



(L to R): Stephanie Slack-Allen, DNP, APRN, PMHNP-BC; Chris Blount, PA-C; Elly Riley, DO; Lori Holladay, NP; Jill Bennett, NP; Katharine Bullock, FNP; and Emily Ezell, DO.



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Chance Carlton

Tennessee Legislation Introduced In Honor of the Late Chance Carlton

NASHVILLE — Legislation introduced in the Tennessee General Assembly would honor the service of the late Chance Carlton of Huntingdon, who died in April 2025 while working as a lineman for the Carroll County Electric Department during severe flooding in the county.

Chance is survived by his wife, Samantha Carlton, two daughters, Landry Jean Carlton and Ellsie Jo Carlton, his parents, Tim and Robbie Carlton, a sister, Jessica (Kris) Hunley, all of Huntingdon.

See **CARLTON** on Page 3

McKENZIE



(L to R) Isaac and Lisa Griffin enjoy the first-place offering of fondue at the McKenzie Taproom, greeted by employees Brody Herrman and Kierstyn Downs. Photo by Brad Sam/The Banner

Chocolate Tour Offers Sweet Fun at Local Businesses

BY BRAD SAM

brad@mckenziebanner.com

McKENZIE (February 7) — Local chocolate lovers spent Saturday afternoon venturing from business to business to sample sweet treats during the annual Chocolate Tour. With 18 stops, this was the most

participation by local businesses since the event began just over a decade ago.

Chocolate tourists were encouraged to visit every stop on the list with the incentive of being entered into a drawing for prizes provided by the participating businesses. Patrons were also asked to

choose their favorite treat on the tour. The winner this year was The McKenzie Taproom with their chocolate fondue fountain and a full spread of options for dipping. The Taproom will receive a trophy commemorating their win.

See **TOUR** on Page 3

Tri-County Family Clinic Opens in Gleason

BY LYNDSEY SUMMERS

lsummers@mckenziebanner.com

GLEASON (February 9) — Nurses Alex Bridgeman and Michele Ellert opened the doors of Tri-County Family Clinic, PLLC, Monday afternoon for a grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony. The clinic, located at 549 East Union Street in Gleason, began accepting patients February 2.

Bridgeman and Ellert each have over 30 years of experience. Bridgeman, an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) and certified family nurse practitioner (FNP-C) serves patients of all ages. Ellert, an APRN and certified nurse practitioner (NP-C) specializes in the

See **CLINIC** on Page 2



Tri-County Family Clinic owners Michele Ellert and Alex Bridgeman each have over 30 years of nursing experience. Photo by Lyndsey Summers/The Banner

SCHOOL BOARD

Property Tax Vote Delayed Until 2027

BY LYNDSEY SUMMERS

lsummers@mckenziebanner.com

McKENZIE (February 3) — The McKenzie Special School District (MSSD) Board of Education delayed the controversial tax increase vote until 2027 in a split decision Tuesday night. The topic was first introduced in a November 2025 meeting.

Without a tax increase, the district looks at a projected \$434,600 deficit in the 2026-27 school year budget.

See **TAX** on Page 3

CARROLL COUNTY

Schools Issue Makeup Plans After Closures

BY LYNDSEY SUMMERS

lsummers@mckenziebanner.com

CARROLL COUNTY (February 9) — Students return to the classroom this week after an unanticipated two-week-long break. Now that most remnants of Winter Storm Fern have finally melted, one question remains: Will students need to make up for any time they missed?

A few Carroll County school districts have already announced their

See **MAKEUP** on Page 3

Deadline Nears For County, School Board Elections

CARROLL COUNTY (February 3) — Time is running out for candidates to file their petitions for the May 5 and August 6 elections.

County office and school board seats are up for grabs this year, and, so far, 65 individuals hold petitions for these seats. Of those, 23 have filed their petitions, officially qualifying for candidacy. The deadline to complete these petitions — for party-affiliated or independent nominees — is noon on February 19, 2026.

See **ELECTIONS** on Page 3



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Seniors to Celebrate Valentine’s In McKenzie, Huntingdon

Come enjoy dinner, great music and dancing at the McKenzie Senior Center’s Valentine Day Dinner and Dance beginning at 6 p.m.

The meal includes spaghetti, salad, garlic bread and dessert. Dinner is at 6 p.m. The band Cool Daddy Trio will provide music for your dancing pleasure. The meal and dinner is \$7 per person. Members and non-members are welcome.

A second event is Tuesday, February 17, with a dinner and music at the Carroll

County Civic Center. McKenzie Senior Center, Carroll County Office on Aging, and Lakeside Senior Living Community are joining forces to host this event. The meal includes lasagna, salad, garlic bread and dessert. Music provided by Carl Byars’ new group, Classic Riders!

Gifts for the first 50 people, fun guessing contest, and LOTS of fun. Free admission! Open to all area seniors. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.; Dinner at 6 p.m.; Music at 6:30 p.m.



Green returned to the landscape on Tuesday after 10 days of white. Photo by Brittany Martin/The Banner

Some Normalcy Returns After Winter Storm Fern

BY BRITTANY MARTIN
brittany@mckenziebanner.com

CARROLL COUNTY (February 9) — Monday was day 17 of ice and snow remnants on the ground as schools in Carroll County reopened and bus drivers were encouraged to use their own discretion when traveling their routes. Winter Storm Fern closed many schools in West Tennessee for 10 days, and even though Carroll County went back to school on Monday, some schools already had planned closures for parent-teacher conferences, among other things.

Warmer temperatures returned to the area over the weekend and are projected to remain until the last week in February. There’s a significant chance of rain on Tuesday night, Saturday and Sunday, but lows remain above freezing for most of the next nine days.

The death toll from Winter Storm Fern remained at 29 in Tennessee on Saturday with more than 900 customers still without power statewide, as of 2 p.m. on February 7.

At the height of the storm, more than 230,000 customers were without power in Tennessee; estimated to be the hardest hit state during Winter Storm Fern.

Nashville Electric Service estimates \$100 million in storm-related damages.

The Tennessee Department of Health has also confirmed three weather-related fatalities due to the separate winter weather that began impacting East Tennessee on Friday, Jan. 30: one fatality in Greene, one fatality in Sullivan and one fatality in Washington.

FEMA Public Assistance Approved

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved FEMA Public Assistance (PA) to support eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations with disaster-related response and recovery costs. Public assistance helps cover eligible expenses associated with emergency work and the repair or replacement of damaged public infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, utilities and public buildings.

Fifteen counties have been approved for full FEMA PA: Cheatham, Chester, Clay, Davidson, Hardin, Henderson, Hickman, Lewis, Macon, McNairy, Perry, Sumner, Trousdale, Wayne, and Williamson.

Eight counties have been approved for FEMA PA Category B (Emergency Protective Measures): Decatur, Dickson, Hardeman, Lawrence, Maury, Robertson, Rutherford, and Wilson.

Category B (Emergency Protective Measures) in-

cludes eligible actions taken to save lives, protect public health and safety, and prevent additional damage. Category B approval does not automatically include other categories of Public Assistance related to permanent repairs.

Individual Assistance Still Under Federal Review

FEMA Individual Assistance (IA), which may provide direct support to eligible individuals and households for certain uninsured or underinsured disaster-related needs, remains under federal review at this time.

“Under federal review” means the state has submitted required information and documentation for FEMA’s evaluation of household impacts and unmet needs. No final determination has been issued yet. If IA is approved, FEMA will announce registration details, eligible counties/areas, and application deadlines through official channels.

While IA is under review, impacted residents are encouraged to:

- Document damage (photos and video)
- Save receipts for disaster-related expenses (cleanup, temporary repairs, lodging, and essential items)
- If insured, initiate or continue insurance claims and keep all related records

The State Emergency Operations Center in Nashville remains activated at a Level 3 – State of Emergency to support statewide coordination in response to Winter Storm Fern.

Crisis Cleanup is assisting residents with free storm-related property cleanup, including fallen trees. To request assistance, call 844-965-1386.

TEMA has created a survey to self-report damages to homes as a result of Winter Storm Fern. Report your damages at <https://arcg.is/1CnqSX3>

General Safety Information

- Discard perishable food that has been above 40°F for more than two hours due to power outages.
- Turn thermostats down to 68 degrees or lower to reduce energy consumption.
- Stay clear of downed power lines and assume all lines are energized.
- Check on neighbors who may be vulnerable, including seniors and those without power or heat.

Generator Safety

- Do not connect generators directly to your home.
- Never use generators indoors and never leave them unattended.
- Use a carbon monoxide detector when applicable.



Hwy 70 Construction & Home Repair founder Jeremy James cuts the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce’s ribbon, surrounded by his colleagues and fellow chamber members. Photo by Lyndsey Summers/The Banner

Ribbon-Cutting Held for Hwy 70 Construction & Home Repair

BY LYNDSEY SUMMERS
lsummers@mckenziebanner.com

HUNTINGDON (February 4) — The Carroll County Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Hwy 70 Construction and Home Repair on Wednesday morning. The new business, based in Huntingdon, began serving Carroll, Benton and Henry counties in December 2025.

Jeremy James, founder and operations lead of Hwy 70 Construction and Home Repair, spent 24 years in the United States Navy working in engineer-

ing. Afterward, he owned an HVAC business for five years. Now, he hopes his military and business expertise will make this new venture all the more successful.

James, along with his crew, specialize in handyman, home repair, decks, drywall, painting, light/electrical and remodeling work.

