

The

Murfreesboro Diamond

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Wednesday, January 22, 2025  
Issue 29 • 1 Section • 6 Pages



Former employee under investigation for selling weapons

BY JOHN BALCH  
Nashville News-Leader staff

MURFREESBORO -- Pike County Sheriff Travis Hill has confirmed a former county deputy is under investigation by the state police for allegedly hawking two of his county-issued weapons.

Hill declined to name the former deputy, citing the ongoing Arkansas State Police investigation.

Hill said he called for the state investigation into former deputy after one of his long guns was found for sale at a Glenwood pawn shop and another long gun was recovered from an individual who was reporting holding the weapon for the deputy as collateral for a loan.

Hill said the deputy was terminated from the county force a few weeks before after failing to show up for two scheduled dates to attend the Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy. When the deputy was ordered to turn in his county equipment, the two long guns were not in the inventory.

The Arkansas State Police confirmed the investigation last week and described it as "open/active."

Fly fishing festival set for M'boro Jan. 31-Feb. 2

MURFREESBORO – The annual Little Missouri River Fly Fishing Festival has been scheduled for Friday, Jan. 31-Sunday, Feb. 2.

The event will be conducted at the Murfreesboro Municipal Building's community room, located at 204 East Main Street in Murfreesboro.

The ArkLaTexOma (ALTO) Fly Tyers will be hosting the festival that will include a "week-end of tying, fishing, fellowship and fun ... with expert tyers, casting instructors, vendors, and seminars."

Raffles and door prizes will also be a part of the festivities – interested participants are asked to follow the ArkLaTexOma Fly Tyers Facebook page for more information on the raffles and event proceedings.

Information for the event says the group will accept interest from all levels of expertise, and wants to make beginners feel welcome.

There is no fee to attend the event, but attendees are asked to bring new/slightly used gear to augment the raffle table. As with all ALTO events, there are no membership dues and events are supported by member donations. All of the donations go toward future events throughout the year or charitable organizations.

On Friday, Jan. 31 the group will open the event at noon, and that evening at 6 p.m. a presentation will be held on the state of the Little Missouri River. Pizza will be available – sold by the slice – as well as drinks.

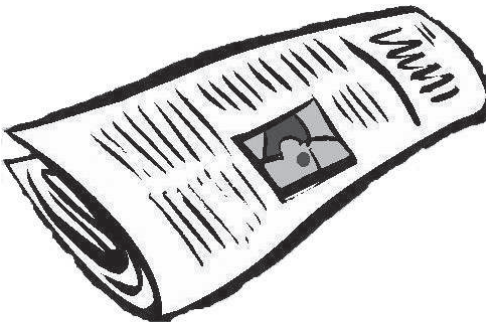
The morning of Saturday, Feb. 1, fly tying will start at 9 a.m., followed by an update on Patriot Angler news and projects by Johnny Walker.

Saturday's lunch will be chicken/sausage gumbo with sides, with cost being a donation to the group.

Following lunch at 1:30 p.m., Gordon Shaw will present the joys of fishing with fiberglass. One of the raffle items will be a hand-built fiberglass fly rod by Randy Hanien. At 3 p.m. the group will present a program on raft fishing in Arkansas.

Sunday morning, Feb. 2, a short devotional will be held at the Riverside pavilion, weather permitting, before the event commences.

For further information, contact Mike Hawkins at (903) 353-3357.



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Submitted photo

THIRD AT STATE ... The Murfreesboro High School cheerleaders placed third in the state competition recently in Hot Springs.

Dedicated group places third in state

MURFREESBORO -- The Murfreesboro High School cheer squad finished third at the state competition held recently in Hot Springs.

The squad was also named for the "highest tumbling award" in their part of the competition and senior team member Reid Spradlin was named to the 2024-2025 all-state cheer list.

Team coach Melissa Jones, who said she participated in competitive cheer as a student in North Little Rock said she came out of retirement for the job when her daughter started cheer in seventh grade.

"I enjoyed it, and most small schools in Arkansas don't do it [competitive cheer]. Our girls are rock stars in multiple things – starters in basketball, track, FBLA – they're so busy its hard to practice competition stuff along with everything else," said Jones.

She brought the team back to competitions because she knew "this group of girls was talented, had a good work ethic and practice ability working well. It's not something you want to do with just any group of kids."

The team qualified for the state competition via their efforts at competition earlier in the fall season, which fall directly amongst their duties for football season.

"That's why it gets a little crazy [time-wise]," said Jones.

During the in-season competitions, the Murfreesboro squad could be lumped in a class A-AA-AAA grouping, depending on the number of participants at the meet. At the state championship meet, the team competed against other class AA and A schools.

At the championship event Jones laughed that the team had departed, and she called them to return after realizing they finished third.

During the state competition, each squad receives scores for three categories – overall, building/stunting and cheer. Inside the scores are sections for a gameday cheer, motions, call-back cheers along with a music section with pyramids, stunts, jumping and tumbling.

Jones said the season really begins in the spring semester with tryouts in March and their chicken dinner fundraiser in May.

"Everything we do is self-supported, we get no funds from the school whatsoever. It costs about a thousand dollars per girl for uniforms and camp, so we fundraise and fundraise. After the chicken dinner in May, we usually have the senior high do something else like crumble cookies or fried pies. We fundraise after tryouts until spring sports are over, because trying to practice during all that is difficult."

The squad begins practicing around the end of May after the end of softball and track. The practices continue in the summer around the basketball duties.

"That's more for senior high than junior high, because we also have football games and pep rallies to get ready for."

The girls attended a cheer camp in Bentonville last summer, and Jones said it was still undetermined what they will do this summer.

June contains the squad's practice and team camp, followed by most of July off – both for a breather and in allowance for the Arkansas Activities Association's mandated time off for all athletes. Cheer now falls under the rules being a state sanctioned sport and no longer a club status.

