



Sweet 16
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The Times

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briefs

Snowfighters clear path for motorists

PIKEVILLE — State highway maintenance crews started monitoring the roads in District 12 at midnight when Johnson County Maintenance crew was called out. Martin County Maintenance followed at about 2 a.m. and all 10 crews in the district's seven counties were out by 3 a.m. clearing a path through snow and slush.

"Mostly what we've found is slush and wet pavement," said Tarnell Patton, point man at Highway District 12's Snow Command Center in Pikeville. "In higher elevations there is some accumulation, and we are always careful to treat bridges and cold spots." Patton explained that cold spots are usually found in places where there has been a cut in the mountain to make room for the road bed.

"As temperatures warm, and traffic warms the pavement," he explained, "the slush will likely turn to water. We expect a rainy mix of precipitation the rest of the morning and into the afternoon, maybe some sleet, but probably not any more snow today."

Patton reminded motorists that wet pavement can be just as treacherous as ice or snow. "Drive cautiously, slower than usual," he advised. "Buckle up, use your headlights, be especially careful at intersections and when making left turns across oncoming traffic. Just use common sense and be safe out there. Our crews will stay on the job until this weather situation has passed. We are doing all we can to make the roads safe and we just ask drivers to do their part to help everyone get to their destinations safe and sound."

50 years later ...



photos courtesy of Jean Burke

Shortly after the 1957 flood hit, local residents turned to their boats for transportation, as floodwaters converted city streets to rivers.

1957 flood remains county's worst disaster

Improvements reduce chance of repeat

by ALEX SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Fifty years ago this week, residents throughout Eastern Kentucky began to embark on a massive reconstruction effort the likes of which the region had not seen since the Civil War.

A devastating flood had just swept through the region, beginning Jan. 28, caused by heavy rainfall which could not be contained within the banks of the Big Sandy River. The waters quickly overflowed and blanketed entire cities under several feet of water. Floyd County, which had not seen such a damaging flood since 1862, was hit especially hard during the flood, with nearly every city and town incurring some amount of damage.

One woman whose home escaped the floodwaters but did see limited damage to her family's drugstore and nearby photo shop was Jean Burke, who was 30 years old at the time. Burke lives less than 100 yards from where the floodwaters crested in Prestonsburg in 1957, in the same house which is located off of University Drive between Prestonsburg High School and where the current Prestonsburg campus of the Big Sandy Community and Technical college is situated.

Burke recalls watching little waves of water splashing their way onto her front porch but not quite making it to the doorway, caused by townspeople who had stirred up the waters as they maneuvered their boats past her home attempting to follow the roadways, which were invisible beneath several feet of water.

"It was really something to see that water," Burke said. "When I looked out over the river I didn't see any houses, I just saw trash and more trash."

The waters, which began to overrun the riverbanks on Monday, Jan. 28, quickly



Little was left untouched by floodwaters in downtown Prestonsburg.

flooded several areas of Floyd County and neighboring Pike and Johnson counties, rose so high in Prestonsburg that the telephone company, located where the Strand Theatre is currently located, was knocked out of commission, effectively cutting off the area from the rest of the country. For 14 hours between Wednesday and Thursday there was no telephone service, with only one line operational for 41 hours after the connection was restored.

The region's main radio station, WPRT, went off the air on Tuesday, Jan. 29, and was unable to resume broadcasting until the following Tuesday.

News of the disaster began reaching across state lines through the use of ham radio, which even then was limited to just three during the flood.

The Red Cross, Salvation Army and several other groups converged on the area to offer food, shelter and help reconstruct the area, but in the immediate days following the flood, residents in affected areas were on their own, relying on friends and family for refuge.

One such refuge was Burke's parents' house in West Prestonsburg. Their home, which was one of the few unaf-

ected in West Prestonsburg because of its location on a hill, served as a temporary shelter for many local residents.

"West Prestonsburg was completely devastated," Burke said. "I don't remember how many people daddy picked up in his boat and took to his house."

Burl Wells Spurlock, the current chairman of the board for First Commonwealth Bank, said he remembers the downtown Prestonsburg area being completely devastated. He recalled hearing that nine feet of water sat in the streets around the home offices of the bank, which was then located in the Legal Arts Building across the street from the current Floyd County Justice Center.

"All the equipment, all the records were underwater, and water also got into the vault," Spurlock said. "It was probably several months before we were able to complete renovations and move back to do business there."

The waters began to recede Jan. 30, two days after the flooding began, and as word of the disaster trickled to outsiders, help began pouring into

(See FLOOD, page three)

Attempted murder case goes to court

by ALEX SMITH
STAFF WRITER

PRESTONSBURG — The West Virginia man who was charged with attempted murder last August after wrestling with a Floyd County sheriff's deputy at an Allen motel pleaded not guilty to all charges Friday.

Twenty-one-year-old Justin Russell was indicted by a Floyd County grand jury Jan. 24 on charges of third-degree assault of a police officer, disorderly conduct, resisting arrest and the attempted murder charge. He waived his formal arraignment Friday, pleading not guilty to all four charges. A pretrial conference was set for May 17.

A \$25,000 cash bond was set for his release which he was able to post. As a non-financial condition of his bond Russell will be required to remain on home incarceration until

the case is concluded.

Russell was indicted on the charges one day after he had finished serving a 60-day sentence stemming from a separate arrest last July for public intoxication, disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. Russell was found guilty and received the sentence on Oct. 30 after he failed to appear at a scheduled pretrial conference.

State police had been called to a gas station July 21 after Russell had placed a phone call to his father claiming his life was in danger and he needed money. Trooper Shawn Little was dispatched to the scene and attempted to place Russell under arrest for public intoxication, which is when Russell allegedly took a swing at Little, leading to the other charges.

(See COURT, page three)

Bank honors 50-year employee

by JESSICA HALE
STAFF WRITER

PRESTONSBURG — "The floodwaters (of 1957) receded and we found Gilva," said First Commonwealth Bank President/CEO Greg Wilson, as he described the beginning of Gilva Horn's career at a celebration held Friday in honor of her 50th year as an employee.

Horn has become somewhat of a fixture within the bank, serving the citizens of Floyd County since Feb. 2, 1957. She was hired on Feb. 1 of that year, at which time First Commonwealth was known as First

National Bank and was under eight feet of floodwater. With those murky darkened waters came an individual who has made her mark in the business of banking, working her way up the ladder to her current position as assistant vice president.

During her 50 years of service, Horn has served under four bank presidents and moved along with the times as banking became computerized and changed the business forever.

"Throughout all of the change at First Commonwealth Bank

(See EMPLOYEE, page three)



photo by Jessica Hale

First Commonwealth Bank Chairman Burl Wells Spurlock assisted Gilva Horn as she opened a gift from the employees of the bank during a surprise celebration given in honor of her 50 years of service.

2 DAY FORECAST

Today
Partly cloudy
High: 28 • Low: 13

Tomorrow
Some snow
High: 23 • Low: 3

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inside

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Regional Obituaries

FLOYD COUNTY

Edgel "Delano" Davis Jr., 73, of Nokomis, Florida, formerly of Hueysville, died Monday, January 29...

Hattie Jarrell, 79, of Prestonsburg, died Sunday, January 28, at Highlands Regional Medical Center...

months, the daughter of Kelly Slone and Tina Woods, of Louisa, died Saturday, January 27...

held Friday, February 2, under the direction of Community Funeral Home.

Ernest Ray Lovern, 77, of Pikeville, died Sunday, January 28, at his home...

Salyersville, a Floyd County native, died Friday, January 29, at Highlands Regional Medical Center...

MARTIN COUNTY

Virgie (Oma) Harless Maynard, 77, of Inez, died Tuesday, January 23, at J.J. Jordan Geriatric Center...

Sharon K. Butcher Meyer, died Monday, January 29, at St. Rita's Medical Center...

Walter Mullett, 85, of Martin County, died Tuesday, January 23, at Highlands Regional Medical Center...

JOHNSON COUNTY

Betty Lou McIntosh Griffith, 72, of Oil Springs, died Tuesday, January 30...

U.K. Medical Center, in Lexington. Funeral services were held Saturday, February 3...

Steven Bradley Harmon, 20, of Oil Springs, died at his home Saturday, January 27...

Mary Daniels Moore, 70, of Paintsville, died Sunday, January 28, at the J.J. Jordan Nursing Facility...

Pamela Parson Nesselrotte, 49, of Whiteshouse, died Friday, January 26, at Highlands Regional Medical Center...

Ruth Lee Rowland, 82, of East Point, died Saturday, January 27, at Paul B. Hall Regional Medical Center...

House speaker won't be at top of ballot, anywhere

by ROGER ALFORD ASSOCIATED PRESS

FRANKFORT — In an effort to be fair, the Kentucky secretary of state's office lists gubernatorial candidates on election ballots in a rotating alphabetical order.

The system is intended to allow each slate to appear at the top of the ballot in at least one of Kentucky's six congressional districts.

However, House Speaker Jody Richards and running mate John Y. Brown III, who are among seven slates of candidates in the May 22 Democratic gubernatorial primary, are the only ones who won't get their names at the top of a ballot anywhere.

Secretary of State Trey Grayson posted the line ups on his Web site Friday. The Richards-Brown ticket makes it no higher than second on any of the ballots.

"I think that the current balloting system is less than ideal, and it probably will hurt Jody and I a small but insignificant amount," Brown said Friday. "I've seen a number of studies that show that candidates being on top of the ballot often have an advantage. But that's typically in races that voters know little about. Because of the nature of the governor's race, voters are going to know much more than they ever wanted to about each of the

major candidates, and it won't have as much of an impact on the governor's race."

Grayson said political races are a lot like horse races when it comes to ballot positions.

"There is a lot of speculation about whether a horse should start on the rail, in the

(See BALLOT, page three)

Obituaries

Michael A. Fitzpatrick

Michael A. Fitzpatrick, age 67, of Prestonsburg, died Wednesday, January 31, 2007, at Norton Hospital, in Louisville.

He was born April 9, 1939, in Prestonsburg. He was a corporate pilot, retired alcohol and beverage control officer for the state of Kentucky...

He is survived by his wife, Della Clark Fitzpatrick.

Other survivors include two sons: Michael Rene Fitzpatrick and Mark Loren Fitzpatrick, wife Robin, both of Prestonsburg; Carol Fitzpatrick, mother of Michael and Mark, of Prestonsburg; one brother, Ralph Little, wife Scarlet, of Prestonsburg; and his mother-in-law, Grace Clark.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by two brothers: Paul T. Fitzpatrick and Dal Little.

Funeral services will be held Sunday, February 4, 2007 at 2:00 p.m., at the First United Methodist Church in Prestonsburg, with Mark Walz officiating.

Burial will be in Gethsemane Gardens at Prestonsburg, under the direction of Nelson-Frazier Funeral Home, in Martin.

Visitation was Friday and Saturday, at the funeral home, and after 1 p.m., Sunday, at the church.

Masonic funeral rites were conducted Saturday, at 7 p.m., at the funeral home.

In Lieu of flowers Donations may be made to First United Methodist Church in Prestonsburg. (Paid obituary)

□□□

Eldon G. Hall

Eldon G. Hall, age 59, of McDowell, died Thursday, February 1, 2007, at Hazard Appalachian Regional Hospital emergency room.

Born March 12, 1947, in Martin, he was the son of the late Verma and Melvina (Pet)

Newman Hall. He was a former maintenance worker for the State Parks Department, and a United States Army Vietnam veteran.