Hwy 70 Construction and Home Repair’s employees have a diverse skillset. There are electricians, plumbers, carpenters and even IT guys in the crew. Since opening, James and his team have worked



on several bathrooms and kitchens in addition to many flooring jobs. They also pressure-washed, painted and installed new outdoor lights for the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce.

“As a customer, we have been very pleased,” said Chamber President Brad Hurley. “Whenever you have a new business like this come in, we’re excited. It’s a tremendous opportunity. They’ve been successful, and we’re looking for even bigger and better things from them. We’re excited to watch them expand.”

Hwy 70 Construction and Home Repair gives free estimates. To get in touch with James or his business partner Al Roney, call (731) 358-6693 or contact the business on Facebook.

Truck Strikes Vacant Building in Two-Vehicle Wreck

BY SHANNON MCFARLIN
Forever Communications

GRAVES COUNTY, Ky. (February 8) — McKenzie and Murray drivers were involved in a two-car accident in Graves County which resulted in one car striking a vacant building.

Sunday, February 8, at approximately 9:40 a.m., Graves County Deputies were dispatched to a two-vehicle, injury-collision, near the intersection of State Route 94 East and State Route 381.



Through the investigation, it was determined Nicholas Yaciuk, 45, of McKenzie, was traveling North on KY 381, in a 2013 Jeep Wrangler. Mr. Yaciuk stopped at the stop sign

and continued across KY 94 East. Mr. Yaciuk pulled into the path of Jerry Stark, 75, of Murray, Ky., who was traveling West on KY 94 East. After the initial impact, Mr. Stark struck

a vacant building at the Northwest corner of the intersection with his truck.

Mr. Stark and his wife, Melisa Stark, 75, of Murray, Ky., were transported from the scene to a local hospital for non-life threatening injuries. Mr. Yaciuk did not report any injuries at the scene.

The Graves County Sheriff’s Office was assisted at the scene by the Cuba Volunteer Fire Department, the Sedalia Volunteer Fire Department, and Mayfield-Graves County EMS.

Scooter’s Coffee Busy Since Snowy Opening



BY SHANNON MCFARLIN
Forever Communications

PARIS — The crew at the newly-opened Scooter’s Coffee took a short break for a photo after their opening at the intersection of Hillcrest Drive and East Wood Street in Paris. Scooter’s opened last week amid the ice and snow and despite that, the coffeehouse was really busy. Scooter’s Coffee is a chain drive-thru coffeehouse which is owned and operated by Keri Story. It features a wide range of menu items, including hot and cold drinks, blended drinks, smoothies, teas, floats and sodas, sandwiches, sliders, breakfast burritos, cookies, muffins and more. Charlton Story said, “It’s been really busy and we’re seeing a lot of smiles, which is good.”



Alex Bridgeman cuts the ribbon provided by the Weakley County Chamber of Commerce, surrounded by various friends, business leaders and government officials. Photo by Lyndsey Summers/The Banner

Clinic

...From Front Page

care of adults and teens thirteen years and older.

“Alex and Michelle have the experience, they have the education and they have the background and the compassion to land anywhere,” said Weakley County Chamber of Commerce Director Erica Moore. “They could open this practice anywhere they want, but they chose Gleason, Tennessee. They care about this community.”

Gleason Mayor Charles Anderson was Tri-County Family Clinic’s first patient, he shared at the ribbon cutting. “This is a red letter day for Gleason,” said Mayor Anderson. “I can’t

remember two clinics ever being in Gleason, so this is a big boost for our city.”

Bridgeman and Ellert named their business Tri-County Family Clinic, hoping to serve families from Carroll, Henry and Weakley counties.

Bridgeman is a 1989 Henry County High School graduate. Early in her career, she worked at McKenzie Medical Center for ten years and at the Gleason Clinic afterward. Bridgeman then relocated, living in Canada for five years. She provided care in North Dakota before returning to Gleason.

Ellert began calling Tennessee home in 2018, moving from Kissimmee, Fla. She now resides in Huntingdon.

The two nurses met while working with

TruHealth.

Together, Bridgeman and Ellert provide pediatric care, adult and geriatric care, women’s wellness, minor procedures, medication management, acute illness treatment, Telehealth, home visits (for homebound patients or patients who meet criteria regarding medical necessity) and coordination of care through Tri-County Family Clinic.

“We are not just about being a business,” Bridgeman said. “We want to be a part of a family. We want people who come to feel like they have been heard, to feel like they have been helped. We want to be able to provide the services that are needed.”

Bridgeman’s supervising physician is Dr. Loren Carroll of Alamo, and El-

lert’s supervising physician is Dr. William Merrick of McKenzie.

Bridgeman named many friends, business owners and volunteers who helped her and Ellert make their dream a reality, thanking them all.

“Never in a million years did we think that this would ever come,” said Bridgeman, “but God has truly led us in this direction. And oddly enough, everything that we have needed, that the services that we have needed to, for this to happen has truly been divine. Like there is no other explanation for everything coming together other than God.”

This was the Weakley County Chamber of Commerce’s first ribbon-cutting ceremony of 2026.



The contestants in the 2026 Tennessee Songwriters preliminary contest held at The Dixie Carter Performing Arts Center on February 7. Some of the contestants were local, some were not. Photo by Joel Washburn/The Banner

Mitchell, Bell Advance in State Songwriters Contest

HUNTINGDON (February 7) — Twelve incredible songwriters took the stage for the Tenn. Songwriters Week Qualifying Round, sharing real, raw talent with an amazing audience. They shared their incredible original stories, lyrics, and melodies.

Congratulations to Mayce Mitchell of Trezevant and Madi Bell of Lexington, who are advancing to the semi-finals for a chance to play the finals at the legendary Bluebird Cafe! Mitchell is a graduate of West Carroll High School.

The Dixie administration and staff offered “a heartfelt thank-you to all of our contestants, our wonderful judges - Bryan Moffitt, Sophia Wright, and Tremayne Johnson - and to Bryan Moffitt for a special set after the



Mayce Mitchell and Madi Bell are the two contestants who advance to the semi-final round at the Bluebird Cafe. Photo by Joel Washburn/The Banner

winners were announced. We're also grateful to Joel T. Washburn for capturing the evening so beautifully.”

The contestants were: Abbie Thomas (& The Crazy Hearts), Candace & Jordan Neuenschwander,

Chris Story, Fisher Stokes, Jacob Ervin, John Harmon, Kristina Craig, Krystal Adcock, Lex Lashaun, Madison (Madi) Bell, Mayce Mitchell, and Randall McCadams.

Tax

...From Front Page

In November 2025, Director of Schools Dr. Justin Barden — under the suggestion of district Finance Director Brad Davis — asked the school board to consider raising property taxes by up to 35 cents per every \$100 of assessed value to combat the six-figure deficit. If approved, he said the lowest possible tax increase the district would need to employ would be 15 cents per every \$100 of assessed value. This would have given the school district an additional \$256,000 to work into the 2026-27 budget, decreasing the deficit by over half.

Tuesday night’s vote would not have immediately raised taxes; instead it would have allowed the district to ask for legislative permission to raise taxes. It was the board’s last chance to take the issue to the General Assembly for it to be approved for the 2026-27 school year.

Before the vote, Davis said, “If we don’t have a tax increase this year, we’re going to come back next February asking for the same thing. This problem’s not going away. It’s still going to be here next year.”

After a discussion amongst board members, Board Chairman LaShonda Williams made a motion to table the tax increase conversation until June 2026, when budget numbers are more concrete.

The motion went to a vote. Williams, Bobby Young, Misty Aird and Chad Brown voted in favor of tabling the tax increase conversation. George Cassidy, Karen Fowler and Spiridon Roditis voted against tabling the discussion.

Because the majority voted in favor of tabling the conversation, the district will miss its deadline to ask for legislative permission and will be unable to increase taxes for the 2026-27 school year.

“I think there’s still a lot

of homework that needs to be done,” Williams said about her decision to table the conversation. “There’s still more money, hopefully, we’re getting from the state. There are things that Dr. Barden and Brad are going to look at on their end. There’s just still a few unknowns.”

Roditis, who voted against tabling, said, “The way that I felt — and I’m not saying this is what happened — is I just don’t want to keep kicking the can down the road. My understanding is that we were voting to get it to the legislators and then we would discuss it in June when we have the hard numbers. Then, in June, we can look at the different [tax increase] percentages when we have all of the information. That’s why I voted no. I thought, ‘Let’s get the ball rolling.’”

After the vote, Davis said, “I kind of expected it would end up the way it did. We’ll end up making some cuts, and we’ll still end up with a deficit when the budget is passed unless something miraculous comes through from the state — which I don’t anticipate. Hopefully the board will address it next year. That’s all we can ask.”

Though discussions are still preliminary, Davis said these budget cuts will result in movement of personnel.

Davis’ budget projections are based on the “worst case scenario,” he said in November, in which the district receives insufficient Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA) funding to make up for teachers’ salary increases required by the state.

In 2026, MSSD is required to raise the minimum salary for first-year teachers to \$50,000 — as a result of Governor Bill Lee’s Teacher Paycheck Protection Act. MSSD currently pays starting teachers \$48,000 per year. To raise the minimum salary by \$2,000 and increase all experienced teachers’ salaries proportionally, the school district plans to increase all teachers’ salaries by three percent

and adjust benefits accordingly. This results in a \$350,936.80 increase in salary and benefits cost to the district.

Until summer 2026, Davis will not know the precise funding MSSD will receive from TISA for the 2026-27 school year.

Additionally, the ISM grant is scheduled to expire soon. This grant pays the salaries of Susan Dyer, CTE director, and Beverly Emerson, STEM teacher.

The IDEA Systemic Change grants, which pay for teacher’s aides Jenny Allen and Ashli Solomon, also expire soon.