"I had to go through all the coaching credentials – I'm now just as qualified to coach basketball as I am cheer," Jones said laughingly. "That's just crazy, but anyway, that's another soapbox."

Toward the end of July the squad begins sell-

ing advertisements for the football programs, which is another fundraiser for the squad.

"Then we start working on game stuff, and don't really begin working on competition stuff until October," said Jones. "Because we are football, football, football ... working on pep rallies, that's our main focus, getting ready for football."

Once the competition practices start, the squad holds them after school, further displaying their commitment to the craft.

"Most schools, maybe not our size, but against many we compete with, get a class period for cheer. At Nashville they have a cheer room and a 90-minute cheer period. But those girls just cheer – they don't do basketball and band, etc. Our girls couldn't get a cheer period with their athletic periods – they'd never graduate high school. So, we just try to make it up after school. That's hard – it's quite a commitment from the girls."

Jones said another difficulty the girls face is the lack of a full-sized practice spot for the competitions.

"We have a full floor we have to compete on with mats, where we only have two of the nine strips of mat [that would comprise the competition space]. I don't even know where we could locate these mats if we had a full floor. Part of the disadvantage for the girls is that they never really get to do it full-out until we get to a competition."

Jones said they have made trips to Nashville to utilize their facilities in order to prepare.

"We still don't get the repetitions that other schools get, because we can't go full-out because of lack of facilities. So, compliments to the girls, we get in there and space it out, but

CHEER Continued on Page 2

Malvern man sentenced in predator sting case

MURFREESBORO -- A Malvern man is the latest individual to be sentenced to prison after falling for an undercover social media account that appears to be a 14-year-old girl, but is actually a Pike County investigator looking for sexual predators.

Trevor Tyrone Lowe, 33, was scheduled for a jury trial Thursday, Jan. 16 in Pike County, but instead took a plea deal on charges of internet stalking of a child and possession of drugs and paraphernalia. As part of the deal, the state will not pursue the drug charges.

Lowe was sentenced to 20 years in the Arkansas Department of Corrections (ADC) with four years suspended. Lowe must also pay all related court fees and will be required to register as a sex offender upon his release from prison.

An investigation into Lowe began in August 2023 up until his January arrest.

According to case information, Lowe sent messages to the account operated by Pike County Investigator Jason McDonald and he claimed to be 22 years old. Even after being informed the person he was messaging was 14, Lowe continued and his messages eventually turned sexual in nature.

In January, a meeting was arranged for the two to meet and have sex and smoke marijuana, according to case information. When Lowe arrived at the predetermined meeting spot, he texted "I'm Here" and was quickly surrounded

by Murfreesboro and Pike County law enforcement and taken into custody with marijuana and a pipe in his pocket.

Also on Jan. 16 in Pike County, William Griffith Medcalf, 63, of Murfreesboro, avoided a jury trial on charges of theft by receiving and misdemeanor drug and driving offenses. He instead plead guilty to the theft by receiving charge and was sentenced to six years in the ADC with two years suspended. As part his plea deal, the state will not pursue the drug or driving charges.

Medcalf was arrested in July behind the wheel of a Jeep Wrangler that was stolen in Murfreesboro on July 3.



# CHEER Continued from Page 1

most squads have an advantage.”

In that vein, Jones wishes the squad could have gone to more competitions leading up to the state competition.

“They just hit at the wrong times – during football – and we were busy preparing for playoffs. We didn’t have the time to get prepped, and I didn’t want to take them if they weren’t ready.”

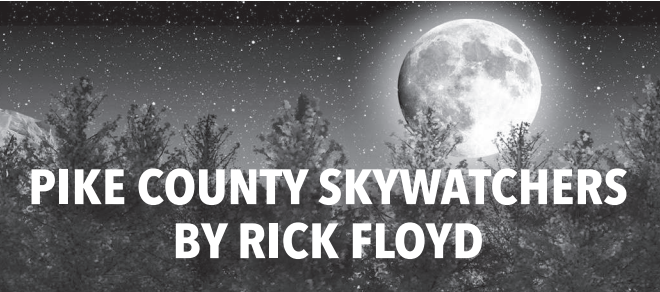
The team was happy with their final results of the season, however.

“We were excited to get third – if we can get our building numbers up – we have a squad of 14 with only 11 that could go to competition [two injuries and a medical issue] and some of the scoring is based on numbers. A lot of the squads there had as many as 24 members. The scores have different expectations [due to squad size] and with 14 members we could have had three full stunt groups, but with 11 we could only have two. But with 11, I think that helped us get the highest tumbling award in the classification, so that was good. I was very proud of them.”

The routines vary, Jones said, noting that the past two years the team has had a National Cheer Association instructor from a member of the squad at Ouachita Baptist University help install them.

“Some years I have done it, meshed stuff we have learned together for it. The past two years we had the NCA instructor, a North Little Rock alum.”

Jones said Spradlin was nominated by the group for here All-



PIKE COUNTY SKYWATCHERS  
BY RICK FLOYD

# The celestial clock

There is a scene late in the motion picture, Jeremiah Johnson, where the Johnson character, played by Robert Redford, is sharing a rabbit with another trapper named Bear Claw (played by Will Geer), and Johnson asks his companion if he would happen to know what month of the year it is. The reply is “no, I truly wouldn’t.” They continue in sparse dialog speculating on whether it is March or April. It is a powerful scene in that it portrays two men who are slowly leaving civilization behind, and with it that what we would call the measure of time.

Time was not invented by we humans, but we learned ways to track and measure it. We have come a long way from simple observation of the movements of sun and stars to what we have today. The Jeremiah Johnson scene raises the question, though, of how long it would take us to lose track of time if we were cut off from calendars and time keeping devices. How many of us would be able to look at celestial cycles, for instance, and know what month of the year it is after a few years without time measuring aids?