Survivors include three daughters and sons-in-law: Melissa and Greg Hunter of Wabash, Indiana; Belinda Gay Hall (Jack Ousley) of Garrett; and Stacy Michelle and Anthony Castle of Hueysville; two brothers and sisters-in-law: Phill M. and Connie Hall of Wabash, Indiana; and Terry D. and Wanda Hall of McDowell; five sisters and brothers-in-law: Eulavene and Hobert Preston of Lexington; Loretta Bolin of McDowell; Joyce Smith of Ft. Wayne, Indiana; Janet Bowling of Tram; and Deborah and Roy Frazier of Price; seven grandchildren: Justin, Dalton, Damon, Breanna, Corey, Blake and Devon; several nieces, nephews, great nieces, and nephews, cousins, and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by one brother, Carl Gene Hall; and two brothers-in-law: Willis Smith and Donnie Bowling.

Funeral services will be held Sunday, February 4, at 1 p.m., at Little Rosa Old Regular Baptist Church of the New Salem Association at McDowell, with ministers of the Old Regular Baptist Church officiating.

Military Service by DAV Chapter 128 at Garrett.

Burial will be in the Newman Cemetery at Hi Hat, under the direction of Nelson-Frazier Funeral Home, in Martin.

Visitation is at the funeral home, and at the church after 11:30 a.m. on Sunday.

Active pallbearers: Justin Boyd, Anthony Castle, Jack Rister, Landon Frazier, Mark

Bowling, Bryan Bowling, Tommy Grierson, and Tim Preston.

Honorary pallbearers: Roy Frazier, Hobert Preston, Terry Hall, Phill Hall, Anthony (Harpo) Castle, and Ralph Smith. (Paid obituary)

□□□

Lorraine Little

Lorraine Little, age 72, of Salem Township, Michigan, passed away Wednesday, January 31, 2007.

She was born December 5, 1934, in Bevinsville, the daughter of Edward and Carrie (Osborne) Hall.

She was united in marriage to the late Paul E. Little, on August 13, 1954.

Survivors include her children: Kimberly (Dave) Marlowe and Paula (Mark) Cesarz; her siblings: Janette (Chuck) Ramey, Jim (Anita) Hall, Joann (Jim) Wright, Barbara Harris, and Emily (Pete) Younger; and her grandchildren: Jennifer (Matt) Murdza, Kevin Marlowe, Cody Cesarz, and Chad Cesarz.

She was expecting her first great-grandchild, Addison Lorraine Murdza, in April.

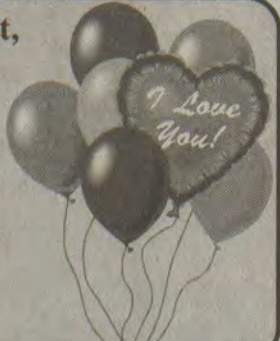
She was preceded in death by her husband and parents.

A funeral service was held Saturday, February 3, at Casterline Funeral Home Inc., of South Lyon, Michigan. She was laid to rest at South Lyon Cemetery.

Memorial contributions to Humane Society of Huron Valley, attn: Development Director, 3100 Cherry Hill Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48105, or Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Donor Services, P.O. Box 4072, Pittsfield, MA 01202, will be appreciated. (Paid obituary)

□□□

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Flood

Continued from p1

the region. "The Red Cross came pretty fast, but they didn't have any way to get the word out," Burke said. Gov. A.B. "Happy" Chandler declared martial law in Floyd County that Thursday and sent the National Guard to the area to subdue looters who had taken advantage of both the limited communications and police presence. A week after the floodwaters had retreated, Gov. Chandler estimated the total amount of damage in 23 Eastern Kentucky counties at \$1 billion. Areas hit hardest by the flood in Floyd County were Martin, Allen, Betsy Layne,

Prestonsburg and Emma. The waters had receded by Friday, Feb. 1, to the point where people could begin assessing the damage and begin wading through the mud in their homes and businesses to take account of what had happened. The Red Cross set up clinics in local churches to give tetanus shots for fear of a typhoid epidemic, which they believed could break out from exposure to the cold, unclean water. The initial Red Cross flood statistics revealed just how devastating the flood had been to the region; 10 houses destroyed and 2,214 homes damaged, with 2,500 families

affected, as well as 301 businesses damaged. More than 1,200 people were sheltered for at least a week at five shelters, and 1,600 people received meals at three feeding stations. As Guardsmen and other aid groups helped with the initial cleanup and humanitarian effort, eventually it was up to the people to rebuild what they could, which in many cases took years. "No flood insurance was available back then, and even if it was, no one was required to offer it or pay out very much on it," Spurlock said. The flood destroyed but also brought substantial change to the area, including

laws making it mandatory that all homes and businesses purchase flood insurance in designated flood zones. Prior to the flood, the only safeguard against the overflow of the Big Sandy River was Dewey Dam, which had been completed in 1949. Since the flood, dams have been constructed in the Levisa Fork region in Yatesville, Paintsville, Pikeville and in neighboring Virginia along the river and its watershed to prevent future floods. Many cities have built their own floodwalls, levees and ringwalls to prevent future flooding. But with dams that are able to regulate water lev-

els and with other flood protections put in place, the possibility of destruction equal to that of the 1957 flood is remote. According to Dewey Lake Park Manager Stonney Burke, an estimated \$80 million in flood damages have been prevented as a direct result of dam construction, which cost a mere \$6 million. Even with all these safeguards in place, the area will never be wholly free from smaller floods. An April 1977 flood, compared by many experts on scale with the 1957 flood, caused an estimated \$198 million in damage in the Levisa Fork Basin area, which includes Floyd County. Several smaller floods caused major damage to smaller areas in 1984, 2001 and 2003. As a result, the city of Martin has undertaken a \$95 million redevelopment project which will move the existing downtown area, which is located in a valley floor that has left it exposed to constant flooding over the years, to a higher elevation. The majority of cities in Floyd County receive more than 40 inches of rain a year, leaving the Big Sandy prone to overflow, with the surrounding

mountains accentuating floods by allowing water to flow quickly downhill during heavy rains. The 1957 flood left an indelible mark on the region which has helped reshape it into a safer area in which to live. The probability of a "100-year flood," a name given to a highly destructive flood which has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any given year, has been reduced significantly since 1957. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has labeled the 1977 flood a 100-year flood, and although it caused extensive damage, the water levels in almost all areas struck by it were considerably lower than the 1957 flood. Spurlock and Burke, who have witnessed the effects of flooding many times over the years, both agree that because of safeguards built in the region since 1957, the chances of another catastrophic flood hitting the region on that scale are slim. "It's unlikely, but I won't say it won't happen," Burke said. "It's unlikely with the new warnings we have."

Court

Continued from p1

Russell was arrested August 18 after Deputies Jeremy Shepherd and Justin Jones were called to the Seasons Inn Motel and Restaurant in Allen to investigate a disturbance complaint in one of the rooms. When the two arrived they went to the room where the complaints had originated from and began questioning the three men who were inside. Russell allegedly refused to follow the

deputies orders to remain quiet while they talked to one of the other men, and after repeated attempts to calm him down he was informed he was under arrest. A fight allegedly ensued between Russell and Shepherd, where Shepherd was overpowered by Russell who had put him into a headlock. Russell finally released Shepherd after Shepherd was able to reach his baton and hit Russell with it sev-

eral times before he momentarily passed out. A second fight allegedly took place outside after Shepherd regained consciousness and caught up with Russell in a field behind the motel. Shepherd said he was hit in the face by Russell and had to use pepper spray and his baton to subdue him and place him under arrest.

Groups call for action to shore up state retirement system

FRANKFORT — The state's retirement system is falling into financial peril and Gov. Ernie Fletcher should act "before we reach a crisis," a coalition of advocacy groups said. The groups, including the Kentucky League of Cities, the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, said the spiraling cost of providing health insurance and pensions to retirees is a "train wreck waiting to happen." They have called on Fletcher to appoint a task force to recommend solutions and want lawmakers to spend the state's projected surplus shoring up the systems. "Cities stand the chance, folks, of going broke if we don't fix the system," Sylvia Lovely, executive director of

the Kentucky League of Cities, said Thursday. Some municipalities, such as West Buechel in Jefferson County, have started laying off police officers because increased contributions to the County Employees Retirement System have gotten too high. "Our cities are crying out for attention to this crisis of epic proportions and for a bipartisan effort toward finding long-term solutions," Lovely said. Fletcher has already announced plans to appoint a panel to study the Kentucky Retirement Systems and has recommended spending at least \$50 million of a projected \$231 million surplus for the fiscal year that ends June 30. The groups want Fletcher to broaden the task force's mandate to include an analysis of the public employee health insurance program and the

retirement systems for local government employees and teachers. "It is important that independent professionals conduct this review," said David Adkisson, president of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. Jodi Whitaker, a spokeswoman for Fletcher, said the governor's office hasn't heard directly from the groups, but their input is welcome. Whitaker said Fletcher hasn't appointed the task force he announced in December. The Kentucky Retirement Systems recently estimated a deficit of \$12 billion caused by chronic underfunding by the General Assembly and recent governors as well as the rising costs of health benefits. That system, which provides retirement benefits to most state workers, has been

given only 61 percent of the money estimated necessary to pay for its future liabilities. The national average is 86 percent. The Teachers' Retirement System has funds to cover 76 percent of its estimated needs, while the County Employees Retirement System can cover 81 percent of its future needs.

Employee

Continued from p1

throughout the years, Gilva has remained a constant," said Wilson. Horn's supervisor, Phillip Elliott spoke a few words during the presentation, saying that he did not see himself as Horn's supervisor because she always knew what she was doing and what needed to be done next. "I think everyone who works here knows that she doesn't need a supervisor," Elliott said. Bank Chairman Burl Wells Spurlock was also on hand to give his thanks to Horn. "Gilva has gone from the horse and buggy days to the days of space flight," Spurlock said as he described her career. Friday's celebration included a slideshow of photographs of Horn throughout the years and a reception with friends and family afterwards in her honor. "I appreciate everyone coming very, very much," Horn said as she fought back tears of joy.



Cover placed over a low-permeable cap layer at the old Floyd County Landfill.

Work near completion at old landfill

FRANKFORT — More than \$3 million in environmental remediation work at the old Floyd County Landfill is near completion. Improvements include a barrier-type cap to prevent entry of rainwater and minimize leachate, surface water drainage, a leachate collection and pumping system and a sewer line to the city of Martin waste water treatment plant.

Leachate is water that collects contaminants as it seeps through the landfill. The Floyd County project is among several being conducted under oversight of the state Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet (EPPC) at old, closed landfills. Upgrades at these old landfills are aimed at protecting human health and the environment - a top priority of the cabinet and

the Fletcher Administration, said EPPC Secretary Teresa J. Hill. Funding is from the Kentucky Pride Program created by the General Assembly in 2002. Program money comes from a \$1.75 per ton fee paid by generators of waste disposed at municipal solid waste landfills and proceeds from a \$25 million bond issue.

Ballot

Continued from p2

middle or in the auxiliary gate," he said. "History has shown that it's the race horse, the jockey and technique that matters, not where you start the race." Political scientists agree, said Joe Gershtenson, director of the Center for Kentucky History and Politics at Eastern Kentucky University. "Certainly, ballot order matters much less in a higher profile race, where people are going to have much more recognition of the names and have a pretty good idea who they're voting for going in," Gershtenson said. "And so it's something where ballot order would make very little difference."