Following the tax vote, the board approved for McKenzie High School Band members (who qualify) to attend the West Tennessee School Band and Orchestra Association All-West Clinic February 12-14, 2026, and for McKenzie High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) students to attend the State FFA Convention in Gatlinburg March 21-25, 2026.

The board also approved, on first reading, language change to the “Safe Relocation of Students” section of the MSSD Board of Education Policy Manual. The changes make the amendment read more clearly, following in line with the state legislature.

Finally, the district approved budget amendments following the purchase of a new driver’s education vehicle and the securement of TISA funds based on 2025-26 school testing.

The district paid \$15,083.81 for a 2023 Hyundai Santa Fe for McKenzie High School. This money came from funds previously set aside for building improvements in the General Purpose Fund.

The district received \$150,277.00 from TISA Outcome Funds for school-based incentives, teachers receiving the TVAAS level 4 and 5 bonus, the end-of-year banquet and other outcome investments.

The MSSD Board of Education meets again Tuesday, March 3.



Top, (L to R) Billie Jean Perry, Crystal Walker and Tiffany Wilson pose with Petals Azola owner Angela Diller during their stop on the Chocolate Tour. Above, (L to R) McKenzie City Florist employee Lisa Langford greets chocolate tourists Jayna Gauthier and Lara Roberts. Below, (L to R) Ann, Christine and Kaydynce Barksdale stopped in at Phipps Pharmacy for sweet treats, greeted by Daisy West. Photos by Brad Sam/The Banner



Tour

...From Front Page

Other businesses participating were McKenzie

Fun Zone, Petals Azola, Summers Ink, McKenzie Nutrition, Phipps Pharmacy, MJ’s Mercantile, The Refinery, The Park Theatre, The Silly Goose, Cedar Street Boutique, Sunrise Cafe, McKenzie

Chamber of Commerce/Industrial Board, McKenzie Memorial Library, Premier Furniture, McKenzie City Florist, The Happy Book Stack and the Gordon Browning Museum.

Makeup

...From Front Page

plans to tackle these lost instructional days.

Huntingdon Special School District (HSSD) used its ten allotted stockpile days on the days missed due to Winter Storm Fern. However, there is one change to the district’s school calendar. Students must now attend school on Monday, April 6. This day was initially designated as a staff development day.

Huntingdon schools have one stockpile day left to use in the case of future school

closures. In the event that HSSD must use its remaining stockpile day, the district will consider applying for a waiver to free up stockpile days if needed and agreed upon by the school board.

South Carroll Special School District used its remaining stockpile days on nine of the ten snow days. To make up for the tenth day, Clarksburg students must attend school on Friday, February 13. This day was initially listed as a Data Day for teachers and school staff.

West Carroll Special School District provided virtual learning on Thursday, February 5, and Friday, February 6, as a way to avoid implementing makeup days.

The Tennessee Department of Education allows up to five additional days for inclement weather if virtual learning is provided.

Hollow Rock-Bruceton Special School District and McKenzie Special School District have yet to announce a decision regarding school makeup days. MSSD Director of Schools Dr. Justin Barden said the McKenzie school board will likely discuss options in the upcoming board meeting on March 3.

At Bethel University, students and professors continued instruction throughout the two-week campus closure with virtual (online) work.

Elections

...From Front Page

The primary election for county offices and board of education seats — for Republican and Democratic parties — is Tuesday, May 5, 2026. Primary winners and candidates running as Independents will appear on the August 6 general ballot.

Also August 6 is the City of

Clarksburg municipal election for mayor and two alderman positions. Petitions for these seats must be filed by March 10 at noon to qualify for the August election.

Three candidates have picked up petitions since The Banner’s last update on January 20.

Michael H. Foster (I) picked up a petition for the County School Board District 1 seat.

Renee Hobson (I) picked

up a petition for one of the four available McKenzie School Board Member seats.

Jeff Reed picked up a petition for City of Clarksburg mayor.

View this story on www.mckenziebanner.com for a complete list of petitioners and qualified candidates, as provided by Carroll County Administrator of Elections Peg Hamlett on February 3 at 3:15 p.m.

Carlton

...From Front Page

The legislation, sponsored by Representative Brock Martin and State Senator John Stevens, would provide salary and benefits equal to \$50,000 annually for five years.

The bill states:

Salaries and Benefits - As introduced, entitles the estate of an electrical lineman who was employed

by or contracted with a local government to service electrical transmission and power distribution systems to an annual annuity of \$50,000 for five years upon the death of the lineman in the line of duty.

“Electrical lineman” means an individual who: (A) Installs, maintains, or repairs electrical transmission and power distribution systems; and (B) Is employed by a local government or an entity that contracts with a local government for the installation, maintenance,

or repair of such systems; SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 7-51-210(b), is amended by adding the language “or electrical lineman” after “emergency responder” wherever it may appear. SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 7-51-210(d), is amended by deleting the period at the end of the subsection and substituting “; or being both an emergency responder and an electrical lineman.” SECTION 4. If approved, this act takes effect July 1, 2026.

THE WIT AND WISDOM OF DAVID JOHNSON

‘Great Balls of Fire!’

Cuss words were never uttered in the family I grew up in.

I’m not saying no one ever thought of saying them because I’m guessing my mother and father had one or two pass through their mind while trying to raise me. I mean, my mother said to my older sister one time when talking about me, “I don’t know what I’m going to do with him.”

Yeah, I was that kid. NONETHELESS, let’s get back to the subject. Whether cuss words were thought or not, they weren’t spoken because they weren’t allowed. That’s a pretty good rule, if you ask me. Mainly because cussing limits your vocabulary.

Honestly, there aren’t that many cuss words, just unlimited combinations of the same words, which, frankly, I find boring. It might surprise you to learn I’ve been “cussed out” (that’s an interesting expression, isn’t it?) lots of times. So much so, it has long since ceased to bother me. All I’m interested in is whether I hear a combination I’ve never heard.

I don’t mind when one of my clients uses cuss words to express themselves, because that’s their language and the only way they know how to express themselves. I respect that.

And I’m certainly not saying a word or two hasn’t slipped passed my lips on occasion, like when I recently told my wife she’s a “grown a\$\$ woman” and can do what she wants to do without worrying what other people will think. If you read my books, you’ll occasionally find one of the characters speaking rather loosely, only because that’s their vocabulary.

The main thing I want to do here is offer some help to those of you who are trying to expand your vocabulary. I’ve got a list of tried-and-true expressions that will fit any sort of situation filled with high emotion.

Using “dog” as a prefix works with lots of other words, like “Doggone your

hide!” which you would use when a friend hits you with a water balloon. Or “Doggone it!” which is for the times your favorite team loses or a fish gets off your line.

If you prefer using a cat, you can say, “What in the cat hair?!” This is used to describe anything that defies explanation, like how your two-year-old boy stuck twenty-seven popcorn kernels up his nose.

The word “holy” gets used a lot, which is probably not wise, but nonetheless, there is “holy smoke” and “holy cow” used to describe surprise or dismay as when the Chicago Cubs win a baseball game.

“Dag” isn’t a word, but when you pair it with other words, as in “dagnabit” or “dagblasted” you end up with expressions to describe how you feel when realize you used plain flour instead of self-rising when you made biscuits.

Closely related to the “dag” words are “dadgum” and “dadburn.” That’s what a boy said to me after I’d placed a penny on the radiator for fifteen minutes during American History class and then set it on the back of his neck while he was bent over studying. He jerked upright, sending the penny sliding past his shirt collar and down his back. It wasn’t nearly as funny to him as it was to me.

If you don’t object to using “holy,” then you’ll probably be okay with using “heaven,” as in “heavens to Betsy” or “heaven help us.” You could use either one when you learn your octogenarian uncle has run off with a twenty-year-old. (But neither of those expressions would be what his wife would say.)

I can’t explain why, but you can say “gosh” or “gosh dang it” but not “gosh grief.” Just as you can say “good grief” but not “good dang it.”

There are unanswerable questions that make no sense, like, “What in tarnation?” or “What in the sam hill?” either of which can be used when you hear something go “bump” in the middle of the night.

The little word “for” is as handy as a Swiss army

knife. “For crying out loud,” “forever more,” and “for Pete’s sake” can all be used when you’re exasperated over the power going out at the climatic moment of your favorite movie that you’ve seen a dozen times but keep hoping that this time the main character won’t make the same fatal mistake.

I especially like the sound of “yikes,” “thunderation,” “I’ll swahnee,” and “lawzee me.” They can mean anything you want them to.

“Confound it” works well when you’re looking for your phone that you’re holding in your hand or your glasses that you’re already wearing.

“Fiddlesticks” might be okay to use where you live but not around here, because there’s an annual Fiddlestick Festival held in Greenfield with corn-dogs and fried Oreos and rides designed to make you throw them up.

You might think “I declare” means you’re actually going to declare something, but the expression stands alone when used to express the feeling you have when you walk into your teenager’s room and find they’ve cleaned it without being told to. “Mercy sakes alive” also works well. But be prepared to say “land o’ Goshen” when that same teenager comes to you asking if they can use the family car to go mudding.

Saying “shoot fire” or “shoot a monkey” has nothing to do with a gun, but it’s what you say when you hit your thumb with a hammer for the umpteenth time.

And finally, you can use the word “my” if you say it more than once, like if you tell your wife, “My, my this is good banana pudding.” The power of the word increases exponentially, because if you say it three times, “My, my, my, honey, this is good banana pudding” you might get lucky in bed that night and be heard to exclaim, “Great balls of fire!”

