The mission of this publication is to be an instrument within the community connecting each of us through our personal stories, our challenges, our victories and our celebrations by our collective witness of local life.

Meet the Staff

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Owner/Publisher

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Times Online Editor/Sports Editor/Sports Preview Editor

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1990 General Carl Stiner Hwy. LaFollette, TN. 37766 423.912.8873
From the Publisher, Kelli Jo Wright

Hope, grace and faith. Well I can assure you this particular publication is going to require a half box of Kleenex as well as offer you a closer look into each of the aforementioned. It’s a rollercoaster of emotions but offers similar insights. Embedded in these pages you will find experiences that are emotionally moving and hit home for so many of us. I believe everyone can relate to pain in some form and no one is above being taught a good hard lesson from life. You’re going to read some fascinating stories in this month’s publication and perhaps find yourself, like I, so proud of the people whose stories are told. I want to thank each one of these individuals for personally telling or allowing us to tell their story. It’s not easy opening up about something as personal as our pain, but I have found so often people are willing to share if they believe sincerely that it will help others. I’m so proud to call them our neighbors and friends.

You will also read a piece about the issues surrounding our county in regards to drugs. It will be encouraging to know we are making progress in some areas and you will read more about that in this issue. In our attempt to maintain a positive outlook, progress has been made although there is still much work do. We have listed many resources available to help families and loved ones in need. We all have to work together with the resources we have to see this continued improvement.

In closing, this will be the last free issue. Yes, I know I’ve said that before but then I begin to rethink my marketing approach as so many still don’t know that we’re back in print not online only. I felt 3 free copies would be the best we could offer to reestablish our presence in the community. We will be easily recognized as we have such a unique cover and look nothing like an ordinary publication. I love the red theme we have this month and look forward to showing off something unique for the next edition as well! Right now getting this in the hands of the public for the first time is easier when it can be snatched off a shelf at no cost and easily recognized. It is our hope it will whet appetites to read more.

Look for us at many of your local mom-and-pop gas stations and supermarkets. Please remember to patronize these businesses. We are in the process of utilizing paper boys and girls and other means of outreach. Thank you in advance for having this Preview in your hand and reading what we’ve offered this month. Although we relish changing things up to keep it fresh and contemporary, we want to maintain a consistent core of community that will relate to an audience of any age. I welcome your ideas, your input and even your criticisms. More than anything else we need you telling people about our new publication and helping us spread the word. Picking up one or two copies as a gift to others is a wonderful way to spread a positive message that you believe in. Until next month, God bless.

God bless
Welcome to Terry's Pharmacy! We've been serving the communities of LaFollette, Jacksboro, Caryville, and Campbell County since 1977. Our pharmacists have over 75 years of experience and our friendly staff will treat you like family. Here at Terry's Pharmacy, we are dedicated to providing our customers with services that are customized to meet their needs. Whether it's prescription medications or over the counter products, we are here to answer any and all of your questions. If you haven't taken advantage of one of our many services, call or stop by and see us today!

At Terry's Pharmacy, we take pride in serving our community. We offer a variety of services to fit the needs of our customers. Stop by today and check out the services we have to offer!

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By State Representative Dennis Powers

As we enter the new year, I am so grateful and honored to get to serve the good people of the 36th District, which includes all of Campbell County, most of Union County and part of Anderson County. This district surrounds Norris Lake and is arguably the most beautiful part of the great state of Tennessee – we are so fortunate to get to live and work in this beautiful area.

On Tuesday, Jan. 10, the 110th General Assembly was convened after we were sworn into office at noon. The first week is always an exciting week with legislators coming to the Capitol from all over the state - from Bristol to Memphis, from Chattanooga to Clarksville – we all have one goal: to make Tennessee a better place to live, work and play.

Here are a few of the issues we will be confronting this session:

- **Budget Surplus** – For two years in a row, we have had a budget surplus. Much of this has come from increased revenue from the increased number of businesses moving to our state and current businesses expanding due to fewer regulations and lower taxes implemented over the past 5 years. However, much of the surplus is going to be used to increase our rainy day fund, pay back money to the transportation fund that was unconstitutionally taken from it years ago and the increased cost of TNcare and healthcare, which is going to be $300M+ above last year.

- **Education** – Two years ago, the governor put $97M in the budget for teacher raises, $105M last year and we expect to have another increase this year. We will also continue to put an emphasis on expanding our free community and technical colleges with the TN Promise. We are proud that we are the only state that offers this program. We have also set up a review board that will read every book and assess it before it is put in the classroom.

- **Social Issues** – We will continue to fight for our Constitution in the face of federal activist judges. Our state constitution contains amendments that puts restrictions on abortions and only allows marriage between a man and a woman. We will continue to push back against the federal government overreach that does not uphold our constitution.

- **Gas Tax** – There has been much discussion about this, but we have not had an increase for almost 30 years. Our roads are beginning to deteriorate and we have almost $7B of road projects on backlog. The transportation fund is a dedicated fund and separate from the general fund, so the surplus cannot be used to fund it. Constitutionally, the transportation fund has to be subsidized with a gasoline tax, which is actually a “fee” for using our roads.

- **Marijuana** – Another bill will be coming to legalize “medical marijuana.” However, the ingredient in marijuana that is effective in reducing seizures, etc., is already available in pill or liquid form. We passed a bill last year to allow that to be used as long as it did not contain THC, the drug, which produces the “high” effect. Therefore, it will be very difficult to persuade legislators to see the need for legalizing “medical marijuana.”

See state of state, Page 6
New requirements for High School Seniors

By Director of Schools, Larry Nidifer

Campbell County High School students are looking at some new requirements for graduation for the 2016-2017 school year. The ACT test and civics test is a requirement for graduation this year. Another plus is the county school system is able to fund the second ACT test so that students can improve their test score. In addition to the ACT test for seniors, all juniors are required to take the test and a practice test is going to be provided to sophomores. Practice allows students the opportunity to improve their score. A score of 21 on the ACT is a good indicator of college readiness.

Campbell County High School seniors will take a civics test of 25 questions. The test is taken from a pool of 100 questions and a 70 is considered a passing grade. Teachers have provided students with study guides to assist in passing the test. A very high percentage of students have passed the civics test. Students also have the opportunity for a retake, if necessary.

Campbell County Sherriff’s Office

Complaints for Service in 2016

By Sheriff Robbie K. Goins

Sheriff Robbie K. Goins reports that his Patrol Division answered 11,870 complaints of service from its citizens in the year of 2016. This was a busy year for his deputy sheriffs as they were dispatched to a plethora of diversified calls. These 11,870 calls include being bound to serve all civil process papers, subpoenas, civil warrants, garnishments, writ of possessions, and civil executions. These processes are from the six court systems in Campbell County. The courts are Juvenile, General Sessions, Child Support, Circuit, Grand Jury, and Criminal. Plus, there are the same court processes from other counties and states that are sent to the sheriff to serve on Campbell County citizens. The amount of processes on any given day is staggering. The deputies work diligently in performing this vast task.

Some of the daily assigned services the patrol division performs while not answering the 11,870 calls include actual fire calls, 928 of which were fire alarm calls. The funeral escorts are a daily request along with mental patient transports. The funeral escorts are a daily request from other counties and states that are sent to the sheriff to serve on Campbell County citizens. The amount of processes on any given day is staggering. The deputies work diligently in performing this vast task.

The patrol deputies are charged with patrolling neighborhoods and businesses while being diligent in looking for criminal activity. Their eyes are always looking for anything that could be illegal. They are charged with traffic flow and safety in the communities. The amount of traffic stops was extremely high last year. They stopped over 1,300 vehicles throughout the county.

They are charged by oath to seek, locate and arrest subjects with outstanding warrants. These are in addition to the other civil processes from the courts. The patrol deputies also assist the Criminal and Narcotic Divisions in the apprehension of suspects. Those suspects that were identified by the detectives’ investigations and patrol deputies search for them.

The leader of complaints is one that no one would suspect in our county. It is 1,076 escorts and is defined as funeral escorts along with mental patient transports. The funeral escorts are a daily request which mostly is assigned to day shift patrol deputies. The mental transports are always out of the county as the destination.

Second place is given to suspicious persons and vehicle complaints. There were a total of 928. This is apparent that community watch programs are actively performing well, based on these numbers.

State of State

FROM PAGE 5

- Immigration – The past presidential administration has put the states in a quandary by forcing them to accept refugees from countries that contain terrorists. We are all concerned about the federal government putting un-vetted refugees in our towns and communities in Tennessee.

Many other issues will arise during our upcoming session and I will be in touch. When I first ran, the two questions I kept hearing after knocking on doors and meeting with our citizens were: What does a state representative do and who is our state representative now? So, I always want to keep my constituents well informed of what your state government is doing in Nashville.

Please feel free to contact me anytime at 615-741-3335 or rep.dennis.powers@capitol.tn.gov or by mail at G-27 WMB, Nashville, TN 37243.
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Recent features include:
LaFollette Eye Clinic recently announced the availability of New Media Optics by HOYA Vision Care. The three new custom glasses lenses are known as iD Space, Screen and Zoom. The new high definition lens designs bridge the gap between technology and experience.

“The sooner we realize computer lenses are a requirement in the digital age, the sooner people can benefit from new lens technology,” said Dr. Andrew Howard, OD, President and CEO of LaFollette Eye Clinic. He continued, “The New Media Optics lenses should allow our patients to maximize their visual comfort during the most stressful part of their day – work!”

Our vision is best when our eyes work together, yet most people’s prescriptions have a power difference, known as imbalance, between the right and left eyes. A key feature of the iD Space, Screen and Zoom designs is HOYA’s patented Binocular Harmonization Technology TM which performs individual calculations. This ensures the prescription is precise at each point of the lens and exactly measured according to the needs of each individual eye. In today’s screen-based society, many people with even mild cases of imbalance can benefit from the new technology both at work and home.

“What we’re really talking about is comfort,” said Dr. Elizabeth Howard, OD. “I often see patients who are suffering from the effects of Digital Eye Strain. Their focusing systems are working overtime. What I love about HOYA’s New Media Optics portfolio is how it completely covers my patients’ needs. Our kids, young adults, and older patients all benefit from the variety of technological advances that HOYA Vision Care lenses now bring to the table. With iD Space, Screen and Zoom we can offer incredible customization for everyone’s working conditions. Now we can make sure all our patients are comfortable.”