Other Democratic candidates include state Treasurer Jonathan Miller, demolition contractor Otis Hensley, Lexington attorney Gatewood Galbraith, Louisville businessman Bruce Lunsford and former lieutenant governors Steve Henry and Steve Beshear. Gov. Ernie Fletcher, considered politically vulnerable after two years of legal turmoil, is being challenged for the Republican nomination by former U.S. Rep. Anne Northup of Louisville and millionaire race car driver Billy Harper of Paducah. Fletcher was indicted last year on charges that he illegally rewarded political support-

ers with protected state jobs. The indictment was dismissed in a deal with prosecutors, but the special grand jury later issued its findings in the case, saying Fletcher had approved a "widespread and coordinated plan" to skirt state hiring laws. Fletcher, the first Republican elected governor in Kentucky in more than 30 years, has maintained that the investigation was politically motivated by Democratic Attorney General Greg Stumbo, who is running for lieutenant governor on a ticket with Lunsford. Kentucky is one of three states that will elect a governor in 2007.

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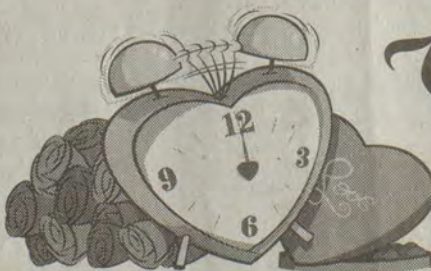
A Message From John Kirk:

As all of us here in Eastern Kentucky know, it's a busy, dangerous place "out there" with lots of Truck Traffic, all kinds of Trucks. Trucks hauling Coal, Trucks hauling Equipment, Trucks hauling just about everything. It's my belief that most Truck Drivers are skilled, competent drivers who are hard-working men and women with a job to do—but, their job is inherently dangerous, their job is to get a product—like coal, for example—to market in the shortest period of time that they can do so, because they are paid by the load. That's why all of the rest of us should do everything we can do to assist truck drivers, things like letting them out in traffic, giving them "the road" so to speak, things like that. True, some Truck Drivers seem to be "bullies" and seem to drive way too fast and way too reckless and sometimes—way too often, it seems—horrible crashes occur and other people are seriously hurt or killed. We have seen a large and growing number of such accidents over the past few years and we have seen the devastation they often cause to innocent and grieving families.

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expression

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— Felix Frankfurter

Our view

Democracy too expensive?

The Associated Press reported last week that county officials across the state are lobbying legislators to eliminate a state law requiring runoff elections under certain circumstances.

As it stands now, if no candidate in a gubernatorial primary receives at least 40 percent of the vote, the top two vote-getters in that primary would square off for another election to determine who represents his or her party in November. The law, enacted in 1992, has never been implemented because candidates in gubernatorial primaries since that time have always met the threshold.

That likely will not happen this year, particularly in the Democratic primary, where seven slates are seeking the nomination. In all likelihood, the winner of that race will emerge with only 20-to-25 percent of the vote.

That prospect has many county officials scared, because holding a runoff election will cost an estimated \$5 million statewide. Critics of the law point out that \$5 million — \$3 million of which would be shouldered by county governments — could be spent on other things, such as improving roads.

Yes, \$3 million does sound like a large amount of money that could be used for all sorts of local projects, but keep in mind that that amount would be split between the state's 120 counties, averaging out to \$25,000 a county. Of course, larger, more populated counties would pay more and smaller ones would pay less.

That kind of money might fix a few potholes, but it certainly won't do much more than that. But let's put money aside, as it should be, and focus on whether the law itself serves a good purpose.

Certainly, most people believe it is important under our system of government to ensure that the will of the people is heard. The runoff election facilitates that, by requiring that gubernatorial nominees be supported by a significant portion of their parties.

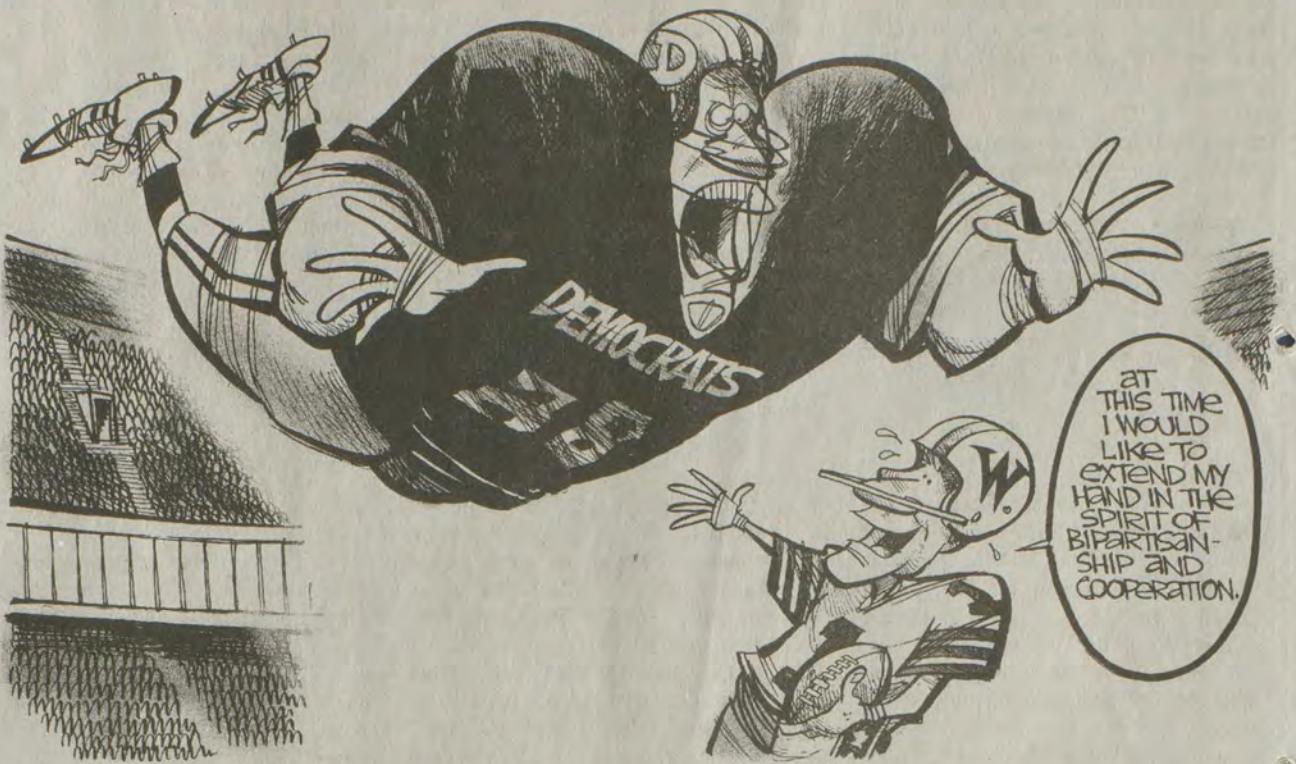
Taking this year as an example, without a runoff election, we could very well see a race this fall between a Democrat who was opposed by 80 percent of Democrats and a Republican opposed by 65 percent of Republicans.

That is hardly democracy and it poses a danger to our system of government. Allowing elections to be won with such small percentages increases the effectiveness of vote fraud and the ability of special interests to hijack the party system.

Our way of life has been paid with the blood of countless soldiers over the years. It would be a shame if their sacrifice were voided for the convenience of filling a few potholes.

— The Floyd County Times

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Rich Lowry Column

The default majority

The "do-nothing Congress" is dead. Long live the "do-nothing Congress." Such should be the proclamation with the ascension of Democrats to control of Congress.

The Republican congressional majority foundered on its inability to address important issues during the past two years, so Democrats are set to fill the breach with an energetic burst of pretending to address important issues. This effort is so urgent that they promised to do it in 100 business hours, trumping Newt Gingrich's first 100 days of legislative action in 1995.

Gingrich mistakenly thought he could govern the country from the speaker's chair and disastrously overreached as a consequence. Speaker Nancy Pelosi's only early overreaching will be exhausting all of her party's popular, largely symbolic measures in a matter of days. What will Democrats do to fill the countless other hours before their term is done?

Some of the Democrats' internal reforms are worthy, especially curtailing privately funded travel and enhancing the transparency of earmarks. It is telling that the late GOP congressional majority couldn't manage even these relatively tepid reforms, since some members of its leadership would have been practi-

cally immobile without a corporate jet.

But all rules have their loopholes, and the ultimate ethics measure is rigorous self-policing. Watch Pelosi ally Rep. John Murtha. If his friends continue to fatten themselves on federal money steered their way by Murtha and return the favor with campaign contributions, nothing will have changed in Congress except the party affiliation of the self-interested barons running the place. Prediction: They will.

The Democratic substance is vanishingly thin. They will raise the minimum wage, but 29 states already have a minimum wage higher than the federal rate. The effect of the hike mainly will be to give a small boost to the wage of teenagers working summers or after school. FDR would yawn.

On prescription drugs, Democrats promised to have the government negotiate for lower drug prices. But the case for major overhaul of the Medicare prescription-drug program has weakened, as the program has proven reasonably popular with seniors and cheaper than expected. Democrats simply might give the Bush administration the authority to negotiate lower prices, which would

be meaningless because the administration opposes such negotiations.

An important political consequence of the Democratic takeover is that it liberates Republicans from the compulsion they had felt to abandon their principles in order to try to protect their majority. As Nancy Pelosi took the speaker's gavel, President Bush sounded the

sort of clarion calls on fiscal responsibility — endorsing a balanced budget in five years — and earmark reform that he never did when free-spending Republicans controlled the Hill. He hopes to box in Democrats with their own anti-deficit rhetoric and force them either to forgo major new spending or embrace politically perilous tax increases.

This is the kind of choice Democrats were able to avoid in November when they became a default majority — a majority elected not for what it stood for, but for what it was not. Eventually, Democrats will have to move beyond their default position if they want a record of substantive accomplishment after the pageantry and symbolism of the 100 hours have passed.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

The Rich Lowry column



beyond the beltway

The state of the union ain't good

by DONALD KAUL
MINUTEMAN MEDIA

Presidential State of the Union addresses tend to be like second marriages: triumphs of hope over experience.

President Bush's speech last week was a lot like that, except that the hope seemed rather desperate. It was a perfunctory list of national problem areas yoked to half-baked solutions. Balanced budgets, more education, better health care, (ho-hum) fairer immigration laws, less dependence on foreign oil, (yawn) less global warming; all got their turn in the box, each to be rendered trivial by the tepid nature of the President's response to their challenge.

Oh, and there was the war of course. Having unveiled his "new strategy" just the week before, he didn't have anything new to say. Speaking to a Congress that was skeptical if not openly hostile his tone was almost plaintive.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, reaching vainly for Churchillian eloquence, "on this day, at this hour, it is still within our power to shape the outcome of this battle. Let us find our resolve, and turn events toward victory."

I half-expected him to break into the old Neo-Conservative hymn: "All We Are Saying, Is Give War a Chance." It would have cheered things up some anyway.

The speech had an eerie "Twilight

Zone" quality. It could have been given two years ago or four, for that matter. None of the problems he mentioned were new. It was as though someone else had been President for the past six years and left all of these messes to be cleaned up.

Actually, the messes are his. It's somewhat amusing that now, as he faces a Democratic Congress (or "Democrat" Congress as he childishly insists on calling it) he speaks sternly of attacking global warming. You mean there's global warming? Who knew?

Perhaps he intends to trick the Democrats into actually doing something about these problems, thereby angering the electorate and sparking a Republican comeback.

If there's anything the electorate hates worse than problems, it's solutions. Anything you do to solve global warming or save Social Security or give everybody health care or reduce dependence on foreign oil is going to cost people money or inconvenience or pain. If it doesn't do that, then it's probably not much of a solution. Which is the category Mr. Bush's solutions fall into. Give tax breaks to people too poor to pay taxes in hopes they'll buy health insurance. Balance the budget by making nickel-and-dime cuts in discretionary spending. Reduce dependence on foreign oil by forcing car manufacturers to increase gas mileage by a mile-a-year for the next few years.