** Taken from The Wit and Wisdom of David Johnson, Volume III: A Harrowing Halloween Tale*

HUNKER DOWN WITH KES

Those Drovers Knew What They Were Eating

I was taking a rare break on a cold, slow, late afternoon, watching an old “Rawhide” rerun. But, as always with that classic western depicting Gil Favor and Rowdy Yates chasing 3,000 head of cattle up the 1,000-mile Sedalia Trail from Texas to Missouri, my mind turned to high school basketball.

It was my senior year. The problem arose because Coach Sterling Givens was fond of scheduling home games on Friday nights. The girls played a game before us. Coach wanted us there to support the girls by coming early, but he demanded we be in the locker room by the halftime break to get dressed and prepared for our contest.

That was not a problem for the other guys. But “Rawhide” aired in the seven o’clock spot on Friday nights. You understand there were no tape delays or recording features back then. And we’d never heard of reruns in 1965. You watched it live, or you didn’t see it.

You look back on that series now, and it may seem a bit campy, dated, trite...it was in black and white, and most of the cows could act better than many of the guest stars.

But I have always wanted to be a cowboy.

I would wait until Rowdy had cleaned up his mess, or the cattle got across the river safely and then I sprinted to the gym. Sometimes the girl’s game would be almost over when I got there. Coach Givens didn’t like my tardiness one bit.

And he didn’t “buy” that story about me being home watching “Rawhide.” He thought I was seeing a girl, which was, of course, the worst thing anyone could do if they were a “team player” and were “getting their mind

right” for the big game at hand.

He would run me after practice on Monday till my tongue was dragging across the floor behind me. That TV show was near ‘bout killing me! I would beg Charlotte Melton at lunch to call a few extra timeouts in the first half. I asked Emily Scarbrough to fake a knee injury. I told Jane Hill to start a fight....

I wasn’t alone with my basketball memories as I watched the Rawhide gang “head’em up and move’em out.” I had an ice filled glass of Diet Coke and was munching on a ten-ounce bag of Lay’s Potato Chips. The world, at the moment, was moving in my direction.

Scout Pete Nolan was informing Mr. Favor there was no water up ahead, and the outfit might be doomed when I reached for another handful of chips. I looked down and noticed for the first time the inscription below the Lay’s Classic moniker, “Made with REAL POTATOES.”

Folks, I quit the trail drive. Which you just can’t do!

My mind switched gears. Does that mean some potato chip companies don’t use real potatoes? Is that even possible? Don’t tell me somebody makes them out of potash and turkey feathers...and spray paints them yellow.

Lord a’mercy, I began to wonder what exactly was Hamburger Helper made of. And what is in imitation Vienna sausage?

And that took me back to my high school days again. I tried to recall all the signs hanging on the walls in the City Café. But nothing relating to the type of meat in the hamburgers came to mind.

I hope they were not keeping something from

us. The burgers cooked up like real beef, smelled like real beef, and tasted pretty darn good. But I can’t be certain. The only sign I remember for sure that Mr. Stavely had on his Café wall was, “I have a deal with the bank. They don’t cook hamburgers and I don’t cash checks.”

Free range chickens entered my thinking. I hear that term a lot. I don’t know what it means unless you have to chase’em down to process them. And many in the poultry business assure us their chickens are steroid free. Well, I want to trust everybody. And then I sit down to eat, with a chicken breast as large as a diesel engine in front of me.

I’m going back to a diet of peanut butter smeared over the top of an Oreo cookie. You can’t get much healthier than that. And it may be the last food left that you feel sure is the same as it has always been. I mean, if you can’t trust the Oreo people....

All of this food conundrum could be AI’s fault. Anything that has artificial in its title reeks with made up, not real, fake, non-natural...that has got to spill over to the food world. Dad had an old expression about such things, “It ain’t fit for man nor beast.”

Cathy came into the den, and surmised (with that wife’s built in intuition) that I was getting worked up over something. She hoped to help my mindset with a small diversion. “Honey, what would you like for supper?”

“Beef and beans. Cooked over an open fire, built in sight of the chuckwagon.”

Respectfully,
Kes
kesley45@aol.com

Overflow Church to Host Night to Shine

MCKENZIE — A special night for people with special needs is Friday, February 13, 6-9 p.m. at Overflow Church in McKenzie.

Hundreds of churches host this unforgettable worldwide celebration to honor people aged 14 and up with special needs. It’s a Night to Shine and provides a night of dignity, love, and respect for the special valued people, who make up 16% of the global population.

There are opportunities for additional honorees; contact Overflow Church at nova@overflowchurch.net.

Night to Shine is a worldwide celebration event (hosted by the Tim Tebow Foundation) centered on God’s love, honoring and valuing people with special needs. On a single night, hundreds of churches from around the world will come together for an unforgettable prom night experience for individuals with disabilities, aged 14 and up.



Night to Shine is an unforgettable worldwide celebration event, centered on God’s love, honoring and valuing people with special needs. This event, hosted each year on the Friday before Valentine’s Day by churches across the globe, brings congregations, communities, and families living with special needs closer together in fellowship.

The details are: Friday, February 13, 2026, 6- 9 p.m., 14800 Highland

Drive, McKenzie at Overflow Church, overflowchurch.net

The event includes a red-carpet welcome, dancing, music, and celebration.

People with special needs make up 16% of the global population and are one of the largest unreached people groups in the world. The Tim Tebow Foundation started Night to Shine 12 years ago as a way to reach this community with the love of Christ.

Tandy Darby’s Capitol Talk Set for February 13

HUNTINGDON — Representative Tandy Darby (R-Greenfield) returns to Carroll County Friday, February 13, at 8 a.m. for a “Capitol Talk” at the Carroll County Civic Center. The public is invited to attend.

Darby represents Tennessee House District 76, which encompasses Weakley County and parts of Carroll County (McKenzie, Trezevant, Bruceton and Hollow Rock) and Henry County (Henry, Cottage Grove and Puryear). He was elected into the Tennessee House of Representatives in 2020 and has been a member of the 112th through 114th General Assemblies.

Darby’s campaign ran on the following priorities: supporting high-quality education and resources for teachers, keeping Tennessee’s taxes low, protecting the second amendment, opposing illegal immigra-



tion, supporting pro-life policies and supporting policies that benefit farmers in rural Tennessee.

In Nashville, Darby is the Chair of the Banking & Consumer Affairs Subcommittee and a member of the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee, the Commerce Committee, the Disaster Relief Committee of Extraordinary Session, the Fiscal Review, the Immigration Committee of Extraordinary Session and the Select Committee on Rules. On the local level, Dar-

by is on Greenfield Banking Company’s Board of Directors and First State Bank’s Community Bank Board. He is a member of the Greenfield Rotary Club and the National Rifle Association. He has also been a youth coach in various leagues.

Darby is a 1992 Greenfield High School graduate and holds an Ag Business degree from the University of Tennessee at Martin. He is a small business owner, recently receiving the Guardian of Small Business Award from the National Federation of Independent Business.

Darby’s visit is the second of three in this year’s Capitol Talk series, hosted by the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce. Representative Brock Martin spoke in January about current conversations and bills in the State Capitol. Senator John Stevens concludes the series Friday, March 18.

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brittany@mckenziebanner.com
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Editor • News & Sports • TCP Print Shop
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

254171

BEATING HEARTS SOUP FOR LIFE

Beating Hearts hosts its annual Soup for Life event at the First Cumberland Presbyterian Church - McKenzie on February 12 at 6 p.m. The 10th annual fundraiser features all you can eat soup and a pottery demonstration with a one-of-a-kind bowl to take home. For more information, phone 731-207-1400.

CAPITOL TALK WITH REP. TANDY DARBY

Capitol Talk with State Representative Tandy Darby is Friday, February 13, 8 a.m. at the Carroll County Civic Center. The event is free to attend. For more information, contact Carroll County Chamber of Commerce at 731-986-4664 or email cchamber@earthlink.net.

SWEETHEART BREAKFAST IN CLARKSBURG

Sweetheart Breakfast in Clarksburg on February 14, 7 to 11 a.m. The event is at Clarksburg City Hall and is a fundraiser for Clarksburg City Park. The price is \$10 for adults and children are \$5. For more information, contact Clarksburg City Hall 731-986-5547.

CARROLL DEMOCRATIC PARTY MEETS

The Carroll County Democratic Party meets every second Saturday of each month at 10 a.m., at the Carroll County Office Complex, 625 High Street, Huntingdon, Tenn.

CARROLL REPUBLICAN PARTY MEETS

Carroll County Republican Party meets Tuesday, February 24 at 7 p.m. in the McLemoresville Activity Center (across from CB&T).

THE BREAKFAST CLUB AT HOMETOWN HEALTH CLINIC

Everyone is invited to The Breakfast Club every Monday from 9-10:30 a.m. for coffee, snacks, mingling and a light activity. Take the chance to connect and socialize before getting interactive with games, light exercise and fun! Bring a friend and

come make new ones at Hometown Health Clinic - Pediatrics/Specialty Entrance. We can't wait to see you there!

CARROLL HUMANE SOCIETY EVENTS, NEWS

Cat Vouchers

Cat spay/neuter vouchers are always available for \$60. To purchase by phone for use at Paris Vet Clinic, call 731-514-0878 and leave a message. These are available to anyone regardless of residency. We now offer cat vouchers to Carroll County residents for \$60 at the Huntingdon Animal Clinic. These must be purchased in person at the shelter with cash or card, and proof of residency is required. However, Carroll Co. residents can still use Paris Vet Clinic if preferred.