Digital Eye Strain is the most common computer-related repetitive strain injury, surpassing carpal tunnel syndrome and tendinitis. Vision and the focusing system are underappreciated and accounted for in the ergonomics of most people’s work space. If this is ignored, then discomfort, disability and lower productivity can result. iD Space, Screen and Zoom have customizable fitting values to ensure each individual’s work space is part of the lens design.

About LaFollette Eye Clinic
LaFollette Eye Clinic has served tens of thousands of patients for nearly thirty years, and consistently receives national recognition for excellence in eye care. The mission of the clinic is to provide patients with the highest quality eye care available anywhere.

LaFollette Eye Clinic focuses on vision, fashion, health, and comfort. The team places a heavy emphasis on diagnosing and treating many eye diseases, as well as, the overall health and well-being of patients. The clinic serves the East Tennessee region, although some patients continue returning from as far away as Ohio, Texas, and Florida.

About HOYA Corporation
HOYA Corporation is a global technology company traded on the Japanese stock exchange based in Tokyo, Japan, and the leading supplier of innovative and indispensable high Dtech and healthcare products based upon its advanced optics technologies. HOYA now has over 100 subsidiaries and affiliates, and employs over 36,500 people worldwide.
John T. Reynolds receives the Boy Scouts of America’s Good Scout Award

Logan Hickman, chairman of the tenth annual 2017 Boy Scouts of America’s Campbell County Good Scout Award Dinner, is pleased to announce the 2017 honoree is long time Campbell County resident John T. (Jack) Reynolds. Jack Reynolds is the Chairman of the Board at Peoples Bank of the South. This yearly ceremony and dinner will occur at the Ball Farm Event Center, 2107 General Carl W. Stiner Highway, LaFollette on Thursday, March 16, 2017 at 6:00 PM. The money raised at the event will support Campbell County scouting in 2017. This yearly dinner has evolved into Campbell County’s premier recognition banquet.

John T. (Jack) Reynolds, except for the time spent in the US Army and at college, is a life-long resident of Campbell County. A graduate of LaFollette High School in 1947, he began his college education at Carson Newman University in September 1947. After two years at Carson Newman, he transferred to Bowling Green College of Commerce (now Western Kentucky University). He graduated in 1951 with a Bachelor of Science in business administration. From there it was off to the US Army. In 1953, Jack started work immediately at the bank his father helped organize in 1917. His 63 years of service at Peoples Bank of the South includes duties as executive vice president, president, chief executive officer, and board chairman. Jack, a former boy scout, is proud of many things and especially the fact his son, his son-in-law, and two grandsons are all eagle scouts. Jack and his wife, Mary Lou, have been married 61 years. They have three children and four grandchildren.

Commissioner of the Department of Financial Institutions, Greg Gonzales, is keynote speaker. He is the 18th commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Financial Institutions. Commissioner Gonzales began serving in this role in 2005, and was reappointed by Governor Bill Haslam. He has served in the department since 1986. In this position, Gonzales serves as Tennessee’s chief regulatory officer of all state-chartered depository and licensed non-depository financial institutions. Additionally, he has served as assistant commissioner and general counsel for the department.

Peoples Bank of the South is proud to underwrite the dinner’s expense for the tenth year. Jack Reynolds’ recognition also coincides with the 100th anniversary of Peoples Bank.

The previous award recipients are Mr. Edward Ball-off, Mrs. Juanita Baird, Colonel Tommy C. Stiner, the five Baird brothers, General Carl W. Stiner, the Campbell County Honor Guard, Mr. Lansden E. Hill, the Campbell County High School football team coaching staff, and Mr. Mike Malicote.

John T. Reynolds
By Christy Elkins

As soon as you walk through the ornate, wooden doors of Sun Gypsy Boutique, it is like stepping into a whole other world.

The boutique is carefully decorated with antiques, collectables, and memorabilia, and the exposed brick walls and original vintage ceiling create a chic, high end shopping experience.

Coupled with on trend clothing for women of all sizes, Sun Gypsy Boutique also offers unique jewelry pieces that cater to the hearts of those born and raised in Kentucky and Tennessee, and also offers stylish footwear to complete your look.

Sun Gypsy Boutique is a perfect locale to Shop Small, Shop Local, a campaign that the Campbell County Chamber of Commerce encourages the community to remember when purchasing those Valentine's Day gifts, birthday gifts for your best friend or mother, or a little something special for yourself.

Sun Gypsy Boutique is located at 208 North Main Street in Jellico and business hours are 10am-6pm Monday through Saturday.
Each morning when I start my day, I go through the motions of getting everyone dressed, fed, and out the door. I become so emotionally drained before its even 9 am. Monday through Friday is exhausting. The running, the play-dates, sporting events, homework, my jobs. I’m such a mess 95% of the time, and until recently, have been beating myself up over not being a better mother to my children.

In my head I’m constantly thinking, “Is my house too dirty?” “Am I cooking for my kids enough, or are we eating out too much?” “Am I being present enough?” I never give myself enough credit for anything, which is a blessing and a curse. I’m always so critical of myself and everything I do, always thinking that I could have done better. I rarely celebrate my little victories and get really embarrassed when people do offer me praise. This is probably not an idealistic mindset for someone who’s hanging on by a string, but this mindset has made me into who I am as a mother and human being. I have to be hard on myself in order to make things happen, because if I don’t who will? It’s so exhausting.

I’ve learned that when you become a mom, you have to not only learn how to make the lemonade, but you also have to learn to stomach the lemons. With that being said, putting yourself into this box of being a perfect parent is for the birds. It’s unrealistic, we are flawed and it’s beautiful. I don’t want to keep it together anymore. I’m tired of over analyzing every tiny detail. I’m starting 2017 with a new definition of who I am, and who I want to be. Every mother out there needs to find the courage and confidence in ourselves to handle life on our own terms, without everyone else’s approval.

Being a parent is the best gift that God has ever given to me, but I’ve got to stop worrying. My identity is so much more than just being mom. Sometimes the best thing that us moms can do is not to think, not wonder or obsess, but to just breathe.

If we’re not happy and fulfilled, then our children can sense that. Mothers have to be strong the majority of the time so we need our mental health to be in check, so that we don’t lose our minds. It’s ok to ditch the Nike’s and top knots for contour and heels. Do “you” moms, even if it’s only getting dressed up to go to Target by yourself. Make that spa appointment, hire a sitter and go for drinks with your friends, take a yoga class, just do something to set yourself apart and keep your identity alive. We deserve it.

You can follow along on my parenting fails and triumphs on my Instagram account @hellonugget, my Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/lindsey.bradley.58, or my blog www.hellonugget.co
Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness. — Desmond Tutu

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## If You Can Find A Better Deal, You Had Better Buy It!

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Friends of Campbell County Animals open to new members

By Michelle Lyons-Orman
Friends of Campbell County Animals (FCCA) is holding a membership drive. We are looking for people of all ages (16 and under to be accompanied by an adult) to volunteer in helping the animals of Campbell County.

Since FCCA acquired the operational management of the Campbell County Animal Shelter on August 2, 2015, we strive to enhance the rescue efforts and services to the unwanted or lost animals of our county. As a County shelter, we accept any/all dogs and cats that come through our doors, regardless of their condition. Our team of dedicated shelter employees and volunteers go above and beyond for the animals in our charge. Our successes include lowering the overall county shelter euthanasia rate from approximately 90% to approximately 20%. Also, our diligent team coordinates rescue efforts resulting in approximately 2,000 dogs and cats leaving for rescue annually. This important work can only be accomplished through the work and volunteer efforts of many; this includes you!

Be part of the solution! An hour, day or weekend of your time is all it takes. It can be as simple as volunteering to walk the dogs and/or interact with the cats. This human interaction and socialization makes them “well-rounded” pets, increasing their potential for adoption. It’s not all hustle and bustle, sometimes we have to “mend broken spirits.” You can do this with your calm voice and presence; just sit, relax and let them know they’re safe and loved. Other volunteer positions include: phone attendant to provide information to our caller’s, general shelter helper and animal foster. Come meet new friends. You’ll join a network of people working to enrich the lives of animals, while staying active in your community.

Equally important, we have identified ways to help if you can’t physically visit the shelter. For those with similar experience or looking for a challenge, we need individuals to take on the following volunteer positions with FCCA; volunteer coordinator, marketing director, fundraising, and grant writer. While these positions may require more time than fun, a sense of accomplishment will more than compensate.

See FCCA, Page 15
City of LaFollette January 2017 Overview

By Jimmy Jeffries

January has given the City of LaFollette a productive start to the new year. We have many projects that we are currently working on that will greatly improve our city. If you recall, back in October of last year, Governor Haslam and Commissioner Boyd presented us with a Community Development Block Grant for Sewer Improvements. This grant was used to repair and extend the sewer lines in the city and county.

The City is also currently working with TDOT on 3 different projects: 1) Dossett Lane Bridge Project – this project is a 2.8-million-dollar project. The City of LaFollette is partnering with the Campbell County Commission to give us added access to the industrial park and Life Star helicopter without crossing the railroad tracks. This could also be used as an emergency exit for the Campbell County High School. 2) The Downtown Revitalization Project – this project is for downtown improvements. It will be used to address issues such as problems at intersections, drainage, and signage. We are hoping this project will improve the overall appearance of downtown and revitalize it for our citizens. 3) Safe Routes to School – this project is to put sidewalks in so the children of our community can have a safe way to walk from home to school. The City also received a Parks and Recreation Grant to be used to widen our Walking Trails and extend turf on the playground, which will make it safer for our children to play. We are also working on the Big Creek Project; this project will start at Tank Springs and end below the Walking Trail on the south side of Beech Street. This project will remove vegetation, brush and fallen trees along the creek making it more attractive and prevent any future flooding. The City is also in the process of opening selected streets for ATV/UTV travel. This will connect us to Rocky Top, Caryville, Scott County and Jellico. Many will travel here to use the ATV access streets to experience our trails, mountains, and cities. Which will mean an increase in tourism. We have many things happening in the city for the city right now and we will keep moving forward and seeing these projects through and are looking forward to new challenges and projects for the future.