It's a good thing Noah wasn't anything like Mr. Bush. When God told him a flood was coming, he'd have built a rowboat.

So lacking in confidence was the President that he didn't even throw any red meat to his conservative base—nothing on gay marriage or flag burning bans or "activist" judges or the evils of stem-cell research. (Neither did he mention the rebuilding of New Orleans, which he promised to do after Katrina and has not.)

And when he closed by saying that "The state of our union is strong; our cause in the world is right," his heart didn't seem in it. It was a weak speech, weakly delivered.

You know a Presidential address is in trouble when it gets blown out of the water minutes after its conclusion by a nine-minute speech by a rookie senator making his first appearance on a national stage.

Jim Webb of Virginia, responding for the Democrats, delivered a simple and forceful message, based on facts:

Our leaders, he said, in taking us to war owed us "sound judgment, clear thinking, concern for our welfare, a guarantee that the threat to our country was equal to the price we might be called upon to pay in defending it."

"The President took us into this war recklessly...We are now, as a nation, held hostage to the predictable and predicted disarray that has followed."

That hits the neo-con on the head.

Don Kaul is a two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning Washington correspondent who, by his own account, is right more than he's wrong. Email him at donald.kaul2@verizon.net.



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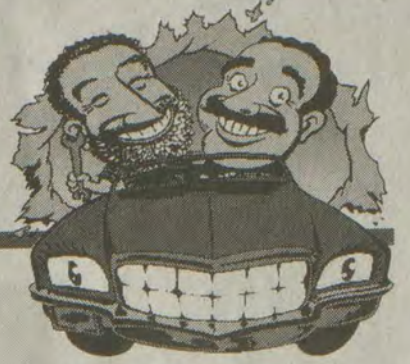
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INSIDESTUFF

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CAR TALK:

Wife gets OK to listen to radio

see pg. A7

**This Town,
That World**

Editor's Note: For years, Floyd County Times founder and former publisher Norman Allen wrote a weekly column that looked at Floyd County through his eyes. His columns are being reprinted due to request.

I refuse to believe that we are to be no more when we die than an old shoe—even if we are heels.

WHAT WILL SATISFY?

For weeks now there have been few conversations in places of business, at home or on the streets, which did not include the junior college, and the bill in the General Assembly at Frankfort.

One of these following the splendid vote given by the House, last week, discussed those who had led the fight here, those who helped, commended Senator Burnis Martin, Representatives Allen Slone and Ben Martin for their work. This was one of those rare conversations in which there was little, if any, criticism of anybody.

Then said one of the group: "If this bill passes the Senate, regardless of who has been for it and is still for it, we can give credit to one man—Bert Combs. If you don't think so, imagine what would have happened to the bill if he had been against it."

That was followed by a comment that the Governor "has stuck his neck out for us" on more than one occasion, and just about as far as it would go. "What else do we want him to do?"

"Give everybody 40 acres and a mule," replied another. But that suggestion was immediately vetoed. Another remonstrated:

"That won't do—a body would have to feed the mule!"

ADVICE FOR THE ASTRONAUT

Lennie Moore, who failed to renew his driver's license in time, after driving a car 40 years or more, had to go through the examination and road test all over from scratch. Not one time, but twice. He finally made it Wednesday, and between sighs of relief asked us to notify Colonel Glenn that if he expected to do much more traveling to be sure and keep his driver's license renewed, and that if he didn't, not to come to Floyd County to take the examination.

NO HELP HERE

August Hahn, 425 Grand Ave., Cincinnati 5, Ohio, subscribed for The Times, a year ago, and we wondered, at the time, wherein lay his interest in Floyd County. This week came a letter from Mr. Hahn explaining that he is retired, that he wanted to move to a small town, and had thought Prestonsburg might be the spot. So he subscribed for the paper to watch the "for rent" ads. Now he writes:

"I have written to several persons advertising places...The only answer I got from any of them was from a Mr. Wells at West Liberty. I can't understand the reluctance of the nicest and friendliest people on

(See ALLEN, page six)



A close up of the beautiful flowers that adorn the bird tree.

The Bird Tree

by DR. PHYLLIS PUFFER

In the dusk about 5:30 pm, the tree was really loud. It hosted a large flock of small birds whose calls filled the whole area. They sounded somewhat like a small river rushing over rocks, but there was also a rusty edge to it, like an old hinge with only a little bit of rust here and there. Just on the very edge of dusk, seconds before any detectable change in the light, they started coming in from all over the University of Botswana campus and who knows where else. They flitted restlessly from branch to branch, looking for just the right spot for the night, exchanging the news of the day.

"This branch is too thin. Last night it bobbed and twisted and I didn't get a minute's rest."

"Did you hear? Bernard was eaten by a cat."

"Are you sure? Now just how many cats do you see around here, anyway?"

"No. No. You never get anything right. Bernard chased a cat."

"It's getting awfully crowded here."

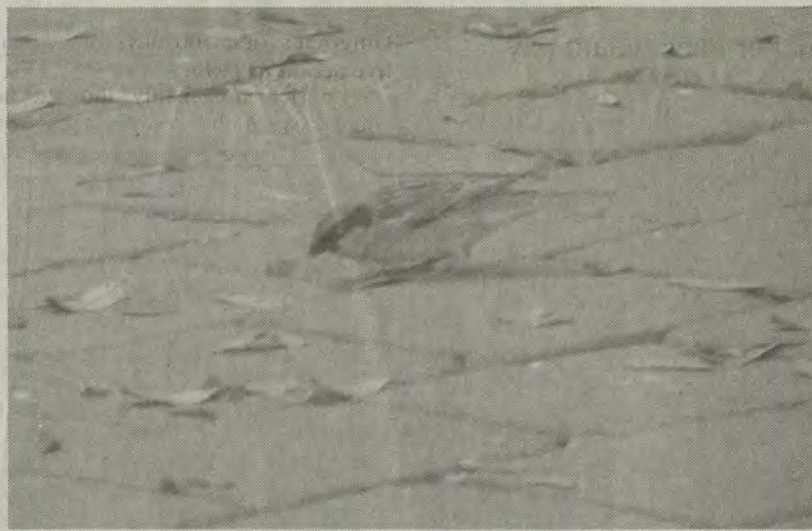
"Come on over. There's plenty of room in this part. But hurry before the others get in."

"Don't you think it's about time for everyone to settle down? Why did I have to choose a branch with the night owls?"

"I never liked Bernard anyway."

By 6:15 it was dark, dark night, the lights in the courtyard were on, and the tree was silent.

At dusk was the only time I ever heard those little birds make a sound. They were small, about the size of Goldfinches. They were brown striped with little black caps and looked like our sparrows. During the day they pecked busily but noiselessly at minute specks on the bricked surface of the courtyard



A lone bird among the fallen leaves.

floor. They flew in and out all day long.

I passed under the tree every morning and every evening and often several times during the day as I entered and left the courtyard where the University of Botswana Social Science building was located. The "tree" was actually three trees and a trunk. Three small trees grew so closely together that their branches intermingled. From some angles they looked like a single tree. The trunk of a fourth leaned sharply into one of the end trees. The whole top of this one had been removed for some reason. The birds also spent their nights in two other larger trees across the courtyard, but the three smaller ones together formed their main social center.

When I first arrived at the university during the second week of June, it was the middle of the southern-hemisphere winter and cold enough for my all-weather coat with liner. The "tree" was thick with leaves and the birds impossible to see. You could see them flying into the tree and out of it, but

once inside it you could only hear them. All that was visible of the birds was their overnight-dried droppings lying under the tree early in the morning before any of the cleaners had gone through. If it hadn't been for the courtyard's brick floor, the soil under the tree would have been unusually fertile.

A week or two after I arrived, a bright red flower appeared at the very top of the tree, slightly off center. For a week or more, only a few flowers gradually appeared at the top and I thought that was going to be all. However, about the second week in July the tree began more changes more rapidly. More and more flowers appeared. As the flowers increased in number, the leaves began to fall. So many fell that it finally became possible to see the birds. They were tiny shapes flying and hopping among the branches.

Then the flowers began to fall, following the path of the leaves to the ground, and bits of red lay among the dried leaves and the

(See TREE, page seven)

**MOVIES FROM
THE BLACK LAGOON**

'The Brainiac'

by TOM DOTY
TIMES COLUMNIST

A persecuted heretic seeks vengeance on the descendants of the men who sentenced him to death by immolation, 300 years earlier, in this Spanish thriller.

The film opens in the 17th century as the Spanish Inquisition is sitting in judgment on Baron Vitelius. The group's leader steps up to the podium and recounts the Baron's charges in the tones of a game show host awarding the grand prize. He notes that the Baron engaged in necromancy, witchcraft and the time-honored tradition of seducing married women and the odd maiden. A friend named Marcos appears as a character witness, but his testimony goes over like a lead balloon and sees him handed 200 lashes for his trouble.



Tom Doty
Times Columnist

The scene shifts to the Baron's roast and Vitelius finally speaks as he notices a comet streaking overhead. He outs his inquisitors and threatens that he will be back in 300 years, when the comet passes again, and that he will kill the descendants of his accusers.

Cut to 300 years later and the offspring of Marcos, now named Ronnie, who has become a renowned astronomer. He spots the comet coming back and is shocked to see something fall from it. As he jets to the scene, a random and highly unlucky dude gets there first and is shocked to see a bulbous-headed beast emerge from the smoking rock. The critter turns out to be the Baron, but he sure has changed and now sports a foot-long tongue which he uses to suck out the brains of his victims. He also has two pincers instead of hands, a mound of unsightly hair scattered around his dome and the ability to change back into his old self after he's noshed on some brain food. His first victim is found later and has been stripped down to his civvies (turns out the Baron must like to go commando).

The local police assign a droll detective to investigate a mounting series of deaths in which the victim has had their brains sucked out and he is, not surprisingly, perplexed. Meanwhile the Baron invites all of the descendants to dinner and sizes them up. He also invites the detective, for security purposes.

All of the guests appear to like the suave Baron, even though he refuses to drink with them by begging off with a bizarre excuse saying, "It so happens liquor does me damage, I once had a very strange disease." Each guest leaves an open invitation to him on their way out and much to their chagrin he takes them up on it.

What follows are several scenes of the Baron showing up at their homes and making nice for a few minutes before proceeding to hypnotize them and subsequently change into his other self before sucking out their brains. These actions eventually raise

(See LAGOON, page seven)

Dusty, the wonder dog

by MARY SARACINO

"CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE PRETEEN SOUL"

When I was a kid, my godparents, Uncle Nell and Aunt Frances, brought me a 4-month-old puppy. She was half German shepherd, half collie. As her pink tongue tickled my face with wet licks, it was love at first hug.

My family named the puppy Dusty. Although I wanted to lay sole claim to her affections, in a family of seven kids, no one lays permanent claim to the family pet.

Dusty was our dog, not my dog. We soon realized that she had the patience of Buddha. My baby sister often transformed Dusty's warm fur into a nap-time pillow — falling asleep on the rug. Like a protective mother, Dusty waited — without moving — until my sister woke.

Dusty doubled as a school crossing guard, too. Monday through Friday she'd walk us kids two blocks to St. Patrick's Parochial, looking both ways to check for traffic before allowing us to cross the street. We'd wave goodbye as we entered the door, knowing Dusty would be wait-

ing at the school door to claim us at the close of the school day.

Of all the contributions Dusty made to our family, one incident stands out far and above all others.

