can be held in the oven, chafing dishes, slow cookers or warming trays to keep warm," he said. "Remember to check the temperature by using a thermometer every two hours for the most accurate temperature of your food."

Foods that have been safely held within the appropriate temperature ranges can be stored for leftovers. Whitson said food should be placed in shallow containers and immediately put in the refrigerator or freezer for immediate cooling.

"Most leftovers remain safe in storage for three to four days," Whitson said. "Always reheat leftovers to an internal temperature of 165 degrees F."

For more information about food safety, visit the Food Safety page on the Cooperative Extension Service website at www.uaex.uada.edu/life-skills-wellness/food-safety.

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