If you would like to assist the animals in other ways, monetary donations are always appreciated, as are comfort items for the animals, such as blankets, toys, food and treats. Donations of office and cleaning supplies are another way to keep our operating costs down, as are gift cards so that we may purchase the supplies needed. Because we are a non-profit (501.C 3), all donations are tax deductible.

Although FCCA does good work, the community must also recognize their responsibility to minimize pet over-population; please spay & neuter your pets. If you need assistance with this routine procedure, you may contact Terri Woodward, at “Spay Campbell County Pets” (423-352-7447) for details.

Thank you for considering FCCA as your preferred volunteer commitment. You may contact FCCA at 423-566-8018, or come by the Campbell County Animal Shelter.
He’s still working on me!

By Jeremy Young

“He's still working on me
To make me what I need to be
It took him just a week to make the moon and stars
The sun and the earth and Jupiter and Mars
How loving and patient
He must be
"Cause He's still workin’ on me."

A simple song taught to children that definitely still applies to all of our lives today I think. I am definitely not the young “sprout” that I was when He saved me over 22 years ago. I have grown closer to God, slid away from Him and returned with my head held low several times. But He is always there to accept me back and forgive me again. I hope and pray that everyday I get closer to God, and not farther away. Because I have learned that if you're not getting closer to Him, you're getting farther away.

I have heard it explained that Satan is always in attendance at every church service. In Ephesians 2:2, Paul describes him as “the prince of the power of the air.” Unfortunately, he is always there, too. Whether in church, school, work or anywhere we might find ourselves, he is waiting and watching for an opportunity to trap us in a snare that will pull us away from God. This makes sense when you read the first chapter of Job, some of which is a conversation between the Almighty God and Satan about one of God’s most devoted followers.

“And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it,” reads Job 1:7

What is he doing on his little stroll through our neck and woods? Peter warned us of what he was doing in 1 Peter 5:8, which tells us to, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

Just as Satan is always there, he too is still working on me. He’s working on all of us. For those who haven’t accepted Christ and aren’t around Christians who might help lead them to Christ, he doesn’t have to do much. He has them right where he wants them. He wants them to be content and even happy in their lives on Earth. If they reach the end of their days without realizing their need for salvation through Jesus, then ultimately Satan has won them to Hell.

For those of us who know Christ, the devil wishes to push down our desire to serve the one true Living God. He wants to make us fail, he wants to drag us through the mud, and most of all, he wants to ruin our testimony that could lead someone to Christ. It seems to me, and many other Christians I’ve discussed this with, that he works on us the hardest when we are trying to show the love of Christ to others. Through prayer and God’s direction, I started this writing series in 2011 and have prayed many times that He would allow it to once again be in print for people to read. Of course, everything works for His purpose and timing. When I got the call from my old colleague, boss and friend that she had been praying and felt led to print The Volunteer Times again showing positive news, the Spirit stirred within me.

Just as quick, the devil started his clap-trap a-flying in my ear. “You can’t do this. You’re not a strong enough Christian. No one wants to read about or hear about Jesus from the likes of you.”

I must admit, that’s kinda what let me know I was on the right path. When you feel Satan working on you and trying to talk you out of doing something, it stands a good chance that you are right where God wants you to be. The devil will undoubtedly continue to try to hinder us from working for the Lord. Not that we are required to work for our salvation, but that God gives us the true desire to see others freed from their sin through the grace and forgiveness that comes only through the salvation of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He will always be working on us, telling us that we aren’t good enough, don’t know enough of The Bible, don’t know Jesus well enough, don’t want to ruffle the waters with our friends, don’t want to be made fun of, don’t want to be pushed out of our group of friends and colleagues, don’t want be pushed out of our group of friends and colleagues, don’t want asked a question we don’t have an answer for, and that we don’t need to share Christ with anyone.

He is wrong! He wants you to believe that you can’t show someone the Love of Christ. He wants you to believe you can’t or shouldn’t share what the Lord has done in your life. He will scream in your ear, kick and stomp his feet and physically throw things in your way to stop you from sharing Jesus with anyone. He will act like a 3 year-old whining, crying brat to get you to give into his wishes instead of doing what you know is right. He will convince you that it isn’t him doing this, and that it is a feeling inside of you that keeps you immobile. Yep, he will work on you and try his hardest to make you give in and give up.

But while Satan is the prince of this dirt we live on, God was, is and always will be the King of us all. Through a thoughtful, prayerful life with Christ, you can overcome this rapscallion of a brat named Satan.

There are many verses in The Bible that could be shared on how to handle these encounters with our adversary. After all, it is the manual for surviving on this planet.

Some say that the whole “What Would Jesus Do?” thing was really just a trend of my youth, but I find that many times it is a helpful thought. In this and every instance Jesus knows what we need to do to subdue our biggest foe: pray, breathe, and read our Bible.

And reading The Bible we find that when Jesus was tempted by Satan directly (Mt. 4:1-11, Mark 1:12, 13 and Luke 4:1-13), just as we find ourselves being tempted by him everyday, here is what He said and did: “Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve,” Luke 4:8.

Father I thank you for allowing me to be close to You through Your Son Jesus Christ. I know that the enemy is working hard on me to keep me from doing and saying what You would have me to do and say. Thank you for always working on me more than he ever can. Thank you for holding me tight in your hand and never letting me go. Amen!
Grit and grace along with the price of pearls

By Trina Waldroup Lemarr

There was a day when I thought I would die and I wanted my pearl necklace. I didn't want it to die in. I wasn't sure why I wanted it, but it would be made very clear to me later as to why I needed it so badly. I had purchased it more 25 years prior when pearls weren't as available as they are now. As a result they were far more expensive back then and very hard earned. I saved every spare dime for 2 years to buy it.

It was more than a necklace it represented what I wanted to be. I wanted to be graceful like Jackie Kennedy, Audrey Hepburn, Princess Diana, and my mamma who all wore pearl necklaces. I wore mine on special occasions only and very aware of it the few times I wore it that I noticed when it shifted the way pearls do. I was far too mindful of them to be comfortable.

As the years passed and I grew into myself and I became who I was based on my beliefs and my experiences that had absolutely nothing to do with a string of pearls. The necklace became an afterthought for many times that had absolutely nothing to do with a string of pearls. The necklace was perfectly placed on the yellowing white velvet pedestal it came on and held in place by ribbons that snapped on both sides. The mint green taffeta case still snapped sassy like the one that Edward Lewis presented to Vivian when she squealed with delight in "Pretty Woman" as I shut it back.

As I examined it I thought about how graceful the pearls actually were. I thought about how tough they were too. Each pearl was formed from a grain of sand in the grit and the mire of a dark place. I got a little stronger as I thought about God's hand on such things as pearls. I knew his hand was on me too. I looked closely at the flaws in the pearls and the flaws didn't matter. In fact the flaws only served to remind me that pearls were real. I kept getting little bit stronger. I finally began to whisper things to myself like, "You are no hot house flower, you will survive this, and God's sake wear your pearls." I self talked myself through some of my weakness. As it turned out, my necklace was beautiful with my pink pajamas that I had spilled red nite medicine on. The red medicine actually seemed set my pearls off in a becoming manner and they were far prettier than I had ever seen them before, bald head and all.

In hindsight, I see that the girl I was may not have been that naïve after all. My pearls finally did what I was confident they would help me do over a quarter of a century ago. They helped me be graceful that through awful day. It was in grit that I too found the grace that I had searched for back then and I learned that without grit there is no gracefulness. In fact, I was more graceful than I had ever been before that day. I am glad that I was as Daddy sat with me that afternoon and we laughed and smiled through my pain and his worry.

We wore our troubles lightly and my pearls were most comfortable. The ability to be at ease in the hardest of times is a wonderful thing that comes from knowing God will take care of us. I think it is the highest form of faith. That day will always stand out as one the best days of my life, yet one of hardest days of my life.

The ladies I mentioned earlier not only wore pearls; they were pearls. The grit served to polish them graceful. Their composure, poise, and gracefulness quietly whispers to me that they too survived unthinkable times. I don't need to know what those hard times were, or what they survived, but I know their crosses must have been heavy as their grace says they have known grit. I also think their pearls were more of a character statement than a fashion statement.

If you are in the grit and the mire of cancer, depression, poverty, addiction, or any painful thing you should learn what you can from it. You will need the lessons for what is intended in the future for you. God has a specific plan for each of us. God has a purpose in everything, you future pearl, you.

A,B,C’s of Money

In a follow up from my last article I’m going to cover IRAs, or Individual Retirement Accounts. An IRA is a type of account for retirement. You can have an IRA that is in CD’s, mutual funds, a money market. It’s just a term to let the government know it is set aside for retirement. As we have covered in the first article about using a 401K to put back money, not everyone has access to a 401K. For those who do not, an IRA is a good alternative to put back money for retirement. You can go to an adviser or set one up online through a company like Fidelity.

There are a few different types of IRAs. I’m covering two of the most popular ones. One is a Traditional IRA. This is an IRA that you can put $5,500 a year into if you are under 50, and $6,500 if you are over 50. This amount changes from time to time usually going up every 2-3 years. A Traditional IRA will give you a tax deduction if you put money into this account. So you get to put money away for retirement and you help reduce your taxes with a deduction. You will however pay taxes on the growth when you take it out in retirement.

A Roth IRA is different than a Traditional IRA. The limits of $5,500, and $6,500 are the same, but with a Roth IRA you don’t get a tax deduction on your taxes for that tax year. With a Roth IRA you get a future advantage. All the growth on the money you will get tax free when you take it out in retirement. Both of these plans can incur penalties if you touch the money prior to age 59 ½ unless for a few specific instances.

The key to these is starting and funding as soon as you can. If say a 20 year old put $2,000 into a retirement account yearly that grew at 8% annually; at retirement they would have $1,239,343. If that same person waited 10 years and started putting back at 30 they would accumulate $559,562. Those 10 years make a significant difference.

Next time we will talk about other things that can affect your retirement if not in place, Life insurance and disability. — Mr. Money
A very small community nestled in the mountains of Campbell County just southeast of highways 25W and 90 is named for a “Mr.” Morley, a railroad contractor who was connecting coal mines for rail access in the early 1900s. The coal mining community of Morley, Tennessee was first settled around 1906 by best locate-able records. It is also the native home to former Wynn-Habersham School student, Jellico High School graduate, and video game graphic animator turned East Tennessee State University teacher/lecturer Greg Marlow.