Late one night, Dusty rushed to my parents' bedroom. She barked and barked. When she got no response, Dusty raced upstairs to my bedroom and my brothers' bedroom and barked again and again. When she failed to fully wake us, she flew back down the steps and returned to my parents' room. Finally she got Mom's attention.

"What are you doing, Dusty?" Mom snapped, still halfway in dreamland. Dusty persisted. Finally my mother gave in. "OK, what is it?" Dusty whined and rushed out of

Mom's room. Thinking the dog needed to be let out to relieve herself, my mother followed Dusty to the front door.

When Mom opened the door to let her out, Dusty tore across the street, not stopping to do her business, as my mother had assumed. Then she discovered what Dusty already knew. The house across the street — where my best friend, Marianne, and her family lived — was on fire. All of Dusty's middle-of-the-night craziness had

served a purpose: She'd been trying to call for help.

My mother alerted the fire department immediately. Soon, the firemen in their trucks roared up the street, squelching the blaze and saving my best friend's family from harm and their house from total ruin.

My mother refused to take credit. "It was Dusty," she told the firefighters. "She saved them. Not me."

(See SOUP, page seven)





Is Your Spouse The Most Romantic Ever?
Was Your Proposal Unforgettable?
Or Was There One Sweet Day?

Share your story with us and our readers in a special section

“Say It With Love”

Wednesday, February 14

Your story will be entered into our
“Most Romantic Spouse” contest.

Winner will receive a delicious
Candlelight Prime Rib Dinner for Two
from *Billy Ray’s Restaurant*

Entries may be typed or emailed, 300 words or less.
Photos are allowed. If emailing, attach in JPEG or PDF format.
Deadline to enter: Thursday, Feb. 8th by noon.

Mail: your submission to
Floyd County Times, “Most Romantic Spouse,”
P.O. Box 390, Prestonsburg, KY 41653
Email: features@floydcountytimes.com



Wife gets OK to listen to the radio

by TOM and RAY MAGLIOZZI

Dear Tom and Ray:
Am I right, or does my husband know what he's talking about? When my husband fills up his car with gas, he always turns the car off and removes the key from the ignition, which turns the radio off — even if I'm busy listening to "Car Talk" on NPR! It drives me crazy, but he insists that having current passing through the vehicle is a disaster waiting to happen while filling up the gas tank. I'm sure he's being a little — well, maybe a lot — too cautious, because I often hear radios playing in other people's cars while they're filling up, yet I have NEVER seen a car blow up from an electric short during that process. Please tell him that I can safely listen to the radio while he's filling up! — Cathy

RAY: He probably just doesn't want you listening to us, Cathy. And can you blame him?

TOM: There are several reasons why gas stations tell you to turn off your ignition while refueling. No. 1 is that if you accidentally leave your car in drive, or if it slips out of park or your dog knocks it out of park, the

car could run somebody over. Or, worse, bash into the station's new Mountain Dew machine.

RAY: Reason No. 2 is that they want to lessen the chances that you'll drive off without removing the nozzle, yanking their hose out of its socket.

TOM: No. 3 is that they don't want anybody to be tempted to hop in your running car and steal it. It happens.

RAY: Reason No. 4 is that, with modern cars, running the engine with the gas cap off will turn on the "check engine" light.

TOM: And reason No. 5 is that there are various sources of ignition in a running automobile. Aside from the ignition system itself, there are relays, fan motors and other electrical devices that could, theoretically, provide a spark if a bunch of fuel were spilled and gasoline vapor enveloped the car.

RAY: In reality, most gas stations now have vapor-recovery systems, so vapors would only come from a fuel spill. It would have to be a pretty sizable spill to create enough vapor to cause a problem. So the exploding-car scenario is pretty unlikely. After

all, how many knucklehead gas-station attendants have you seen pumping gas with a Tipparillo dangling from their lips, with a 3-inch-long, glowing ash hanging off the end of it?

TOM: And the odds get even slimmer of having any kind of problem if the engine is off and the key is only in the accessory position — where it would be if you were listening to the radio. In fact, I can't really imagine a scenario in which you could ignite anything that way.

RAY: So tell your husband he can rest easy, Cathy. There's no problem with you listening to the radio while he refuels, as long as the key is in the accessory position. And if you want to turn the tables on him, tell him a greater spark danger comes from the static electricity he's building up because he's still wearing those sky-blue polyester leisure suits.

Pros and cons of low-profile tires
Dear Tom and Ray:
There has been a recent upsurge of extremely low-profile tires and extraordinarily large-diameter wheels on all types of personal vehicles. Is this good: stiffer sidewalls — less lateral movement? Or is this bad: more

unsprung mass — changing suspension requirements? Or is this just an expensive affectation? — Frank

RAY: It's primarily about style, Frank. People want bigger wheels because they look cooler.

TOM: And if you use a bigger wheel, you have to use a lower-profile (i.e., shorter sidewall) tire so the wheel/tire combination still fits in the car's wheel well.

RAY: The weight isn't much of an issue, because alloy wheels are pretty light. And when you go with a bigger wheel/smaller tire combination, it's pretty much a wash.

TOM: You do get some handling benefits with lower-profile tires. The less-expansive sidewall you have, the less the sidewall will flex on turns. That's good for handling.

RAY: But you pay a high price in ride quality. Because you have less



sidewall, there's less of it to absorb bumps and potholes. So lower-profile tires give you a much harsher ride.

TOM: The other significant argument against low-profile tires is that with less sidewall, the wheels themselves are much more vulnerable to being bent from potholes and scraping up against curbs. Especially if you live in a city. And when you have to replace a 19-inch alloy rim and it costs you \$750, you're going to wish you'd gotten the smaller wheels with bigger tires, even if you don't look quite as cool when you go to pick up your dry cleaning.

Got a question about cars? Write to Click and Clack in care of this newspaper, or e-mail them by visiting the Car Talk Web site at www.cartalk.com.

Odds & Ends

■ **BALTIMORE** — Prison officials and poison control centers can add a new substance to their list of intoxicants — hand sanitizer.

A usually calm 49-year-old prisoner prompted a call to the Maryland Poison Control Center after guards found him red-eyed, combative and "lecturing everyone about life." Other inmates and staff reported the unidentified prisoner had been drinking from a gallon container of hand sanitizer, which is more than 70 percent alcohol, according to an article appearing in the February issue of the New England Journal of Medicine.

The call was one of about a half dozen the center has received involving hand sanitizers, said Dr. Suzanne Doyon, the center's director and co-author of the article.

While the hand sanitizer contains other chemicals in smaller amounts, it is primarily the same type of alcohol found in liquor, and acts on the body in the same way, Doyon said.

"I don't think a lot of people realize these are ethanol containing, or alcohol containing. They are really no different than a really concentrated liquor," she said.

However, other types of hand sanitizers contain isopropyl alcohol, which is metabolized differently by the body, and has different health effects, she said.

Alcohol-based sanitizers

are credited with being more effective against germs and less irritating, but health-care providers and hospitals and correctional facility administrators should be aware of the potential misuse, the authors said in the article.

■ **PENSACOLA, Fla.** — A packet of U.S. savings bonds, washed out of a house destroyed during Hurricane Ivan more than two years ago, was found and returned to its owner.

Jan Meade and her husband, Timothy, a Fort Walton Beach attorney, received the bonds Tuesday after they were found by two people on the shoreline of East Bay, the Pensacola News Journal reported.

The Meades fled their home just before Ivan struck on Sept. 16, 2004. When they returned the next day, they found the back half of their house had been blown out and almost all of their possessions gone or in ruins. Damage was so severe that the house had to be razed.

"I had been buying a few savings bonds every now and then for some time, and they were in the house," Meade said. I really didn't know how to replace them. I just thought they were gone forever."

On Saturday, Trudie Childers and her 75-year-old mother, Claudie Tolbert, spotted a plastic bag as they walk along the beach.

"When I pulled it out, it looked like just one bond wrapped in plastic," Childers said.

But when she got home, she saw many more and hung them on a clothesline to dry.

When she returned to work Monday, Childers, an employee of Holley-Navarre Water System, checked the water department's computers to locate Meade. She then called to say she'd found the bonds.

Meade greeted Childers with a hug and tears when she reclaimed the bonds, estimated to be worth about \$1,000.

■ **HUNTINGTON, N.Y.** — Two puppies born with cleft palates have had their first corrective surgeries and are said to be doing well.

The puppies, named Magic and Merlin, are about three months old. They were taken in by the Little Shelter Animal Adoption Center last year after a worker found them in a New York City shelter, unable to eat and likely to die.

While recuperating from Tuesday's surgery, they're receiving pain medication and are wearing medical collars so they won't scratch their mouths, said veterinarian Priti Karnik.

They have been fed through a tube, but should be able to eat on their own soon, she said.

Karnik will determine later how many more surgeries will be necessary.

■ **SEATTLE** — If you think rush-hour traffic is frustrating, imagine what it was like for three women who gave birth in their vehicles because they couldn't make it to the hospital along clogged Interstate 5.

Two little girls entered the world during the morning commute in as many days this week, and a boy was born along the north-south artery on Jan. 5.

"We simply attribute it to coincidence," State Patrol Trooper Jeffery L. Merrill said. "Who wants to have their baby in their car on the freeway?"

On Tuesday, Trooper Chad Williams was parked on an off-ramp in the city's south end when a Toyota 4Runner stopped and a frantic Magin Rodriguez leaped out, forming the shape of a pregnant belly with his hands and gesturing toward the passenger door.

Williams got to the sport utility vehicle just in time to greet the arrival of 7-pound, 7-ounce Alexa, whom he placed in the lap of her mother, Wendy Meza-Jimenez. He called for emergency medical aid and mother and daughter were reported in good condition that evening at a nearby hospital.

A day earlier, Liz Kirkman and her husband Brian got caught in a rush-hour slowdown while driving to a hospital east of the downtown area.

"Once I was in the moving

car, I was like 'Uh-oh,'" Kirkman, 28, said Tuesday. "I started doing the math in my head and thought, 'I am cutting this real close.' Then I got this urge to push."

Finally she propped her leg up on the dashboard and delivered Juliet, her seventh child, as her husband drove in the car pool lane. He got off the freeway shortly afterward and drove a short distance to Northwest Hospital, where mother and baby stayed until Tuesday night.

That's also where Jenny Miller, 29, went with her baby Ian after he insisted on entering the world while she and her husband headed for the hospital on Jan. 5.

All troopers are trained to deliver babies, Merrill said. "It's part of our basic curriculum at the academy," he said. "You secretly hope you don't have to use it in the field."

■ **LYNCHBURG, Va.** — Audrey Hudgins never saw it coming, but then, who would have?

Hudgins, a sophomore from Durham, N.C., was sitting on a bench outside the campus' Main Hall on Tuesday when a squirrel crawled up her leg and sat in her lap.

"They come close to you, they're really friendly, but they don't climb on you," Hudgins said Wednesday.

To Hudgins' surprise, the

squirrel — described as an infamous chowhound named Toby — snatched a piece of the strawberry Nutri-Grain bar she was holding.

"I said to myself, 'That doesn't happen every day.'"

But when Toby went back for a second bite it locked on, and bit through Hudgins' right thumbnail.

At that point, the communications major said she tried to unlatch the squirrel by beating it against the bench.

"What else do you do in that situation?" she asked. "There's no stop, drop and roll."

After Hudgins shook Toby off, she sat in shock.

"He's looking at me, I'm looking at him," she said of the moment just before the squirrel grabbed the Nutri-Grain bar that she had dropped during the struggle and ran off.

A while later Hudgins met up with her friend Amberly Fradsham, a senior, who took her to the hospital to get the first in a series of rabies shots she'll need this week as a precaution.