MCKENZIE TOPS MEETS WEEKLY

Win over weight with support and encouragement by meeting with the McKenzie Chapter of TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) each Monday at 3 p.m. in the McKenzie Church of Christ gymnasium. The first meeting is free. For more information, call 731-352-7309. If no answer, leave a message.

CARROLL COMMISSION MEETS MONTHLY

Carroll County Commission meets the second Monday of each month, 7 p.m., in the Conference Room of the Carroll County Office Complex, High Street, Huntingdon. No meetings in February and July.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES

Huntingdon Location — Adult Education Building, 14155 Paris Street. Office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Classes are offered for one-on-one instruction on Mondays, 1-4 p.m. and Thursdays, 9 a.m.-NOON. For more information, phone 731-364-5481.

Obituaries

WILLIAM CURTIS MILTON 1958 — 2026

MCKENZIE — Funeral services for William Curtis Milton were Saturday, February 7, 2026, at Greater Enon Baptist Church. Interment was at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, McKenzie.

Mr. Milton, 67, died at his residence on Monday, January 26, 2026.

He was born in Paris on November 10, 1958, to George Washington Milton and Wilma Jo Mitchum Milton.

He is survived by his mother, Wilma; children Clayton (Brandi Pevahouse), Milton, and Destiny Spencer; two sisters, Dorothy Harrison and Georgia Johnson; a brother, Norris (Kim) Milton; and two grandchildren.

He is preceded in death by his father; a sister, Karen Milton; and a brother, Jerry Milton.

If you require additional assistance, please contact Brummitt-McKenzie Funeral Home at 731-352-4848 or visit our website at brummittmckenziefuneralhome.com.

VICKI HAWKINS 1947 — 2026

MCKENZIE — Vicki Lynn Hawkins, 78, of McKenzie, died Monday, February 2, 2026, at Harmony Hills Assisted Living.

A memorial service is on Friday, February 13, 2026, at 11 a.m. at Eternal Hope Christian Church in Salem, Ill., with Brother Kevin Lewton officiating. Burial is at Paradise Cemetery in Salem, Ill.

Vicki was born April 5, 1947, in Salem, Ill., to the late Bill and Evalena (Needs) Hawkins.

She is survived by her brother, John (Phyllis) Hawkins.

JUNE SAWYERS EVANS CALDWELL 1937 — 2026

GLEASON — June Sawyers Evans Caldwell, a woman whose life journey took her from the basketball courts of Gleason to the halls of the Pentagon, died on February 3, 2026.

A memorial service was at Williams Funeral Home in Gleason on Sunday, February 8. She was laid to rest at Hopewell Cemetery.

June, 88, was born on June 23, 1937, to Dudley and Maggie Sawyers.

She eventually returned to her roots, where her life was defined by her devotion to her family and her sharp wit. She is survived by her daughter, Susan (Dean) Hamilton; a granddaughter; two great-grandchildren. She also leaves behind her brother, Jerry (Pat) Sawyers.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husbands, Curtis Evans and George Caldwell; and her siblings, Shelby Klutts and George Sawyers.

Williams Funeral Home of Gleason.

JOE E. ANDERSON 1958 — 2026

MCKENZIE — Funeral services for Joe E. Anderson are at 2 p.m. Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at Brummitt-McKenzie Funeral Home. The family will receive friends on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Interment will follow at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, McKenzie.

Mr. Anderson, 67, died on Sunday, February 8, 2026, at his residence. He retired from Walmart as a sales associate in the hunting and outdoor departments, was a member of McKenzie First Cumberland Presbyterian Church, was an avid fisherman, enjoyed golf, but his greatest time was spent with his grandchildren. He was born on April 7, 1958, in McKenzie to Ervin and Betty Russell Anderson.

He is survived by his wife, Marsha Lemonds Anderson; two children, John (Leslie) French of Jackson and Beth (Jason) Mathis of McKenzie; his mother, Betty Anderson; four grandchildren, Sami Mathis, Lane Mathis, Olivia French, and Brooks French; a sister, Susan Anderson; and a nephew, Blake Clark.

He is preceded in death by his father, Ervin Anderson; and his brother, Ricky Anderson.

If you require additional assistance, please contact Brummitt-McKenzie Funeral Home at 731-352-4848 or visit our website at brummittmckenziefuneralhome.com.

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McKenzie Police Reports

DUI — Harrison Stephen Maness, Paris Street, McKenzie, was charged with DUI on February 7.

Officer Darren Davis responded to a report of an erratic driver on Highway 79 and entering McKenzie City Limits. Davis observed the reported vehicle and initiated a traffic stop. After a field sobriety test, Maness was arrested for Driving Under the Influence - First Offense. He refused to submit to a blood-alcohol test and was then transported to Carroll County Jail.

Driving on Revoked License — George Austin New, Lumber Road, Henry, was charged with Driving on a Revoked License, Driving an Unregistered Vehicle, and Violation of Display of Registration on February 6.

Officer Darren Davis initiated a traffic stop after observing the light above the registration plate was not working. A check of George New's license revealed a restricted status requiring the automobile to be equipped with an interlock device due to a prior DUI conviction. The vehicle was unregistered and lacked an interlock device. New was transported to Carroll County Jail, and the vehicle was impounded.

Driving on a Revoked License — Armond J. Cloutier, Players Court, Nashville, was charged with Driving on a Revoked License due to a prior DUI conviction. The incident occurred on February 3.

Officer Jackson Henderson observed Cloutier traveling at 56 miles per hour in a 40 mph zone. Officer Henderson initiated a traffic stop and learned Cloutier's license required an interlocked device, which was not installed.

Cloutier was arrested and transported to Carroll County Jail. His vehicle was impounded by MPD.

Violation of Sexual Offender Registry — Jason Matthew Sharp, homeless, of McKenzie, was charged with Violation of the Tennessee Sexual Offender Registry on February 5.

Officers Austin Jones and Sergeant Kyle Beauchamp filed a report stating that they were conducting a follow-up on an incident that led them to a residence on Forrest Circle. When officers knocked on the door, Mr. Sharp answered it. Sharp said he had gotten off work and stopped at his wife's house. When officers asked if he had been staying there longer than he had previously admitted, Sharp replied, "Yes, sir."

He had previously been warned that he could not reside in Forrest Circle because it is within 1000 feet of a daycare center at the McKenzie Church of Christ.

Sharp was arrested and transported to Carroll County Jail.

Fugitive From Justice — Gregory L. Olive, Oak Street, McKenzie, was taken into custody in regard to an outstanding warrant from Calloway County, Kentucky on February 5.

Officer Daniel Pollard filed a report indicating Olive turned himself in at the McKenzie Police Department. Olive was transported to Carroll County Jail and held for Kentucky authorities.

Property Transfers

American International Home Investments TN, LLC to Kelly Family Properties, LLC in District 16.

Jo Ann Wood, as executor, to Jo Ann Wood and others in District 11.

Cox Real Estate Investments, LLC to Danny Ray Johnson in District 13.

Myles J. and Aimee E. Hebrard to Jason J. and Brenda J. Griffin in District 16.

John and Marcie Boutwell to Cesar David Avila in District 4.

Beaver Creek Management Group, LLC to Scott Joe and Nancy Leann DeLoach Fray in District 12.

Ashlee M. Young to Colin P. Miller and others in District 11.

Mark A. Jackson and others to Michael Keith and Teresa Gail Jackson in District 6.

Taylor Ann Fortner to Jason L. Beecham in District 6.

Daniel Lee Jr. and Heather Jeanne Willman, trustees, to Charles J. and Robin Clemson in District 5.

Frank D. Newsom II to Frank D. Newsom II and Lisa R. Newsom Revocable Living Trust in District 2.

Nicholas and Hannah Kopiar to Samantha Poe in District 16.

Bobby Ricketts to Charles Randy Cary and others in District 12.

Citizens Bank, N.A. to Preston Carter. No District listed.

Matthew Lane to Michael G. and Kirsten N. McPeake in District 22.

Servbank, N.A., FKA Servbank, SB to David and Christine Sanders. No District listed.

Tiffany J. Todd to Tiffany J. Troutt and others. No District listed.

Gokce Capital, LLC to Aldeen and Ambar Elder. No District listed.

Gina Brown to Cesar Ruiz Medina in District 16.

Margaret M. Pucino to Margaret M. Pucino as trustee. No District listed.

Mary Kimrey Miller to Michele Souza Cunha in District 4.

GL Land, LLC to Samuel J. and Emily M. Straley. No District listed.

Jean S. Damon to James Rushton Jr. No District listed.

Huntingdon Police Reports

Theft of Merchandise — According to a report made on January 20, Sgt. Tony King responded to Walmart in Huntingdon in reference to shoplifters.

Upon arrival, store security had two female subjects detained in the security office. Security personnel advised that Briana R. Pugh and another woman were observed taking assorted merchandise through the self-checkout area without paying for the items.

The stolen merchandise included women's underwear, with a total value of \$30.53.

Both individuals were cited into Carroll County General Sessions Court and were issued a 10-day booking notice.

Leaving the Scene of an Accident — According to a report made on January 21, Sgt. Ethan Parham responded to East Main Street in Huntingdon regarding a vehicle that had struck a speed limit sign and left the scene. Upon arrival, officers observed the damaged sign lying off the roadway.

Witnesses reported that a red Ford Mustang ran off the roadway, struck

the sign, and then left the scene traveling westbound. Officers later located a vehicle matching that description at a residence on 6th Avenue, Huntingdon. The vehicle displayed front-end damage consistent with the incident.

The registered owner, identified as Bert Hurlburt, stated that another vehicle pulled out in front of him, causing him to run off the roadway in an attempt to avoid a collision. Hurlburt was cited into Carroll County General Sessions Court for leaving the scene of an accident.