Marlow, 36, holds close to his family and northern Campbell County roots as he was enjoying early-January’s snowfall at his parents house in Morley for this interview. He admitted that he didn’t really know what he wanted to do with his life before graduating high school in 1998.

“I knew I wanted to go to college, but didn’t really know what I wanted to do,” Marlow said. “Jellico didn’t have an art class at the time and I really liked drawing. A friend told me about ETSU and I had never heard of it,” he said laughingly. Lisa Marlow, now a teacher at Campbell County High had taught him some computer classes at J.H.S. he said. The combination of the two melded into what is now Marlow’s passion and career.

Following a campus tour, Marlow signed up to attend the first college in America permitted to teach the Maya computer animation program, a program used by a then relatively unknown company known as Pixar. Marlow stated proudly that ETSU is the only public university in Tennessee that teaches this program and curriculum today.

“Toy Story had just came out,” Marlow recalls Pixar’s first major production, calling his thrust into computer animation “a perfect storm of events.”

See MARLOW, Page 19
Graduating high school, being inspired by then futuristic animation of Toy Story and being accepted into ETSU's Digital Media program was Marlow’s perfect storm.

“It kind of all came together,” he said.

Following his graduation from ETSU’s Digital Media Program with a Bachelor (2003) and a Master of Science Degree (2006), he received further certification in Advanced Character Animation from Animation Mentor. He first worked on educational games for kids with A.D.H.D. and autism.

“It’s some pretty interesting technology actually,” he said. “It allows you to interact with the game through brain waves instead of controllers.”

Also in 2006, Marlow married his girlfriend of two years, Johnson City native and University of Tennessee graduate Amanda Livingston in Las Vegas. She was walked down the aisle by Elvis.

Marlow and his wife moved to Baltimore, Maryland that same year and he started working for Firaxis Games. Marlow has made many contributions to the video gaming world by creating animated characters such as “Duncan” from Civilization: Beyond Earth and “Harold” from Sid Meier's Civilization VI, just to name a couple. He has contributed work to other games including Sid Meier's Civilization V, multiple DLC and expansion packs for the Civ. V Franchise, XCOM – expansion and DLC, Bioshock Infinite (promotional material), Battleborn, Civilization: Beyond Earth and Sid Meier's Civilization VI among others. He is also using his artistic and animation talents on games that have yet to be released and cannot be revealed at this time.

Marlow, admitting he is “kind of addicted to school,” said he hopes to soon to be professor of Digital Media as he is currently pursuing another degree in creative writing. As a college teacher he has published academic literature in his field, giving him many opportunities to travel over the course of his young career. This includes gaming conventions and conferences in Boston, Baltimore, and even Hawaii.

“Baltimore is really close to a lot of cool places,” Marlow said. “Gettysburg (PA), Washington DC, and New York.”

Marlow explained ETSU’s Digital Media program saying, “We are a different department, but we work pretty close together with the art department and we work with the computer science department. We are like a hybrid in the middle. The four concentrations of digital media are Animation, Game Design, Visual Effects, and Visualization. I mainly teach in the Animation concentration. A lot of the people I teach have gone into the video game industry and the film industry as well.”

When talking about his success in Digital Media and animation, Marlow said he really wants local kids to understand that they can do what they want if they work hard at it. In fact, that's one of the big reasons Marlow moved back to Tennessee to help kids realize that these kinds of jobs exist for those who work hard at it.

“I want to help young people in this region realize that these kinds of jobs are a possibility,” he said. “They may not even know that their dream job exists, and that is why they have to make an effort to go out and find it.”

Marlow opens himself up to those who think they may be interested in animation or video games by e-mail at marlowg@etsu.edu. You can also learn more about ETSU’s Digital Media Department at www.etsudigitalmedia.com.
If there is one thing I know Pat and John know how to do, it's eat. I've been feeding those guys for a long time and not only do they eat impressively they have a great talent for preparing food as well. They know and recognize culinary imagination when they come across it and are happy to try some of your local favorites and report back their opinions. If you have a specialty item on your menu you would like Pat and John to give a whirl and feature in the next "Foodie" edition let us know.

thevolunteertimes@comcast.net
Publisher

By John Muse and Pat Pebley

Today we stopped in for lunch at the Two Sisters Market and Deli located on the Jacksboro end of Towe String Road. Two Sisters is open Monday-Friday from 7am to 6 pm and it's 5 minutes from Walmart, it was an easy trip and the food was well worth the stop.

I selected the Italian sub, along with tater tots. I have a weakness for salami and wasn't disappointed. The sandwich was close to an 8 inch sub and was loaded with meat, cheese and the veggies I selected. With each bite I was able to taste the individual flavors of the ham, pepperoni and salami, along with the gooey, buttery goodness of the Swiss cheese I ordered on my sandwich. The veggies were fresh and crisp and a perfect compliment to the meaty goodness.

The tater tots were quite the tasty treat as well. They were perfectly cooked, very crisp without even a hint of being overcooked. I've worked in a small restaurant like Two Sisters in the past and know that it's very tough to find that perfect balance when cooking your potatoes. They've found the zone here. Probably the best tots I've ever had at a restaurant anywhere. Topping off the meal was a piece of Oreo cheesecake. Cheesecake is one of my favorite desserts and this homemade delight was the perfect way to end the meal.

If you're wondering about prices, you can eat the full meal, with dessert and a drink for less than $10. Most things on the Two Sisters menu are under $4.00 for sandwiches or burgers and under $2.00 for fries/tots/hot dogs and other smaller items. Two Sisters also offers all-day breakfast items off their breakfast menu if that is what you're looking for in a meal.

Two Sisters Market and Deli

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As a young boy, these type establishments were much more common and I would often dine at them with my grandparents or other family members. Two Sisters is nostalgic taste and place. The kind of place where one may go for a meal and sit around for another hour talking to a neighbor. So combining the taste and nostalgia factor made this trip to Two Sisters Market and Deli a real winning experience.

While this was John’s first time trying this hidden gem I have eaten there dozens of times. This time I tried the Philly cheese steak for the first time. It was delicious, probably my second favorite item on the menu behind the Italian sub that John had. I also had onion rings which are my favorite of their fried sides.

Like many diners in our area Two Sisters features hot dogs. Now my grandmother has me very spoiled on the hot dog front and it is hard to impress me with them. But the ones at Two Sisters are so good I have ordered them at least half of the many times I have patronized them. As a side note on wiener dishes they also have a delightful corn dog.

If you are unsure what to try first, their burger is very good. A nice thick patty of beef cooked to order. It is also big enough to satisfy even a hungry fat guy like me.

All of their sub sandwiches are stuffed full of meat. I would feel confident ordering any of them and knowing that I will have a tasty satisfying meal.

To my regret I have yet to try their breakfast. But I recently discovered you can order it all day and it will be on my plate the next time I visit, which will be very soon.
By Patrick Pebley

I have noticed an ongoing and disturbing trend lately. Suddenly we seem to have a group of outside observers that seem to, in their mind at least, know more about coaching than the actual coach. They sit in the stands and second guess every coaching decision, and a few carry it on to a degree that is actually harmful.

Now this is not some new issue. When I coached there were always a group that sat in the stands that clearly knew more about what was needed to win on the football field than those of us who actually put in the long, hot, and often times sweaty hours working with the players virtually year round. We would be in game situations and it would be all I could do to maintain my composure while in the press-box hearing these armchair coaches spout off their “knowledge.” If you know me, and especially if you knew me back in the day, then you know how close I came to at the very least going to jail for assault and battery. In fact I had a couple of infamous verbal confrontations after games with these “experts.”

Unfortunately it has gotten worse over the last several years. Back when I coached, our record spoke for itself as we won way more than we lost. Also I truly think most of the mouth breathers that were coaching from the stands realized that although we did not make the perfect call every time that we were doing what was best for the student athletes on the field.

Over the last several years it has gotten worse. I will flashback to a few years ago when a group of parents and players actually walked out on Len Pierce on game day. This was heavily rumored to have been done with the blessing of the woman who was the Director of Schools for Campbell County at the time. Only Corey Minton stayed with his team as Pierce cobbled together a replacement squad of former JV players and had a mid-season open tryout. The most disturbing part of this is the conspirators won the day and Pierce was forced out following the season. I was running www.campbellcountysports.com at the time. The Volunteer Times was defunct. I tried to rally the public in outrage but the internet was still a brave new world, and the vast majority of folks I was trying to reach were not online.

Now, even years after that, it is still an ongoing issue. Parents and players who are unsatisfied are now turning to the bathroom wall of the internet, also known as Topix, to go after any coach they do not like. Heck it does not even have to be a coach of a struggling program. I have seen the Price twins unjustly criticized there and they have had an unparalleled level of success.

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Meet the Cougars: Kasi Phillips

By John Muse

Kasi is a senior and 4 year player for the CCHS Lady Cougars basketball squad. She’s also one of the original Lady Cougar soccer players.

Q: What is your favorite food?
A: Pizza! You can literally put anything on a pizza and it's still good.

Q: Books or Movies?
A: I'm a movie fan!

Q: What would you tell an 8th grader who was about to enroll at CCHS next fall?
A: Don’t be scared. This is a really great school and we all get along and try to love each other. Before you know it you’ll see that it’s like family here, especially on the sports teams.

Q: What are your college choices and career choices?
A: I’m going to Hiwassee College to continue my soccer career. I plan on getting a degree in business or a teaching degree. I’d like to become a coach in the future.

Q: Who has inspired you or is someone you look up to in life?
A: My brother, Shaun Phillips. He was a basketball player too and I can talk to him about on the court stuff and anything off the court as well. He’s always been there for me and always helps me with anything I’ve ever needed.
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Lucas is a senior and 2 year player for the CCHS basketball team. He was also on the CCHS football team during his time at Campbell County High School.

**Q:** What is your favorite food?
**A:** Steak. A really big steak!

**Q:** Movies or books?
**A:** I love the Marvel movies, the Avengers, Thor, Captain America.

**Q:** What would you tell and 8th grader who was about to enroll at CCHS next fall?

**A:** Take it seriously. Buckle down and do your work. Try as hard as you can to be as ready as you can for college, because it’ll be that time before you know it.