"After everybody at the hospital laughed at her, I took her to Cold Stone Creamery for ice cream," Fradsham said.

In an e-mail on Tuesday, school officials told students about what had happened to Hudgins.

The e-mail's subject line? "Please don't feed the squirrels."

Lagoon

the suspicions of Ronnie and the police but not before Ronnie finds himself at the Baron's home and about to lose his brains to the Baron.

This one scores points for the originality of the Baron's make-up. Why he turns into a cross between a rat, a mosquito and a man is anyone's guess, but the special effects are pretty good, with the Baron's head appearing to be part balloon as it pulsates from within.

Obviously the producers were out to emulate the success of "Black Sunday," which opened two years earlier and had the same plot. "Sunday," however, had a talented director, Mario Bava, who could

work miracles on a small budget.

As rip-offs go, this one goes to the head of the line for being totally out there and including some mean spirited scenes of the Baron relishing his revenge. One such moment sees the Baron break in on one victim during her wedding night and depriving her of the pleasure of consummating the ritual. He does put off killing the bride until she has a chance to see what remains of the groom, and it ain't pretty.

You also get some lousy dubbing and a fair share of cheap effects such as the Baron's hypnotic talents which are achieved by shining a flashlight on the actor's eyes.

Best yet is the bug-eyed expressions of his victims who are forced to watch their loved ones get their brains sucked out through the back of their necks before the Baron makes a cerebral stew of them as well.

The best news is that this one is available on the cheap and shares a disc with two other horror fests. The other films included on the disc ("Fury of the Wolfman" and "Doctor Blood's Coffin") are technically better than this one, but nether is anywhere near as wild.

Best line: "The cephalic matter was sucked out through these small openings." 1962, unrated.

Soup

I put my arms around my dog's neck and kissed her square on the tip of her wet nose. "Thank you for saving Marianne," I whispered into

Dusty's tan and black ear. "You're the bravest dog I've ever known."

Dusty wagged her tail and licked my face. That old famil-

iar rush of puppy love overtook me. I smiled and promised to let her sleep in my bed for the rest of her life.

Allen

earth to answer a letter...Can you tell me why?"

And I, too, fail to give Mr. Hahn an answer.

ROCKET FUEL

This definition of moonshine whiskey was sent from this county to an English girl who had expressed some curiosity about the subject: "Moonshine (Mountain Dew) is our secret-weapon to paralyze any enemy who might invade us. It is a concentrated vodka—old-timers say it represents 30 gallons of vodka squeezed into a one-gallon jug. Folklore would

have us believe it was used as a flame-thrower to dislodge Indians from caves; that a tobacco-chewing frontiersman could hold a teacup full of it in his mouth, inhale, then light it with a spark as he exhaled mightily, and throw a stream of fire to the back of a 20-foot cave. One of the legends tell of one visitor who had imbibed a quart to insulate him against the wintry winds, who hiccupped near the open fire of a neighbor, and the explosion blew the roof off the house."

AH, MEMORIES!
This also was contributed:

Every man is a born collector. First, he collects, beetles, toads, and marbles.

Then girls, kisses, and fancy ties. Then dollars, troubles, and a family. Later gold-cups, after dinner stories, old pieces of string. And lastly, aches, symptoms, and memories.

The same law that forbids a teacher to instruct her pupils in the Bible, and the knowledge of God, should make it illegal for a teacher to stand before a class and deny God and the Bible.

Tree

droppings. Friends told me that by the end of July the tree would be bare and would remain so for a month or two. Then, in a process thoroughly reversed from our own, leaves would begin sprouting in the "spring" months of September and October to return to the fully leafed tree I had known in June. The end of the cycle would be flowers.

I asked around for the name of this tree, but social scientists often are low in botanical knowledge and no one knew. For me it was just The Bird Tree.

Editor's Note: Dr. Phyllis Puffer is a professor of sociology at Big Sandy Community and Technical College. She enjoys traveling, writing, gardening and observing the world, and people, around her.

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FLOYD COUNTY Sports

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StoneCrest Golf course announces pricing for 2007

TIMES STAFF REPORT

PRESTONSBURG – StoneCrest Golf Course has announced pricing for the 2007 season, with some new programs to encourage play on one of the state's top courses.

The Prestonsburg course has opted to set annual rates at the same level as 2006. An annual membership for an individual is \$1,420 for unlimited play including a cart. A senior membership for every day is \$1,280, while a weekday pass, good for Monday through Friday, is \$1,020. Juniors can get a membership for \$420, and each

additional member in a family plan after the first individual is \$420. Those fees all include cart usage.

A pass that is good for 20 plays at any time is available for \$650. New this year is a weekday pass that is available for \$500. Daily fees for the weekend have increased this year to \$42. The weekday rate is still set at \$30. StoneCrest will continue to offer offseason rates through end of February at \$24 for weekdays and \$30 for the weekends. There are discounts on daily rates for both seniors and juniors in-season. Another new item this year is the lowering of what is

considered a senior age from 65 to 60.

There will be active programs this year for various golfers. Thursday will be women's league in the morning and men's league during the evening. Monday will be instructional night for women's clinics with an opportunity to play afterwards. Saturday mornings will be the time for junior clinics. There will be a couple's nine-and-dine the final Friday of every month. Late Sunday afternoons will feature an opportunity for families to get out and play without pressure. All of these programs will work in conjunction with scheduled play,

not negatively impact anyone's ability to enjoy the course and will begin in April.

After an extremely successful initial year for the Food City/StoneCrest Amateur in 2006, an even better version for 2007 is planned for June 9-10. StoneCrest will host the Two Man Invitational July 14-15. The Prestonsburg course will host its first-ever Couples Invitational Oct. 6-7. All three of the events will be geared towards brining in more out-of-town visitors to Prestonsburg and showcasing not only the golf course, but the whole area.

StoneCrest is open for public play seven days a week. Owned and operated by the City of Prestonsburg, StoneCrest first hosted play in 2001. In its short history, the course has hosted the Kentucky Women's State Amateur (2003) and Kentucky State Women's Amateur (2005).

Tea times at the Prestonsburg course are taken up to one week in advance. The StoneCrest Golf Shop features the top companies in golf, and offers many services.

For more information, call PGA Professional Rick Frye at 886-1006.

Tigers oust Elliott

by STEVE LeMASTER
SPORTS EDITOR

RICHMOND – Paintsville knocked off favorite Elliott County 60-53 on Thursday night in the final opening round game of the Touchstone Energy All "A" Classic boys' basketball tournament at Eastern Kentucky University's McBrayer Arena. Paintsville, which trailed at the end of each of the first three quarters, outscored 16th Region champ Elliott County 18-8 in the final frame.

Landon Slone led Paintsville with 21 points. Van Ferguson was Paintsville's second-leading scorer, finishing with 14 points. J.D. VanHoose added 13 points and Blake Bundy pushed in 12 for the Tigers.

Elliott County enjoyed the better start of the two teams. The Lions led Paintsville 19-13 at the end of the opening quarter. Elliott County took a 27-26 lead into halftime.

Paintsville, which improved to 15-6, saved its best for last in the smallschool state tournament game. Elliott County owned a 45-42 lead at the start of the third

(See **TIGERS**, page nine)

SWEET 16s



Johnson Central and Shelby Valley met up in last season's 15th Region boys' basketball championship game at the Eastern Kentucky Expo Center. An underdog, Johnson Central claimed the title.

State tourney draws pit 15th vs. 16th

by STEVE LeMASTER
SPORTS EDITOR

LEXINGTON – The draws for the 2007 National City/KHSAA (Kentucky High School Athletic Association) Boys' and Houchens/KHSAA Girls' State Basketball Tournaments were held on Friday. WKYT-TV27 in Lexington aired the draws. In each draw, the 15th Region was paired up against the 16th Region. The National City/KHSAA Boys' State Basketball Tournament is scheduled for March 21-24 at Lexington, inside Rupp Arena. The Houchens/KHSAA Girls' State Basketball Tournament is scheduled to precede the boys' event, March 14-17 at E.A. Diddle Arena on the campus of Western Kentucky University.

Both tournament brackets are posted online on the Riherd's/KHSAA Scoreboard portion of the KHSAA website. Opening round matchups for each tournament follow.

The 2007 National City/KHSAA

Boys' Sweet Sixteen State Basketball Tournament, March 21-24 at Rupp Arena, Lexington, Wednesday, March 21: Region 5 vs. Region 12, Noon; Region 11 vs. Region 8, 1:30 p.m.; Region 13 vs. Region 6, 6:30 p.m.; Region 9 vs. Region 1, 8 p.m. Thursday, March 22: Region 3 vs. Region 7, Noon; Region 10 vs. Region 2, 1:30 p.m.; Region 16 vs. Region 15, 6:30 p.m.; Region 14 vs. Region 4, 8 p.m.

The 2007 Houchens Industries/KHSAA Girls' Sweet Sixteen State Basketball Tournament, March 14-17, E.A. Diddle Arena, Bowling Green, Wednesday, March 14: Region 6 vs. Region 14, Noon; Region 13 vs. Region 5, 1:30 p.m.; Region 3 vs. Region 4, 6:30 p.m.; Region 12 vs. Region 7, 8 p.m. Thursday, March 15: Region 16 vs. Region 15, Noon; Region 8 vs. Region 9, 1:30 p.m.; Region 11 vs. Region 2, 6:30 p.m.; Region 1 vs. Region 10, 8 p.m.

The Eastern Kentucky Expo Center will again host this year's 15th Region basketball tournaments.

ROAD TO RUPP CONTINUES

Area boys' basketball games scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 6

- Allen Central vs. Prestonsburg
- Buckhorn vs. Hazard
- Cumberland vs. Cawood
- Elliott County vs. Ashland Blazer
- Fleming County vs. West Carter
- Greenup County vs. East Carter
- Jackson City vs. Riverside Christian
- Jenkins vs. Cordia
- Lee County vs. Magoffin County
- Letcher Central vs. Knott Central
- North Laurel vs. Leslie County
- Paintsville vs. East Ridge
- Pike Central vs. Belfry
- Raceland vs. Fairview
- Rockcastle County vs. Powell Co.
- Rowan County vs. Lewis County
- Shelby Valley vs. Pikeville
- South Floyd vs. Betsy Layne
- Wolfe County vs. Morgan County

Bears shock Lindsey Wilson

TIMES STAFF REPORT

PIKEVILLE – It was a thrill ride at the Eastern Kentucky Expo Center.

Even though it took an extra period, the Pikeville College men's basketball team managed to edge out the No. 6 Lindsey Wilson Blue Raiders 65-64 on Thursday night.

The win, in Pikeville's final home game of the season to be played here, raised their record to 4-0 this season in the two-year-old Expo Center.

The Bears controlled the tempo for most of the first half, but the Blue Raiders went on a 10-0 run over the final seven minutes, giving them a 23-19 lead at the break.

But the Bears came out determined to regain the lead at half-time. And regain it they did, using a 13-0 run over six and half minutes, capped off by a jumper from senior Donald Thomas (Baltimore Md.), to take a 49-39 lead with 5:53 to go.

It looked as though the game

(See **BEARS**, page nine)

Little League again offering free background checks

TIMES STAFF REPORT

The start of new Little League baseball and softball seasons are just around the corner. In partnership with ChoicePoint, Little League International will provide every local Little League in the U.S. with 80 free criminal background checks of volunteers in each league, including local charters. Additional checks will be \$1 each. This represents a savings of more than \$1 million annually for local Little Leagues.

For the first time in Little League's 68-year history, the fees paid by the local volunteer organizations to become "chartered" Little Leagues will decrease for every division of play. In 2006, charter fees were \$18 per team. In 2007, fees have been lowered to \$16 per team, representing a savings of more than \$350,000 per year for local leagues.

