

DISCOVER

West Tennessee

January 2021 - Volume 1 - Issue 2

Spotlighting
**GIBSON
COUNTY**

Inside -

**Historic
Minglewood
& The Legend of Blues Man
Noah Lewis**

Ripley

**Wins Makers Mark
"Small Town, Bright Lights"
Nationwide Contest**

Getting To Know
**Golden Tide
Football Coach
Shane Jacobs**



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Letter FROM THE Editor

jonathan**MOODY**
Discover West Tennessee Editor

The reception from our premier issue has been nothing short of amazing. It is a blessing to be able to produce a high quality magazine that helps bring attention and much needed tourism to our region. The more that I have been able to travel across West Tennessee over the last few months, the more appreciative I am to be able to call this home! I have met so many interesting people, and seen so many stunning sights! Everyone has a story and I am thankful to be able to hear them. We look forward to seeing more people and being able to share those stories with you, our readers. There are many more places I want to visit but no where else I'd rather live.

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ON THE COVER - TRENTON PEABODY CHEERLEADERS,
(LEFT) KAYTE MARIE GREER, AND (RIGHT) - ABBY MILLIGAN



Gibson County

Something For Everyone



Gibson County Lake is one of the favorite destinations for fishermen from all over the south.

Pictured above: Jamal Hall

Upper Right: Julie Red, Lower Right: Tommy Tosh



Scenic views like this are just a part of Gibson County Lakes popularity.

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One of the most unique attractions in West Tennessee, the teapot museum located at the Trenton City Hall.



The beauty you find at Crown Winery. Picnicking in the Vineyard or riding horses by the lake. Below is a advertisement for the winery featuring a popular scene from the hit show "I Love Lucy," starring Lucille Ball.



Strawberry Festival



A scene from the Strawberry Festival Historical Museum's Foyer.



Bottom Left: Shriner clowns are a yearly favorite at the Strawberry Festival. Top: Members of Gibson County High School marching to the beat. Right: Unidentified Strawberry Festival "Superheroes."



Davy Crockett Cabin: This cabin was constructed using timbers from Crockett's last known dwelling. Crockett was killed during battle at The Alamo fighting for the freedom of Texas.



The splash pad located at Medina City Park provides a fun way for kids to cool off during the dog days of summer.



MILAN

DAWG DAZE

Street Festival



Members of the Leaders Credit Union team set up during the "Dawg Daze" Festival.



Another huge crowd at "Dawg Daze"



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A rowdy Milan crowd celebrates during the waning seconds of their semifinal win over South Gibson.

Welcome To Gridiron County Population: 49,133

jonathanMOODY
Discover West Tennessee Editor

Every fall for the last 100 seasons, high school football has become the number one export of Gibson County. There have been so many gold and silver footballs brought back to Gibson County, you would think that the young men raised there have a bit of pirate

blood running through their veins.

Peabody began playing in 1921, with Milan and Humboldt opening football programs the following year. Other county high schools that offer football programs are Gibson County and South Gibson, which began in 1981 and 2011, respectively.

Leading the way in acquiring those precious gold and silver trophies are

the Milan Bulldogs, a program that has claimed four state championships and five runner-up trophies, including this season's Class 3A runner-up. Milan's overall record is 685-398-23, for a lifetime winning percentage of 63.

You can't mention Milan football without remembering the legendary John Wade Tucker, who coached from 1969-93, compiling a record of 225-61-2. Tucker



Peabody's coaching staff led by Shane Jacobs is celebrating their third state AA title in a row. Trenton defeated Meigs County for the second consecutive year, the latest by a score of 35-13. Peabody has now won 37 games in a row and 43 out of their last 44.

was known not only for his on-the-field coaching prowess, but also his sense of humor, and the legendary downplaying of his own exceptional football squads while making his opponents sound like Vince Lombardi's Green Bay Packers. Under Tucker, Milan won gold in 1971 and 1977.

Coach Jeff Morris brought much notoriety of his own to Bullet Town as he rolled up a record of 222-69, bringing

two golden footballs and four silvers during his 22 seasons at the helm. Coach Carl Diffe began his stint as the Milan skipper with an inaugural season record of 12-2. Those two losses came versus cross-county rival Peabody in the season's opening game, and in the season's ending game versus perennial East Tennessee powerhouse Alcoa in the 3A State Championship. People close to the Milan program say that the

future is bright with Diffe at the helm.

If you are a high school football fan in Tennessee, you know about the Peabody Golden Tide football program. Peabody has just completed a three-peat in 2A football, and have won four of the last seven state championships in that classification. The Peabody program holds an overall 100-season record of 496-414-33. In addition to four 2A state titles, they also were state in 1991 under



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Coach Tim Haney playing in the 1A division.

Peabody won their first state title in 2014 under Ricky Woods. Shane Jacobs, a defensive coordinator under Woods, took over as head coach in 2015, losing in the semi-finals to eventual state champion Nashville Christian. In 2016, they lost in the 2nd round to eventual state champion Dresden. Again in 2017, Peabody lost to the state champion Union City Tornadoes in the 3rd round of the playoffs. Would Peabody ever get over the hump?

The answer to that question was a resounding yes! Three seasons and three state championships later, along with an outstanding coaching staff and a classification drop to single A in 2021, and a better question would seem to be when will be the next season that Peabody will not win a state championship?

Humboldt is now known as a “basketball school,” but that was not always the case. The Vikings own an all time football record of 525-362-25. Humboldt has claimed 12 district titles through the years and won a state championship in 1979 under Jack Cain. John Tucker coached at Humboldt from 1994-97, when he led the Vikings to the 1994 championship game where they lost to Marion County.

Gibson County High School came into existence in 1981. By 1983, they cruised to a 10-0 record. Unfortunately, success-

es on the gridiron after that high-water mark in 1983 have been few. The Pioneers had a winning season in 1988 with an 8-2 record, and they went 6-5 in 1995. The good news is that recently under Coach Cody Finley, the tide has been turning for the Pioneers. In 2018 they went 7-4, and followed that up in 2019 with 6-4. In 2019, Gibson County laid claim to one of the greatest upsets in the state by dominating the Union City Tornadoes, 61-35.

The South Gibson Hornets are the proverbial “new kids on the block” in Gridiron County. Founded in 2011, the Hornets have enjoyed a good degree of success with the pigskin. South Gibson has rolled up an overall record of 68-43 in their 10 years on the field. Scott Stidham has been their head coach, and under his leadership they have only missed the playoffs in two seasons. South Gibson celebrated their first district title in 2019. In 2020 they advanced to the 3rd round playoffs before losing to the neighboring Milan Bulldogs.

Gibson County has many beautiful sights. The have rich and fertile farmland, and one of the best fishing spots in all of the south on Gibson County Lake. Beauty queen Kelley Cash calls the county home. There are Strawberry Festivals, teapots, and the UT Agricultural Museum. And along with all these worthwhile features, Gibson County has high school football.

An unidentified Milan player and Peabody senior Benjamin Hayes face off at the coin toss.



I still say Gibson’ top export is the tradition of turning out talented football teams and players. Toby Champion, Junior Reed, and Kelsey Williams hail from Humboldt. Earnest Fields, John Fisher, George Kidd, Jeff Smith, Rod Smith, and Avery Williamson came from Milan. Cooper Baugus, Jarel Dickson,

and this seasons “Mr. Football” winner Khalik Ganaway rose from Peabody. These players and many more are the heroes that residents grew up idolizing in Gibson County. With legendary coaches like A.F. Bridges, John Tucker, Jack Keane, and Jeff Morris blazing the path, and todays coaches such as Shane

Jacobs, Carl Diffee, Scott Stidham, and Cody Finley picking up the torch in their respective programs, we are left to wonder how many gold and silver trophies will Gibson County football claim over the next 100 years? I know you Tennessee high school gridiron fans will be watching!



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Getting To Know: Peabody Head Football Coach Shane Jacobs

Family Man, Devout Christian, Natural Leader

jonathan**MOODY**
Discover West TN Editor

Baseball is the reason Shane Jacobs first came to West Tennessee, but love is what kept him here.

Jacobs grew up in Cullman, Ala., and attended Vinemont High School. He was a three sport man, playing basketball, baseball, and football. He said he figured out that a career in the NFL wasn't in his future around the 9th grade, and by the end of high school he knew that he had to find another way to stay involved in the sport. This led him into coaching football.

After high school, Jacobs received a baseball scholarship to Lambuth University in Jackson. This is where the paths of he and his future wife intersected. If you are a West Tennessee sports enthusiast, then you know all about former Bradford High School and Union University basketball star Merideth Richardson. According to Jacobs, he "totally swept Merideth off her feet, and agreed to marry her" during her junior year at Union.

After graduating from Lambuth, Shane began his coaching career at Jackson

North Side where he coached the secondary and quarterbacks. Meanwhile, Merideth became the girl's basketball coach at South Gibson High School. An opportunity opened for Meredith to take over the reigns at Bradford, and they decided to move to Gibson County. Shane and Merideth are presently the proud parents of Dean (9), Makaren (7), and Nolan (5). They will be blessed to welcome another daughter into the world in May.

The Jacobs family attends Bradford First Baptist Church, where Shane is a Sunday school teacher and has been a deacon for 10 years. You can tell just from his smile when speaking about his family how much they mean to him. He told me that he and his sons enjoy rooting for the Atlanta Braves and the Alabama Crimson Tide. (He kinda lost me at Alabama, but I quickly snapped out of it.)

Jacobs began his coaching career in Trenton as defensive coordinator in 2012, capping off that stint with Peabody High School winning the 2014 Tennessee State Football AA Championship. He became head coach of the Peabody Foot-

ball Program in 2015, and the program has continued to gain momentum over the last five seasons under his leadership.

Unless you have been living under a rock for the past three seasons, you know that Peabody just won its third state football championship in a row, the fourth over the last seven seasons. Peabody has won its last 37 games in a row, 43 of the last 44. Jacobs has a Peabody career record of 72-11, an impressive 87% winning percentage.

