

The Murfreesboro Diamond

\$1.00
USPC 103-230

Serving South Pike County, Arkansas Since 1975

◆◆◆ Home of the Crater of Diamonds State Park ◆◆◆



Taste of Christmas, parade to be held this Thursday

Editor's note: The Diamond incorrectly identified the date of the parade in last week's paper. Please note that it is set for Thursday, Dec. 12.

MURFREESBORO -- This Thursday, Dec. 12 and the Chamber will host their ever popular "Taste of Christmas" meal fundraiser at the Murfreesboro Senior Adult Center from 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. The meal features ham, dressing and a variety of sides and desserts prepared by local churchgoers. The cost of meal, which may be eaten there or in a to-go format, will cost \$10 or greater donation to the Chamber.

Later that evening on Dec. 12, the Chamber will conduct the annual Christmas Parade under the theme of "Light up Murfreesboro." Lineup for the parade will be in front of the former Pike County Hospital at 5 p.m. and begin traversing toward the other end of town at 6 p.m.

Local businesses will be encouraged by the Chamber to hold extended hours that night following the parade. In addition, registration will be available at participating businesses starting December 7 through the night of the parade, with the Chamber drawing for prizes and chamber bucks.

More information for any of the above listed events may be obtained by calling the Murfreesboro Chamber of Commerce at (870) 285-3131.

Gospel event announced

ANTOINE -- The Antoine Baptist Church will be hosting a gospel singing on Saturday, Dec. 14, starting at 5 p.m.

The service will feature Ron Kelley and the Kelley's from Benton.

Refreshments will be served after the service. Everyone is invite to attend this fellowship.

O'Neal to be honored at retirement reception

MURFREESBORO -- The public is invited to join a retirement reception honoring Susan O'Neal on Friday, Dec. 20, from 1 to 3 p.m.

O'Neal is an employee in the Pike County Circuit Clerk's office as a deputy clerk under Pike County Circuit Clerk Sabrina Williamson.

The reception will be held on the second floor of the Pike County Courthouse.

Murfreesboro coach departs for Nashville

MHS begins search for new football head coach immediately, with no definitive timeline

MURFREESBORO -- The South Pike County School Board accepted the resignation of head football coach Brad Chesshir at their December meeting on Monday night.

Chesshir has been announced as the new football head coach at Nashville High School earlier Monday. Chesshir was a graduate of NHS in 2007, where he was an award winning linebacker and part of the Scrappers' two consecutive state championship teams in 2005-2006. Chesshir was also Nashville's defensive coordinator in 2015 when Nashville won another state title.

In his three years at Murfreesboro High School following his hire from De Queen in the spring of 2022, the Rattlers went a combined 22-11 and won first round playoff games the past two seasons after being back-to-back 4-2A regular season conference champions.

In a submitted letter, Chesshir penned the following to the board:

"Please accept this letter as my formal notice of resignation from the South Pike County School District effective on December 20, 2024. As this decision was not an easy one, I want to express my gratitude toward the South Pike County School District and the community for being so good to me and my family. This is a special place and will forever be special to my family. I know that the program will continue to be successful for many years. I look forward to following the success of the Rattler football program over the years and I will do whatever I can do to help. If I can be of any assistance through this transition, please let me know. Sincerely, Brad Chesshir"

The board accepted the resignation of Chesshir by a 6-0 vote. In addition to his coaching duties, Chesshir also served as the district's athletic director.

After the meeting, Superintendent Tanya Wilcher voiced both disappointment and hope for the future.

"Well, I hate it personally and I hate it for our district -- he has been wonderful and brought a culture to us that I feel like will keep us growing for years to come. I totally understand [his decision] -- it's his family and his hometown. He wants to go [there] and build what he has done for us. He feels like he needs to go to his hometown and do that. We will definitely miss him, but I hope we will bring someone in that will just pick up and keep going stronger. I feel like we have the type of program going now that will get some good applicants, and I think someone will love to come join our team. That's what we are -- a family -- and we want someone to come be a part of our Rattler tradition."

Wilcher said there was no timetable for the process to hire a new coach, other than it would begin immediately.

"I will open it up tonight [Monday] and it will be online. We are basically going to accept applications until we find that person. I don't want to put a time on it, because I don't want to



Staff photo

CHESSHIR TO NASHVILLE ... The popular Murfreesboro High School football Coach Brad Chesshir resigned from his duties (effective Dec. 20) at MHS to accept the head coaching position at Nashville High School. Chesshir is pictured (above) talking to the team following the win over Lafayette County on October 18.

rush it, and I also don't want to have to extend it in order to find the right person."

Wilcher said that while the decision by Chesshir was not ideal, the timing was as good as it gets, allowing the district to find a new coach prior to both spring practice and summer workouts -- when the pool of possibilities would be much lessened.

"In March and April you have offseason going and everything rolling, you need somebody

in place to help you get all that done."

She also wished to put a good spin on the overcast day to conclude.

"I feel like it's been a good year, we are growing, doing well, we are proud of our sports and our academics -- it's going to be good and we will have a great second semester. I want everybody just to remember what is important -- which is our students."

Howard County man arrested for alleged fifth DWI

MURFREESBORO -- A Howard County man has been arrested and charged in Pike County after he was allegedly caught drinking and driving for the fifth time.

Freddie L. Robinson, 57, of Nashville plead innocent to the felony fifth-offense DWI charge Monday and he was ordered to return to court on Feb. 3 with an attorney. A March 3 pretrial date was set for the case.

Robinson was arrested by Arkansas State Trooper Micah Brown on Nov. 26 and charged Dec. 6. The trooper had pulled Robinson over in Murfreesboro for expired tags. Robinson, who was traveling with his son, was found to be driving on a revoked license and reportedly had a cold open can of beer in the center console.