**Q:** What are your college choices and career choices?
**A:** That even if we’re not related we’re still a family and I’m going to Roane State in the fall and I’m looking to get my degree and work in the field of physical therapy.

**Q:** Who has inspired you or is someone you look up to in life?
**A:** My mom, Tiffany Wilhoit for sure. She and my grandparents raised me and she’s always been there for me. She helps me with school or any other problem I’m ever faced with. I couldn’t have made it this far without her.
Meet the Cougars: Alexis North

By John Muse

Alexis is a senior cheerleader for CCHS. She is a 4 year cheerleader and the current Co-Captain of the 2016-2017 cheer squad.

Q: What is your favorite kind of day off, a snow day or a summer vacation day?
A: Definitely a snow day. It’s less planned and you can just kind of relax at the house and watch movies.

Q: Movies or books?
A: I love movies more, but the right book is also great!

Q: What is your favorite cheer experience?
A: I always loved cheering football season. It’s just so much fun, the crowd is huge and they fill us with energy as we cheer.

Q: What would you tell an 8th grader who was about to enroll at CCHS next fall?
A: Come in and enjoy yourself. Live life to the fullest the next four years and try everything you can. It flies by and you’re a senior before you know it.

Q: What are your college choices and career choices?
A: I’m going to UT Chattanooga Arts & Sciences. I love art and would love to teach art to children someday. I think that would be one of the most satisfying jobs I could get.

Q: Who has inspired you or is someone you look up to in life?
A: Haley Kramer, who also cheered her and graduated from CCHS last year. I grew up with her and she inspired me all the way. Her heart is in the right place and she’s following her dream as a dancer at Tennessee Tech. I have always admired her work ethic and she taught me so much about how to do things the right way over the years I’ve known her.
Meet the Cougars: Sarah Cain

By John Muse

Sarah is a senior and multi-year starter for the Campbell County Lady Cougars basketball team. She plays multiple positions and is one of the most versatile players at CCHS.

Q: What is your favorite type of day off, a snow day or a summer vacation day?
A: A snow day, I can stay inside wrapped up in my favorite blanket and just relax.

Q: Movies or books?
A: Definitely both! I can go for a good book or movie any day.

Q: What would you tell an 8th grader who was about to enroll at CCHS next fall?
A: Don’t blink! Trust people when they tell you it flies by because I promise it does. Have a good time with your friends on game days or any other day of the week. Don’t take anything for granted because you could lose it in a second.

Q: What are your college choices and career choices?
A: I’m going to Bryan college this fall and looking to major in psychology. After that I’m going to attend optometry school to become an eye doctor.

Q: Who has inspired you or is someone you look up to in life?
A: My parents, Mark and Melissa Cain are an inspiration to me. They are amazing people. They show love even when it’s hard. They’re always there for me no matter what whether I have a good game/bad game or a good day/bad day. Moving as often as we have has definitely been a struggle, but my parents have been so supportive through everything. I’m so thankful for them.
Meet the Cougars: Jacob Walden

By John Muse

Jacob is a senior and multi-year starter at guard for the Campbell County Cougars basketball team.

Q: What is your favorite food?
A: Chicken.

Q: Movies or books?
A: Definitely both! I can go for a good book or movie any day.

Q: What would you tell an 8th grader who was about to enroll at CCHS next fall?
A: Keep your head up and try as hard as you can at everything you do. Never get discouraged. If you keep putting in the effort the results will come and it'll all pay off in the end.

Q: What are your college choices and career choices?
A: I'm undecided on a college right now. It will come down to what potential scholarship offers I may get for basketball. If I decided not to play ball at the next level, I'm either going to the University of Tennessee or East Tennessee State University. I'm planning on being a chemistry major and becoming anesthesiologist.

Q: Who has inspired you or is someone you look up to in life?
A: Definitely my dad, Anthony Walden. He's a great role model, he works very hard to provide everything I need. When I need to talk about the game or just life in general, he has always been there for me and I know I can always count on him no matter what.
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Meet the Cougars: Mallory Bolton

By John Muse

Mallory is a senior cheerleader for CCHS. She is a 3 year cheerleader and the current Co-Captain of the 2016-2017 cheer squad.

Q: What is your favorite kind of day off, a snow day or a summer vacation day?
A: I'd say a summer vacation day, I have to work most days I'm not at school any way, so even when we get off for snow I'm at my job.

Q: Movies or books?
A: I prefer movies over books. School, cheer and work doesn't leave a lot of time for either.

Q: What is your favorite cheer experience?
A: Our beach trip this year. It was an amazing bonding experience for the team and a great time with my friends.

Q: What would you tell an 8th grader who was about to enroll at CCHS next fall?
A: Take the hard classes, get involved in activities. Be happy and don't worry about what others think. Search out for teachers who'll push you and be thankful for your time here. The seniors told me it'd fly by and I didn't believe them. They were right. Find your best friends while you're there. Keep your future in mind and plan for it. If you're willing to work for it, you can have anything.

Q: What are your college choices and career choices?
A: I'm going to the University of Tennessee and majoring in biochemistry as a precursor to medical school. I plan on becoming a physician.

Q: Who has inspired you or is someone you look up to in life?
A: Haley Kramer is like a big sister, she showed me how to put my heart into everything I do. She is always there for all of us girls on the cheer team. When things get tough, I know if Haley can do all she does, I can do what I need to do. Mrs. Browning has always given me courage and believed in me. No matter how tough it gets, she's always there for me, even on days I felt like crying or giving up. Mr. Copeland also pushes me and he also helps me so much. No matter how tough physics or calculus got he was always there to teach me, to tutor me, and to guide me. He gave his extra time to help me without complaint.
We have an outstanding training staff at Absolute Fitness. I am extremely proud of them and the success they have had with their clients. Their personal touch, attention to detail, and understanding of the body and human movement is top notch.

Julie Zupancic, my wife and foundation, has a Bachelor’s degree in Exercise Physiology and is a Physical Therapist Assistant. She has nearly 20 years experience in personal training and physical therapy rehab. Her high energy spirit and personality is contagious. She has the ability to make even the most strenuous training session fun and filled with laughter. Julie also has compassion and patience while working with her training and rehab clients.
One Voice Can Make A Difference

From the desk of David H. Dunaway

In his January 6, 1941 message to Congress, President Franklin Roosevelt called for a world where “four freedoms” were protected: freedom of speech and expression, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. Indeed, the greatest of these freedoms may very well be the freedom of speech and expression. It was for this reason that our founding fathers, adopting a Bill of Rights, made freedom of expression the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

I have always believed that one voice could make a difference, whether in our own life or the lives of others. When I remember the people who have inspired me, at the top of the list is the former Superintendent of Schools of Knoxville and my former principal at Fulton High School, James A. Newman.

See ONE VOICE, Page 33
One Voice
FROM PAGE 32

At the time I was 10 years of age, I began carrying newspapers in the old North Knoxville, Oglewood, and Lincoln Park communities of North Knoxville. There were six kids in our family. My parents had enough money to send only one to college. I paid for my own clothes and lunches, and I was up at 5:00 every morning and just assumed that everyone else was doing what I did.

Dr. James A. Newman and my junior and senior English teacher, Linnie McMillan, were the first to see my potential. Their encouragement served me well in later essays and legal writings.

While Dr. Newman passed in 2007, he inspired a generation of Fulton High School students and was the architect for taking the high school from the turbulent sixties into the seventies and taking Fulton High School from a desert land of athletics and academics to a promised land of state football championships to outstanding graduates and productive citizens of our community, making a difference in the lives of many students, but for which he made a tremendous difference at Fulton High School in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Dr. Newman instilled in us one principle that is shared and was shared with many outstanding graduates of the sixties, including but not limited to D. D. Lewis, Coppley Vickers, all Americans Ron Widby, Bill Justin, Jackie Walker, Billy Wilson, and David Smith; Olympic runner Wilbur Hawkins, Dr. M. Douglas Leahey, Dr. John Burkhart, Harry Ogden, Herb Newton, Doug White, and Parkwest Church Pastor, Gerald McGinnis. It was instilled in each of us the one principle that “It still matters how we live and how we serve.” Dr. Newman’s story, the story of Linnie McMillan, Hack Ayers, Gerald Crabb, Dr. Mark Williams, Senator Estes Kefauver, Reverend Delmus Bruce, Senator Ken Yager, High Roads soloist Kiley Phillips, Hazel Clear, Dr. Coleman Peacock, Smoky Mountain Children’s Home, Fulton high school basketball Coach Bob Fry, and Judge David Duggan’s tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King are stories that are featured in our first book: “ONE VOICE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.”

Underlying this book is the concept that “one voice can make a difference and that voice is yours.” In the foreword to the book, Bishop Sonny D. Wilkes, former Pastor of LaFollette Church of God and now Pastor of Dividing Ridge Church of God in Hixson, Tennessee, has written, “Those who read this book will be informed, inspired, and renewed by each message. This book is being published at an appropriate time. Discussions of good character, right and wrong, heroes and angels encourage that which is best in our human spirit. The people whose stories are told in this book are voices that made a difference in each of the lives of the writers.”

Judge David Duggan’s tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King takes a quick look at Dr. King’s Easter weekend in 1963 “Letter from the Birmingham City Jail.” Like the Apostle Paul, Dr. King was imprisoned because of his commitment to where his faith journey had left him in search for truth. And like the Apostle Paul, Dr. King wrote his letter from his jail cell. In his story, Judge Duggan reflects on his memories of members of the Alcoa High School Class of 1967, the same year that I graduated from high school, including a memorable class that won Alcoa’s second state basketball championship in the days when there were no classifications and each basketball team had to beat everyone in the state to be declared a state champion.

Judge Duggan reflects on the graduates of that class, who went about doing their daily lives, but being the best at what they did.

Tolerance and an open mind are practical necessities for today and are otherwise reflected in the stories of “ONE VOICE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.”