If you ask Jacobs, all those wins, all that gold, is just icing on the cake compared to the really important things. Faith, family, and developing young athletes into young adults are really important things to Jacobs. "Winning keeps me employed, but seeing boys develop into young men keeps me motivated. If focusing on the development of players is always the top priority, then winning will take care of itself," he said.

I asked the coach about his secret of developing championship football teams and upon what tenants he has built his program. "Obviously, players are number one. As a coach at a public school



Shane Jacobs

in a rural town, I can't impact the most important recipe to having good teams (the players). So we, as a staff, focus only on the things we can control. The number one thing we can control is the culture of our program," Jacobs related.

He stressed that the Peabody program is built on three core principles. He elaborated, "Love is the first principle - you have to love your players. You must love the process of teaching lifelong lessons. If a coach is missing this, he or she will have a miserable experience and will most likely never experience any real success. Second comes trust - players need to trust the coaches, and coaches must trust the



Clockwise upper left to right: Peabody football coach Shane, Bradford girls basketball coach Merideth, Makaren (Age 7), Dean (Age 9), and Nolan, (Age 5).

players. Trust comes from love. When you truly love and care for each other, trust should naturally follow.”

The third principle in the Peabody football program is hard work. According to the coach, football is hard, and when things get difficult, players and coaches alike need something on which they can rely.

“I tell our players - rely on your training. Rely on the work you've put in to get to this position. No one out-works us! We must push our physical and mental limits every day,” Jacobs said. “According to a book I read about Navy Seals, our minds begin telling our bodies to shut down when we have only reached about 65% capacity

of our capability. If you play in this program, you will train your mind to allow your body to push to 95% capacity. It's far less safe to play when you're not prepared, than it is to push your mind/body in training past the 65% capacity.”

Jacobs is very happy to be coaching at Peabody, stressing that he believes there is not a community in the state that supports its football team more than Trenton. “Coaching is a difficult profession, but it's far more difficult in places where there is little to no emphasis placed on extracurricular activities. Here we have everything we need, because this community sees the importance of investing in extracurricular

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activities,” Jacobs noted. “I am blessed to be able to coach in a community like Trenton!”

Hey Coach, Trenton is blessed to have a football coach who teaches the right priorities and gives so much support to his players like you do. Here’s to many more seasons of Coach Jacobs’ winning strategy.



Coach Shane Jacobs is either firing up his football team or expressing frustration at a call!



Merideth Jacobs at Union University.

Peabody will be updating the logo at right, after the 2020 AA championship game to now read as Class 2A Champions Back 2 Back 2 Back as they defeated Meigs County by the score of 35-13.



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Access is more than just a building close by. It includes connection to a variety of primary and specialty care providers as well, which is why West Tennessee Healthcare pursues recruitment and retention each year. With close to 200 employee providers, nearly 100 of those being primary care providers, West Tennessee Healthcare continues to actively recruit. In the last 18 months, 20 new providers have been added to the West Tennessee Healthcare family across the region, and their partnership with the UT Family Practice residency program provides a constant influx of primary care doctors. The program averages 7 graduates each year, and over the last ten years, more than 50 graduates have chosen to stay in West Tennessee to practice.

In 2018, when access to care was in jeopardy with the possible closing of three area hospitals,

West Tennessee Healthcare stepped in and acquired them from Community Health System. Hospitals in Dyersburg, Martin, North Hospital in Jackson, and several clinics stayed open, keeping 1,000 nurses and staff stayed employed in the area.

Besides buildings and staffing, West Tennessee Healthcare is committed to providing access to state-of-the-art healthcare. In 2019, West

Tennessee Healthcare spent over one million dollars on NAVIO, the best knee surgery robot available in the country, so that west Tennesseans would have access to the highest quality knee surgeries without having to travel far from home. NAVIO is so good that it comes with a lifetime warranty, a first for this area. West Tennessee Healthcare is also the only provider in the region to offer micro pacemakers as an option for heart patients, and one of only a couple of cancer centers in the state to provide Lutathera treatments.

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West Tennessee Outdoors with Steve McCadams



Pictured with a trophy 18-point buck he bagged earlier this season is Chris Smith of Camden. The deer had one of the more impressive racks taken this year around this area. Overall, several hefty bucks were taken this year across West Tennessee and it was a good season for most hunters.

IMPORTANT DATES

January 3, Gun/Muzzleloader/Archery Season Ends.

January 4-8, Private Lands Only Deer Segment

For Gun/Muzzleloader/Archery.

January 7, Trout Stockings Paris/McKenzie/Milan etc...

January 9-10, Young Sportsman Deer Hunt.

January 15, Final Segment of Dove Season End.

January 31, Statewide Duck Season Ends.

February 6 and 13, Youth Waterfowl Hunt.

DEER SEASON DRAWS TO A CLOSE

Deer hunters across Tennessee will see the regular gun, muzzleloader and archery season draw to a close on Sunday, January 3, 2021.

Hunters have enjoyed a wide window of opportunity as archery season began way back on the fourth Saturday in September which is the traditional fall opener each year. Actually, prior to that hunters had a short three-day segment August 28-30 that was private lands and archery only except for CWD Unit where regular gun and muzzleloader were allowed.

PRIVATE LANDS ONLY DEER SEGMENT

Although the regular deer season has ended there's still more opportunities for hunting during a 5-day segment January 4-8 on private land in Unit L and the CWD unit. No public lands or wildlife management areas are open during this period.

Additional regulations state no antlered deer may be taken during this period in Unit L. Antlered deer may be taken in the CWD Unit and statewide bag limit still applies.

For a map showing all counties listed in both Unit L and the CWD Unit refer page 26 of the Tennessee Hunting and Trapping Guide printed by Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency or log on to the website at www.tnwildlife.org.

YOUNG SPORTSMAN DEER HUNT

Youngsters who fall within the 6-16 year age bracket will get the final shot at deer during the second and final Young Sportsman Deer Hunt across the state slated for January 9-10. The two day segment is similar to the first hunt held prior to the opening of the regular deer season that occurred back in late October and early November.

Participants may use gun, muzzleloader, and archery gear. Kids must be accompanied by a nonhunting adult, 21 years of age or older who must remain in a position to take immediate control of the hunting device and who must also comply with fluorescent orange regulations.

A non-hunting adult can supervise multiple youth hunters. Antlerless bag limits for Units A, B, C, and D are not to exceed a total of two antlerless deer for the four days combined for both youth hunts.

ASIAN CARP BATTLE CONTINUES

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency is continuing its efforts in the battle against the invasive Asian carp. The TWRA has several partners in its fight against Asian carp, including officials from Benton County which is the heart of Kentucky Lake on the Tennessee River.

Benton County Mayor Brett Lashlee and Dale Robertson, owner of D&D Fish and Caviar Company in Benton County, were guests at a special meeting of the Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission held in neighboring Decatur County at the Parson Municipal Building. The two spoke to the commission about the joint effort in the fight against Asian carp and expressed thanks to the TWRA and commission in supporting the endeavor.

D&D Fish and Caviar Company is one of three vendors on Kentucky Lake which was awarded a grant. It was a \$123,700 grant which will improve and expand D&D Fish and Caviar's operational capacity in processing Asian carp for market. This allows D&D to accept larger hauls by local fishermen which hopefully will result in pulling more Asian carp from local waters.

The other two vendors are North American Caviar and Hart's Fish Market located in adjacent Henry County. The grants total more than \$400,000 and an estimated 5,342,170 pounds of carp (approximately 600,000 individual fish) have been removed from Kentucky Lake. The average size of the carp is about 9 pounds.

Also, the TWRA was recently awarded nearly \$1.7 million from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct carp control and monitoring in the coming year. This amount is a substantial increase from previous years that will advance the agency's capacity to control and monitor carp populations. Asian carp work will be conducted in the Tennessee and Cumberland basin as well as Reelfoot Lake. Plans include providing incentives for the commercial removal of Asian carp and monitoring population.

FINAL SEGMENT OF DOVE SEASON

Tennessee's three segment dove season will see the curtain fall on January 15. Each year the state offers an early season that open the first day of September. Then toward the end of September it expires and the second segment opens in the second week of October for a short period before ending in early November.

The winter segment opens the first week of December and this year runs through January 15. Bag limit is the same in all segment allowing 15 birds daily.

Although not many wing shooters take advantage of the winter season it can be good as dove migrate and often concentrate around harvested corn field and feed lots.

WINTER TROUT STOCKINGS

Each winter Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency conducts winter trout stockings at various locations across the state. In the West Tennessee area stockings will occur on January 7 at Lake Graham in Jackson. Additional stockings will take place on January 13 at Paris City Park, McKenzie City Park, Milan City Pond and Beech Lake in Lexington.

For additional stocking dates and locations log on to www.tnwildlife.org. However, any stocking event could be postponed or cancelled due to unforeseen problems, such as adverse weather. A supplemental trout license (type 022) is required for ages 16-64 to fish for trout in addition to Type 001 or 020.

DUCK SEASON WINDS DOWN

Waterfowlers will see the curtain drop the last day of January this year as the Volunteer State's 60-day duck season draws to a close. Both the Reelfoot Lake Zone and Statewide Seasons end January 31.

Overall it seems Dixie duck hunters fared better this year when compared to the previous two seasons. The season was still in progress as this report was being written so just how productive the last half of season went was still to be determined.

Fortunately, Volunteer State duck hunters didn't have as much flooding and warm weather as had been the case the previous two years. When that combo descends it scatters ducks across the five state region once the mighty Mississippi River backs out and inundates thousands of acres of farm land. Last year a lack of cold weather hurt too.

Duck numbers down south were below average the last two years as the migration was off but it appeared this year things were better as late November and December got off to a decent start.





A retriever such as the above pictured is an important companion in the duck blind. Dogs are great company and may prevent the hunter from stepping into a hole and filling their waders up with freezing water!