Robinson is also charged with misdemeanor

refusal to submit to a chemical test, open container in vehicle, no liability insurance, expired tags, fictitious license plate sticker and violation of interlock device requirements.

Also on Dec. 6, Noe Ismael Gonzalez-Perez, 28, was Glenwood was charge with failure to comply with registration and reporting requirements of being a sex offender.

MURFREESBORO

TASTE OF CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 12
11 PM - 1 PM
SR. CENTER

\$10 OR
BY DONATION

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CHRISTMAS PARADE

Join us

Thursday, December 12

and let's "Light up Murfreesboro"

Contact Chamber @ 870-285-3131 for parade registration.
Lineup @ Pike Co Hospital 5 pm, parade @ 6.

Lady Rattlers jump out to 5-0 start of season

MURFREESBORO – The Murfreeseboro Lady Rattlers have jumped out to a 5-0 start to the 2024-2025 basketball season.

The ladies opened with a 65-26 win over Umpire to open the season.

MHS would bolt to the lead in a 23-5 first quarter that saw Chloe Scoggin score all eight of her points in the game, including a pair of three-pointers.

The lead would expand to 38-11 by halftime.

Delaney Ford had eight points for Umpire, while teammate Savannah White knocked down a trio of three-pointers for her nine points.

Jenna May had 12 points to lead the Lady Rattlers, followed by Natalie Perrin with 10. Jocce Holt would add nine in the contest and add a team-leading seven steals.

Perrin would lead the team with four offensive and four defensive rebounds.

As a team, Murfreeseboro cumulatively hit seven three-pointers and record 19 steals versus 14 total turnovers.

Scoggin had a team-high four assists.

VERSUS MINERAL SPRINGS

In the second night of the Lady Rattler Classic to open the season, MHS defeated the Lady Hornets of Mineral Springs by a 54-42 score.

The Lady Rattlers would jump out to a 14-4 score after one period, but Mineral Springs would fight back in the second, outscoring MHS 14-6 in the quarter to close the gap to 20-18 at the halftime break.

MHS won the third period 18-14 and then defensively put the clamps down on the Lady Hornets in the fourth quarter, allowing only eight points, to secure the win.

Perrin would lead the Lady Rattlers in scoring with 15 points, followed by Holt with 13 points and May with 12 points each.

Number five led the Lady Hornets with 13 points, while number 23 added 11.

Sydney Braden led the team with 12 rebounds (6 defensive, 6 offensive) and had a pair of steals.

Perrin, Holt and Jamie Howell each has two steals. As a team, MHS recorded 11 steals and had 16 turnovers.

Scoggin again led the team with four assists.

VERSUS MAGNET COVE

On Nov. 19, Murfreeseboro would defeat Magnet Cove at home by a 55-45 score.

The Lady Rattlers had a 32-25 lead at the break, but Magnet Cove would outscore the hosts 10-4 in the third period to trail by one at the quarter's end.

Murfreeseboro's Holt saved her best for the stretch run, scoring 11 of her 14 points and knocking down a pair of threes in the final quarter. Howell also had a pair of threes in the final quarter as part of her 11 points. Braden would tally ten points in the victory.

As a squad, the Lady Rattlers hit eight three-pointers.

Tayla Tanaka led the Lady Panthers with 20 points, while her teammate Braelyn McEntire added nine.

Braden again led the team with 12 rebounds (nine defensive, three offensive). Scoggin had five steals to pace MHS. As a collective, the team recorded 16 steals and has 26 turnovers.

Scoggin and May each had four assists in the contest.

VERSUS UMPIRE

In their first of two games last week, the Lady Rattlers again defeated Umpire, this time by a 77-44 score.

MHS would jump out to a 27-7 lead by the end of the first quarter and wouldn't look back.

Perrin would lead the team with 19 points, while Scoggin added 16. Braden had 12 in the game.

Ford would lead Umpire with 23 points.

Perrin led the team with seven steals, while Scoggin had five assists.

As a team, MHS had 22 steals against 17 turnovers.

VERSUS SPRING HILL

The Lady Rattlers defeated Spring Hill by a 43-34 score last Friday night to open their conference slate.

After jumping out to a 13-8 lead in the first quarter, the Lady Rattlers would extend the lead to 22-13 by halftime. They held a 35-22 advantage going into the final quarter.

May led the team in scoring with 14 points, followed by Perrin with 12 and Holt with 10.

Kinslee Howell would lead the team in rebounding with eight (3 offensive, five defensive), while Holt notched four assists.



Staff photo

SEEKING POSSESSION ... Kinslee Howell seeks to come away with the basketball on the offensive end of the court in the Lady Rattlers' recent game versus Spring Hill as teammate Jenna May looks on.

Perrin had four steals along with Scoggin's three.

Cumulatively, the Lady Rattlers balanced in the steals to turnovers ledger at 13 and shot well from long range – 6/15 for 40%. The team's defense allowed them to shoot a subpar 27% (9/33) from two-point range and 50% (7/14) at the charity stripe.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Lady Rattlers still have a number of games prior to the holiday break, including at Horatio on Dec. 10, versus Hampton on Dec. 12, at Foreman on Dec. 13, versus Gurdon on Dec. 16 and versus Mountain Pine on Dec. 17. The Lady Rattlers will then next see action Dec. 28-Jan. 4 at the Mineral Springs senior tournament.

MURFREESBORO JUNIOR LADY RATTLERS

The Junior Lady Rattlers opened the season with a 42-37 win over Mineral Springs.