Carroll County General Sessions Report

HUNTINGDON (February 4) — The following cases were heard in Carroll County General Sessions Court on February 4.

The following cases were bound over to a grand jury:

Adam Richard Seavers, Sand Hill Road, Lavinia, bound over, Possession of Unlawful Drug Paraphernalia Uses and Activities; bound over, Meth – MFG, Deliver, Sell, Possess with Intent.

The following cases resulted in a guilty plea or finding:

Derek S. Baker, Atwood Street, Trezevant, guilty, Probation Violation – Booked, no fine, 11/29.

Christian Cantrell, Sunray Drive, Murfreesboro, guilty, Probation Viola-

tion – Booked, no fine, 8 months, supervised probation for 8 months or until all conditions are met, report to jail February 27, serve consecutive weekends or as work schedule.

Cody Edward Noah, Bluebird Lane, Huntingdon, guilty, Probation Violation – Booked, supervised probation for 3 months.

Carla Wagner, Park Circle, McKenzie, guilty, Probation Violation – Booked, no fine, 30 days, supervised probation for balance per 25CR137 25CR905, sentence shall be consecutive to 25CR905.

The following cases were dismissed:

Madison Elizabeth Johnson, Bills Drive, Camden,

dismissed, Driving While License Suspended; dismissed, Light Law – Motor Vehicle; dismissed, Financial Responsibility Law; dismissed, Vehicle Registration – Improper Use.

John Self, Big Buck Road, Trezevant, dismissed, Probation Violation – Booked.

The following cases were rescheduled:

Randy Lynn Anderson, Tillson S. Brooks Jr., Daron L. Dildine, Maurice Lawrence, Mack Caige Napier, Mack Caige Napier, James Adam Vermillion.

Carroll County Sheriff's Reports

Driving on Revoked License — On February 2, Deputy Dustin McClure initiated a traffic stop after observing a white Chevrolet Equinox traveling on East Main Street, Huntingdon, with window tint darker than the legal limit and a registration issue.

The vehicle's license plate returned to a different vehicle, and the driver, Toni Pearson, 53, of Huntingdon, advised she did not have a valid driver's license. A records check confirmed Pearson's license was revoked for DUI out of Carroll County. The report further indicated the offense was Pearson's fourth driving on revoked violation, with prior offenses dating back several years.

Pearson was taken into custody and transported to the Carroll County Jail, where she was booked on a charge of driving on revoked license (fourth offense)- Bond was \$2,500. Verbal warnings were issued for the window tint violation and improper registration. The incident occurred in Carroll County.

24th Judicial District Drug, Violent Crime Task Force Shares 2025 Year-end Statistics

The 24th Judicial District Drug and Violent Crime Task Force met for their annual districtwide meeting recently.

While not a comprehensive list, here are some of their 2025 statistics:

- 180 felony arrests, 201 firearms seized and 37 vehicles seized.
- 100 pounds of methamphetamine, 2.2 pounds of fentanyl, one pound of cocaine, 277 pounds of marijuana, 46 pounds of mushrooms (psilocybin), 103 pounds of THC edibles and 433 THC cartridges taken off the street.

The task force is led by Director Tim Meggs and operates at the discretion of District Attorney General Neil Thompson.

The 24th Judicial District Drug and Violent Crime Task Force encompasses Benton, Carroll and Decatur counties.

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL

Bulldogs, Lady Lions Split Wins

BY BRAD SAM
brad@mckenziebanner.com

DRESDEN (February 3) — Dresden High School hosted Gleason Tuesday for a pair of district basketball contests. The Lady Bulldogs had a one-point edge at the half, but the Lady Lions took control after the break for a 48-36 win. The Bulldogs pulled away in the second quarter for a 72-47 victory.

Dresden Lady Lions 48, Gleason Lady Bulldogs 36

The Lady Bulldogs had a 13-10 advantage after the opening frame, led by Ahmyre Allen with five points, including a three-pointer. Hylan Leach and Madi Dean each hit a three, and Kadence Witherspoon had a pair. Lady Lion Jacie West scored four points with a three, and Molly Robinson, Irah Cianfarini and Rylee Cousins each had a pair.

Dresden cut the deficit with a 12-10 edge in the second quarter, led by Cianfarini with five points. Robinson scored four, Gracie Adams had a pair, and Jentri Mangiaracina hit a free throw. Karlie Wilson led Gleason with four points, including a three-pointer. Leach hit another three, and Allen also scored three points. At the half, the Lady Bulldogs led 23-22.

The Lady Lions dou-

bled up Gleason 14-7 to pull ahead in the third, led by Adams with six points, including a three. Cousins scored four, and West and Cianfarini each added a pair. Allen led the Lady Bulldogs with three points, and Leach and Brylee Robertson each had a pair. Entering the final frame, the Lady Lions led 36-30.

Dresden capped the win with a 12-6 tilt in the fourth, led by Adams with five points. Cianfarini scored four, Robinson added a pair, and West hit a freebie. Allen had all six Gleason points.

Lady Bulldog Ahmyre Allen led all scorers with 17 points, including a three-pointer. Hylan Leach scored eight with a pair of threes.

Gracie Adams and Irah Cianfarini led Dresden with 13 points each, Adams with a three. Molly Robinson scored eight points.

Bulldogs 72, Lions 47

Gleason had a 15-13 edge after the first frame, led by Drake Lehmkuhl with seven points, including a three-pointer. Kade Sawyers scored six, and Brock Dilday had a pair. Lion Landon Floyd scored six on a pair of threes. Cannon Floyd also hit a three, and Athan Spaulding and Jacob Durham each had a pair.

The Bulldogs pulled away with a 20-9 advantage in

the second quarter, led by Miami Woolridge with five points, including a three. Lehmkuhl and Brody Sanders each scored four. Sawyers had three points, and Dilday and Ashton Morgan each had a pair. Lion Ayden Flora scored three points, and C. Floyd, Spaulding and Durham each added a pair. At the half, the Bulldogs led 35-22.

Gleason enjoyed a 24-16 tilt in the third, led by Lehmkuhl with 12 points, including a pair of threes. Sawyers scored eight, and Sanders had four points. C. Floyd scored six Dresden points on a pair of threes. Spaulding and Durham each hit a three-pointer, and Flora and Grey Forrester each had a pair. Heading into the final frame, Gleason led 59-38.

The Bulldogs sealed the win with a 13-9 fourth, led by Sawyers and Morgan with four points each. Dilday hit a three, and Lehmkuhl added a pair. Forrester scored five for Dresden with a three, and C. Floyd had four points, also with a three-pointer.

Bulldog Drake Lehmkuhl led all scorers with 25 points, including a trio of threes. Kade Sawyers scored 21 points.

Cannon Floyd led the Lions with 15 points, including four three-pointers.

High School Basketball Regular Season Nears End After Weather Delays

Area schools are wrapping up their regular season basketball schedules, which have been disrupted for two weeks thanks to Winter Storm Fern.

Remaining games for McKenzie, Huntingdon, West Carroll and Gleason are:

Tuesday, February 10
Hollow Rock-Bruceton @ West Carroll (Senior Night)

Lake County @ Gleason
McKenzie @ Clarksburg
Wednesday, February 11
West Carroll @ Halls
Thursday, February 12
Huntingdon @ Camden
Humboldt @ West Carroll (Homecoming)
McKenzie @ Hollow Rock-Bruceton
Friday, February 13
South Fulton @ Gleason

(Senior Night)
West Carroll @ Middleton
Saturday, February 14
Hollow Rock-Bruceton @ Huntingdon (Senior Night, 3 p.m. tipoff)
Tuesday, February 17
McEwen @ McKenzie (Senior Night)
After regular season games conclude, coaches will meet to determine district tournament schedules.

Huntingdon, Gleason, Westview In Top 10 Basketball Poll

NASHVILLE (February 9) — The Tennessee Sports Writers Association and USA Today Network released the latest basketball ranking for prep basketball.

In Class 1A boys, Gleason boys (20-3) is ranked seventh, behind Eagleville,

Pickett County, Jackson County, Richland, Humboldt, and Perry County.

In Class 2 A boys, Huntingdon is ranked third behind Chattanooga Prep, Tellico Plains, Gatlinburg-Pittman, Peabody (5th), White House Heritage

(tied for 6th), and Westview (tied for 6th).

In Class 2A Girls, York Institute and Gatlinburg-Pittman are first and second, Westview is ranked third and Huntingdon is ranked fourth. In the first two rankings are. Stewart County is ranked fifth, Pearl-Cohn is sixth, and Gibson County is seventh.

Marriage Licenses

Aaron Leverne Woods, 65, of McKenzie, to Rubie Lee Rutherford Wyatt, 71, of McKenzie.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated Section 13-7-203, notice is hereby given of a public hearing to be held by the McKenzie Mayor and Board of Aldermen on Thursday, the 12th day of February, 2026 at 5:45 p.m. at McKenzie City Hall.

The hearing is to receive public input on a proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to annex certain territory and incorporate same within the corporate boundaries of the City of McKenzie. Full copies of the proposed resolution may be viewed in McKenzie City Hall during normal business hours. All interested persons are invited to attend and comment.

A1/5-2

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated Section 13-7-203, notice is hereby given of a public hearing to be held by the McKenzie Mayor and Board of Aldermen on Thursday, the 12th day of February, 2026 at 5:45 p.m. at McKenzie City Hall.