Duck Days In Dixie

Eternal Optimists Wait On The Weather

steveMcCADAMS
MVP Contributor

Duck hunters down in Dixie are indeed eternal optimists. Our loyalty ranks right up there with devoted college football fans who, regardless of their team's previous season record, anxiously await the start of another year.

Such is the case with weary waterfowlers who each year get pumped up with enthusiasm as summer fades to fall and the November season opening nears. A 60-day season across Tennes-

see offers a wide window of opportunity each year so even a slow start can result in a fast finish. Sort of like horse racing!

For the last two years Volunteer State duck hunters have had to dig deep in their enthusiasm bank for remnants of joy and pleasant memories from the marshes. We've had to endure some pretty tough seasons where back to back warm and wet winter weather didn't push ducks to normal southern wintering grounds.

Our web-footed friends didn't get the memo to head South and stay a spell.

Y'all come back is a moot point if they never got here in the first place!

This year's season has had both differences and similarities to last year's sluggish saga. Season got going the weekend after Thanksgiving again as the traditional opener kicked off for a two-day segment. After a 5-day closure the second segment restarted things on the first Saturday in December and from there hunters entered a 58-day straight stretch that is taking us all the way through January 31, 2021 this year.

It appears this year's season got off to a better start when compared to

the previous two years as many public hunting areas, which are labeled wildlife management areas under the umbrella of Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, kicked off the season with good water levels in most all units across middle and west Tennessee.

That alone was a plus as there have been times when lack of rainfall leading into the November opener did not occur in adequate amounts to sufficiently flood shallow areas to normal pool elevation, leaving some blinds high and dry or somewhat inaccessible.

However, some popular areas such as Camden Bottoms, Big Sandy and Gin Creek in Benton County and West Sandy, referred to locally as Springville bottom, located in Henry County had high water issues at the wrong time during the late spring and summer. Heavy rains flooded out corn and other crops TWRA had planted for wintering waterfowl, diminishing their long season appeal wintering ducks.

There were other victims of summer rains across the region too as some state refuges west along the Obion, Hatchie and Forked Deer River drainage areas suffered losses. The pendulum often swings to the extremes and this year has been a prime example.

By the time late fall arrived most of West Tennessee was experiencing dry conditions. Several popular private hunting areas were still in need of rain when season opened while a few other were utilizing pumps to bring water to thirsty bottomland fields where soybeans and corn had been harvested.

Many areas rely on runoff from heavy rains to inundate swamps and farmland for the late fall and winter. The region doesn't want too much water here or over along the mighty Mississippi River but it needs enough to flood shallow areas that provide feeding and roosting areas once waterfowl migrate to our sector of the flyway.

So, there are several ingredients that must come together to set the stage for good duck seasons across the south and especially right here in West Tennessee.

Too much water along the Mississippi River and flooding occurs over a



A father and son spend quality time together doing something they love.

six state region of Missouri, Kentucky, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi and north into portions of Illinois. That was the scenario the last two years; good for the ducks but bad for the hunters.

A combination of warm and very wet winters means no icing occurs up north to help trigger the migration. When waterfowl have ample open water with unlimited feeding areas they are reluctant to leave a good thing.

When seasons close to our north waterfowl face no hunting pressure so they stay put, which is bad news for Dixie duck hunters who scanned empty skies the last couple of years searching for the migration that never really got off the ground.

We can't shoot what we can't see!

However, duck hunters know this sport can change quickly. When drastic cold fronts descend things can literally change overnight. Hunting can go from real bad to real good if the weather stimulates movement.

Getting back to those ingredients I mentioned earlier; it's a hodgepodge in the waterfowler's world. Too cold and some shallow areas ice up. Too warm and ducks don't fly. Too much flooding and they scatter out over a vast region and often alter normal flight paths.

Most all hunters want wind. The breezes giveth and they taketh away.

Wind brings life to a decoy spread and stimulates overall activity for ducks to move around. Without it they get complacent and downright sluggish.

Hunters know they can't control the weather. The only control we have is being there in the blinds when the weather clicks and good things happen. No way to predict that really so for that reason the best time to go is whenever you can and as often as you can!

Meanwhile, season is in progress and the success or failure isn't determined by one or two weekends but rather over the long haul. Even a bad start can be overcome when late season weather patterns send ducks winging our way in big numbers, erasing the slow times that might have occurred back in late November and December.

Generally speaking our waterfowl numbers peak in mid to late January in West Tennessee. Based on several years of data state and national wildlife refuge census figures indicate the best opportunities are present throughout the second half of season.

Still, the ducks make their own rules and pretty much deal the cards. Weather is unpredictable. Always has been; always will be.

The day you don't go is the day they fly. Just like your deer stand as the wise ole' buck will pass right in front on the morning you didn't go!



Above: "Let's Fish" TV Host Crispin Powley with a monster bass he snagged at Pickwick Lake in Hardin County

NPFL Announces Tournament Schedule Pickwick Lake Is Included

The National Professional Fishing League, announced in October of 2019, is finally able to announce their 2021 season. The Inaugural Season will kick off in mid-March on the famed Big Bass Capital on Lake Eufaula in Eufaula, Alabama. More to come!

Stop #1 – Lake Eufaula – March 11-13, 2021

Stop #2 – Wright-Patman Lake – Texarkana, TX – April 22-24, 2021

Stop #3 – Harris Chain of Lakes – Leesburg, FL – June 3-5, 2021

Stop #4 – Pickwick Lake – Counce, TN – July 15-17, 2021

Stop #5 – Lake Winnebago – August 19-21, 2021

Stop #6 – Grand Lake-September 30-October 2, 2021

Championship – TBD



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Hardin County Enjoys Another Successful Season With "Christmas On Main" Event

Due to COVID-19 concerns many events were cancelled, but the beauty remains





Historic Minglewood & The Legend of Blues Man Noah Lewis

dannyWALDEN
MVP Contributor

Having been raised in Dyer County, I grew up hearing stories related to music and how performers were connected to Dyer County history. Stories like the fact that Elvis drove a truck and would stop in Newbern before he cut his first record. I learned that James Brown and the Flames once played in a joint south of the train tracks in Dyersburg.

On March 5, 1963, Patsy Cline ate her last meal and made a phone call to Nashville from the Dyersburg airport before boarding a small plane that later crashed near Camden, Tennessee. That crash took her life but also killed country music stars, Cowboy Copas, Hawkshaw Hawkins and her manager, Randy Hughes.

I learned one of the more interesting stories when I served as principal of the school in Finley, Tennessee. Finley is a small town located just a few miles west of Dyersburg. It serves all of the families from Dyersburg to the Mississippi River. The land there is mostly used for farming today. Fields of corn, beans and cotton can be seen for miles with only a few houses spotted along the roads that crisscross the landscape. But that wasn't always the case.

For the six years I served as principal from 1983 till 1989, I learned of small communities that had unusual names. Parents would refer to where they lived based on those names. Names such as Chic, Tiger Tail, Ayers, Miskelly Loop, Rush Slough and Minglewood.



Noah Lewis's compositions have been recorded by such artists as The Grateful Dead and Bob Dylan. (Photo courtesy of The University Of Louisville)

Each of these small communities no longer exists but still have their own unique history. Most of them had their own one room school house, a store or two and possibly a couple of churches. Life at the turn of the last century wasn't based on farming but on logging since all of the land west of Dyersburg was covered in trees. Many of those trees were hardwoods which would be harvested and shipped by rail to cities north and south. It's the saw mills that sustained those small towns that nurtured yet another historic music story that's rooted in Dyer County history.

The Mengel Box Company was headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky. It operated band mills across the south, harvesting trees and shipping them by

rail to cities in the north, midwest and south.

The location of the first Mengel Box band mill in Dyer County was in the Trimble area. Once most of the trees had been harvested around Trimble, the operation was moved to a location on the Obion River west of Dyersburg.

As was true most places in the early 1900s, people lived near where they worked. It didn't take long for the mill that Mengel Box ran was surrounded by homes, two schools, churches, a company store, a hotel, a movie theatre and a doctor's office. There were also two "juke joints" where workers relaxed after a week of hard labor either in the woods or in the mill. My interpretation would be that the Mengel Box Company

was located in the middle of the woods so the name of the community logically would be Mengelwood.

Life in Mengelwood was hard. The schools were segregated and the bosses in the mill were white. Workers, both black and white, were paid in company script, not dollars and cents. If you needed shoes or a broom, you went to the company store and paid for those items using the company script you earned working for "the man". On weekends one might frequent one of the juke joints to relax with a drink or dance to the music coming from a piano, banjo or harmonica. It was inside a juke joint in Mengelwood that yet another historic music story of Dyer County develops.



Pictured Above: Members of Cannon's Jug Stompers, circa 1924, including at far right Noah Lewis. (Photo courtesy of The University Of Louisville.)

A young black man from Henning, Tennessee would come to play in a joint in Minglewood on the weekends. His skills as a harmonica player were recognized throughout West Tennessee because he could play two harmonicas at once. One with his mouth and the other with his nose! The man's name was Noah Lewis and he wrote a song about the small town on the Obion River in western Dyer County. Noah sold The Minglewood Blues to another performer who often played in Memphis. Gus Cannon and his band, Cannon's Jug Stompers, recorded Noah's Minglewood Blues on Victor records in the early 1920s. Interestingly, Noah Lewis was a member of Cannon's Jug Stompers along with Gus Cannon and Ashley Thompson who was from the Brownsville/Ripley area of Tennessee.

After a few years passed, Noah realized his song was popular in the black community and he wasn't benefiting from it, financially. He changed the song a bit and recorded it himself as The New Minglewood Blues. It became a hit in the black community once more.

It took an unknown group from San Francisco in the 1960s to revive Noah's song once more. That group spent time researching many of the songs from the 1920s and the Memphis/Mississippi Delta area and found Noah's song. They decided to rework the song and record it themselves. They called their version of the song The New, New Minglewood Blues and they placed it on their first album. That album was called "Shakedown Street" and that group was The Grateful Dead. It was released in 1967.