Kyndahl Posey would lead the team with 14 points, while Macy Gills and Kyndall Henderson each had seven points each. The Lady Hornets held a 24-17 halftime lead.

In their second game of the season, the girls traveled to Nashville to participate in the Scrapper Junior Tournament.

The girls found themselves down 24-3 after the first period, digging a hole that was ultimately too large to climb out of. The contest finished with a 53-12 final.

Back at home against Magnet Cove, the girls lost by a 37-36 score in overtime.

Murfreeseboro would control the game through three quarters, taking a 23-13 lead into the final quarter. The Lady Panthers were able to outscore MJHS 13-3 in the fourth to move the game into an extra stanza.

In overtime, Magnet Cove would prevail by outscoring MJHS 11-10.

Maci Price would lead the team with 15 points and a pair of three-pointers. Henderson would add eight points and Shaylia

Morris had six points.

MJHS would again get to take on Mineral Springs in the second game at Nashville, winning this contest by a 35-31 score.

The Lady Rattlers held a 19-18 lead at the halftime break, but took control in the third outscoring MSJHS 8-2.

Henderson scored 12 points to lead MJHS, while Morris had 7 and Price 6.

Last Friday night the girls defeated Spring Hill 42-21.

MJHS forced Spring Hill to play from behind the whole game, jumping out to a 14-4 lead by the end of the first quarter. The Lady Bears did make up a little ground by halftime at 20-14, and had the deficit cut to 26-24 by the end of the third. The Lady Rattlers were able to end any doubt of a full-fledged comeback by the early stages of the fourth quarter, however.

Henderson had 16 to lead the squad, with Morris adding 11 and Addy Silva with five.

Before the holiday break, the junior Lady Rattlers will face off at Foreman on Dec. 13 and against Mountain Pine on Dec. 17.

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 Murfreeseboro Diamond reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity. Letters must not be libelous or contain any profanities.

Send Letters to P.O. Box 550, Murfreeseboro, AR 71958 or e-mail to mdiamond.editor@windstream.net

Murfreeseboro Diamond

Your Hometown Newspaper since 1975

Located in the County Seat of Pike County • Murfreeseboro, Arkansas
Home of the Crater of Diamonds State Park
Little Missouri River • Lake Greason

• John Robert Schirmer, Publisher
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Please Send Change of Address Information to:
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P.O. Box 550
Murfreeseboro, AR 71958

Any erroneous statement published in the newspaper will be gladly and promptly corrected if called to the attention of the management.

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE
FRIDAYS AT 3:00 P.M.**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on December 19, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. the contents of the following storage units will be auctioned off to satisfy the operator's lien. That sale will take place at the location of the storage unit on Highway 19 in Murfreeseboro, Arkansas. All sales will be for cash and the buyer will be responsible to remove all contents from the storage unit within 10 days of the sale and sweep the unit clean. Units #21, 22 and letter G, L, and N. (g.s., 88w, 22)



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Latimer Funeral Home in Nashville

is offering personalized ornaments to families who have lost loved ones during this past year.

Stop by this Christmas season, and take an ornament from our Remembrance Tree, which is located in our foyer.

Each ornament was hand made by our staff and has been personalized with your loved one's name, date of birth and date of death.

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Vaccines protect you and your loved ones. They are our best defense against serious illnesses. When you get vaccinated, you're protecting your home, your schools, and Arkansas.

- ✓ Stay healthy
- ✓ Stay protected
- ✓ Vaccinate on time



healthy.arkansas.gov

Court sentences seven in proceedings this week

MURFREESBORO -- Seven defendants were sentenced during the Monday session of Pike County Circuit Court including a 73-year-old man that arranged to meet who he thought was a 14-year-old girl for sex.

Gary Eugene Johnson of Nashville plead guilty to the charges of internet stalking of a child and computer child pornography. He was sentenced to a total of 25 years in the Arkansas Department of Corrections (ADC) with 10 years suspended. Johnson will return to Pike County court Jan. 6 for formal sentencing.

In August 2023, Johnson took the bait of Pike County Investigator Jason McDonald's undercover social media account, designed to catch sexual predators. The account portrays a 14-year-old female.

Johnson, who resides on Rankin Road, was 72 at the time and sent the account several pictures and videos of himself

masturbating before setting up a meeting with the phantom 14-year-old. When he was arrested at the meeting place, he was found to be in possession of two cell-phones and loaded pistol.

Also Monday, Micah Timothy Mitchell, 35, of Murfreesboro plead guilty to the amended charge of distributing, possessing, viewing matter depicting child sex and a single count of rape.

Mitchell was sexually involved with a 13-year-old female who had been sending nude images of herself to various men. He was sentenced to a total of 20 years in the ADC with 10 years suspended.

Clifton Lee Nash, 57, of Delight was sentenced to a total of eight years with five years suspended after he plead guilty to charges of possession of methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia. Nash was arrested in December of 2023 after warrant was executed at his home on Bill-

stown Road.

Justin Stone, 31, of Delight, was sentenced to seven years with one year suspended on drug charges and three concurrent sentences of five years on three probation revocation charges. His sentence totals 11 years.

Brittany A. Smith, 39, of Delight plead guilty to drug and firearm charges and felony fleeing Monday. She was sentenced to six years with four years suspended on each of the two charges for a total of two years in the ADC.

Austin M. Swanger, 27, of Glenwood plead guilty to the charge of breaking or entering. He was sentenced to six years probation, fined \$1,500 and ordered into a recovery program.

Brandon Lee Watts, 44, of Delight plead "true" to the charge of probation revocation and was sentenced to 60 days in the county jail.