Preppers and survivalists, as part of their “kit”, have maybe learned the patterns of the sky. Our military realized some time ago that things like GPS could be taken out during a conflict, so training of navigators and such includes knowledge of constellations, sun position, and the use of the “primitive” sextant.

Sky watching is actually a very multi-level activity, and serious business in many ways. Is it worth the time to learn a few basics of using the Sun and stars to navigate by, and to keep time? Probably so. Noting where the sun rises at different times during the year can give a good hint of the month of the year. Finding the North Star is a good start at knowing how to navigate your way. The three stars that are the “sword” of the constellation Orion point south as it moves across the sky, and Orion rises early morning in late July, and early evening in mid-Autumn, and always due east. Ways of navigating and telling time by looking at the sky are topics for another time, maybe when the big square of the constellation Pegasus sets early evening in the west (that is, next month).

**SMALL ADS DO WORK** ...  
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# Murfreesboro Diamond

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*Little Missouri River • Lake Greeson*

• John Robert Schirmer, Publisher  
• P.J. Tracy IV, Editor  
• Christy Coccarelli, Office Manager/Photographer

Published by Nashville Leader Inc.,  
418 North Main Street  
Nashville, AR 71852

**Periodical Class postage paid at Murfreesboro, AR**

The *Murfreesboro Diamond* (USPC 103-230) is published every Wednesday.

**Subscription Rates: \$40 per year in area: Pike, Howard, Hempstead, Clark, Nevada & Montgomery counties; \$55 per year elsewhere.**

**\$30 for 6-months in area; \$35 for 6-months elsewhere.**

**College Subscriptions- \$25 for 9-months.**

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**Business Hours:** Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Wednesday 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
Friday 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Please Send Change of Address Information to:  
Murfreesboro Diamond  
P.O. Box 550  
Murfreesboro, 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.**

State designation after participating in the competition. Participation in the state competition is a prerequisite for inclusion on the list.

“I consulted with [Melissa] Cornish because she had had this group for the two years prior, and I thought it needed to be a senior. Reid is always a go-getter, asking what she can help with and providing ideas, so she’s very organized. She’s a leader that speaks up, and if I need an idea for some material for halftime or a pep rally, she was always helpful. She’s just a dependable good kid, but all of my seniors are, so it was hard to pick.”

Jones also adds that the student athletes are also very good in the first part of the equation, excelling in the classroom with high grade point averages.

“They are good students and active in everything.”

The squad was composed of:  
Sophomores -- Josey Jones, Madie Ward, Charleigh Wheeler, Ramsey Terrell, Kinslee Howell, Bella Frazier and Gianna Draper

Junior -- Teegan Barnett

Seniors -- Natalie Perrin, Jocce Holt, Alyssa Ruiz, Jenna May, Reid Spradlin and Kinleigh Sullivan

Jones said the junior high squad also attended competitions this season with an eye toward developing them for state competition when they reach the senior high level.

“They went to a few other [competitions] that we didn’t go to. They do the same type things we do on the senior high level.”



Submitted photo

**PERFORMING THE ROUTINE ...** The Murfreesboro High School cheerleaders (above) are pictured doing the routine that won them third place at the state competition in Hot Springs.



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# PUBLIC NOTICE

## BID NOTICE

Pike County will be accepting sealed bids on the following equipment.

3-20- yard Heavy Duty Rectangle Roll Off Dumpsters.

3-30- yard Heavy Duty Rectangle Roll Off Dumpsters.

2-40- yard Heavy Duty Rectangle Roll Off Dumpsters.

Please call the Pike County Judge for details and specifications.

Bids may be mailed to P.O. Box 239, Murfreesboro, AR. 71958 or delivered to the Pike County Judge, at 1 Courthouse Square, Murfreesboro.

Bids will be opened January 29, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in the Pike County Judge’s office, located at 1 Courthouse Square, Murfreesboro.

Pike County reserves the right to accept or reject any an all bids.

Eddie Howard  
Pike County Judge

*This publication was paid for by Pike County Judge. The amount paid for this publication is \$54.00*

*(p.c.j. 132w. 28,29)*

# PUBLIC NOTICE

## IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF PIKE COUNTY, ARKANSAS CIVIL DIVISION

<b>Michael McCratic</b>	<b>PLAINTIFF</b>
<b>Vickie Owens</b>	
<b>vs.</b>	<b>55CV-24-104</b>
<b>ANY UNKNOWN PERSON CLAIMING AN INTEREST IN THE PROPERTY AT ISSUE</b>	<b>DEFENDANT</b>

## NOTICE OF QUIET TITLE ACTION

Notice is hereby given that a Petition has been filed in the office of the Circuit Clerk of Pike County, Arkansas to quiet and confirm title in and to the following described property in Pike County, Arkansas:

A tract of land being situated in the SE1/4 SW1/4 of Section 34, Township 5 South, Range 25 West of the Fifth Principal Meridian, being located in Pike County, Arkansas, and being more particularly described as follows:

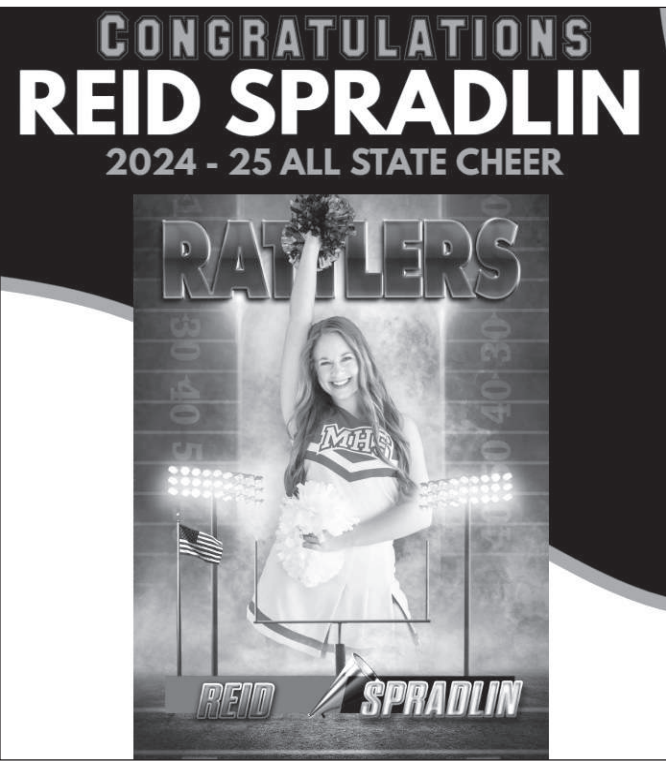
Commencing at a Rebar w/Cap (PS 902) for the NE Corner of Said SE1/4 SW1/4, Thence S 03°22’38” W, 309.94 Feet to a Rebar w/Cap (PS 902) on the East Line of Said SE1/4 SW1/4; Thence S 03°22’38” W, 242.06 Feet to a Point on the East Line of Said SE1/4 SW1/4 and the Point of Beginning; Thence S 03°22’38” W, 146.04 Feet to a Rebar w/Cap (PS 1491) on the East Line of Said SE1/4 SW1/4; Thence N 87°34’37” W, 550.25 Feet to the Centerline of a Road; Thence N 02°51’11” E, 155.21 Feet along Said Road Centerline; Thence S 86°37’22” E, 551.59 Feet to the Point of Beginning, Containing ±1.91 Acres more or less and being subject to any and all covenants, easements, and restrictions of record.

Any person claiming any title or interest of any kind to such property is hereby notified to appear herein on or before February 10, 2025 to assert his title or interest in such property and to demonstrate why title to this property should not be quieted and confirmed in Michael McCratic and Vickie Owens, Plaintiff herein.

WITNESS my hand and seal of the Court on this 6th day of January, 2025.

SABRINA WILLIAMS,  
Pike County Circuit Clerk

*(d.b. 337w. 28,29,30,31)*



# 4-H announces date for 2025 Not-So Newlywed game

To be held Feb. 8 at Senior Center

MURFREESBORO -- The Pike County 4-H will be hosting a Not So Newlywed Game on Feb. 8, starting at 6 p.m. at the Murfreesboro Senior Center, located at 120 Court St.

The evening’s dinner will consist of a pasta bar and dessert. Also a silent auction and door prizes will be held.

The second annual game participants will include Tim and Melanie Trout, John and Sandra Garrett, Keith and Sherry Craig, Richard and Becky Stivers.

Tickets for the event will be \$10, or a table of 6 for \$60. Tickets can be purchased in advance at the Pike County Extension office, located at 100 Court St. Murfreesboro.

For more information, call (870) 285-2161.

# PUBLIC NOTICE

## IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF PIKE COUNTY, ARKANSAS PROBATE DIVISION

### IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF PATRICIA OLDHAM DICKEY, DECEASED NO. 55PR-25-3

## NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTOR AND FILING OF CLAIMS

Last known address of decedent: 7920 Skylake Drive, Fort Worth, TX 76179

Date of death: 01/04/2024

The undersigned, Reade Clayton Dickey, was appointed Executor of the ancillary estate of the above-named decedent on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2025.

All persons having claims against the estate must exhibit them, duly verified, to the undersigned within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or they shall be forever barred and precluded from any benefit in the ancillary estate.

This notice first published this 22nd day of January, 2025.

Reade Clayton Dickey, Executor  
BY: Victor Martin, ABN 2018116  
Attorney at Law  
420 N. Main, Suite One  
P. O. Box 922  
Nashville, AR 71852  
(870) 845-5256 phone  
(870) 845-5899 fax

*(v.m., 161w., 29, 30)*

# PUBLIC NOTICE

## BID NOTICE

Pike County will be accepting bids on culvert pipe for the 2025 calendar year. Bids are requested on galvanized, bituminous coated, concrete, corrugated polyethylene (smooth interior) and aluminum coated culvert pipe.

Prices will be F.O.B. County Yard, Murfreesboro, Arkansas.

Bids will be opened January 28, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in the County Judge’s Office located at 1 Courthouse Square, Murfreesboro.

Bids may be mailed to the Pike County Judge, P.O. Box 239, Murfreesboro, AR. 71958 or delivered to 1 Courthouse Square in Murfreesboro.

Pike County reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids

Eddie Howard  
Pike County Judge

*This publication was paid for by Pike County Judge. The amount paid for this publication is \$48.80*

*(p.c.j. 122w., 28,29)*









Submitted photo

**DOING THE GOOD DEEDS ...** After the recent storm that dumped inches of snow and ice across town, local Murfreesboro businessmen Travis Branch and Henry Ward helped clear parking areas of local businesses, allowing commerce to progress a bit more normally in the aftermath.

Extension investigates impact of road salt on environment

**BY JOHN LOVETT**  
*University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture*  
FAYETTEVILLE -- Salt is essential to keeping our roads and walkways safe when it snows. But when salt is washed off the roads, how does it impact nearby micro-organisms?  
Water quality researcher Shannon Speir and her students have been conducting studies to measure the impact that road salt and beet brine, a common eco-friendly alternative, have on freshwater ecosystems that receive the roadway runoff. Their initial results were not entirely expected.  
Beet brine is a liquid solution of salt and beet molasses, which helps the solution stick to the road. Road salt is mostly salt mixed in with a small amount of calcium chloride or magnesium chloride.  
Speir is an assistant professor of water quality in the crop, soil and environmen-