Over the past fifty years the song has been covered by groups and individuals around the world. From Patrick Costello to Bob Dylan, the song that began in a joint on the Obion River in western Dyer County nearly 100 years ago lives on, today.

When this story is repeated there are usually questions. Why are there so many different spellings of the town/song? Where is Minglewood today? Can I visit the site? Are the people who wrote and performed honored or recog-



The Grateful Dead's debut album pictured above featured a remake of Noah Lewis's blues composition "The New Minglewood Blues."

nized for their work?

The spelling issue is rather simple. In the early part of the last century, many people spelled things as they sounded. Over time, the incorrect spelling takes hold and becomes the dominant spelling. A internet search with either spelling will generate lots of information about Noah, Gus, the Grateful Dead and the song, as well as the logging town.

The location is a bit more difficult to explain. There is an old bread factory located on Madison Avenue in Memphis that has taken the name of the town and the song. That building was converted to a music venue several years ago and their web page tells the story of the song. The business in the building is called "The Minglewood Hall". Their web page leads one to believe that Minglewood is located

west Ripley. Probably on TN highway 19. That is logical since Noah was from Lauderdale County, but it isn't true.

If one searches via GPS you may be taken west of Dyersburg on TN highway 104 but that, too, would be wrong. But not by much.

All the property that was once part of the town of Minglewood is private today. The Dyer County Historical Society has worked with the property owners to host a walking tour of the site several times. Out of respect for the owners and to protect those who want to experience that field trip, it's best if we maintain that relationship. Snakes and poison ivy are a consideration, too. It's an easy trip during certain times of the year. Contact the historical society to learn more.

When it comes to those who expe-



A coin from the Mengel Box Company



This abandoned chimney is one of the few landmarks still standing to remind us that a bustling community once stood at the Minglewood site.

rienced life in the woods, harvesting trees, writing, performing and recording the music of the time, the story is varied. Most people will know of the success of Bob Dylan and the Grateful Dead. The originators of the song earned some success but their stories aren't as recognized.

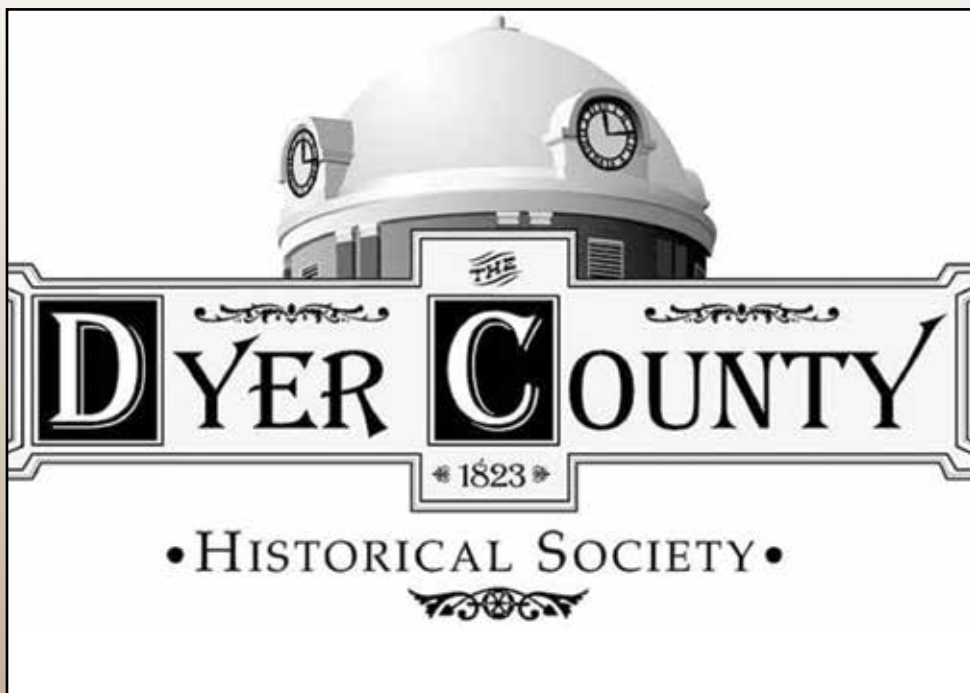
Noah Lewis became impoverished and died as a result of frostbite in 1961. He was just five miles from where he was born 70 years earlier.

Gus Cannon wrote "Walk Right In" and several other songs that received world-wide recognition. He didn't receive any royalties for that song until people in the music business helped correct that issue. He died at the age of 96 in 1979.

In 2010 documentarian Todd Kwait produced a video DVD entitled Chasin' Gus's Ghost. It features John Sebastian of the Lovin' Spoonful and tracks the story of delta blues music and its connection to the music of the 60s.

The members of the Dyer County Historical Society are dedicated to learn, collect, preserve and display the many aspects of our county.

Like many West Tennessee counties, there is a lot to tell and a lot of work to do. We do it for future generations because those who came before us did that work for us.



**Located inside the Dyersburg Professional Development Center
305 College Street Dyersburg 38024**

**Hours Of Operation: Tuesday and Thursdays 9:00-11:00 AM
(Also by appointment)**

**Contact: Danny Walden-Dyersburg Historical Society President
Phone or text @ (731) 676-8075 www.dyerhistory.com**



The newest mural to be placed in downtown Dyersburg is of blues musician Noah Lewis who played in the juke joints in nearby Minglewood.

Two Works of Art Grace Downtown Dyersburg

jonathanMOODY
Editor Discover West Tennessee

Some things just take your breath away. I'm lucky that I get to travel around the whole of West Tennessee and see the sights all across this region. I especially love visiting the downtown areas of each town. I believe you can tell a lot about a community by either how nice, or how unkept their historical districts are. A well groomed court square for instance tends to take us back to a simpler time when those areas were always the community hub.

One of the more beautiful areas I have encountered in my travels that takes my breath away has to be downtown Dyersburg. Many people have had a hand in revitalizing their downtown shopping

district. First Citizens National Bank for instance was instrumental in the construction and upkeep of the new community pavilion/bandstand located in Pocket Park on the corner of Main Street and West Court. This past spring artist Whitney Herrington was commissioned to create a memorial mural to blues musician Noah Lewis from nearby Ripley Tennessee, who played his music in the juke joints of historic Minglewood.

The first mural project to take place in Dyersburg was sponsored by The Dyer County Adult Leadership Class of 2018-19 and it can be seen on the north wall of the Tencom/Mill Workspace Building located at 217 South Mill Avenue. The project manager of this endeavor was Amy Cresswell who is

the risk manager at Ford Construction Company. Cresswell commented, "Our Dyer County Leadership Class is so pleased to have completed this project, which was the first mural of its kind in Dyersburg. The mural celebrates many of the elements our citizens love about this community: agriculture, the historic courthouse, dogwood trees, the Dyer County Fair, wildlife, and the I-55 bridge. We hope this mural will attract visitors to take photos and make fun memories in Downtown Dyersburg and that this project would inspire future community art, which we have already begun to see with the recent completion of the "Minglewood Mural" in Downtown Dyersburg as well."

A local artist, Mary Alford created the "Dyersburg" mural which especially

stands out at night with domed lights accenting the piece of art. On her work Ms. Alford commented, “Dyersburg is and will always be my hometown so getting to create a mural that encom-

passes all of what makes my hometown special was an absolute honor. We worked on the design and execution of this mural for almost a full year before paint hit the wall but it was all worth

the wait! I am so grateful to be part of such a wonderful community and to have had the opportunity to create a focal point for the city of Dyersburg for years to come!”



The mural serves as a backdrop to many concerts.



Local artist Mary Alford.



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Minglewood Mural Artist Whitney Herrington

In her own words...



My name is Whitney Herrington and I am an artist, public school teacher, and muralist from Columbia, Tennessee. I teach at Mount Pleasant High School in Mount Pleasant, Tennessee, about 10 minutes south of Columbia. I love being a creative person with a creative career. It is such a blessing to do what I love as my job. Painting murals for people and towns is my favorite part about being a working artist. I love to see clients' and communities' faces light up when the final project is unveiled. It's like Christmas!

I was selected to do the Dyersburg "Noah Lewis" mural after Slater Barr, from Dyersburg Chamber of Commerce, reached out to me with the opportunity to submit a mock-up/design. The story and idea was intriguing - I believe that as an artist, you must constantly push yourself to do different things or you will

not grow creatively. So, needless to say, I was excited to take on the challenge.

This particular project was special to me for many reasons - it would be my first mural outside of Middle Tennessee, it was to be a very large scale piece, the story behind the mural is rooted in African American Music History, and most importantly, it represents People of Color and their accomplishments - standing in deep contrast to the Confederate Monument across the street from the mural. Plus, it was meant to get people outside, practicing social distancing, and patronizing local downtown businesses.

For my design and final work, the image of Noah Lewis holding his banjo is larger than life. The head of the banjo and his hands seem to come out towards the viewer who is unable to look away from his confidently gazing eyes. The flowers in the background are peonies. I chose these flowers because they have all these beautiful petals and layers, but turns out, they have a history with Dyersburg as well. According to a local historian, peonies have always been a part of Dyersburg. It was pure luck and fate

coming together on this project! The circle in the background keeps the viewer's eye flowing throughout the picture while anchoring the design to the wall.

The mural was painted with high quality Sherwin Williams exterior paint and a UV/Antigraffiti protective sealer. I started the drawing using the squiggle or doodle grid method. This turned out to be quite the talk of the town. Chamber of Commerce and business owners were getting angry phone calls from citizens concerned the mural would be random graffiti and symbols. Someone even said that I was drawing gang symbols. Ha! In reality, they were my guidelines. I superimposed my mockup on top of the doodle in my art program to get the drawing correct.