The hearing is to receive public input on a proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to revise criteria pertaining to apartments as incidental uses in the B-3 (Central Business District). Full copies of the proposed amendment may be viewed in McKenzie City Hall during normal business hours. All interested persons are invited to attend and comment.

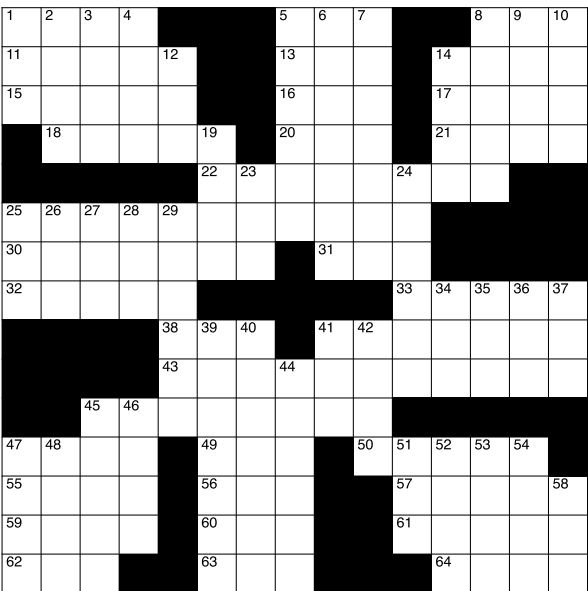
A1/5-2

Color A Masterpiece



Weekly Crossword

- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Breezed through
 - 5. Consumer protection agency
 - 8. Criminal syndicate
 - 11. Moves back from
 - 13. Satisfaction
 - 14. Feel concern or interest
 - 15. Monetary units
 - 16. Congressman (abbr.)
 - 17. Israeli city
 - 18. Restaurants
 - 20. 2,000 lbs.
 - 21. Grandmother
 - 22. North, South and Central
 - 25. In an early way
 - 30. Foes
 - 31. Social networking platform
 - 32. Early term for basketball player
 - 33. Another name for sesame plant
 - 38. Disallow
 - 41. Provide greater detail
 - 43. Inaccessible
 - 45. Evoke emotions
 - 47. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
 - 49. Celtic punk rockers
 - 50. A fencing sword
 - 55. Actor Idris
 - 56. Affirmative (slang)
 - 57. Afflicted in mind or body
 - 59. One point north of northeast
 - 60. Born of
 - 61. Social media hand gesture
 - 62. Hong Kong food stall ___ pai dong
 - 63. Opposite of beginning
 - 64. Email function



- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Sign language
 - 2. Fashionable
 - 3. Borough in Helsinki
 - 4. Inability to hear
 - 5. More quickly
 - 6. An idea accepted as a demonstrable truth
 - 7. Shrewdly
 - 8. Rooney and Kate are two
 - 9. Mediterranean port
 - 10. Benedictine monk
 - 12. Midway between south and southeast
 - 14. Town in Galilee
 - 19. Satisfy
 - 23. Mice genus
 - 24. Brass instrument
 - 25. Chest muscle (slang)
 - 26. Transmits genetic information from DNA
 - 27. Records electric currents
- generated by the brain
- 28. Woman (French)
 - 29. Short route aircraft
 - 34. Pitching statistic
 - 35. Pointed end of a pen
 - 36. Popular sports league
 - 37. Body part
 - 39. Inoffensive
 - 40. Yellowish cotton cloth
 - 41. Feline
 - 42. Does not tell the truth
 - 44. Seduced
 - 45. Spiritual leader
 - 46. Abba ___, Israeli politician
 - 47. Repair
 - 48. Olive genus
 - 51. Swiss river
 - 52. Prejudice
 - 53. C. European river
 - 54. Keep under control
 - 58. Father

Week 6 See solution in next week's edition.

Heart Healthy Word Search

F L A H O F F S E V L A V M N O U O V I
M A U O E K D O R T S P O R H A R Y T U L P
M U S C L E D Q R S C O R O N E A R Y T U L C
H S N P A N I R N E Q N K I X B M B D R
A I S P E H C H O L E S T E R O L F I U
H V I A E R O B I C I U R P F D R R M E
M F R D X E S I C R E X E R P B S T I Q
S S I S O R E L C S O R E H T A H K E F
D I Q X U N O I T A M M A L F N I Q S F
L X P I X H E A L T H Y L Q A H C E L D
E R K C A R D I A C R P H C S P O N U S
U N O I T A L U C R I C B E A T S X P F
Q Y S C X R A L U C S A V O I D R A C A
A X F M O T H Q Q V D N E V T O X A K R
L S T R E S S D H B I Y I M A T A P S T
P H B V V D X F V V D I L E T H V X Q E
D O O L B S Y F V F F A B A V K M Y Y R
S E Q T H Y P E R T E N S I O N N R I I
C M O C M C E C N A R U D N E L I N Q E
L H H A I M H T Y H R R A K B K P U S S

- Aerobic
Arrhythmia
Arteries
Atherosclerosis
Beats
Blood
- Cardiac
Cardiovascular
Cholesterol
Circulation
Coronary
Endurance
- Exercise
Healthy Heart
Hypertension
Inflammation
Muscle
- Plaque
Pulse
Stress
Stroke
Valves
Veins

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1778: The United States flag is formally recognized by a foreign naval vessel for the first time.

1849: James Knox Polk becomes the first serving President of the U.S. to be photographed.

2005: YouTube is launched.

SUDOKU

WEEK 6

	4			9			8	1
		1	2	8		4	3	7
8	3		1	4				5
		6						9
	7		5	6	2	8	1	
1	2					5		
		8			7	9	5	
			4			3		
6	5		8	3				

Level: Beginner

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Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

See solution in next week's edition.



Solve the code to discover words related to heart health. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 9 = S)

- A. 8 23 22 9 3**
Clue: Throbbing of arteries
- B. 8 10 3 9 9 23 10 3**
Clue: Continuous force
- C. 8 23 20 8 6 25 14**
Clue: Moving blood through body
- D. 2 3 9 9 3 22 9**
Clue: Veins and arteries

Answers: A. pulse B. pressure C. pumping D. vessels

LETTER MIX-UP

How many words can you make by rearranging the letters in the phrase below? Use each letter only once.

CARDIOVASCULAR

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____
- 11. _____
- 12. _____
- 13. _____
- 14. _____
- 15. _____
- 16. _____
- 17. _____
- 18. _____
- 19. _____
- 20. _____

Riddle Me This

Where do cows go to dance?

Answer: The Meatball.

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to this week's theme.

IWHITEG

Answer: Weight

GUESS WHO ?

I am an actress born on February 11, 1969 in California. I worked various odd jobs to support my acting career. One of my first acting jobs was in a 1993 horror film. My fame skyrocketed thanks to a very popular TV show about a group of young people living in New York City.

Answer: Jennifer Aniston

Edward Jones

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Week 5 Crossword Puzzle Solution

			H	U	P	A		A	E	O	N	S		
	E	R	A	S	E	R		B	A	T	O	N	S	
	R	E	G	E	N	E	R	A	T	O	R		A	B
M	A	G				N	A	T		S	C	U	T	A
U	T	E			H	A	D	E	S		O	T	I	S
D	O	N		M	I	S		S	A	D		I	R	E
		E	B	O	N				T	A	B	L	E	S
E	R	R	E	D						M	O	I	S	T
L	E	A	D	E	D				M	A	T	T		
A	C	T		M	A	M		B	A	N		A	A	R
P	E	E	L		T	A	A	L	S			R	B	E
S	I	S	A	L		I	D	A				I	B	M
E	P		S	A	L	M	O	N	E	L	L	A	E	
	T	H	E	C	A	E		C	R	A	N	N	Y	
	T	R	E	N	D			A	G	O	G			

SUDOKU

SOLUTION WEEK 5

1	8	7	2	9	4	6	5	3
4	2	3	6	5	7	9	1	8
6	5	9	8	3	1	7	4	2
7	9	1	5	6	2	3	8	4
3	4	8	1	7	9	5	2	6
2	6	5	4	8	3	1	9	7
9	3	2	7	1	8	4	6	5
5	7	4	9	2	6	8	3	1
8	1	6	3	4	5	2	7	9

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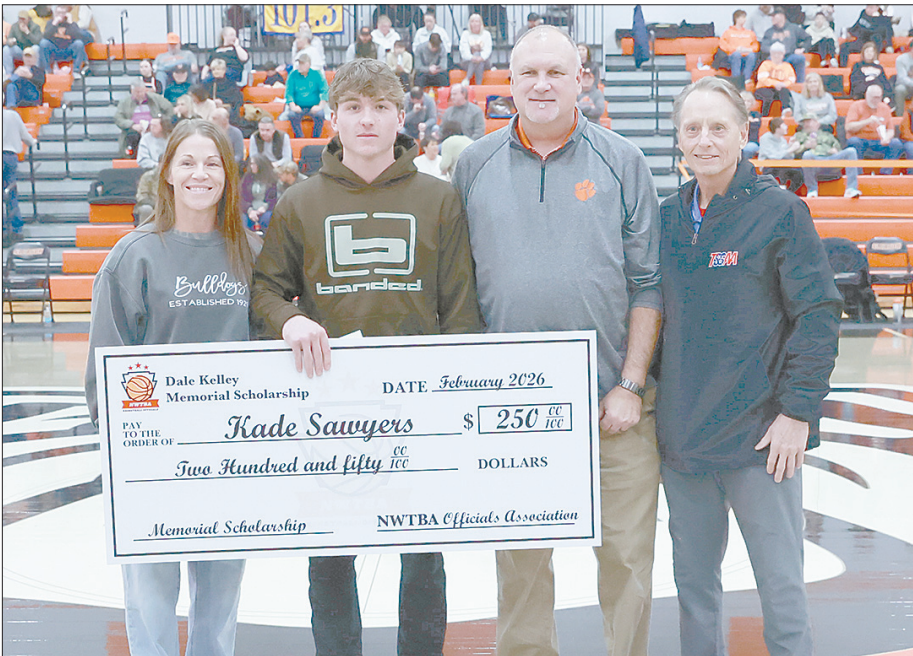
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(L to R): Melanie Sawyers (mother of Kade), Kade Sawyers, Coach Mike Riggs and Keith Wish. Kade was presented with the Dale Kelley Memorial Scholarship. Photo by Joel Washburn/The Banner

Gleason’s Kade Sawyers Presented Dale Kelley Memorial Scholarship

GLEASON (February 5) — Gleason senior basketball player Kade Sawyers was presented with the Dale Kelley Memorial Scholarship during half-time of the girls’ game Thursday.