tal sciences department for the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences at the University of Arkansas and the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, the research arm of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.  
Speir said her team’s experiments showed road salt and beet brine did not significantly impact overall leaf litter decomposition even though decomposition rates were decreased in the presence of high levels of beet brine during the first week of the study only.  
“Beet brine has less salt than road salt since it is in a solution, but it also has a lot of added nutrients like nitrogen, carbon and phosphorus,” Speir said. “So, we’re reducing our salt application, but what does this mean in terms of added nutrient application and potential runoff to waterways?”  
Caroline Anscombe, one of Speir’s graduate students at

the University of Arkansas, put the question to the test. She conducted a study in partnership with researchers at the University of Notre Dame to examine the impact beet brine and rock salt have on leaf litter decomposition using recirculating aquatic mesocosms. Aquatic mesocosms are water enclosures designed to replicate natural conditions where environmental factors can be realistically manipulated.  
“They look kind of like oblong donuts,” Speir said of the aquatic mesocosms. “It circulates the water around and around using a paddle wheel to simulate natural stream flow.”  
Anscombe’s experiments aimed to measure the impact of varying levels of beet brine and rock salt on leaves that were either tough or soft. They chose post oak leaves, which are harder for microbes to break down, and sugar maple leaves, which are easier for microbes to decompose. She

exposed the leaves to low and high levels of road salt and low and high levels of beet brine to get a broad comparison of different treatments.  
**TESTING**  
Going into the study, Speir and Anscombe predicted that the nutrients in low levels of beet brine might stimulate microbial activity. Higher levels of beet brine, however, were hypothesized to hinder microbial decomposition activity due to excessive salt concentrations. Similarly, road salt was predicted to decrease microbial processing, Speir said.  
Contrary to expectations, preliminary results suggest that decomposition rates were not significantly affected by the various treatments over the experiment’s two-week duration. Beet brine decreased decomposition rates for maple leaves more than traditional road salt in the first seven days but did not significantly impact leaf litter decomposition overall for the oak and maple leaves. And microbial colonization of oak leaves increased by each of the deicing treatments.  
Beet brine had a larger effect on leaf litter decomposition and respiration than the equivalent concentration of traditional road salts. However, they did not see differences between low and high salt treatments in any of their response metrics.  
The results, especially the lack of a significant impact on decomposition from beet brine treatments, were surprising and did not align with the initial hypotheses, Speir said. Since they found that beet brine has the potential to impact decomposition, partic-

## ‘Dear Preacher’

By Buddy Ray, Murfreesboro Church of Christ


WHEN LOVE IS BAD

Even though Jesus taught that love is the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:36-40), we are also warned that there are certain types of love that are unprofitable and evil. The following are examples of love that we should not have:

Love of money – “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Timothy 6:10)

Love of the world – “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15)

Love of prestige – “It is not good to eat much honey: Therefore, for men to search their own glory, is not glory” (Proverbs 25:27); “For whoever exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted”



(Luke 14:11)

Love of idols – “Thou shalt fear the Lord your God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods, or the gods of the people which are round about you” (Deuteronomy 6:13, 14)

Excessive love of self – “For men shall be lovers of their own selves...” (2 Timothy 3:2); “And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Corinthians 5:15); “...In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Philippians 2:3,4)

Love of strife – “As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife” (Proverbs 26:21); “But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish. For where envying and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work” (James 3:14-16)

Love of sin – “That they all might be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:12); “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Romans 1:32)

*Paid Advertisement*

Strawn-Wagner diamond to take field trip to Arizona

MURFREESBORO -- The Murfreesboro Advertising and Tourism Commission was told by board member Caleb Howell that the Crater of Diamonds would be sending a local contingent to the Tucson, Arizona Gem and Mineral show this Feb. 13-16.  
The Crater employees will host a booth with information about the park, and will have on hand the Strawn-Wagner diamond along with a replica of the Esperanza diamond.  
Howell said it was hoped that the park and Murfreesboro would see results from their efforts, but noted the difficulty of measuring those results directly. To that end, the group is planning some sort of giveaway with the Esperanza replica to those that like and follow the Crater’s Facebook page.  
He added that the group would be happy to share Murfreesboro-centric information and take along local brochures, and suggested that the commission purchase a diamond from a local vendor to be given away at the event under the same guidelines as the park to help draw viewership of the Chamber’s Facebook page and digmurfreesboro.com website.  
Howell said the contest would be open to only residents of the 48 contiguous states, because shipping a diamond internationally was simply too time consuming.  
The winners would be drawn after the contingent returns to Murfreesboro, and the commission approved the purchase of a yet-to-be-identified diamond for the venture with an up to \$2,000 budget. Howell suggested something in the range of a quarter-carat diamond, perhaps yellow in color.  
In other Commission business, the group was told by Howell that he is now seeing an increase in electric cars (two to three per week) that make the trek to the state park, and noted that there was a chance that the state would find a way to place chargers at the park.  
However, the tourism commission has noted perceived value in having a small number of chargers at the former City Service station, essentially forcing users to enter local shops while they wait for the charging to complete.  
Commission treasurer Jane Fugitt told the board she would apply for the 2025 round of grants via the Arkansas Transportation and Highway Department to help accomplish such a venture.  
The group will also have the electrical meter at the former hospital turned off, presuming there would be no reconnection fee. The electricity was turned on to help provide power for the Haunted House efforts by the Chamber of Commerce last October.  
Howell also discussed the Arkansas State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission meeting that will be held at the locally this September 17-18. It was noted that it could include to up to a 40-member contingent, and that the Park really didn’t have a proper facility for that many attendees. Therefore the community room of the Murfreesboro Municipal Building could be utilized, and further updates will be given as the year progresses.  
December was slower for local tourism, and the commission showed deposits of \$5,460.23 for the month, now allotting them a balance of \$94,962.24 at the end of 2024.

Park sets signup times

MURFREESBORO -- Sign up for youth baseball, softball and tee-ball will be held Thursday, Jan. 30 from 4-6 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 1 from 9 a.m.-noon.  
Both dates will be conducted at the Murfreesboro City Park office. Fees of \$60 for baseball and softball and \$30 for tee ball will be due at the time of sign up.