Obituaries

Joyce M. Henderson, 90, Delight



Joyce M. Henderson, age 90, of Delight, AR passed away Saturday, December 7, 2024. She was born on July 25, 1934, in Okolona, Arkansas to the late James and Iva (Parks) Stockton. In her early teens, she assisted her family in operating a café in Delight. In Delight High School she was a star basketball player and was an avid roller skater. Upon graduating from high school, she had the opportunity to join the All American Red Heads (first professional women's basketball team) but after consultation with her dad decided to focus on work and family. She married Clovis W. Henderson in 1954 and after moving to West Texas to pursue work they had three children, Sandra, Sammy, and Shirley. The family moved back to the Delight, AR area in 1968 and she stayed there for the remainder of her life.

Joyce was a member of Delight Church of Christ. She en-

joyed gardening, bird watching, collecting 4-leaf clovers, and collecting anything to do with frogs. Joyce was a pillar in our family. She enjoyed spending time with extended family and touched many lives and will be missed by everyone who knew her. She was preceded in death by her husband, Clovis and her siblings, Silvia, Claire Bee, Inez, Louise, James, and Charley. Survivors include her sister Belinda Wilcox of Shreveport, LA, children Sandra Smith of Delight, Sammy Henderson (Paula) of Boulder, CO, and Shirley Smothers (Scott) of San Antonio, Texas, six grandchildren Jeremy Smith, Elizabeth Henderson Hartman, Jon Henderson, and Amanda, Samantha, and Matthew Smothers. Joyce was joyful and proud of her three great grandchildren.

Visitation is 9:00-11:00 a.m., Saturday, December 14, 2024, at the Ruggles-Wilcox Chapel in Arkadelphia. Funeral services are 3:30 p.m., Saturday, December 14, 2024, at the Delight Church of Christ. Services will conclude after the church service. Pallbearers are Jon Henderson, Jon Hartman, Jeremy Smith, Matthew Smothers, Ray Wise, Alvin Burnett, and Scott Smothers. Arrangements are by the Smith Family Funeral Home-Arkadelphia/Ruggles-Wilcox Chapel, 517 Clay Street, Arkadelphia, Arkansas 71923, www.smithfamilycares.com.

MHS announces postseason awards list

Maroon a candidate for Class 2A defensive player of the year

MURFREESBORO -- Murfreesboro High School has announced the postseason awards list for the 2024 football campaign that saw the Rattlers win their second consecutive conference championship.

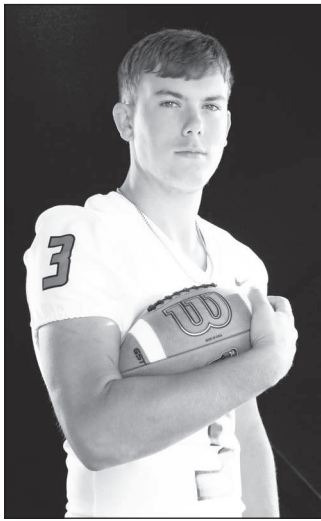
The senior trio of Laytan Wilcher, Brody Maroon and Lathan Compton were named to the 2A All-State team by 2A-3 conference coaches.

Players named to the 3-2A All-Conference list includes Wilcher, Maroon, Compton, Kale Burns, Logan Burrus, Hawkins Jackson, Cameron Stevens, Aden Stinson and Cash Lowery.

A pair of Rattlers, Kooper Caldwell and Daelyn Henderson, were on the All-Conference honorable mention list.

Also for Maroon, he is a finalist for the Farm Bureau 2A defensive player of the year.

The Farm Bureau Insurance Awards honor Arkansas' top offensive player, defensive player and coach of the year for each classification. The veteran staff at Hooten's Arkansas Football selects finalists for each category, and those finalists and their families are



Submitted photos/Jill Sellers

ALL-STATE RATTLERS ... Three Rattler seniors from the team were named to the Class 2A all-state team for their efforts in 2024, including (L to R) Brody Maroon, Lathan Compton and Laytan Wilcher.

invited to attend the Farm Bureau Insurance Awards on Monday, Dec. 16 at the Doubletree Hotel in downtown Little Rock.

Mack Wallace, Vice President of Sales Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company of Arkansas, Inc., said: "It is truly my pleasure on behalf of Farm Bureau Insurance to take part in recognizing the incredible achievements of the

student-athletes and coaches being honored here. They are some of the greatest in the state, and Farm Bureau Insurance wishes them continued success."

The other two candidates for 2A defensive player of the year are Gabe Boyle of Carlisle and Brady Domokos of Conway Christian.

For the Farm Bureau offensive player of the year finalists,

two were foes of the Murfreesboro Rattler this past season -- Dominique Grimes of Junction City and Ben Woodfield of Mount Ida along with Jeryn Thomas of Conway Christian.

LET THEM KNOW!

Submit your community announcements by e-mailing mdiamond@windstream.net or calling (870) 285-2723

'Dear Preacher'

By Buddy Ray, Murfreesboro Church of Christ

IF YOU LOVE ME
John 14:15



God's people spend great time and effort verifying the fact that they really love their Savior. We sing about it and we pray about it. How can we know for sure we love the Lord the way He wants us to love Him? We follow Him day by day and try our best to show that "Keep my commandments." Simply, He says, "Do what I have asked you to do." Talents and abilities vary but the command does not. The parable of the talents gives us a decisive look at how it works. We, individually, can only do what our ability permits. We must not try to judge our devotion by another child of God. The Lord knows what we are able to accom-

plish with the capacity He has given to us. The definition of a faithful servant is shown by our doing what we can in His service. We must do our best to step forward and accept any challenge or opportunity when it comes our way. Some of the open doors are always there and demand faithful devotion. The Lord knows each day will bring new challenges and our mind set must propel

us forward to do what we can every time we can. Accepting these challenges becomes a labor of love. We must do as Jesus did, work the works He has set before us each day we are blessed to obey. Do you and I love the Lord? The heart-felt answer is found in the joy we find in obeying our Lord. Do we look forward in great anticipation to honor Him every time we can? Is there a soul satisfying sense of bringing glory to Him each day we live? Jesus said, "If you love me..." Our response, obeying His commandments, will be done with zeal and love for Him. We are His servants and are honored that He has allowed us to serve Him and His father.