(See **BACKGROUND**, page nine)

Bristol CoT testing open to public

TIMES STAFF REPORT

BRISTOL, Tenn. – With NASCAR debuting the Car of Tomorrow during the Food City 500 weekend at Bristol Motor Speedway March 23-25, Nextel Cup teams will be visiting the famed half-mile oval in advance to put the new car through its paces.

The Feb. 28-March 1 COT test session, which is expected to feature nearly every Nextel Cup team, will be open to the public both days. The test sessions will begin at 9 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. An hour break in on-track action is scheduled from noon to 1 p.m. each day.

Fans wishing to watch the test sessions will enter BMS through the South entrance and will enter the backstretch grandstands through Gate 6. Parking will be in the lot directly across from Gate 6. Spectator gates will open at 8:45 a.m. both days.

(See **BRISTOL**, page nine)

Wildlife commissioner defends hike in cost of hunting licenses

by ROGER ALFORD
ASSOCIATED PRESS

FRANKFORT – The state wildlife commissioner is defending a 30 percent hike in the cost of hunting and fishing licenses, saying it is still far cheaper to participate in outdoor sports than go to the movies.

Jonathan Gassett, head of the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, said the increase is necessary to avoid cutting programs and services.

The agency has budgeted expenses of \$38.8 million this year. Of that, \$29.1 million goes for employee wages, benefits and other personnel costs.

Under a plan approved by the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission and a legislative review subcommittee, the price of hunting and fishing licenses will increase from \$15 to \$20

beginning March 1. A combination hunting-fishing license goes up from \$22.50 to \$30.

Gassett said the price of hunting and fishing licenses is "the best deal going" even with the increase.

"So the cost of going to a movie for one night, the cost of bowling for one night, the cost of playing a round of golf for one afternoon far exceeds what it costs to hunt or fish for an entire year in Kentucky," Gassett said.

Mark Marraccini, spokesman for the agency, said license and permit sales generated \$22.4 million in 2006-2007. He said the price increases will generate an additional \$2.8 million.

Michael Taylor, a hunter from rural Franklin County near Frankfort, said Thursday the cost of the licenses and permits can become burdensome for families when spouses and teenage children also hunt and fish.

(See **WILDLIFE**, page nine)



BATTLE FOR THE BALL: Sheldon Clark was able to turn away visiting South Floyd when the two teams met up in Inez on Tuesday.

photo by Steve LeMaster

WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Combs, Strayer career-highs lift MSU over EKU

TIMES STAFF REPORT

MOREHEAD – Junior guard Tarah Combs hit six three-pointers, leading to a career high 23 points, and junior point guard Stacey Strayer recorded her first career double-double with 11 points and a career high 11 assists as the Morehead State women's basketball team completed a season series sweep over Eastern Kentucky, 82-72, Thursday at Johnson Arena and set a single season school record with their 11th OVC win.

The Eagles, who placed six players in double figures and tied a season high with 11 three-pointers, improved to 12-10 overall and 11-3 in the league, bettering the 2001-2002

team's 10 league wins. EKU fell to 9-13 and 6-7 in the OVC. It was also the first season sweep over EKU for MSU since 1988-89.

Combs, whose previous career high of 20 was equaled this year at Jacksonville State, tied her three-point career high with six, hitting 6-of-10 from beyond the arc. Strayer, who entered the game as the OVC's leading assister, tied a career high with 11 that she had set previously this season at Jacksonville State. She also nearly had a triple-double with 11 points and a career high six steals. As a team, the Eagles record a season high 24 helpers on their 31 successful baskets.

Senior LaKrisha Brown picked up her eighth double-double of the season

and the 26th of her career with 12 points and 11 rebounds as the Eagles out-rebounded the Lady Colonels, 35-26. Anitha Smith-Williams came off the bench for 10 points and tied a season high with six assists, while Jessie Plante and Holly Williams also notched 10 points. Williams was a flawless 5-of-5 from the field, while Plante hit 4-of-6, including two three-pointers.

Eastern Kentucky got a team high 22-point performance from Andrea Jenkins and got 17 from Crystal Jones. Jones also handed out a team-best six assists and had three steals. Ashley Cazez notched 14.

The Eagles shot 55 percent (31-of-56) for the game, including a scorch-

ing 65 percent (17-of-26) in the second half. Both teams found it easy to score however, as EKU managed to shoot a respectable 48 percent (29-of-61) from the floor during the 40-minute affair.

Leading 37-34 at halftime, Morehead State opened the second half on an 11-4 scoring run to open up a 10-point (48-38) lead. At the 7:29 mark of the second half, EKU had cut the Eagle lead to five (61-56), but the Eagles responded with a 10-0 run, capped by a Brown free throw, to push ahead 71-56 with 5:28 left. That would prove to be MSU's largest lead of the night as the Lady Colonels could only cut it under double digits once more in the final five minutes.



TARAH COMBS

Pulling away: Strong second-half sends Colonels past Eagles, 69-61

TIMES STAFF REPORT

MOREHEAD – Thanks to shooting 68.8 percent from the field in the second half, the Eastern Kentucky University men's basketball team was able to build a 14-point cushion before fighting off a late Morehead State University rally to earn a 69-61 victory Thursday night in Johnson Arena. With the win, the Colonels (12-9, 7-6 OVC) completed the season sweep over the Eagles (10-12, 6-8).

Four EKU players finished in double figures, led by sophomore Mike

Rose's 20 points, his seventh 20-point performance of the year. Junior Darnell Dials equaled his season high with 15 points, 13 of which came in the second half, on 85.7 percent (6-of-7) shooting. Meanwhile, senior Julian Mascoll and freshman Adam Leonard each chipped in with 12 tallies.

Morehead State netted a season-high 14 three-pointers with Quentin Pryor going 6-of-10 (60 percent) from behind the arc for 18 points. Maze Stallworth added 10 points and a game-best six rebounds.

Eastern opened the contest by hit-

ting its first five shots from the field, four of which were three-point buckets, helping the visitors establish a 14-6 lead. The Colonels stretched their advantage to 10, 21-11, before settling on a five-point edge at intermission, 24-19.

EKU maintained the lead throughout the early stages of the second half until a 7-0 Morehead spurt put the Eagles ahead for just the second time in the game, 40-38. After a four-and-a-half minute scoring drought, freshman Josh Taylor hit perhaps the biggest shot of the game, a long-range three-pointer from the

left wing, to allow the Colonels to jump back in front, 41-40.

The Colonels then forced a turnover on Morehead State's next possession and converted an easy lay-up to stretch the cushion back to three points. A Dials dunk a minute later gave Eastern some more breathing room at 45-40. Neither team could find the range over the next two minutes before Eagle foul trouble put the Colonels in the bonus with 5:45 remaining.

Eastern Kentucky was able to convert six consecutive free throws and Rose hit a key three-pointer with 2:29

left to make the score, 56-42. However, Morehead State would not go away and after making five three-pointers in the final two minutes, the Eagles found themselves trailing by just four, 65-61, with :21 on the clock. The Colonels held off Morehead by netting their final four free throws of the contest.

The win allowed Eastern to break a four-game road losing skid and move to 3-3 in OVC road games. Also, the Colonels improved to 6-0 this season when shooting better than 50 percent from the field (54.1).

Jackson's triple-double leads Lindsey Wilson past Lady Bears

TIMES STAFF REPORT

PIKEVILLE – On Thursday night, Lindsey Wilson junior guard Kristal Duncan was a perfect 10.

Duncan recorded her first career triple-double with 10 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists as her Lady Raiders continued the Pikeville College women's basketball team's struggles through the Mid-South Conference, winning 68-56 at the Eastern Kentucky Expo Center Thursday night.

The loss dropped the Lady Bears to 0-4 in the MSC and 8-16 overall this season.

The Lady Bears took a 4-3 lead after a jumper from senior Tonya Amburgey (Pinetop) with 16:42 to go in the first half; it would be the last time Pikeville held the lead.

Lindsey Wilson proceeded to go on an 11-0 run over the next three minutes, capped off by a three from Kara Osterfeld. Leading 33-21, the Lady Raiders got a last-second jumper from Kera Gibson as time expired, giving them a comfortable 35-21 lead at halftime.

With their first possession of the second half, Pikeville got a three from Amburgey, cutting the lead to 11 points, but Lindsey Wilson quickly took over, leading by as many as 25.

With 41 seconds left in the half, sophomore Camille Cook (Whitesburg) was fouled after making a layup. The subsequent free throw cut the Lindsey lead to ten, but it was too little, too late, as the Lady Raiders ran out the clock and preserved the 68-56 win.

"Jackson had a great game, no doubt about that," said Pikeville head coach Bill Watson. "But we hurt ourselves, giving up 19 offensive boards and turning it over 18 times. We battled near the end, but we just dug ourselves too big of a hole."

The Lady Bears got a game-high 15 points out of Amburgey, while sophomore Vicki Hall (Belfry) threw in nine.

Jackson's 10 points, 10 assists, and 10 rebounds were more than enough to help her team to victory. Still, three other Lady Raiders scored in double-figures in the win, with Osterfeld and Duncan leading the balanced attack with 12 each and Kera Gibson scoring 11 off the bench.

The win improved Lindsey to 9-15 overall and 1-3 in the MSC.



photo by Steve LeMaster

UP WITH A JUMPER: South Floyd's Adam Slone lofted a shot during Tuesday's night game against Sheldon Clark. South Floyd was scheduled to play on the road Friday night at Prestonsburg, but the game was canceled due to inclement weather.

No. 15 Vanderbilt 63, Kentucky 62

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LEXINGTON – Dee Davis made a driving layup with less than 2 seconds left, lifting No. 15 Vanderbilt to a 63-62 victory over Kentucky on Thursday night.

Christina Wirth scored 14 points and Carla Thomas added 11 to help the Commodores (18-4, 4-4) win their 11th straight against Kentucky.

The Wildcats, seeking their first win against a ranked team since beating then-No. 25 Florida in the quarterfinals of the Southeastern Conference tournament last season, have lost five of six.

Kentucky took a 62-61 lead when Amani Franklin scored inside with 11 seconds left. Vanderbilt called timeout with less than 7 seconds to go.

After Davis scored, the Commodore's picked off Jennifer Humphrey's inbound pass to preserve the win.

Humphrey led the Wildcats with 16 points, and Nastassia Alcius matched a season high with 14.

Vanderbilt scored the first nine points of the game and led by nine in the second half, too.

Kentucky went on a 10-2 spurt to tie the score at 25. Vanderbilt went ahead 31-28 when Thomas scored on a layup, but Alcius hit a jumper 52 seconds before halftime to cut the Commodores' lead to 31-30 at the break.

The Commodores, who lead the nation in 3-point field-goal percentage, shot just 3-of-9 from behind the arc.

Preseason coaches poll tabs UK baseball team fourth in SEC East

TIMES STAFF REPORT

LEXINGTON – A year after winning its first Southeastern Conference Championship in school history, the University of Kentucky baseball team has been picked to finish fourth in the SEC East as voted on by the league's 12 baseball coaches in the 16th annual preseason SEC poll, the league office announced Wednesday.

The Wildcats completed the most improbable league championship in SEC history a year ago as UK climbed from a last place 2005 finish to the 2006 league crown. Kentucky entered last season having been picked to finish last in the conference, only to rise from the conference cellar to win a school-record 44 games and host the first NCAA Regional in school history.