Community discussion set for March 10 at Municipal Building’s community room

MURFREESBORO -- The Pike Health County Coalition invites county residents to an upcoming community roundtable discussion and asks interested participants to save the date.  
The event will be held on March 10 at the community room of the Murfreesboro Municipal Building located at 204 East Main Street.  
Topics of conversation will be improving healthcare access, addressing community concerns and fostering collaboration across local organizations.  
“Help us make a difference,” said the flyer for the event. Lunch will be provided for attendees.  
For more information contact Shannon Ballard at (870) 285-2161 or Chantell Jones at (870) 703-1158.

### MURFREESBORO SENIOR ADULT CENTER LUNCH MENU

<b>MONDAY, JANUARY 27</b> Spaghetti w/meat sauce, broccoli, French bread, chilled pears	<b>WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29</b> Vegetable beef soup, cornbread, pineapple upside down cake <i>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</i>
<b>TUESDAY, JANUARY 28</b> Baked ham, black eyed peas, seasoned cabbage, cornbread, peach crisp	

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

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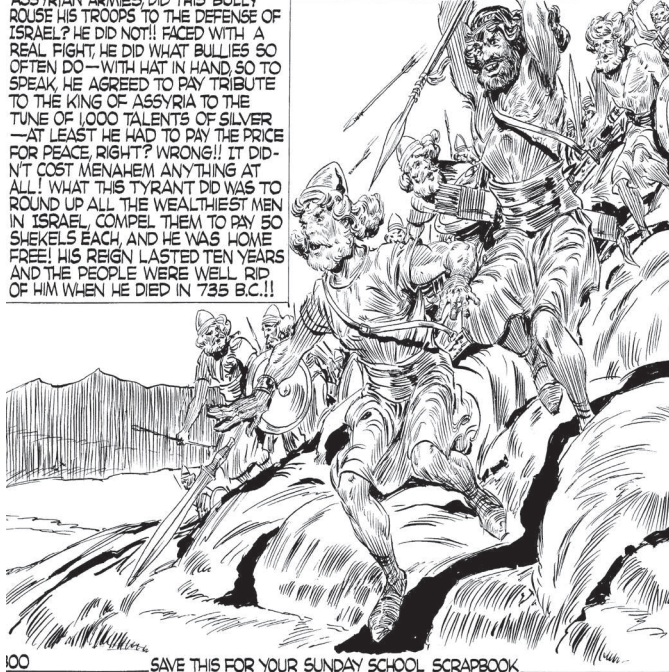
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### Facts About The BIBLE

BY JOHN LEHTI

#### SOME KINGS WERE TYRANTS!

WHEN NEWS REACHED THE CITY OF TIRZAH THAT SHALLUM HAD MURDERED KING ZECHARIAH OF ISRAEL, AND REIGNED IN HIS STEAD (II KINGS 15:10), MENAHEM AND HIS FOLLOWERS FOUGHT THEIR WAY TO SAMARIA AND, ONE MONTH AFTER SHALLUM TOOK THE THRONE, MENAHEM SLEW HIM AND THEN HE PROCLAIMED HIMSELF KING! THE PEOPLE GOT NO BARGAIN, FOR MENAHEM WAS A VENGEFUL MAN -- TIPSAH, WHICH WAS A TOWN THAT HAD REFUSED TO ADMIT HIM WITHIN ITS GATES DURING HIS CAMPAIGN AGAINST SHALLUM, HE NOW CAPTURED AND IMMEDIATELY PERPETRATED UNSPEAKABLE CRUELITIES ON ITS PEOPLE, SUCH AS KILLING ALL WOMEN WITH UNBORN BABIES IN A MANNER SO ATROCIOUS THAT KING TIBLATHPILESER AND HIS ASSYRIAN ARMIES DID THIS BULLY ROUSE HIS TROOPS TO THE DEFENSE OF ISRAEL? HE DID NOT!! Faced with a REAL FIGHT HE DID WHAT BULLIES SO OFTEN DO -- WITH HAT IN HAND, SO TO SPEAK, HE AGREED TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE KING OF ASSYRIA TO THE TUNE OF 1,000 TALENTS OF SILVER --AT LEAST HE HAD TO PAY THE PRICE FOR PEACE, RIGHT? WRONG!! IT DIDN'T COST MENAHEM ANYTHING AT ALL! WHAT THIS TYRANT DID WAS TO ROUND UP ALL THE WEALTHIEST MEN IN ISRAEL, COMPEL THEM TO PAY 50 SHEKELS EACH, AND HE WAS HOME FREE! HIS REIGN LASTED TEN YEARS AND THE PEOPLE WERE WELL RID OF HIM WHEN HE DIED IN 735 B.C.!!



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**SUPER BOWL**  
\* -- *Theme Related Clue*

**ACROSS**

1. Bungle  
5. Cause of a trip?  
8. Dao, alt. sp.  
11. Between marquess and viscount  
12. Super garb?  
13. Inlet in Norway  
15. Cogito \_\_\_\_ sum  
16. Long story  
17. Deprived of a limb  
18. \*Half-time headliner  
20. Ice, dark or middle \_\_\_\_  
21. \*Cindy Crawford wore “ \_\_\_\_ Dukes” in a Super Bowl ad  
22. Flightless bird  
23. \*Last year’s Super Bowl winners  
26. A cheap, run-down motel  
30. “ \_\_\_\_ the fields we go”  
31. Merry  
34. Actor’s part  
35. Expensive  
37. Not him  
38. Cell phone bill item  
39. Civil Rights icon  
40. \*David Tyree’s \_\_\_\_ Catch  
42. Letters of distress  
43. What rule follower does  
45. Get cozy  
47. Greed, biblically-speaking  
48. Grieve for the dead  
50. Time period  
52. \*Team with most Super Bowl appearances  
55. 3600 seconds, pl.  
56. Casino chip  
57. Salmon’s output  
59. En \_\_\_\_, all together  
60. Like Piper of Hamelin  
61. Uber alternative  
62. \_\_\_\_ Robinson  
63. Acronym, abbr.