I am honored to be the face/artist for Dyersburg's newest mural. However, this mural couldn't have been completed in the 5 days I planned without the help of my assistant, Maggie Ferrell, the lift, which was donated by local businessman Tim Vestal, or without the oversight of Slater Barr, leader of the Dyer Chamber of Commerce. These guys deserve just as



Whitney pictured with her assistant Maggie Ferrell.



Pictured above & below right, other projects that the team created in Columbia, Tennessee.

much credit as I do for making this mural happen.

Besides the initial confusion of my doodle grid, the experience of being in this little town was overwhelmingly positive. People wanted to help, shouted from their cars how great it looked, and just stopped by to say hi. It is truly a community piece. I hope that for generations to come, Dyersburg gets to enjoy this mural and many more that I know the future will bring to their little city.

I love creating art for rural commu-

nities! Art brings people and cities together, especially public art. Art can be anything, anywhere. To the people of Dyersburg, please continue supporting and getting more public art! When you have a strong art scene, then you know that everything else is falling into place.

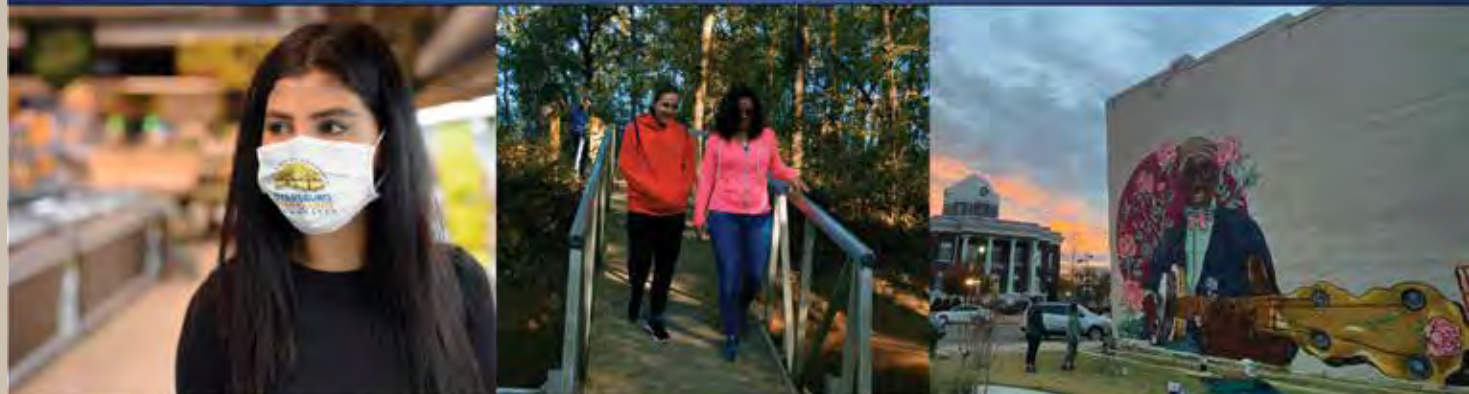
If you would like to contact me about future commissions or see my other works of art, please reach out to whitney-leah1125@gmail.com, call 931.446.0127, or visit my Instagram @oldsoulvtg. I can't wait to hear from you!



Original sketch of the Noah Lewis Minglewood Mural.

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A Family Legacy: Men of Valor

sherriONORATI
MVP Contributor

A family's legacy- a torch of honor and patriotism - which started with a father and uncles serving in the United States Navy and Army during World War II, was passed down to sons and now grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It is a fitting honor for the Wakefield and Wherry descendants of the enslaved and sharecroppers.

Oldest son, William Thomas "Tommy" Wakefield, attending Frazier High School in Covington, graduating in May 1964. He entered the United States Army in November 1964, a tumultuous time in America history, attending boot camp in South Carolina and advance military training in Texas. Assigned to the 562d Artillery Division in Fulda, Germany, he was the HAWK Missile Crew member/Trainer for the Army's 6th Battalion. As

the HAWK missile trainer, he maintained and prepared HAWK missiles and associated equipment for launching missions and supervised operations of HAWK missile firings. Wakefield served two years on active duty and four years in the United States Army Reserves. He separated honorably as a Staff Sergeant in 1970.

Although, Wakefield's four younger brothers followed him into military service, they did not follow him into the Army, opting instead to join the United States Air Force, the path their Uncle Olune Wakefield took during WWII. Their father, Andrew Wherry, Jr. served in the United States Navy during the second world war.

The second oldest brother, Leamon E. Wherry, born to Andrew Wherry Jr. and Ruby L. Wakefield, attended George R. Ellis Jr. High School in Munford, graduating in May 1968. After graduation, he entered the United States Air Force on

July 1968 as a Law Enforcement Patrol Officer. Leamon served in various capacities as a law enforcement officer, including investigator, at bases in California, Utah and Colorado and in several overseas locations, including Vietnam, Taiwan, Guam, and England. His last assignment for the Air Force saw him serving as the Deputy Director of the Family Support Center assigned to the 323rd Air Base Group, Mather AFB, Calif., where he developed internal policies and procedures consistent with local operational needs and assisted in the development and presentation of programs to meet identified needs of base personnel and their families. Master Sergeant Wherry supervised over 46 volunteers while serving as liaison with civilian, commercial, military, and other governmental entities. Master Sergeant Wherry spent 20 years in the United States Air Force and retired in August 1988.

Timothy Wherry was the third broth-

er to join the military, and the second to enter the Air Force. Graduating from Munford High School in 1974, 17-year-old Tim entered the Air Force on June 26, 1974 as a Material Storage and Distribution Specialist and cross-trained into the pharmacy career field in May 1978. Serving across the United States in Texas, Colorado, Michigan, Missouri, Florida and Georgia, Idaho and overseas in the Philippines, Tim had a storied career in the Pharmacy field and at the end of his career, he provided pharmacy services to over 50,000 eligible beneficiaries while serving as the Superintendent, Pharmacy Services assigned to the 34th Support Squadron, 34th Medical Group, Moody Air Force Base, Ga. Tim Wherry spent 21 years in the United States Air Force and retired as a Master Sergeant in April 1995.

The fourth brother to serve his country, Ridley H. Wherry, also did so as an Airman, entering the Air Force after graduating Munford High in Spring 1976. By the end of 1976, he had made his deci-

sion to enter the United States Air Force on December 1976 as an Administrative Specialist.

Master Sergeant Ridley H. Wherry served at Air Force bases across the country, including Texas, Mississippi, and Florida and overseas in Germany and Iceland. For his final duty assignment, he served as the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of Administration, assigned to the 2nd Fighter Squadron, Tyndall AFB, Fla., and he was responsible to the commander and staff for providing all administrative, personnel, and manning actions relating to all assigned personnel. His team's efforts and professionalism contributed to maintaining mission readiness.

Master Sergeant Wherry spent 19 years in the United States Air Force before retiring as a Master Sergeant in January 1995.

Although, the youngest brother, Victor D. Wherry, will jokingly confirm he outranks all his older brothers. He also went the path of our nation's aviation service,

and like his three other brothers who served in the Air Force, he also completed a career rising to the rank of Senior Master Sergeant at the time of his retirement in June 2004.

Victor Wherry attended Munford High School, graduating in May 1982 and entered the United States Air Force on November 1982 as a Passenger and Household Goods Specialist. Not only serving in Texas, California, and Oklahoma, Master Sergeant Wherry also served in several exotic locations including Korea, Saudi Arabia, Australia, and England. For his last tour, Victor served as his squadron's First Sergeant, responsible for the effective leadership, management, morale and welfare of the unit's military and civilian personnel.

During his career, Master Sergeant Victor D. Wherry earned five Meritorious Service Medals, two Air Force Commendation Medals, two Air Force Achievement Medals, the Army Achievement Medal, Air Force Outstanding



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Leamon Wherry



Timothy Wherry



Ridley H. Wherry

Unit Award, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award, seven Air Force Good Conduct Medals, two National Defense Service Medals, two Southwest Asia Service Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, three Air Force Overseas Short Tour Ribbons, Air Force Overseas Long Tour Ribbon, five Air Force Longevity Service Awards, three Professional Military Education Ribbons and Air Force Training Ribbon.

The brothers were honored with a well-attended reception in February before COVID-19 struck the country. With friends, family, and community members in attendance, they were recognized for their life-long dedication to their country and its people. The Tipton County Museum, Veterans Memorial and Nature Center, located at 751 Bert Johnston Avenue in Covington, currently features an exhibit honoring Sgt. Wakefield and his younger Wherry brothers. The exhibit will be available until the end of January and



Victor D. Wherry



William Thomas "Tommy" Wakefield

can be seen when the Museum is open for business, currently Tuesday and Fridays

from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and on Thursdays from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

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2021 Ford Bronco Is Here, And It's Everything You Hoped For!