Paid Advertisement

SOUTH PIKE COUNTY SCHOOL MENU

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12

Breakfast: Chicken biscuit or cereal, fruit, juice, milk

Lunch: Salisbury steak, mashed potatoes, black eyed peas, cornbread muffin, spiced apples, milk

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13

Breakfast: Super donut or cereal, fruit, juice, milk

Lunch: Cheese pizza, steamed broccoli, seasoned corn, mixed fruit, milk

MONDAY, DECEMBER 16

Breakfast: Powered donut or cereal, juice, fruit, milk

Lunch: Cheeseburger, potato smiles, lettuce

& tomato, 7-12 onion & pickle slices, fruit, milk

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17

Breakfast: Pancake on stick or cereal, juice, fruit, milk

Lunch: Chicken fajitas w/cheese, refried beans, lettuce & tomato, salsa, fruit, milk

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18

Breakfast: French toast sticks or cereal, juice, fruit, milk

Lunch: Hot ham & cheese croissant, baked beans, seasoned corn, 7-12 baked chips, fruit, milk

*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

MURFREESBORO SENIOR ADULT CENTER LUNCH MENU

MONDAY, DECEMBER 16

Goulash, salad w/dressing, cornbread, snickerdoodle cookies, milk

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17

BBQ on bun, pinto beans, oil & vinegar salad, fruited gelatin, milk

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18

Chicken & dressing, green beans, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, peach cobbler

Lunch served at 11:30 a.m. For more information (870) 285-2312. Open Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 8 a.m. Carry out is now available for \$6.00

Trinity Missionary Baptist Church

Hwy 27 N. Murfreesboro

- Worship 11 a.m. • Sun. Eve. 5 p.m.
- Wed. Bible study & Prayer Meeting 6 p.m.
- Facebook services on Sunday at 10:45 a.m. & 5 p.m.

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289

Facts About The BIBLE BY JOHN LEHTI

This is a dramatized version of facts taken from the book of 1Chronicles Chap. 24 and 2Kings Chap. 12 consolidated

ZECCHARIAH A YOUNG PROPHET

HAVING TAKEN THE ADVICE OF HIS YOUNG PRINCES, KING JOASH SETS UP IDOLS IN THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM AND ALL IS DAH HAS BEGUN TO PRACTICE IDOLATRY, BUT NOT WITHOUT STERN OBJECTIONS BY HIS COUSIN, ZECCHARIAH, AND NOW...

AND WHILE ZECCHARIAH BEGATES THE KING, THE PRINCES HOLD COUNSEL AMONG THEMSELVES...

WE MUST NOT ALLOW ZECCHARIAH TO INFLUENCE JOASH--OR ALL WE HAVE GAINED WILL BE LOST!

...AND THEY ENTER THE CITY AND, THROUGHOUT JERUSALEM'S WINDING STREETS, THEY PROPHESY TO ALL WITHIN HEARINGS...

...ALL OF WHICH IS NOTED BY THESE POLITICALLY-MINDED YOUNG PRINCES!

ONLY THE LORD CAN SAVE US FROM OUR ENEMIES! AND NOW BY THIS TRANSGRESSION, THOU HAST DOOMED THE HOUSE OF DAVID AND ALL JUDAH!

ONLY THE LORD CAN SAVE US FROM OUR ENEMIES! AND NOW BY THIS TRANSGRESSION, THOU HAST DOOMED THE HOUSE OF DAVID AND ALL JUDAH!

COME! I HAVE SEEN ENOUGH! THIS IS THE WORK OF ZECCHARIAH--HE HAS HIRPED THESE MEN TO DO THIS, AND NOW HE MUST BE STOPPED!

Next Week THE CONSPIRACY!

SAVE THIS FOR YOUR SUNDAY SCHOOL SCRAPBOOK

Murfreesboro church of Christ

305 S. Second Ave.

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 • Worship 10:20
Sun. eve. 6 p.m. • Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Radio Broadcast B99.5 @ 8:30 a.m.

Bro. Buddy Ray

Attend Church
This Sunday!

HAVE AN ITEM YOU'D LIKE TO
SEE INCLUDED?

email us at

mdiamond@windstream.net

YEAR-IN-REVIEW

* -- Theme Related Clue

ACROSS

- 1. Cerberus' domain
6. Chop
9. Mama's husband
13. Unsuitable
14. Adam's partner
15. Echo sounder
16. Sunny prefix
17. Armed conflict
18. In a heated manner
19. *Highest grossing movie based on Broadway musical
21. *Time's 100 World's Most Influential People cover model in 2024 (2 words)
23. "___ and the City"
24. Not exciting
25. Accident
28. Rani's dress
30. Talking points
35. Aflame
37. Spanish sparkling wine
39. Slang for money
40. Velum, pl.
41. *November 5th 2024 winner
43. Short for "and elsewhere" (2 words)
44. Met's offering
46. River in Bohemia
47. Queen of Hearts' pastry
48. *Super Bowl winners in 2024
50. Visi___ or Ostro___
52. The Alan Parsons Project's "Eye in the ___"
53. ___ of passage
55. *Milton's center
57. *Miley Cyrus' Grammy-winning Record of the Year in 2024
61. *2024 Summer Olympic Games host
64. Cat's nine
65. Lowest or highest card
67. Accustom
69. E-wallet content
70. Backstabber
71. N in RN
72. Whipping mark
73. R&R spot