Kentucky returns several starters from the championship club, including preseason All-Americans Sean Coughlin (Sr., C), Collin Cowgill (Jr.,

OF), and Greg Dombrowski (Jr., RHP). Coughlin and Cowgill will provide some significant pop to the lineup after combining for 33 home runs and 116 RBI a year ago. Dombrowski established himself as the ace of the staff in 2006, picking up 10 wins and a 2.83 ERA as the Sunday starter.

Joining the trio of All-Americans as a returning starter is arguably the best defensive centerfielder in all of college baseball, Antone DeJesus. DeJesus (Jr., CF), a career .333 hitter, will yet again be a force as the Wildcats' disciplined leadoff hitter.

Atop of the coaches poll sits the South Carolina Gamecocks, who were picked as both the Eastern Division champ and the overall SEC Champion. Following closely behind are the Arkansas Razorbacks who were selected as the Western Division Champions.

The 2007 Kentucky baseball season gets started with a three-game road series at Furman (Feb. 16-18) in Greenville, S.C. The Wildcats then open up the home portion of their schedule with a 20-game homestand beginning with Murray State on Feb. 21.

State tourney tickets available

TIMES STAFF REPORT

LEXINGTON – Tickets to the 2007 National City/KHSAA Boys' and Houchens/KHSAA Girls' State Basketball Tournaments continue to be on sale through the KHSAA office and online at khsaa.org. At this time, only full tournament sets of tickets (one ticket to each of the eight sessions) are available. Lower arena seats are priced at \$108 each and upper arena seats are priced at \$58 each. Tickets will be on sale through the KHSAA until Feb. 23. Beginning March 2, tickets will only be available through the Rupp Arena

(boys) and Diddle Arena (girls) box offices and/or the venue's respective online ticketing agent.

Basketball stats are posted on the KHSAA website under the basketball sports link. Rankings will be compiled weekly throughout the remainder of the regular season. A final season ranking (including post-season games) will be conducted on April 15.

Individual school-by-school stats reports are posted on the Riherd's/KHSAA Scoreboard as they are received from member schools.

The next meeting of the KHSAA Board of Control is a special meeting to review appeals and will be held on Monday, Feb. 19 beginning at 9 a.m. at the Association office in Lexington.

For an agenda, contact the KHSAA or log on to www.khsaa.org/board-of-control.

■ Following are the dates for the 2007 National City/KHSAA Boys' & Houchens/KHSAA Girls' State Basketball Tournaments: Houchens/KHSAA Girls' Sweet 16, March 14-17.

WKU E.A. Diddle Arena, Bowling Green, National City/KHSAA Boys' Sweet 16, March 21-24, Rupp Arena, Lexington.

UPCOMING KHSAA EVENTS

Feb. 9-10 State Swimming & Diving Meet
Feb. 9-10 Regional Wrestling Tour
Feb. 15-17 State Wrestling Championships
Feb. 26-March 3 District Boys' & Girls' Basketball Tournaments



NUMBER ONE IN THE CLASSROOM: Mountain Christian Academy was awarded the trophy as county academic champion during the recent Floyd County Boys' Grade School Basketball Tournament. The team had a combined GPA above 3.7, the highest grade point average by any Floyd County boys' basketball team in conference history. The team members pictured (not in order) are Alex Hartgrove, Minus Helton, Matthew Prater, Joseph Kidd, Jacob Bartley, Alex Davis, Ian Hall, Matthew Ison, Chase Perkey, Tyler Stumbo, Matt Kidd, Zack Clark and Colson Bartley. Shawn Quesberry and Jeremy Ousley are absent from the photo. The team is coached by Rick Hughes. Assistant coaches are Jerry Kidd and Eddie Hartgrove.

Natural Resource's Prestonsburg Regional Office, 3140 South Lake Drive, Suite 6, Prestonsburg, Kentucky 41653. Written comments or objections must be filed with the Director of the Division of Mine Permits, #2 Hudson Hollow Complex, U.S. 127 South, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601. All comments or objections must be received within fifteen (15) days of today's date.

JOB FAIR
COLORAMA RENTAL CENTER

Colorama Rental Center, a leading home furnishings rental purchase company since 1984, is currently seeking high energy, career-minded individuals to join our team and grow with us.

On Thursday, February 8, from 12:00 noon to 7:00 p.m., we will be conducting a Job Fair at our Prestonsburg store, located in the Glynview Plaza. At the Fair, we will be accepting applications for all positions and discussing the many opportunities available in our Eastern Kentucky stores. This is a great opportunity to get to know who we are, and see if Colorama is the career you have been looking for.

There will be door prizes along with food and drinks, served by management staff from our Corporate Office, who will be on hand to discuss opportunities available to you within the organization.

We offer excellent salary, great benefits, including paid health insurance, 401k, paid vacation and holidays, training with opportunity for advancement. Minimum job requirements: Clean driving and criminal records, 21 years or older, high school diploma or GED.

For more information, call 800-527-4688, ext. 3015 for Human Resources, or ext. 3007 for David Lickliter, Regional Manager. You can also reach David on his cell at 859-608-8485, or email your resume to davidlickliter@hotmail.com.

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Show someone how much you really care about them, in our February 14th edition, in Classifieds we will have a special section dedicated to those who want to send a special message to their sweetie! The cost is only \$10.00. Just imagine the look on your significant other's face when they see you've put such thought into this Valentines Day. Guys- This is a great idea! Trust me! Call LeighAnn today to find out more, I can even help you compose your ad! If you would like to add a picture, it's \$10.00 more. Call today to reserve a spot! 886-8506

"V" for Valentines Day CONTEST!

Think of as many words as you can that begin with the letter "V". Send your responses to the Floyd County Times PO Box 390 Prestonsburg, KY 41653 Attention: LeighAnn All entries must your name and phone number. The deadline for this contest is Feb 9.

IF YOU WIN:

You will get a FREE Valentines Day ad in the classifieds with a picture!!!!!!! You can dedicaite this to your Husband, Wife, Mom, Dad, Friend.. Whom ever you want!

Remember there are 3 WAYS to enter!

1. Come by the Floyd County Times and drop off your entry.
2. Mail in your entry.
3. Fax it 886-3603.

Remember, you can also reserve a spot of your own for \$10.00 if you don't win!!!



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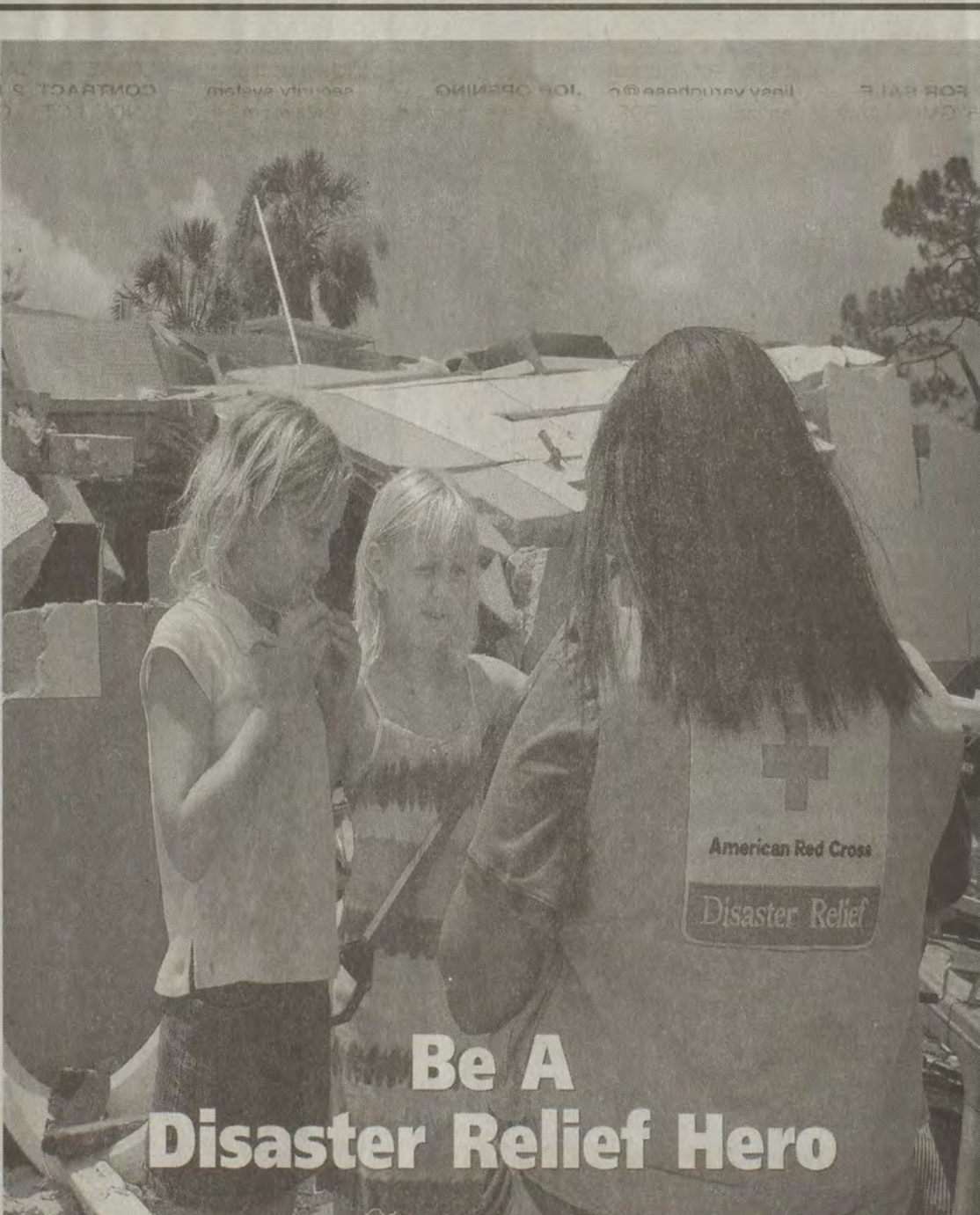
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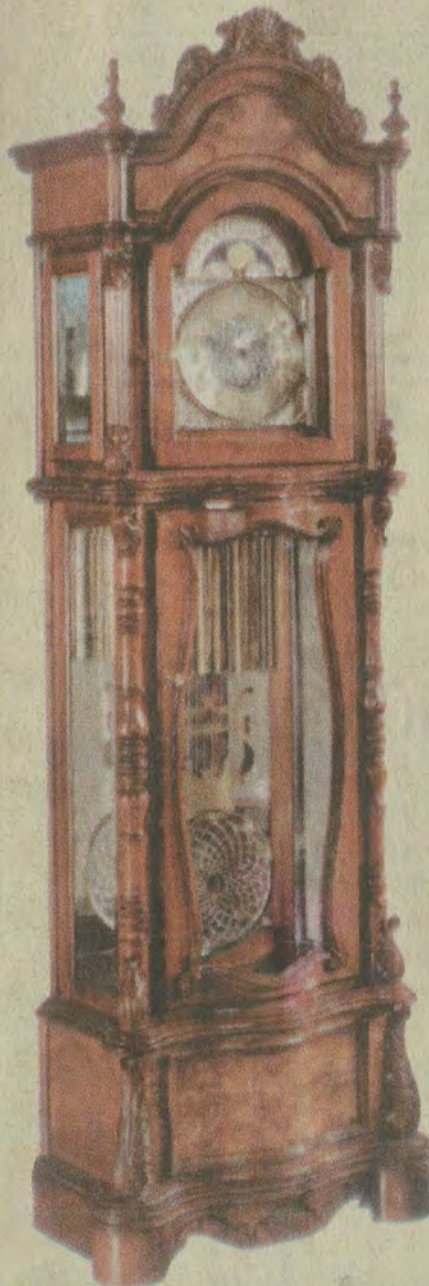
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