64. “Come Sail Away” band

**DOWN**

1. Service charge  
2. Songbird  
3. Craving  
4. Marilyn Monroe, e.g.  
5. \_\_\_\_ lazuli  
6. Hot  
7. 52 cards  
8. Hefty volume  
9. Greek god of war  
10. 1, e.g.  
12. Cherry red  
13. Post vitriol  
14. \*Team with no Super Bowl appearances  
19. Looney Tunes duck  
22. Architectural add-on  
23. Meat of coconut  
24. Roman king of Judea  
25. Like certain whiskey  
26. Grow crop  
27. Brag  
28. Algorithmic language  
29. Ganders’ companions  
32. Tom Jones’s “ \_\_\_\_ a Lady”  
33. Rolodex abbr.  
36. \* \_\_\_\_ Superdome  
38. Wombs  
40. Lady lobster  
41. Hardened  
44. Follows wash  
46. Pig sounds  
48. Bouncing off the walls  
49. Weasel’s aquatic cousin  
50. Fly like an eagle  
51. Boot-wearing kitty  
52. Mama Bear’s husband  
53. To perfection (3 words)  
54. \*Justin Timberlake’s “ \_\_\_\_ Back,” sung in Super Bowl show  
55. Expression of doubt  
58. \*Steelers’ number of Super Bowl trophies

CROSSWORD

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SALT Continued from Page 4

ularly in areas where it is continually applied throughout the winter, Anscombe said future studies may be needed to quantify the effects of repeated deicer treatments and the residence time, or how long these products are staying in the environment, to determine their potential impacts of beet brine products on freshwater ecosystems.

Two undergraduate students in Speir’s lab — Brynнен Beck and Claire Meara — are currently conducting related studies on the impacts of road salt and beet brine on microbial respiration, which is a measure of microbial activity, and the conversion of nitrates to atmospheric nitrogen, also known as denitrification.

“It’s a very understudied area considering the widespread application of salt to roads without really understanding what the benefits, the risks and tradeoffs are,” Speir said. “It’s not to say that road salt and beet brine are not tools you should use. It’s just that if we’re going to wholesale apply it on areas, and water quality is something of importance, we really want to make sure that we understand all the tradeoffs.”

**PRACTICING ‘SMART SALT’**

While this study showed that beet brine and road salt did not significantly impact leaf litter decomposition, Speir said more public education is needed to address proper application of salt to roads, driveways and walkways. Too often, Speir said, people use too much salt around those areas.

In the United States, the most drastic increases in salinity have occurred in the Midwest and Northeastern regions, driven by winter road salt application, Speir said.

The Conservation Foundation, a northern Illinois nonprofit that promotes a practice called “Smart Salt” recommends making a brine with 3.5 cups of road salt per gallon of hot water to spray on driveways and walkways. Following is a list of brine application tips from The Conservation Foundation.

- Don’t apply brine if rain is forecasted before the snow.

- Use the sprayer to make lines back and forth across the pavement; you don’t need to cover all of the pavement.
  - Brine can be applied 24-48 hours before a storm is predicted.
  - Agitate or shake the sprayer to keep the salt from settling out – especially if the sprayer has been sitting for a while between storms.
  - Brine left over at the end of the season can be stored in a clean jug for the next winter. Excess brine or rinse water shouldn’t be dumped onto the lawn or down a storm drain or sink drain.
- To learn more about the Division of Agriculture research, visit the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station website.

LEGISLATION Continued from Page 3

schools throughout the day. Suicide rates among teenagers have risen dramatically and the culprit is clear, the governor said. It is unrestricted access to phones and social media.

A related bill, titled the Social Media Safety Act, would enable parents to sue social media companies in state court.

The governor proposed legislation allowing property owners to more easily evict squatters from their land, by calling their local sheriff.

Expanding access to Medicaid for pregnant women will be considered this year, as will legislation to pay for an additional prison unit.

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School board extends superintendent's contract

BY JOHN BALCH  
*Nashville News-Leader staff*

MURFREESBORO -- The South Pike County School Board unanimously voted Monday night to extend the contract of Superintendent Tanya Wilcher through the 2027-2028 school year.

The vote was taken after an eight-minute closed executive session. All board members were in attendance Monday, including Andrea McRae, Cory Ballard, Robert Silva, Scott Maroon, Barbie Baxter, Alyssa Duggan and Wes Campbell.

Wilcher, who took over as superintendent in 2022, has a long career in education and has worked in the South Pike County School District, as well as the former Delight School District. She is a 1990 graduate of Murfreesboro High School.

Wilcher became director of programs in 2016 at Murfreesboro and also served as elementary principal from 2009-2016. From 2007-2009, Wilcher was high school counselor and from 2005-2007 was principal at the former Delight district where she also served as interim superintendent in 2004.

In other school business Monday, Wilcher gave a progress report on the district’s new \$1.750 million baseball/softball facility. The complex is located on the 27-acre tract purchased by the district in 2007 for \$48,000. The land adjoins the campus and is north of the visitor side of Rattler Stadium.

In December 2023, SPCSD board members approved a resolution authorizing the district to issue second-lien bonds “in an estimated amount of \$1,830,000 for the purposes of constructing athletic facilities” with any remaining funds to be used for other construction, renovation and equipment purchases.

Wilcher said Monday the project is progressing, despite weather setbacks, and the fields are ready for sod. She expects the complex to be ready for league play in March, weather permitting. In the meantime, the Rattler baseball and Lady Rattler softball teams will practice at the city park fields.

Wilcher also gave a preview of the education-related issues expected to be addressed during the legislative session. She said “the big ones” will include: use of cell phones in school, salary schedule adjustments, school calendars and School Choice.