DOWN

- 1. "Say what?"
2. All over again
3. *MV ____, cause of 2024 Baltimore bridge collapse
4. Long stories
5. Tends a fire
6. Obscene
7. Spermatozoa counterpart
8. Lost, in Paris
9. *Olympic Gold winner Katie Ledecky's "court"
10. Dead against
11. Explore by touch
12. Maisie Williams' "Game of Thrones" character
15. Hello, in Haifa
20. Dead-on
22. Last month
24. Disclose
25. Wreaked state
26. Be's predecessor
27. Pileus, pl.
29. Like steak order
31. Maya Angelou, e.g.
32. Itsy-bitsy bits
33. *Caitlin of college basketball
34. Gin and grapefruit juice cocktail, a.k.a. ___ dog
36. Scarlet O'Hara's home
38. Speaking platform
42. Dinklage or Townshend, e.g.
45. Again but differently
49. Elton John's title
51. Shenzhi of "The Lion King"
54. Russian rulers, pre-1917
56. Tedium
57. "One ___ Over the Cuckoo's Nest"
58. Classroom pests
59. Elliptical
60. Sunset location
61. Sheep's milk cheese
62. Little Miss Muffet's morsel
63. Gaelic tongue
66. Upper limit
68. Poetic "always"

CROSSWORD grid with numbers 1-74.

Consumer Cellular advertisement: Off First Month of New Service! USE PROMO CODE: GZ590. CALL CONSUMER CELLULAR 888-804-0913.

BASKETBALL Continued from Page 3

of the year by a 33-22 margin. The Rattlers would hold leads of 11-4 after one quarter and 24-10 at halftime. Burgess would score 10 for MJHS, followed by C.D. Morrow with six points. Prior to the holiday break, MJHS will see action on Dec. 10 at Horatio and Dec. 12 versus Hampton. On Dec. 14 the seventh grade team will host a jamboree at the MHS gymnasium.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

ONGOING -- Holiday pecan orders are ready to be picked up at the Pike County Conservation District office at 131 N. Kelley St. in Murfreesboro on Monday thru Wednesday 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Phone (870) 285-2424 for more information.

Email announcements to mdiamond@windstream.net

Library announces new hours in '25

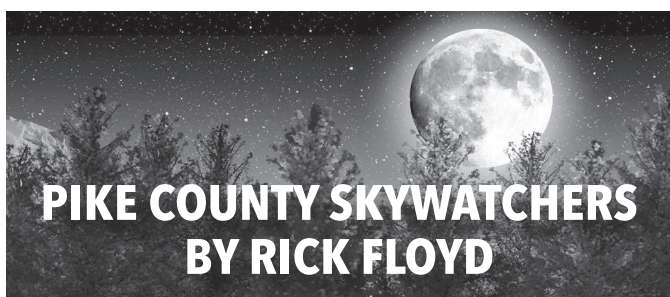
MURFREESBORO -- The Murfreesboro branch of the Pike County Library system has announced new working hours that will start beginning in January. The library will then open at 9:30 a.m. and close at 4:30 p.m. The new lunch hour will be from 12-1 p.m.

STATEWIDE CLASSIFIEDS

STATEWIDE CLASSIFIEDS advertisement containing various classified ads: HELP WANTED (DUMP DRIVERS), ANNOUNCEMENTS (JACKSONVILLE'S ALL LIT UP!), MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!, AUCTIONS (FIREARMS AUCTION), SERVICES (INJURED IN AN ACCIDENT?), PETS AND SUPPLIES (GET RID OF NUISANCE SQUIRRELS), and MEDICARE PLANS HAVE CHANGED!!!

City council hears of grant to continue sidewalk project

BY JOHN BALCH Nashville News-Leader Staff Murfreesboro Mayor Jim O'Neal announced Monday night that the city has received a \$500,000 grant to continue its sidewalk project through town.



December's 'star' of the show

The constellation Orion "the Hunter" is the star (no pun intended) of the night sky show in December as it rises shortly after sunset on the 24th. It appears much larger as it comes up, and this is the same phenomenon that happens when the Moon and the Sun rises or sets. Science does not have a definitive answer to why we humans see this happen. They call it the Moon Illusion and that it is all in our heads. A friend told me the answer is simple: when the Moon, for example, is at the horizon, our minds tell us that it is on the ground and therefore close, and when it is high in the sky it is far away. We all know that when something is near it appears larger, and vice versa. It is a plausible theory, and it points up the fact that the brain is a big factor in how we perceive reality. You can test the illusion by holding a pencil at arm's length toward a large rising moon. Put the lead point at the top of the moon, and mark the bottom with your thumb. Do the exact same thing an hour or so later. It may surprise you to find that the measurements are about the same. The bottom line is to just enjoy the way we see things. Brain scientists pretty much agree that reality for us is a complicated relationship between our senses and our brains. Our eyes and other senses provide information, the brain processes it and adds what it "thinks" is there, and memory also plays a part. The Moon is full on the 15th. It rises at its most northern place on the horizon, near where the Sun rises at Solstice in June.

O'Neal told council members that the Arkansas Department of Transportation 80/20 matching grant could be used to either finish the west side of the sidewalk project or start on the east side or attempt to complete the entire project - east and west with lighting. The project runs along North Washington through the center of town.

O'Neal advised council members to "kick it around" on how to best spend the funds with plans to meet with the project's engineer to determine costs for all three options. Treasurer/Recorder Penny Lamb said the city's matching funds for the project are expected to max out at \$210,000.