The final chapter of this book is “The Silas Story.” In this story, I come to grips with my own loss and suffering, the loss of a child and grandson, Silas. The book is dedicated to his memory. This story and the eulogy to Hazel Clear remind us that we need to remember that if indeed times are as bad as we think they are, if the darkness in our world is growing heavier by the moment, if we are facing a spiritual battle in our home or community, then all we need to do is turn to God, who supplies unlimited grace and power.

The proceeds from the book are going entirely to the “Smoky Mountain Children’s Home” in Sevierville, Tennessee. The book, which costs $10.00 plus shipping, can be obtained directly from Smoky Mountain Children’s Home, attention: Dr. Coleman Peacock, Director of Public Relations, 449 McCarn Circle, Sevierville, Tennessee 37862, ordered at 865-453-4644 or online from Dr. Coleman Peacock cpeacock@smch.org. Checks need to be made payable to “Smoky Mountain Children’s Home.”

After many years of caring for thousands of needy children, Smoky Mountain Children’s Home has grown and developed into a modern, group care facility with an emphasis on treatment and rehabilitation for all ages. Smoky Mountain Children’s Home, with its foster care program, has become one of the largest childcare facilities on one campus in the State of Tennessee and one of the largest on one campus in the country. This started with one voice calling for the care of children. One Voice Can Make A Difference and that voice has made a difference in the lives of these children.
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Abuse: What is the solution

Note from the Publisher
As promised last month we are going to address issues in the community in a positive way, from the standpoint of hope. That doesn't mean we are going to ignore real problems. Instead, we are going to seek and offer solutions to issues our community faces everyday. We chose to get the largest obstacle addressed up front and do it through educating and providing resources to our readers. This month we are focusing on drug abuse, resources for overcoming addictions and prevention. Although this article starts out a little disturbing, it gives you a sense of the dark places drug abuse can enslave people in however, our focus remains on hope. You will read Scott Smith's article in the next few pages and understand that from these dark imprisonments it can always turn around. There is always hope. I'm very proud of the research Jeremy Young put into this for your benefit. For those of you who are dealing with drug abuse in any form from a loved one or struggling with addiction personally, we want you to get help. We believe many of the resources given here along with our local law enforcement plays a huge role in our gaining ground locally in the war on drugs. The good news is, the problem here is getting better and you'll read more about that within.

By Jeremy Z. Young
In early December, LaFollette Police Officers responded to an incident in which a fully-grown adult man held his mother in her home against her will, LPD records indicate. The report reads, "Victim states as soon as her husband left defendant shut and locked the door then turned to her and stated you are going to die today then grabbed hold of victim throwing her around like a rag doll slammed her head against the door then grabbed her around the throat and dragged her down the hall towards the bathroom. Victim states he then grabbed a black leather belt wrapped around her neck and began to strangle her... states she seen spots before she blacked out completely..."

The man allegedly held her in her own bathroom for roughly two hours before allowing her out of the home. The report contains much more.

What would make a person treat their own mother this way? The report answers that this is around the victim's words, "Victim states that defendant was on drugs bad causing him to act like this." She said she had been, "threatened in the past numerous times."

This may be an extreme example of how tightly addiction can hold a person, but illegal drug use and recreational use of prescription drugs has a negative effect on nearly everyone in Campbell County, the state of Tennessee and our country as a whole. Whether it's you, a family member or a friend, we all know someone struggling with addiction. But this problem, at least locally, seems to be on a downward trend since 2010, according to records from the Campbell County Sheriff's Office.

In 2010, there were 112 drug/narcotics violation arrests, while in 2015 there were only 66 arrests in the same category. Some years in between fluctuate up or down, the reports indicate. However, overall it appears arrests in this category are down. In fact, the total number of Group A offenses and arrests are consistently down, aside from an increase in 2015. Group A offenses include crimes against persons, such as murder, kidnapping and assault; crimes against property, such as arson, fraud, theft, burglary and robbery; and crimes against society, which includes drugs, gambling, prostitution and weapon law offenses.

While the numbers are encouraging, it doesn't take away from the fact that the epidemic continues to be a persistent problem. It also doesn't account for people misusing prescribed medication, family members giving other family members medication that wasn't prescribed to that person, etc., who have yet to have a run-in with law enforcement.

While riding with LPD Sgt. Duff in December (see January Preview for story), we had time to talk about the prescription drug epidemic.

"It must be unbelievable to break that habit," Duff said. "The pills, the needles... It's eight out of ten calls we go on."

"I don't hold anything against them personally," he said. "But it must be really strong for them to lose their family, their home and everything they have over it. I really do hate the addiction part of it."

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation reports agree with that estimation. The TBI states that 80% of all crime in Tennessee is drug-related in some way.

"It (drug use) goes with a lot of the other stuff we deal with," Duff said. "Homelessness, theft, robbery, domestic disputes, drugs play into most all of those things. When (addicts) need that pill, they do whatever they have to do to get it. Some of them have $100 or more a day habits and they don't work. They need help."

"But it isn't just here," Sgt. Duff said. "Other counties and officers I've personally talked to from around the country are battling the same thing. It's everywhere. It touches every family."

The abuse of prescription drugs is having disastrous consequences across Tennessee, including overdoses, increased hospital costs and emergency room visits, children being put into state's custody and costs of prosecution and incarceration of drug-related offenders.

Over 6 million Americans have used a prescription drug non-medically in the past month, and drug overdose is now the leading cause of accidental death in the United States.

These are not the only concerns when it comes to drug abuse of course. While in years past prescribed medication was taken orally or snorted through the nose, many users are turning to syringe needles and injecting the drugs. Illegal intravenous drug use has long been known to spread Hepatitis C and HIV and can cause systemic infections as well as anemia and other physical problems. Some addicts have had infection near injection sites resulting in the loss of fingers, toes, arms and legs.

Sgt. Duff also said one of the most dangerous drugs users are injecting is Opana (Opana ER), which can have a street value of $100 per pill. Opana, Oxymorphone hydro-chloride, is a powerful semi-synthetic opioid painkiller intended for oral administration for those who require round-the-clock pain management. Needle use not only causes concern for the health of the user, but also for law enforcement. Officers could accidentally be stuck by a needle if they are unaware of its presence while conducting a search.

"When I suspect someone of being on drugs, I ask them up front if they have any needles," Duff said.

Duff said that they should tell officers if they have needles, as it isn't against the law to possess them. It is simply a matter of safety for the officer.

Needle use also presents dangers to the general public when it comes to improper disposal. Needles and other items used to dissolve medications into an injectable form have been found in public places in our area, including parks, playgrounds, creeks and streams, lake banks and sidewalks as well as many other places they could pose harm to the general public.
Duff said there are basically two kinds of people who become addicted to pain medication. Those who want to “get high” and those who are prescribed pain medication for legitimate reasons, such as bad car accidents, accidents at work or other debilitating injuries. These people can become addicted to their prescribed pain killers. When their prescription runs out, they resort to buying it on the street, Duff said.

**What, if anything, is the solution?**

“It's not just about getting them to be clean, it's about teaching them how to live,” Community Health of East Tennessee (CHET) Recovery Court case manager Monica Poston said. “There isn’t a book that says ‘X, Y, and Z is going to work. We have to change their way of thinking and living.”

Prescription drug abuse is a multi-faceted problem that requires that kind of approach. Law enforcement, health agencies and pharmacies, schools, family members, drug counseling and intervention programs among others can aid in helping an addict overcome their personal addictions. Referred to as ‘drug court,’ Sandy Webber, Recovery Court Coordinator says, “We like to focus on ‘recovery’ and not the ‘drug.’”

Recovery Court, administered by CHET and presided over by the Honorable Shayne Sexton, takes adult, non-violent felons convicted within the 8th Judicial District and offers them a way to break their addiction and gain a new life.

“Addiction is a disease,” Poston said. “If you had cancer, you would go to the doctor and get treated. Addiction doesn’t discriminate. It knows no age, race or class.”

Participants of Recovery Court are selected through an application process that begins in jail. A background check and assessment are required before a person can be accepted into the four phase program, which usually takes 18 to 24 months to complete. Each of the four phases have different requirements.

“It's like extreme supervised probation,” Webber said. “They must take at least ten drug screens each month, some have more. We also have a new screen that detects alcohol within 80 hours of use.”

Participants attend NA/AA meetings, live in local halfway houses with curfews and other guidelines, go to therapy (as needed) in addition to the drug/alcohol screenings to ensure compliance. They work on budgeting, GED attainment, journaling their process and eventually mentoring others.

Webber said that it takes many people working hard together to operate such a program. A Community Advisory Board, including Coordinator Webber, volunteers from many offices such as the District Attorney’s office, Public Defender’s office, Shepherd’s Home, Celebrate Recovery, treatment providers, and case managers work to help drug offenders work toward a better life. The volunteers bring their recommendations for each case before the Honorable Shayne Sexton who has ultimate veto power in these cases. However, he simply is there to assure compliance in the program unless it is necessary to return the case for prosecution.

According to the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP), 75% of Drug Court graduates remain arrest-free at least two years after leaving the program, with many never being arrested again. The most rigorous and conservative scientific analysis concludes that Drug Courts significantly reduce crime as much as 45% or more than other sentencing options.

The district’s Recovery Court graduated 5 people in September, 2016. Along with other good behavior awards throughout the program, graduates received a pizza party at Charley’s Pizza, and celebrated their victory with sober friends and counselors that can help them continue in their recovery.

“That's a wonderful day,” Webber said of graduation day. “Throughout the program we reward them by taking them bowling, take them to the lake and show them how to live and have a good time without drugs. After graduation we follow up with them. We're always just a phone call away.”

Our 8th Judicial District Recovery Court received a grant for a pilot program in the fall of last year for Vivitrol injections. Vivitrol, injected every thirty days by a medical professional blocks receptors in the brain that allow a person to “get high.” Coupled with intensive outpatient therapy and/or counseling, the pilot program is currently only available to participants in Recovery Court.

It is also critical that work be done to inform children and teens about the dangers of taking medications that aren’t prescribed to them, as a prevention measure. Take Action Today states that one in four teens have abused a prescription drug. So it is important to educate children early.

That's where Generation Rx comes in. Generation Rx, developed by Ohio State University and funded by Cardinal Health, is a program to educate people of all ages about the potential dangers of misusing prescription medications.

“The more I read about it, the more I saw that you could really effect lives,” said Generation Rx Coordinator and former Campbell County Director of Schools Donnie Poston.