The \$250 scholarship is presented each year by the Northwest Tennessee Basketball Association in honor of the late Dale Kelley, former Huntingdon mayor and long-time NCAA basketball official.

The Dale Kelley Memorial Scholarship Fund was established by TSSAA official Keith Wish, who presented the award to Sawyers.



Seated with Huntingdon High School senior Braylin Dearmon (center) are parents Krista and Joey Darnall. Standing are grandparents James and Berniece Bailey. Photo by Brad Sam/The Banner

Huntingdon’s Dearmon Signs with UTM Football

BY BRAD SAM
brad@mckenziebanner.com

HUNTINGDON (February 9) — Huntingdon High School senior football standout Braylin Dearmon will continue his gridiron career at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Dearmon marked the commitment with a signing ceremony Monday afternoon in the HHS library, surrounded by family, friends, coaches, teammates and educators.

Principal Porsche McClerking (also Braylin’s basketball coach) welcomed everyone and said, “This is a huge day, a special day... I’ve been able to watch [Braylin] grow up from a young boy into a man, and I’m so proud of all of the stuff that he’s done. I’ve seen the countless hours that he’s put in. All of the hard work. He’s wired different. He’s only got one gear, one speed. It’s a testament to his hard

work. UT Martin is going to get a great one.”

Mustang football Head Coach Eric Swenson said he and his fellow coaches saw the potential over the past two years. He said, “He was kinda flying under the radar. We knew we had a guy on our hands, that all he had to do was get noticed and he was going to sign somewhere. We’re looking forward to going down and watching him play. He’s going to make an impact right off the bat.”

Braylin’s mother, Krista Darnall, thanked the coaches, teachers, other supporters and, especially, his teammates, saying, “Thank you for giving him one heck of a senior season.”

His father, Joey Darnall, echoed the importance of an extended season in giving Braylin exposure. He said, “We wouldn’t be standing here if it wasn’t for [these coaches and teammates]. We just need-

ed more time, and by God, y’all gave it to us.”

A three-sport athlete, Braylin told The Banner he chose football over baseball and basketball because, “I felt like it would get me stronger and physically better in sports and in life.”

He said he chose UTM because of the coaching. “They win there. I want to win, I want to get bigger and stronger. Coach Simpson changed my mind over time, and I feel like I’m at home there.”

UTM is signing Braylin, who has played multiple positions on both sides of the ball, as a linebacker, but the coaches told the incoming freshman that, depending on his performance, he could eventually see some time at tight end.

Braylin told The Banner, “This is a special moment for me and my family. I’m just happy to be here.”

BACK-TO-BACK CHAMPS



Above, The James C. Haile State Tournament Champion Huntingdon Middle School Fillies. Below Left, All-Tournament players (L to R): Kaylee Eatmon, Lakeitha Cason and Anderson Pearson. Below Right, HMS Fillies Head Coach David Wilkins. Photos by Russell Bush/The Banner



Huntingdon Middle School Fillies Win Second Straight State Title

BY RUSSELL BUSH
banner@mckenziebanner.com

MURFREESBORO (February 5) — The Huntingdon Middle School Fillies polished off a 19-1 season with their second consecutive state championship at the James C. Haile State Tournament with a 36-31 overtime win over Columbia Academy Thursday on the campus of Middle Tennessee Christian School.

It was a see-saw affair for the Fillies against the talented Lady Bulldogs of Columbia Academy as both teams fought from behind in hopes of winning the game and the state title.

The Fillies led 30-27 with 4.2 seconds left in the game before a Cameron Church three-pointer at the final buzzer sent the game into overtime for an extra three minutes to determine the state championship.

The Lady Bulldogs took the lead in the extra session on a foul shot by Evelyn Johnson to lead 31-30, but two made foul shots by Lakeitha Cason gave the Fillies a 32-31 lead and the Fillies then grabbed a rebound and began to play keep away. That led to June Dillahunty making four consecutive foul shots to seal the



Left, Filly Ella Atkins fires a three-pointer. Right, Huntingdon’s Emma Smith gets inside for two points. Photos by Russell Bush/The Banner

36-31 win for the Fillies and capture their second state championship in two years.

The Fillies got off to a slow start for the game as the Lady Bulldogs scored the first seven points of the game to lead 7-0, but the Fillies bounced back to cut the lead to 9-7 after one quarter of play.

The Fillies played better in the second quarter but missed several shots and turned the ball over a few times. Still, they were in shouting distance at the half, trailing 18-15.

The Fillies made some adjustments in the third quarter and jumped to a 25-22 lead after their defense held Columbia Academy to four

points in the quarter to take the three-point lead.

The Fillies kept the defensive pressure up in the fourth quarter and took a 29-22 lead with just over three minutes left in the game. The Lady Bulldogs kept chipping away and trailed by three until Church hit the shot from behind the arc to send the game into overtime.

The Fillies were led in scoring by Anderson Pearson with 10, Dillahunty 9, Cason 7, Ella Atkins 6, Emma Smith 2 and Kaylee Eatmon 2.

Columbia Academy was led by Church with 13, Ellyssa Frey 8, Chloe Love 4, Trulie George 3, Ali Townsend 2 and Johnson 1.

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL

McKenzie Swept at Houston County

BY BRAD SAM
brad@mckenziebanner.com

ERIN (February 6) — McKenzie High School traveled Friday for a pair of district basketball contests at Houston County, ending a long dormant stretch due to the winter weather. The Lady Rebels kept it close until the fourth, when the Lady Irish pulled away for a 60-45 win. The Rebels fell behind early, and the Fighting Irish completed the sweep, 75-55.

Houston County Lady Irish 60, McKenzie Lady Rebels 45

The Lady Irish had a 12-9 edge after the opening frame, led by Ally Mitchell with seven points, including a three-pointer. Preslee Moore also hit a three, and Kylie Smith had a pair. Lady Rebel Jaycee Stafford scored four points. Madeline Gottshall and Addyson Littleton each had a pair, and Braylin Auvenshine hit a free throw.

Houston County had a 16-9 advantage in the second quarter, led by Maddie Brooks with seven points, including a three. Smith scored four points, Moore hit another three-pointer, and Kyaira Rains had a pair. Auvenshine led McKenzie with four points, including a three. Stafford scored three points, and Littleton added a pair. At the half, the Lady Irish led 28-18.

The Lady Rebels rallied 16-11 to cut the deficit in the third, led by Stafford with eight points. Littleton and Ava Hastings each hit a three, and Auvenshine added a pair. Rains scored six for Houston County. Moore had four points, and Brooks hit a freebie. Entering the final frame, the Lady Irish led 39-34.

Houston County sealed the win with a 21-11 tilt in the fourth, led by Rains with eleven points. Briley Bucciarrelli scored four, and Moore had three points. Mitchell added a pair, and Peyton Brooks hit a free throw. Stafford scored seven for McKenzie. Kynadie Brown hit a three, and Molly French hit a free throw.

Lady Rebel Jaycee Stafford led all scorers with 22 points.

Kyaira Rains led the Lady Irish with 19 points. Maddie Brooks scored 13 with a pair of three-pointers.

Fighting Irish 75, Rebels 55

Houston County jumped out to a 17-5 lead after the first frame, led by Townes Epps with ten points, including a pair of three-pointers. Hayden Burgess also hit a three, and Jaxen Honeycutt and Ryan Carter each had a pair. Cole Brown scored all five McKenzie points.

The second quarter was a 20-20 wash. Cayden Ownby led the Rebels with five points, including a three. Avery Brown scored four.

Nolan Fawcett and Kason Brown each hit a three, and Cooper Davidson also scored three points. Eli Vinson had a pair. Daniel Phillips led the Irish with seven points. Epps scored four, Honeycutt hit a three, and Brayden Self also had three points. Carter added a pair, and Burgess hit a free throw. At the half, the Irish led 37-25.

Houston County pulled away with a 19-8 advantage in the third, led by Carter with nine points. Epps scored six, and Honeycutt and Phillips each added a pair. A. Brown scored five for McKenzie. Vinson added a pair, and K. Brown hit a freebie. Heading into the final frame, Houston County led 56-33.

The Rebels rallied 22-19 in the fourth for a closer final, led by A. Brown with six points, including a three-pointer. Fawcett scored five with a three. Malakai Harris hit a three, and Ethan Bradberry and Parker Ross each scored three points. Ownby and Davidson each hit a free throw. Epps led the Irish with eight points. Carter scored six. Trace Mitchell and Kobe Hillsman each had a pair, and Self hit a freebie.

Houston County’s Townes Epps led all scorers with 28 points, including a pair of threes. Ryan Carter scored 19.

Avery Brown led McKenzie with 15 points, including a three.

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