Mayor O'Neal also reported on the city's plan to appeal the 2020 census figure that shows the city has slipped below the 51% "Low to Moderate Income" designation. The mayor has said at past meetings that the increase in vacation rentals homes in Murfreesboro has contributed to the drop, as they formerly housed low to moderate income residents and families. The drop makes Murfreesboro too wealthy to qualify for many grant programs until the next census in 2030.

The plan is still being formulated to survey residents by mail-out, phone or in person and submit the results through the proper channels for an appeal.

During discussion about the city's annual budget, council member Jane Fugitt made a motion to include the mayor's salary in the 4.5% employee pay raise approved for the 2025 budget. The motion was approved and will add \$4,000 to the position's salary. The mayor's current rate of pay is \$13,000 annually. Fugitt said the increase was warranted and called O'Neal "a working mayor."

Fugitt also reminded the council the Murfreesboro Chamber of Commerce's Taste of Christmas is Thursday at the Senior Adult Center from 11-1:00 and that there will be a retirement reception for Randy Miller Friday, Dec. 27 from 11-1:00 at city hall. "He's given us 46 years of his life," Mayor O'Neal said of Miller, who is the city's water and sewer superintendent.

The city's Christmas Parade will also be held Thursday night at 5:00.

The council also voted Monday to allow Chief Randy Lamb to sell the department's 2017 Ford Explorer to another agency for \$15,000. The Pike County Sheriff's Department has shown interest in buying the unit, according to the mayor.

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FAGAN ROOFING advertisement: ALL TYPES OF ROOFING. We are insured! Quality work, Free Estimates. In Business Since 1992! Greg (870) 356-8934

Classifieds advertisement: MINI STORAGE in Murfreesboro. 870-845-6304. (gs:4-1f) SMALL ADS DO WORK ... YOU JUST READ ONE! (870) 285-2723

MILLWOOD CORPORATION BUYER OF TIMBER & TIMBERLAND advertisement: Matt Tollett (870) 703-6939, Jason Porter (870) 703-1039, Johnny Porter (870) 703-1628. P.O. Box 1316 Hope, AR 71802

ARKANSAS press ASSOCIATION advertisement: Get your message to Arkansans across the Natural State! More than 750,000 readers statewide. Small retail or classified ads Statewide or Regionally. News Release Distribution Service to all Arkansas media outlets! For more info contact Neil McConnell 501-517-4620 or neil@arkansaspress.org

Crossword puzzle grid with words: HADES, LOP, PAPA, UNAPT, EVE, SONAR, HELIO, WAR, HOTLY, WICKED, DUALIPA, SEX, DULL, HAP, SARI, TOPICS, ALIT, CAVA, MOOLA, VELA, TRUMP, ETAL, OPERA, ELBE, TART, CHIEFS, GOTH, SKY, RITE, EYE, FLOWERS, FRANCE, LIVES, ACE, ENURE, ECASH, RAT, NURSE, WELT, SPA, AIDER

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas ...



Staff Photos

SANTA MAKES STOP IN MURFREESBORO ... After being delivered to the Pike County Courthouse Square by the Murfreesboro Volunteer Fire Department last Saturday, Santa Claus took the time to visit with all the good boys and girls of Murfreesboro, regardless of age. After hearing their Christmas wishes, Santa presented the attendees with bags of fruit and candy.

SPC school board selects replacement for vacancy

Approves new transfer rules that allow for possible immediate acceptance

MURFREESBORO -- In their December meeting, the South Pike County School Board unanimously selected Wes Campbell of Delight as the Zone 6 member replacement for the recently resigned Matt Henderson of Delight.

Henderson resigned his position on the board in November.

According to School Superintendent Tanya Wilcher, Campbell was the only candidate to submit a letter of interest for the position.

Wilcher gave the board an update on the new baseball/softball complex that is currently under construction.

She said the bleachers were recently delivered and being installed this week. Three walls of the concession stand have been erected, and sprinkler systems have been completed on the softball field. Sod will prospectively be added to the softball field this Thursday, and hopefully sod will be laid on the baseball field next week after the sprinkler system was completed there.

"It's really looking like a field down there," Wilcher said.

Wilcher went on to congratulate the 2024 MHS football team for their second consecutive conference championship.

"It's been a while since we've done that," Wilcher said, adding that commemorative shirts will be available for purchase in the near future.

Wilcher said the cheer squads for MHS and MJHS were at competitions recently and finished first and second respectively. The competition will end the MJHS season, with the senior high to compete at the state tournament on Dec. 20 in Hot Springs.

Brody Maroon will sign a national letter of intent to play baseball at UA-Rich Mountain in Mena on Wednesday, Dec. 11 at 1:45 in the MHS activity room. Friends and family are invited to attend.

Semester tests will be held Dec. 19-20, which will be the last days of the semester. Students will not return to campus until Jan. 7, 2025.

The next school board meeting is scheduled to be held on Jan. 20, 2025, which is also the Martin Luther King holiday.

The MHS marching band will perform in the Murfreesboro Christmas Parade on Dec. 12 starting at 6 p.m. and the band will hold their holiday concert on Dec. 18 starting at 5 p.m. in the MHS activity room.

In the MHS high school report, Cheyenne Burns highlighted some activities that didn't receive as much attention, including the breakfast ring ceremony for juniors that was catered by Terri's Place earlier this week. Additionally, the robotics team built robots that made deliveries around the school and the chemistry classes created Christmas decorations from atoms.

The seventh grade quiz bowl team placed first in a tournament at Caddo Hills last week.