Generation Rx representatives teach mainly 3rd through 5th graders in after-school programs once a week at the county's elementary schools. Poston said they work during school hours with 5th graders at Jellico Elementary School and hope to soon expand that to Jacksboro Middle School, the high schools and to Roane State Community College.

“There are more deaths now from prescription drugs than illegal drugs,” Donnie Poston said. “It's a national epidemic.”

Generation Rx is a seven week program, with each week having its own lesson. The 7th week is for celebrating with the kids what they have learned. The six weeks of lessons start with a survey to see what children may or may not know already and ends with a “good choices/bad choices” lesson and post-survey. Throughout the course, students not only learn about prescription drugs, but also about the dangers of illegal drugs, smoking/vaping, peer pressure and bullying.

The program was brought to Campbell County by South College’s School of Pharmacy who works with local Terry’s Pharmacy, and CHET to conduct the program. Pharmacist Raewyn Snodderly, along with school of pharmacy students from South College conduct a lesson on “visiting the pharmacy” to further educate children on proper procedures for administering, storing and disposing of prescription medications.

“It's such a needed program,” Donnie Poston said. “Most principals, parents, students and teachers are very receptive to it. The key to this program is that it focuses on prevention.”

**Generation Rx has four simple messages it drives home:**

- Only use prescription medications as directed by a health professional,
- Never share your prescription medications with others or use someone else's medications,
- Always store your medications securely to prevent others from taking them and properly dispose of medications that you no longer need, and
- Be a good example to those around you by modeling safe medication-taking practices.

“We're trying to reach as many kids as we can with this message,” Donnie Poston said.

Above all it takes the will and desire of those who are addicted to drugs to fight the addiction and win their lives back. Attached is a list of local organizations that will help. Recovery from addiction isn’t something that happens overnight and it isn’t something that is finished after a certain amount of time.

Recovery Court Case Manager Monica Poston gave these hopeful words to those suffering with addictions, “Sometimes it's minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day.

“If you work as hard to get clean and stay clean as you did to get high, you can accomplish this,” Recovery Court Coordinator Sandy Webber said.

“You can get clean,” said LPD Sgt. Duff. “You can’t stay in the same area with the same friends, riding by the same houses where you were high before.”

If you or someone you know is suffering with addiction, please know that there is a community of support waiting to help.

See ABUSE RESOURCES, Page 44
A TEAM FOR RIVALS

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TURNING VICTIMS INTO VICTORS
Fear to Freedom: The Scott Smith Story

By Scott Smith

My story is one of much success and one of much disappointment. I have won awards for my work in child abuse investigations, stood beside Governors while they gave me a pat on the back, but I've also been homeless, living a life of a vagabond.

At the age of 14, I was diagnosed with a rare and deadly form of cancer. I underwent several surgeries and also had a lengthy dose of chemotherapy and radiation treatments. When you are a teenager, you don't think about dying, but I did almost everyday. But obviously I didn't die. The only real reason I didn't die was because of prayer and I know that. God heard the prayers of my precious mom and dad who diligently prayed and had everyone they knew praying. Even people they didn't know prayed. I was healed of cancer because of one thing, prayer.

I was a decent athlete in high school and even made an attempt to walk on at U.T. but failed miserably. I was 19 years old and wasn't sure what to do with my life. I was working for a friend David Hicks at Industrial Machining in Jacksboro at the time when the Police Chief of the Caryville Police Department (Cameron Evans) asked if I'd like to be an officer. "Yes!" I said because it was something I thought I'd be good at. One night while on patrol I was hit head on by another vehicle and my life had to be saved from a burning car.

I was 20 years old and already my life had been spared twice. I worked for a while at Caryville. Then Sheriff Harry Cureton hired me at the Campbell County Sheriff's Department.

As an officer and child abuse investigator you see a lot. Everyday I saw kids being abused and my emotional health was being tormented and I didn't even know it. So, to make the pain go away I would drink. I drank a lot. Everyday. Because here I was helping these kids, and because of cancer I couldn't have one of my own. I was sterile because of all the chemotherapy and radiation.

I thought, "God hates me."
I thought, "God gave me cancer to punish me."

Years of drinking turned into a pain pill addiction and that's when my life spiraled out of control. I was doctor shopping until that ran out. Then I went to the streets to buy pills. That's right, I was an investigator for the sheriff's department out buying pills from people. You talk about some looks on a few of the faces I'd see. They were shocked that I had fell that hard. But they sold them to me anyway.

I was a mess. I couldn't do my job efficiently and one day Sheriff John Dossett's daughter Sondra sat me down and looked at me with tears in her eyes. She spoke to me with love in her heart. She helped me get into Cornerstone rehab. My friend Charlie Scott, then a T.B.I. agent, took me over there. I stayed sober after that almost 5 years only to go back because of the difficult images that would invade my dreams at night.

People would say, "I couldn't do your job," but I didn't have kids so I thought I'll do it because nobody else can. I was working for Sheriff Ron McClellan when I took some pills from a local drug store that had been broke into one night. Some people found me passed out at a stop sign with my foot on the brake the next day in a rented truck. It was over! My career ended that day.

I slipped deeper and deeper into addiction. I had lost everything. My home, my vehicles, my friends were worried, and no one could believe I was now a hopeless drug addict with nothing left. My life was over, so the only thing left to do was die. I tried hanging myself. I cut an artery in my arm; didn't die. I accidentally overdosed 4 times. I woke up in the hospital each time with machines hooked to me keeping me alive. I was in Lakeshore mental hospital and also was in Peninsula mental hospital. Everyone thought I was crazy and that I had lost it, including me!

Then one morning I woke up and decided today was the day I was going to die. So, I went into a local drug store with a knife and robbed them of 100 Methadone wafers. I probably took about 20-25 of them. That's enough to kill an elephant. I ended up at my mom's house dying when the Police came in and saved my life. I can vaguely remember familiar voices of people that I was really good friends with talking. I heard someone say, "he's not going to make it." But, somehow I did.

Scott Smith tells his inspirational story of hope on stage.
I was sentenced to 10 years in prison. Standing in front of Judge Shane Sexton that day was difficult. It broke his heart to sentence me because we grew up together and played football together. When he was an Assistant District Attorney, we went to Gatlinburg and hung out together. The man had tears in his eyes.

People would look at me and say things like man, what has happened to you? People wanted me to get better but I was miserable. I just didn't want it for myself. I remember when I saw Brushy Mountain Prison from the back of the van and I thought this is where I'm going to die. A cop in prison isn't going to be pretty, especially with a 10 year prison sentence.

But it's funny how God works because I eventually ended up at Morgan Co. Regional Prison in a cell with a guy named Spencer Coon. Spencer is a huge part of my story because Spencer and I became close friends. I would watch him day after day read his Bible. Some days I would think, "Why is he reading that thing, he's never getting out of prison." But, because he read it, I began reading it. We would discuss things we read about and even started a Bible study in our pod. One day while in the cell, I became a born again Christian. I got on my knees and asked God to forgive me and asked Jesus to become Lord of my life, and I came up a new man!

I was on fire for Jesus Christ! I'd go down to the prison yard and tell all the felons about Jesus. One day, one of them looked at me and said, "Man, would you shut up with all this Jesus stuff?"

I said, "No! I'll never shut up about Jesus!"

I got out of prison with every intention of staying sober and serving my Savior, but people are not quick to trust you again. I was working for a man that I truly love and admire with the utmost respect. He tried his best to help me but I had slipped up and relapsed with some pain pills. They drug tested me and I failed. I quit the job and went running back to what I knew – addiction.

After running out of options again, I was homeless, broke, angry, depressed and alone. I ended up at a place near Nashville, Tennessee called Hope Center Ministries. The program was 8 months long. They showed me the love of God. How Jesus Christ gave His life for me while I was at my worst. He loved me then and He loves me now. After graduating I stayed around and eventually went to work for them.

I wish I could say that the story ends there and I rode off into the sunset, but I can't. I relapsed once again, and I had to go back to prison this time, because I was on parole. But this time I met the girl of my dreams and we were getting married in two weeks. But none of that matters when you decide to get high.

So here I am in prison a second time, my fiance' had just sent me a letter wishing me the best, but we were through. I can't blame her. I was so angry at myself. How did I let this happen? Again! I was so depressed during this prison term, I barely came out of my cell for two years. Then one day they came and said my time was almost flat and that I was getting out in a couple weeks.

I didn't know what to do. No one was going to give me a job. Then a week before I was getting out God spoke to me and said, "Go back to the Hope Center."

I said, "Yeah, okay, whatever God." I had left there not on the best of terms. But the day after I got out, I called my friend Carson Plant who was executive director over Hope Center Ministries. When he heard my voice he said, "When you coming back?"

I haven't looked back since. I am thankful to God for people like that still seeing something in me. I have since moved on from Hope Center Ministries, but I can say, that experience helped me with my ministry today. God has done things in my life that I sit in awe of. The fiance' that said it was over in prison, well we are married now. We have a beautiful home near Houston, Texas. My wife Jennifer Smith is the most loving and biggest influence on my relationship with Jesus Christ today. She became everything that Christ told us to be when He said love God and love people the way I have loved you. Not only that, but I have an awesome family and many friends. Simply because I came to realize that even though I was a born again believer, I was still in the bondage of addiction. I had to be set free from addiction.

Today, it is no longer I who lives, but it is Christ who lives in me. Today, I am not a drug addict or alcoholic. I am God's masterpiece. I am fearfully and wonderfully made. I am made in God's image. I am more than a conqueror. God doesn't say I'm an addict or alcoholic. He says, I'm His child. I'm not a slave to addiction anymore, I am a child of God. I am free.

Today I am founder and President of "Free to live Free." A discipleship ministry that helps people understand that they are free. Not just for people with addiction issues either. It's for those with depression issues, co-dependence issues, self esteem issues, childhood psychosis issues, and all other types of things that keep us bound in the lies of the enemy, Satan.