You can Sasquatch any trim to get the HOSS but you only get the creeper on the four. What are we talking about? Oh, just Bronco stuff. You gotta know the lingo, and Ford is introducing plenty of it. The 2021 Ford Bronco is here—or will be, at dealers, next spring—and with it comes a torrent of jargon. We'll explain all the details. But the first thing to know is that you're gonna want that Sasquatch package. Which comes with the HOSS, or "High-Performance Off-Road Stability Suspension." The Bronco, available in both two- and four-door models, starts at \$29,995 for a base two-door and \$34,695 for the four-door. That setup comes with a 2.3-liter EcoBoost inline-four (projected to make 270 horsepower and 310 lb-ft of

torque) and a seven-speed Getrag manual transmission. Ford likes to call first gear a crawler gear, which, when paired with the optional automatic four-wheel-drive transfer case, delivers a 94.8:1 crawl ratio—similar, actually, to a Wrangler Rubicon. The shift pattern puts that gear, "C", below reverse, to keep it out of the way during daily driving. The manual is only available with the 2.3, which can also be paired with a 10-speed automatic. The optional 2.7-liter EcoBoost V-6 is slated to make 310 horsepower and 400 lb-ft of torque. So whichever engine you choose, your Bronco is going to be turbocharged. Whether or not to boost, then, is one decision Bronco customers won't have to make. Beyond that, the



Bronco decision tree gets wild. You know how, when there's a hot new model, a car company will typically roll out some kind of launch-edition trim? The Bronco has that—dubbed First Edition, and kitted out with maximum off-road gear and



luxury options—along with no fewer than six other trims. Above the base model, there's the Big Bend, which upgrades the 30-inch tires to 32 inches. Then comes the Black Diamond, which brings skid plates, rock rails and a locking rear differential. Outer Banks is your more luxury-oriented trim, sort of like a Wrangler Sahara. The Wildtrak is the desert runner, bringing the 2.7 V-6, 35-inch tires, and position-sensitive Bilstein dampers. And the Badlands is like a Wrangler Rubicon, optimized for gnarly trail work with 33-inch tires and a disconnecting front sway bar. The Badlands also comes with marine-grade vinyl upholstery and a rubberized hose-it-out floor, though you can option it up with a fancier interior. Got all that? Good, because there's

one more thing: the Sasquatch package. That's your primo off-road gear: 35-inch Goodyear Territory mud-terrain tires, a 4.70 final-drive ratio, locking front and rear Spicer differentials, 17-inch black-painted beadlock-capable wheels, high-clearance suspension and fender flares, and the Bilstein dampers. Sasquatch Broncos also get a full three inches of extra track width. The package can be added to any trim level, but it's standard on Wildtrak and First Edition. So your bang-for-the-buck off-road beast will be a base model with Sasquatch. Solid-axle enthusiasts will find one out back: a five-link Dana 44 with coil-overs. But even the old Broncos gave up solid front axles for 1980. So it's unsurprising that the 2021 Bronco uses an independent

front end, which is advantageous for every situation outside of extreme off-road articulation. And even then, the Bronco offers a semi-active disconnecting front sway bar to enable the best possible articulation (you disconnect it via a button, but it reconnects automatically). Besides the dynamic benefits of IFS, including lower unsprung weight, the independent front end allows fitment of a sweet "bash plate" that protects the diff. The 11.6 inches of ground clearance for a two-door with 35-inch tires bests even the Raptor. And a max fording depth of 33.5 inches is getting into amphibious-vehicle territory. The independent front end and turbo gas engines are two areas—but not the only ones—where the Bronco diverges from its most obvious benchmark (the one that rhymes with "Peep Tangler"). Ford looked beyond automotive reference points, too. For instance: the Polaris RZR side-by-side. The RZR might've influenced the Bronco's doors, which are frameless, like a side-by-side's, and removable. The doors store in fitted bags that you can take with you (in the four-door, anyway), though they do eat up pretty much all the cargo space behind the rear seat. Since the exterior rearview mirrors are mounted to the base of the A-pillar, you keep your mirrors even when the doors are off. Your move on that one, Jeep!

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2. Downtown Paris delightfully blends two centuries of community history and architecture, with current trends in retail and dining. Experience the enchanting shops, enjoy coffee or a meal served by friendly, hometown entrepreneurs. Afterwards, snap a pic with a whimsical catfish or mural, then cool off at the inviting Fountain Plaza or

shady courthouse lawn.

3. Kentucky Lake & Paris Landing Ramble down to Paris Landing State Park, where the Tennessee River rolls through Kentucky Lake on its way north to the Dam. Poke around the campground, marina and hiking trails, swing a golf club, rent a boat or take a swim in our favorite part of this 652 mile river. Need a snack? Delightful eateries are located on or near the water.

4. Experience a taste of Paris at authentic eateries serving meals from mouthwatering catfish to the tastiest BBQ in the region. Feeling more cosmo? Scrumptious sushi, mai fun, shrimp pasta, hot enchiladas, pizza prepared 100 delicious ways, delectable cocktails and locally-brewed beers await you! In Paris,

you can taste it all!

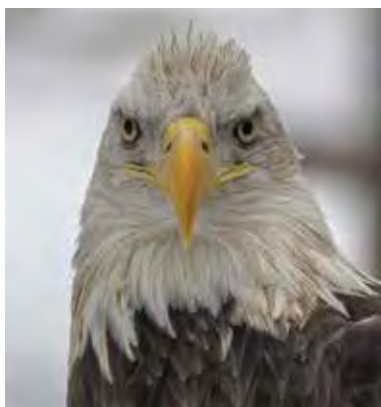
5. Experience a family-friendly play date with nature at the TN National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, hiking/birding/biking trails and overlooks or Paris Landing State Park's birds of prey, trails and more. Knowledgeable marina staff will help you fish the waters of championship anglers on legendary Kentucky Lake. Paddle up close to explore the shoreline, jump the waves till sunset, then relish a goodnight smore at your campsite.

The List doesn't end there. We could easily list five festivals or events, five shopping opportunities, five places to take the whole family, or five date night ideas... Be watching for more ideas on how to enjoy your visit!

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Christmas on the Square

Christmas on the Square skates off to a great start

Christmas on the Square kicked off Saturday, Dec. 11, and it truly was a blessing to see! People came from all

around to bring their families and participate in the ice-skating rink hosted by the Benton County/Camden Chamber of

Commerce. This event was made possible by funding from the Tennessee River Resort District in Benton County and a



Tennessee Cares Act Grant.

With people of all ages there for the fun, families got to enjoy something not normally available in Benton County. There were around 500 skaters over the weekend, sampling the ice in 30-minute sessions. Those unsure of their footing could use little sliding dolphins to learn how to skate, or just go along for the ride. Big sisters pushed little brothers, and vice versa, and everyone had fun.



Annatia Evans spent all day at the rink with her grandchildren.



Castiel (Age 3) and Dakota Howe are all smiles.

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Friends (from left) Alysa Travis, Jayden Brown, and Miley Hartney enjoy the ice.



Sisters Keylee and Kaylee Baker show some sisterly love.



“We had so much fun ice skating on the court square tonight! We seriously had the best time! I am so thankful for our Chamber and these two hardworking women for making this happen for our community,” said Ashley Travis. “Good job Chamber, you just made winter wonderful this year for so many kids by giving them a first time experience learning to skate.”

With food trucks and vendors all around the square, everyone had a chance for a wonderful weekend outing. Hand sanitizing stations were placed around the square, and everyone who

was able was asked to wear a mask. Many health precautions were in place to protect skaters. While on the ice, masks were mandatory. Staff cleaned and sanitized equipment and surfaces in between sessions.

“With 2020 being such a tough year for everyone, we hope it has done everyone some good to see the smiles on all of their friends’ and neighbors’ faces,” said Chamber Director Bonie’ Curtin. “I am so thankful for all of those who have come out to enjoy this event.”

Christmas on the Square continued through Monday, Dec. 28.



Elizabeth Richardson, 6, daughter of Daniel and Lena Richardson, pushes a dolphin across the ice at Camden’s Hallmark Christmas on the Square event while big sister Emmalyn (8) pushes little sister Ella Rose (2) on a dolphin behind her.

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Hundreds of thousands of outstanding burgers and shakes have been served out of this building, first as Tip's Dairy Dip and later as Amo's. Many Huntingdon youth gained their first employment here serving the people of Carroll County.

AP's Dairy Bar

Come And Enjoy Huntingdon's Newest Eating Establishment

ronPARK
MVP Contributor

Over the years, there have been a lot of meals served and quite a few name changes on the sign at 20905 East Main Street.

Not long ago, it was called the Burger Cabin. Before that it was the Mustang Grill, Amo's, Tipps, and it was probably named something else even before that.

What has remained constant is a tradition of good food and a hometown atmosphere.

Now, AP's Dairy Bar is continuing and adding new life to that tradition under the ownership of Austin and Autumn Prater.

AP's opened for business on November 17, and, according to the Praters, business is going well at the newly renovated site, and their patronage is growing as word about their delicious and various menu options, friendly service, and eye-catching décor spreads throughout the community.

As far as their menu, it of course features the expected staples of burgers and fries,

though the Praters are offering some fresh spins on those classic standards.

What's unique about their burgers is the extent to which customers can customize them to their own tastes with a big variety of toppings to choose from. Burger-lovers can pick from five cheese options, including American, pepper jack, Swiss, mozzarella, and cheese sauce. Other available toppings include: lettuce, tomato, pickles, raw onions, crispy onions, mushrooms, jalapenos, hot sauce, A1 steak sauce, chili, ketchup,

mustard, Miracle Whip, mayo, BBQ sauce, and bacon.

And if you're not in the mood for a conventional burger, AP's also offers pizza burgers, crispy and grilled chicken sandwiches, hotdogs, chili cheese dogs, mini corn-dogs, and chicken strips.

When it comes to sides, AP's has got plenty of variety in that department, as well, with crinkly fries, sweet potato waffle fries, crispy waffle chips, jumbo cheese tots (with bacon or jalapeno), cheese curds, and chili all on the menu.



And what would a dairy bar be without ice cream?

AP's offers plenty of cool, sweet treats, including cones, sundaes, shakes, and concrete mixers in a variety of flavors. For those who like their desserts a little warmer, they also serve hot fudge brownies.

Mr. Prater pointed out that AP's is the only location within an hour's drive of Huntingdon that serves custard-based ice cream, which is thicker and creamier than the mostly whipped served at most fast food places.

AP's provides both drive-thru and dine-in options, and those who choose to dine in are sure to be impressed with the restaurant's classic 50's pop culture décor.

There are also outside, picnic-style dining tables for nice days, and when the weather warms back up, servers may again start providing window-side service in the parking lot for those who prefer to enjoy their meal in the comfort of their own vehicle.

Formerly a store manager for Prater's Taters, Mr. Prater said

that he got the idea to open his own restaurant from his brother.

"He called me at 11 p.m. one night, basically woke me up, and said he had an idea for me," he said.