Other notable activities at MHS included the use of new microscopes in class, history classes taking a field trip to Historic Washington State Park, the tourism class visiting Little Rock that included a train ride and scenic views and bridges, 10-12 grade English classes traveling to see Shakespeare on stage, dessert food wars in family and consumer sciences class, the "Pack the Pit" effort placed number 11 in a statewide competition of more than 70 entries for school pride.

James Riley told the board of testing that has been going on at MES with Arkansas Teaching, Learning & Assessment System (ATLAS). Used on "Testing Tuesdays" he said the results showed where students were excelling or lacking in key educational standards.

After C-Stop Exxon/Baskin Robbins recently changed ice cream providers, MES was provided with 12 three-gallon tubs of ice cream that was utilized for the fifth grade who won the November positive points contest.

Riley said December was "crazy" and he laughed saying he sent an e-mail to teachers to "keep the Christmas spirit and he didn't want to be the Grinch but we still need to do some learning. We are slowly going to crank the chaos meter as we get closer to the end."

The MES Jingle Bell Ball will be held on Dec. 17 from 4-6 p.m. in the activity room. MES students will go caroling at the Murfreesboro Rehab and Nursing Home throughout the week prior to Christmas, culminating in the Dec. 20 performance that will feature fifth and sixth graders in costume. Later that day, the play will be held at 6 p.m.

MES was treated to Gus, the 14-year-old mushroom horse, that was purchased by first grade instructor Jane Caldwell. The horse was formerly a birthday party act, whose owner sold it when he realized that kids didn't want ponies at their birthday any longer.

The board passed an update to the student transfer policy, which Wilcher said was unusual in the middle of a school year. New school choice law allows for schools to make decisions on transfers from Jan. 1-May 1 and allows for the school to immediately accept the petitioning student as a transfer.

Other choices for the board include accepting the student at the start of the next school year, reject the student's application for transfer or reject the student due to being on expulsion from another school district.

"You have 10 days to let them know your choices," Wilcher said. "You can do school choice now and be accepted immediately."

However, if rejected, there must be a "really good reason" Wilcher said, such as class size at capacity forcing the need for hiring new teachers.

She said larger schools might have more issues with accepting new students due to room/class availability.

"A school like Bryant may get like 50 new kids on school choice," Wilcher stated. "They may not have the room or teachers [for that]. They would accept more at the end of the year [for the next school year]."

Wilcher said the still unclarified part of such a rule is whether transfer students could be eligible for spring sports -- softball, baseball and track.

"We don't know, and the Arkansas Activities Association is fighting the issue with the [state] legislature that starts in January."

The board also approved a measure to give each employee at the schools a \$300 Christmas bonus that will be included with their check this Friday.

Wilcher reasoned that since appraisals were up in the district and more tax revenue would be garnered -- even "playing it safe" -- she wanted to give back to the employees, as was her goal at every possible juncture.

SIGNING DAY

UA - RICH MOUNTAIN



BRODY MAROON
WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 11, 2024
1:45 PM

MURFREESBORO HIGH SCHOOL
ACTIVITY ROOM



Be vigilant for holiday scams

BY JOHN BOOZMAN,
U.S. Senator, Arkansas

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- It is the season of giving but, unfortunately, it is also open season for criminals who take advantage of kindness and generosity. So, as you plan your shopping and end-of-year gifts, it is important to do your homework, make sure websites are legitimate and think about why an online person or entity might be asking you for money.

Of course, scams are a problem throughout the year and my office regularly uncovers cases where Arkansans are being misled by a crook.

One example we've heard many times over the years involves a supposed friend -- often called a fiancé -- who is stuck outside the country. Their taxi got into a car accident on the way to the airport. They are in the hospital. They missed a flight and can't afford a new ticket. Their employer cut off their paycheck and now their bank in the U.S. froze their account. They are estranged from their family and don't know their neighbors, so this alleged "friend" convinces someone they've met on social media to send them money.

The problem is, it's all a lie. This piling-on of impossible coincidences with only one solution is a deceptive tactic criminals often use, which means it is important to be vigilant and use a healthy amount of skepticism when people approach us for money, especially online.

It can be hard to tell what is real and what is fake when bad actors hack into or impersonate a real person's social media account. This is increasingly common. In fact, fake accounts have been created in my name on several occasions.

Fortunately, sharp-eyed constituents have called my office to find out if it was really me, and our team alerted authorities to remove the scam accounts. But it underscored for me and my family how easy it is for criminals to use the names of people and businesses we trust to manipulate unsuspecting victims.

Sadly, older Americans are frequently the target of these ploys. The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) tracks and investigates online crime and reports a few of the most recurring types of fraud involving the elderly include themes around romance, tech support, help for grandchildren and home repair. In 2023 alone, total losses reported to the IC3 by people over 60 topped \$3.4 billion.

But it is important to recognize that senior Americans are not the only ones scammers prey on, especially during the holidays. We must all pay attention to warning signs to make sure we are buying from legitimate websites and giving to real charities. The FBI offers tips and resources for buying and donating on the IC3 website (www.ic3.gov), as does the Federal Trade Commission (www.consumer.ftc.gov/scams), to make sure our money goes to real people and not in the pocket of thieves.

If you've been the victim of a scam, you can report the crime to these resources and local authorities. In addition, the Arkansas Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division has helpful information about the most common scams circulating in our state and information on how to protect yourself.

Let's all do our part to safeguard ourselves and our family and friends during the holidays and year-round.



Staff Photos

GRINCHMAS BREAKFAST ... The Murfreesboro Band Boosters and band students hosted a fundraising breakfast with the Grinch last Saturday at the Murfreesboro Senior Adult Center in which attendees were provided pancakes, an activity and an opportunity to meet the Grinch himself.