Board member Alyssa Duggan is serving as the board’s liaison again this legislative session.

The board also heard a video presentation from Elementary Principal James Riley, which included information about the elementary’s use of AI technology in the classrooms.

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Submitted photo/Jack Bonds

**JUDGE SWEARING IN ...** Former Murfreesboro lawyer and judge Dana Stone was sworn in on January 1 in Prescott as District Judge for the 8th North Judicial District. Stone was elected to the position in a run-off held last November.

Reward still offered in theft of deer stand

MURFREESBORO -- A local resident is offering a \$1,000 reward for information regarding a stolen deer stand. Facts are being sought that would go toward the locating of the person that allegedly stole a Buck Palace deer stand belonging to Wesley Trister from the Parker Creek area of Lake Greeson. Persons with information may call the Pike County Sheriff’s Department at (870) 285-3315 and tips may remain anonymous. The reward will be given upon the arrest and conviction of the individual(s) responsible.

Cemetery announces recent donations

MURFREESBORO -- The following donations have been give to the Murfreesboro Cemetery Fund from October 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024. Jane Kennedy Memorial Fund Joyce Woodruff in memory of L.R. Woodruff Betty Walls in memory of Betty Sue Dillard Debby Scoggin in memory of Betty Sue Dillard Glynda Kizzia in memory of Cooper Kizzia and Jimmy Echols

\$500.00 - Kathy Stafford \$200.00 - Nina Cox \$100.00 - Carol Strawn, Thomas Crocker Your continued support is deeply appreciated. Donations may be given to Gary Don Turner, Marc Jackson, Margaret Byrd, Kayla Kuykendall, Mary Jean Barbre or Joyce Woodruff. Donations may also be mailed to Murfreesboro Cemetery Fund, P.O. Box 185, Murfreesboro, AR. 71958.



Pesticide applicator trainings rescheduled

Extension office also notes now is the time for soil testing

BY CODIE MCALISTER Pike County Extension Agent, Agriculture

MURFREESBORO -- It is another new year and farmers and ranchers will be soon getting ready to apply herbicides to their fields. One important thing they need to do is check their pesticide applicator license. If the pesticide applicator license is expired, they will not be able to purchase restricted use pesticides. If you don’t have your license in hand or misplaced it, you can contact the Pike County Extension Office, and we can check to see if your license has expired or is currently active. The Pike County Extension office previously had pesticide applicator trainings scheduled for January 21 and 22, but due to winter weather, chose to reschedule the dates to February 4 and 5, 2025. The new pesticide applicator training dates are: February 4 -- 6 p.m., Pike County Extension Office, 100 Court St., Murfreesboro February 5 -- 10 a.m., Bainum Library Community Room, Glenwood April 17 -- 6 p.m., Pike County Extension Office, 100 Court St., Murfreesboro To register for one of these, or for more information, you can contact the Pike County Extension Office at (870) 285-2161. The cost for the training is \$20.

SOIL TESTING As spring draws near, this is a great time to soil test. This is beneficial if you plan to fertilize gardens, pastures, or hay fields. Soil testing is free for Arkansas residents, and you can test more than one area at a time.

- 1. Rake aside mulch or surface litter like leaves.
  - 2. Take soil with a soil probe or shovel from at least 12 spots in each area to obtain a representative sample. A zigzag sampling pattern is preferred. Fertilizer and lime recommendations are no better than the sample taken.
  - 3. Take samples in gardens, lawns, and around shrubs to a depth of about 4 inches and for mature fruit trees at a depth of 12 inches.
  - 4. Mix soil thoroughly from a sample area. Keep different areas separate. Discard rocks, gravels and roots.
  - 5. Allow the soil sample to air dry. Spread the sample on newspapers or large paper bags for a couple of days. Do not heat the sample in an oven to speed drying.
  - 6. Remove one pint for the laboratory sample and place in a clean container or zip top bag. Label each sample with a name that you would recognize.
  - 7. Bring sample(s) to your local County Extension office. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- If you have separate gardens or fields, keep the samples separate. I recommend each sample being a sandwich size plastic bag that is full can also be measured as pint. If sampling pastures and hay fields, limit the samples to 20 acres and split it into multiple samples if it is more. Soil samples can be brought to the Pike County Extension Office at 100 Court Street Murfreesboro. Questions or information about agriculture and natural resources you can contact the Pike County Extension Office at (870) 285-2161. Not sure of your local county extension office? You can find it at our state website at [www.uaex.uada.edu](http://www.uaex.uada.edu).



Submitted photos

**WINTER RECREATION ...** Diamond Glamping provided these pictures (above, left) of the picturesque snow event that covered the area recently.

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Stephanie Lockhart is a Certified Public Accountant bringing a wealth of experience in tax management, compliance, and strategic planning. Throughout her career, Stephanie has developed comprehensive tax strategies and solutions for a diverse range of clients, including individuals and small businesses. She has a strong background in reviewing and preparing income tax returns, calculating tax forecasts, and managing governmental audits to ensure compliance with federal and state laws. In addition to her technical expertise, Stephanie excels in establishing and managing client relationships, providing tailored financial and tax advice. She is committed to supporting individuals and small businesses in achieving their financial goals. Stephanie holds an MBA from Texas A & M University – Commerce and a Bachelor of Science in Accounting Control Systems from the University of North Texas. Stephanie grew up in Murfreesboro, AR, and is the daughter of Steve and Cindy Turner and Richard and the late Vicki Cook of Murfreesboro. In addition to her parents, she has a host of family and friends in the Murfreesboro and Nashville area. She and her spouse William have been married for 16 years and recently moved to Nashville to raise their three boys: Austin (12), Parker (11), and Cason (6).

Stephanie Lockhart, CPA  
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870-455-8093  
[stephanie@lockhartcpa.com](mailto:stephanie@lockhartcpa.com)

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