At his brother's urging, Mr. Prater met him that next day at the former Burger Cabin building.

"We looked it over, all the right doors opened, and now here we are," said Mr. Prater, who added that this has been the easiest and smoothest business opening he has ever been involved with, and he credited his excellent staff of 12 employees for much of that.

"We have the best crew," he said. AP's is open to serve customers from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and is closed on Sundays.

The Praters said they are strongly considering staying open later than 9 p.m. on the nights of Huntingdon High School home sporting events to give players, parents, and fans a chance to grab some late night eats before heading to the house.



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White Squirrel Winery

A Romantic Winery & Vineyard Right Here In West Tennessee

brookeCOFFEY
MVP Contributor

If you have not visited Kenton, Tennessee you are missing out on one of the true hidden gems in northwest (and possibly, all of) Tennessee - White Squirrel Winery! Located on the Sanderson Family Farm, White Squirrel Winery, offers a romantic winery and vineyard, serving a variety of delicious wines, homemade soaps and candles. However, what truly sets this vineyard apart is the warm family atmosphere that envelops you as soon as you walk in the door.

In 2014, the Sanderson family founded White Squirrel Winery to provide northwest Tennessee with high quality wines made right in the heart of the

region. Their wines are all made right at home in Kenton, TN using grapes grown on the 90-acre farm. The Sanderson family has created a collection that ranges from blackberry wine to red muscadine. The property includes a beautiful tasting room, outdoor patio, and romantic loft available for Airbnb getaways that overlooks the grapevines. The view of the vineyard from the beautifully crafted wood building is truly breathtaking.

White Squirrel Winery not only provides wine to the northwest Tennessee region, but is one of the largest grape suppliers in all of Tennessee! Growing over 180,000 pounds of grapes yearly, the Sanderson farm grapes are used in popular wines such as those at Ar-

lington Vineyards in Nashville.

So why the name White Squirrel? Surprisingly enough, Kenton Tennessee is home to the largest concentration of albino (white) squirrels in North America! The white squirrel has become the town's "mascot" as you are likely to see one running around if you spend much time visiting. Kenton even has a yearly white squirrel festival. The winery name pays homage to the incredible town and people that you will find there, reminding the Sanderson family of their roots.

It's safe to say that White Squirrel is a must see when making your way through the great state of Tennessee. For more information, to plan your private event at the winery or book an Airbnb getaway, visit whitesquirrelwinery.com.



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Reelfoot Lake



White Squirrel
Winery

Obion Tennessee County

Visit the New Agriculture Exhibit

Discovery Park of America's new one-million-dollar agriculture exhibit is now open. "AgriCulture: Innovating for Our Survival," is a mind-blowing, myth-busting farming exhibit that tells the story of innovation in farming in the past, present—and especially—future. Now open in the Simmons Bank Ag Center at Discovery Park in Union City, Tenn.



www.obioncounty.org
www.whitesquirrelwinery.com
www.discoveryparkofamerica.com
www.reelfoottourism.com





The cast of "Hitchcock" produced at The Masquerade Theater, which is on the national register of historic places, and is located in downtown Union City



Masquerade Theatre

at The Capitol

Masquerade Theatre, Inc. has been producing theatrical productions for 17 years including musicals, comedies, dramas, children's plays, workshops, and concerts. Our formal season begins each spring with a major musical production followed by three additional shows to complete a four production season. We also provide other workshops, concerts, etc. during the year.

The theatre has presented many successful productions. All of our produc-

tions cover a range of audience appeal and a variety of potential participation from our area. It is our continued goal to bring to Northwest Tennessee a quality art form through the medium of live stage performance. Our plays are open to anyone who is willing to audition and we encourage folks from all around our area to join our cast and crew.

Fortunately, we have the historic Capitol Theatre to call our home. The

Capitol is on the National Register of Historic places and is truly a treasure. Through a local grant, our theatre received funds to install a counterweight fly system which has greatly enhanced our ability to bring quality productions to the stage. For more information on joining our troupe or for future show schedules please visit:

<http://www.ucmasqueradetheatre.com>

Learning About The Obion County Public Library

brook**COFFEY**
MVP Contributor

Today I met with Carolina Conner, Interim Director at the Obion County Public Library. Carolina has been at the library since 2011 and after meeting her and taking a tour, I can tell she has a true passion for what she does. When most people think of a library, they think of checking books in and out and that's as far as the mind goes. However, the Obion County Library

is so much more. From the park in the back that features an amphitheater and book walk to the largest selection of Ellison Dies I have ever seen, I soon realized how much the library has to offer to community members.

While the library is home to a ton of activities, I also found that there is an abundance of local history to be found. On file, there are local newspapers that date all the way back to 1883. After the year 1945, they have every issue that was produced. The library also has a genealogist on staff that can help

research your family ancestry. How exciting!

The employees at the library are always looking for something creative and fun to offer. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, they offered a drive-in movie in the parking lot! I think that the library should be a stop for all community members as you will find a welcoming environment and be so happy that you stopped!

To learn more about the Obion County Public Library resources and programs, visit oclibrary.org.



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Making presentation at Community Montessori

Pictured Left to Right: James Johnson, Leigh Anne Bentley, Eddie Hayes, Callie Dollar, Ron Tharpe, Dr. Marlon Kin.

Leaders Education Foundation Awards \$10,000 To Area Educators

Leaders Education Foundation, a non-profit 501C-3 formed by Leaders Credit Union, is pleased to award ten West Tennessee educators with the L.E.A.D.S. Educator Grant. This program awards ten \$1,000 grants to area educators whose initiatives empower students to Learn, Experience, Advocate, Dream, and Serve.

“The L.E.A.D.S. Educator Grant embodies who we are as an organization because we are here to serve, advocate and educate our members and allow them to dream of a new future,” said Leigh Anne Bentley, President of Leaders Education Foundation. “Especially in 2020, we are proud to support educators as they navigate through an uncertain school year.”

Grant proposals range from funds for agriculture livestock pasture, a virtual field trip, band program equipment, to funding for a school broadcasting drone. Grant submissions included a short video explaining the need and use of the grant money. Twelve proposals were submit-

ted, and the top ten winners were chosen by the community via social media voting. Winners include:

- Kyle Gehring, Bradford High School
 - o Grant Project: Bradford Agriculture Livestock Pasture
- David Sinclair, South Side High School
 - o Grant Project: Band iPad
- Sarah Hubbard, Elmore Park Middle School
 - o Grant Project: Podcast Recording Equipment
- Callie Dollar, Community Montessori School
 - o Grant Project: Virtual Field Trip to Jamestown, Virginia

- Angela Searcy, Jackson Madison County Schools
 - o Grant Project: Student Study Spots
- Matthew Barker, Freed Hardeman University
 - o Grant Project: Class Fundraiser Campaign
- Todd Lewis, Chester County Schools
 - o Grant Project: Eagle Vision Network Drone Project
- Linda Lane, Madison Academic High School
 - o Grant Project: Madison’s Academic Decathlon
- Brittany Fowler, West Carroll Elementary School
 - o Grant Project: Robots in the Class-

LEADERS

EDUCATION FOUNDATION

room

• Nathan Lewis, JCM Early College High School

o Grant Project: Books for Scholars
“We’ve been amazed with each grant submission we received,” Bentley said. “Success is in the power of people helping people, and we plan to continue to lead the way.”

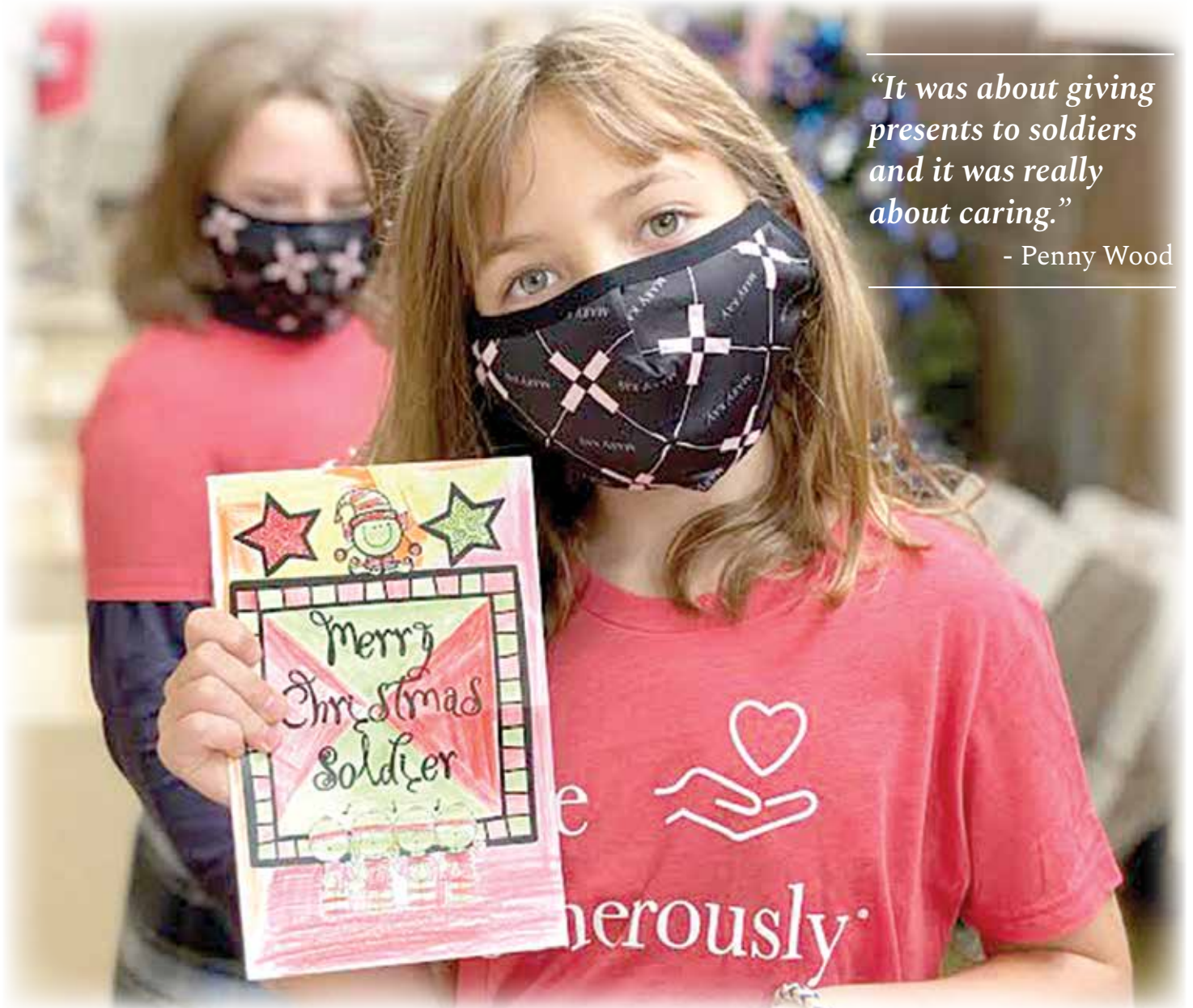
About Leaders Education Foundation:
Leaders Education Foundation is as a non-profit 501c3 organization based in Jackson, Tenn. Established in 2019, the Foundation allows community-minded citizens, members, and organizations to unite to makes lives better together. The Foundation invests back into the local community through scholarships, grants, and financial literacy resources to provide educational opportunities promoting workforce development, job enhancement, lifelong learning, and training for students, teachers, and our community. For more information about Leaders Education Foundation, please visit their website.



Leigh Anne Bentley, Kyle Gehring, Shea Brown, along with Bradford High School Future Farmers of America Officers.



Leigh Anne Bentley, Brittany Fowler, Tracy Foster



“It was about giving presents to soldiers and it was really about caring.”

- Penny Wood

Student Penny Wood

Shelby County Students Send Christmas Care Packages To Deployed Troops

pamela **MIRABELLA**
MVP Publishing

While COVID-19 cancelled many events, including this year’s Veteran’s Day program at Immanuel Lutheran School, the pandemic did not stop the students from showing support for the

troops.

“The students were asking what they could do since we weren’t able to have our annual Celebrate America activities,” said third-grade teacher, April Jones. “As a school, we always find it important to support our troops and I have a son that served in the Army so

I know just how vital that support is to personnel.”

One of Jones’ former students, Specialist Ian MacGregor is stationed in Qatar. She stays in contact with the student’s family through Facebook. Specialist MacGregor said Christmas care packages would be most appreci-

ated and explained what types of items to include.

The school went to work. Students and teachers of Immanuel's First, Third and Fourth grades signed up to bring different items, while students made cards and ornaments at school.

On November 20, the students worked together to assemble the packages. "My favorite part was the packing because I felt like the soldiers would really like the stuff. It was fun with my friends and getting to help the first graders cause we got to see what everyone brought," said third-grader, Penny Wood.

Thrivent, a financial services organization, and Elizabeth Prauner, a Mary Kay consultant, helped by donating supplies and funds to make sure the care packages reached their destination. "The students packed 60 goodie bags filled with items like snacks, card games, toiletries, socks and more," Jones smiled.

When Penny was asked about the Trees for Troops project she said, "It was about giving presents to soldiers and it was really about caring."



Taylor McNeil, and Eliah Scheidegger, students at Immanuel Lutheran school located in Bartlett pack care packages for our troops



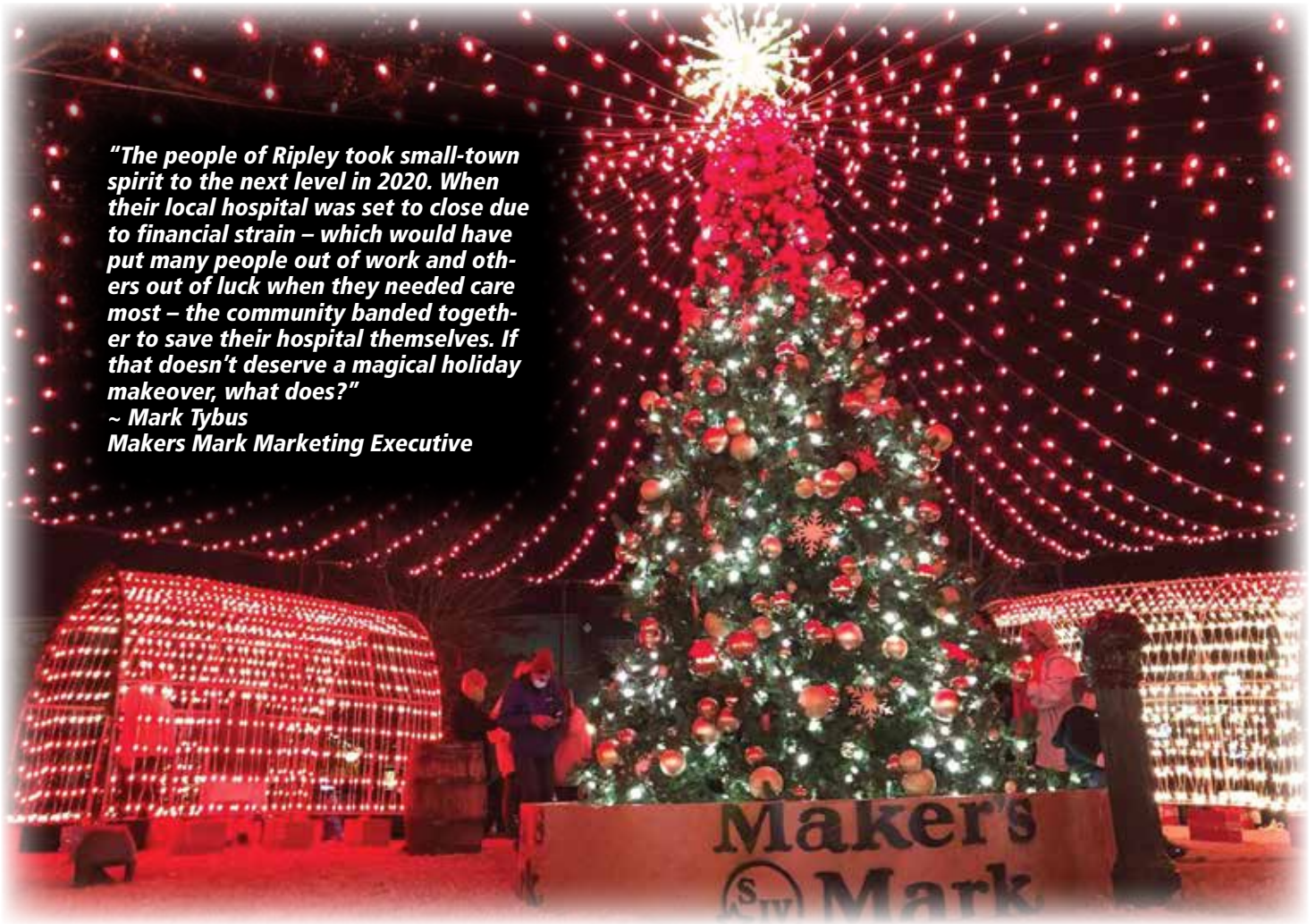
Students Matthew Winter, Mycah Tunstall, and Zenon Szyzuta



Students Tripp Sealey & Alexander Fuller

"The people of Ripley took small-town spirit to the next level in 2020. When their local hospital was set to close due to financial strain – which would have put many people out of work and others out of luck when they needed care most – the community banded together to save their hospital themselves. If that doesn't deserve a magical holiday makeover, what does?"

*~ Mark Tybus
Makers Mark Marketing Executive*



City of Ripley Wins Nationwide "Small Town, Bright Lights" Contest Sponsored by Makers Mark

jonathanMOODY

Discover West Tennessee Editor

This story begins with a community in a bad situation. Lauderdale County hospital was one of thousands of rural hospitals around the country that had fallen into a dire financial crisis. Back taxes, supply shortages, lack of doctors caused the emergency room to close first. Staff going weeks at the time not getting paid would have caused lesser people to just lay down and give up. Add in the coronavirus epidemic and the people of Lauderdale County's situation was

dire indeed. But that's not the stock that Lauderdale County folks are made of. The community banded together to save the hospital themselves. This is a story of it's own that would take several pages to relate.

The story of the "Small town, bright lights" contest begins with the City of Ripley's mayor Craig Fitzhugh surfing the internet. He stumbled across a contest sponsored by Makers Mark, the world famous distillery. The rules were pretty simple for entry. The winning entry must be from a community that has struggled, but has met that struggle with

resilience and overcome their obstacles. Here is the catch: You could only submit one picture and your explanation of why you felt your town deserved to win could only be related in 280 characters submitted via Twitter. His wife convinced him to go for it.

Mayor Fitzhugh's mind moved on to more immediate concerns. He says that getting the phone call telling the city they had won the national contest was one of the most surreal and shocking moments of his life. "This story is just so remarkable, there were over 1,000 entries and little ole Ripley, Tennessee was the

winner!” Fitzhugh related. The hardest part according to the mayor was having to keep the good news a secret until an official announcement from Makers Mark.

Once the winner was announced the company got to work in November hauling in decorations, greenery, lights,

etcetera. “Makers Mark distillers have been so good to our town and county, they were so friendly and easy to work with. We can’t thank them enough for what they have done for the people of Ripley.”

If you have never been to downtown Ripley it is a beautiful and charming

town in it’s own right even when it is not decorated from top to bottom in Christmas decorations. With the added beauty of sparkling Christmas trees and cheery music being piped in over P.A. systems, it truly reminds you of a Norman Rockwell painting.



Makers Mark announcement



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Ripley mayor Craig Fitzhugh

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