If anyone was bound, it was me. Six times I was on death's door, but today I'm free. I travel the country now speaking in churches and also to groups of people who invite me to come and tell my story. I'm not ashamed of the dark moments at all because in the end Jesus gets all the glory. And it's my hope to see this nation free. That's right I said nation. Free to live Free is going to spread across this great nation of ours and freedom is coming to those who are bound in all sorts of emotional and spiritual prisons. I tell people everywhere I go that I thank God for two things in my life, addiction and prison. Because you really don't understand freedom until you've been in the bondage that I've experienced. If you'd like to know more about Free to live Free go to our Facebook page, like it, and send me a message. God bless you all.

To my mother Ann Smith, Momma, I love you so dearly, because you never gave up on me. Even when the doctors said to give up you didn't, you kept praying. When I get to Heaven I'm going to ask God how many times He spared my life because of your prayers. I just bet it'll be way more than the six times I mentioned here. Thanks mom, I love you. I AM FREE.
Miracles

The Miracle of Allyson Leigh Shepherd

By Publisher, Kelli Jo Wright

Last month when I wrote that I was looking for miracle experiences and wanted the public to offer up any they had or knew of, I never imagined so many inspirational stories would abound in our community. One however, stands out that I wanted to begin with, as it offered so many human emotions that it’s almost overwhelming. I believe however, when lives are truly changed, and there is abundant hope given through insurmountable circumstances, those are generally signatures that God was ever-present.

On Friday, April 18, 1997 David and Tammy Shepherd’s 11 year old middle child, Allyson, had begged to stay all night with one of her best friends Shaunta Anderson. The two attended middle school together at Gresham Middle in North Knoxville and the tomboy-girl duo had a softball game the following day. Reluctantly, Tammy agreed knowing she had to work a health fair in LaFollette the next day, leaving her looking for a way to get Allyson to the game anyway. This idea appeared a win-win. Tammy told Allyson to gather what bags she needed and they would drop her off on their way to dinner that evening.

Tammy and her husband David were usually in tune with everyone their children spent the night with and felt they had gotten to know Gail Roach, Shaunta’s mother, rather well over the last few months. She was an active team ball mom with the league and was well liked personally by most everyone. Tammy’s and David’s family are all from Campbell County although they had recently moved back to the area from Dallas-Fort Worth where David had attended Baptist Seminary. They decided to move to the North Knoxville area rather than LaFollette as there were more job opportunities. Trusting people, especially with your child was a big step and one they knew they had to be careful with. North Knoxville wasn’t like the community of LaFollette where the couple themselves had grown up, where everyone knew each other or were in some way related.

When the family retired to bed that evening, little did they know that in no way would this be a regular weekend. David’s cell phone rang about 4:00 a.m. with an unfamiliar voice on the other end of the line. The man asked him to please “Wake up and listen to what he had to say very carefully?” David, shaking himself to consciousness was trying to gather his thoughts as he knew it had to be something serious. The man identified himself as a police officer and asked David if he had a daughter spending the night away from home? “Yes, I do, what is going on? You’re scaring me.” “There’s been an accident,” the officer said. “A house fire actually, and it’s serious. We need you and your wife to come to St. Mary’s hospital as quickly as possible.

Tammy and David parked close outside the Emergency Room, and ran straight inside. They told the hospital staff they needed to see their daughter, Allyson. It was at this moment that things became a bit surreal for Tammy as she noticed the staff were avoiding eye contact to an uncomfortable degree and no one seemed to be in a hurry. The reason why would soon become all too clear.

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The couple was led to a small medical conference room just down from the Emergency Room. The room was small but quickly became very crowded with people...Doctors, Nurses, Firefighters, Firefighter Chaplain. All that Tammy and David could offer up was, “What’s wrong? Where is she?”

Some in the room were already crying. The doctor told Tammy and David that they had treated a little girl from the fire but that little girl had died from cardiac arrest and they had already sent her body to the University of Tennessee Hospital. They would need to go there to identify the body.

“How can this be? What happened? Who found her? Where were they? Who did this?” Every question you can imagine began screaming through their minds but was unable to escape their mouth. They were told another girl was at Children’s Hospital on life support. The mother was deceased.

In that moment there are no words of comfort. In fact, there are no words. People can talk, but you can’t hear them. It’s like a deafening silence and a paralyzing feeling of being dead inside but knowing you’re still alive. Upon news of losing a child it can be said that through that anguish, one can see a small glimpse of hell. Feeling from this day forward, this loss, would consume every part of your being.

As the story began to unfold, they were told that apparently Gail, the mother of Shaunte, had fallen asleep smoking a cigarette in their living room while watching TV. Gail had a cold and was taking cold medicine to alleviate the symptoms. The cigarette had ignited and spread to the sofa and drapes after she fell asleep. Gail’s husband was asleep in the bedroom. He was awakened by the fire alarm and ran to a neighbor’s home to call 9-1-1. Gail woke up and tried to get to the bedroom where the girls were sleeping but was overcome by smoke. She had been found dead in the hallway. When firefighters reached the bedroom they got Allyson first and the firefighter dragged her with him as he crawled on his hands and knees out of the house. By this time, the fire had been beaten back enough that they were able to just pick up Shaunta and hurry out of the house with her.

Tammy was holding out hope that the little girl they treated was not Allyson but immediately cried for forgiveness because she didn’t want it to be Shaunta either! The pain and shock was overwhelming. When she could finally speak, Tammy asked that someone please call their pastor, Elbert. Everyone in the cramped little room tried to offer some kind of solace through their own tears. Tammy was praying this was a very bad dream. Soon, Elbert arrived and thankfully drove them to UT Hospital. The three of them sat in a small room off from their Emergency Room when a doctor entered and asked them to please follow him. Tammy did not move. She placed her hand on Elbert’s arm and said, “Elbert, we can’t do this. Can you please do this?” Elbert looked like he would rather do anything else, but he just sadly nodded his head and followed the doctor out of the room. When the door shut, Tammy looked at David and told him that she was aware that Allyson had been under conviction but had not yet accepted Jesus as her Savior. Tammy was Allyson’s Sunday School teacher at church and David was Choir Director. David told her he felt she was okay. Tammy was not so sure.

The door opened again and Elbert walked back in, accompanied by the doctor. Elbert nodded his head and said, “It’s Allyson.”
Allyson died on April 19, 1997.

On April 20, 1997, Miranda ‘Shaunta’ Anderson, Allyson’s friend, was removed from life support and she also passed away.

So how could this story have hope or be considered a miracle amidst all this tragedy? I’m sure you’re asking yourself that right about now. With Allyson’s parents being in the ministry and gospel music singers they were fully aware of the fact that based on their Christian beliefs, Allyson was being convicted to draw her to salvation several weeks prior to this night.

Allyson had been asking her mother questions about God and Heaven and how to be saved. Tammy would explain to her what it all meant and told her if she felt that God was speaking to her heart, and if she was ready, she would pray a sinner’s prayer with her. Allyson had not taken that step as yet. Tammy did not want to push or force that on her. She knew it had to be Allyson’s decision. The fact that Allyson had not made a profession of faith began to pound in Tammy’s head like a drum, louder and louder over the next few days as the gruesome task of the funeral and burial had to be endured.

The day of Allyson’s funeral started out as a cool spring day. She noticed someone had placed a Dogwood bough at the base of Allyson’s basketball goal. Tammy would retreat on occasion to a bathroom for some privacy where she would just sit on the side of the bathtub to cry and pray. Other times she would sit on the front porch to breathe the cool air. Grief is so heavy; she felt she could not get a deep breath. As the day wore on it became much colder, started to rain, and then hail pummeled north Knoxville. The roads were covered in white as if by a snowstorm. Their usual route to the church had to be changed because of car accidents. Tammy was certain the horrible weather would hinder the visitation. It may have, but so many people came anyway. They attended Grace Baptist Church in Halls, TN. Grace is a small congregation of wonderful people and visitors were packed into every available space inside their modest church building. Visitation started at 5 pm and the funeral was at 8 pm. Visitation continued until the last visitor came through the line at 11:25 p.m. that evening. Although Tammy understood if people did not wish to get out in that weather she still felt blessed that they did. Even David’s paternal uncle, Conley, who was quite ill, refused to leave the church and go to the Emergency Room until he had seen and talked with them. Shaunta’s father and grandparents also came.

Allyson’s burial was the following day, April 21, which was also the day of Shaunta’s funeral. Shaunta’s family was equally devastated with their loss. They had the opportunity for Shaunta to be an organ donor and those gifts enabled others to live life more fully and for others, it allowed them to live. Her father, Kenneth, wanted the girls to stay close so he buried Shaunta one monument row over from Allyson.

Ultimately, thousands attended the girls’ funerals. More people were present from Campbell County than anywhere. The story was on the television news and in the Knoxville papers.

The following week was pure grief. Tammy and David tried to be strong for their other two children Ashley and John but were overcome with anguish over Allyson. If David had peace about Allyson, Tammy certainly did not. Tammy related that since Allyson had passed the previous week she kept hearing this voice, as real as if someone was standing next to her whispering in her right ear…”Grieve not as those who have no hope.”

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Allyson badly need that reassurance. She needs you to tell her that it is okay, but God I so need to hear it from Allyson and she is not going to keep quiet about it. The rest of my life like this. The only way I am ever going to know for sure is what happened that night. As difficult as this is, how can I get through it like this? I can't live the rest of my life like this. The only way I am ever going to know for sure is to hear it from Allyson and she is not here to tell me. I am going to have to ask God, I just don't think I can go on like this. You tell me to grieve not like those who have no hope, what about my daughter's hope? Not like those who have no hope, I need to go on like this. You tell me to grieve. Y ou tell me to grieve not like those who have no hope. Tammy decided to let him have his alone time. Tammy noticed a backpack and other things sitting beside the sofa and asked David about it. He told her one of Allyson's teachers, Shaunta, had turned in a youth group at rallies around the nation and has helped win countless

However, the first thing she pulled out was a black and white mottled journal. Tammy began reading the entries and realized it must be a journal for reading/writing of some sort. Funny, Allyson had never mentioned it. It was so sweet to read the entries because Allyson wrote just as she talked so Tammy could almost hear her speaking each word. She wrote about her friends, severe storms/lightning of which she was very afraid, animals at her grandparents’ home. Such sweet, precious stories. Then, when Tammy turned to the page dated March 10, 1997, just five weeks before her death.....Allyson’s words came leaping off the page!

**See letter written by Allyson at right.**

God heard! Tammy’s prayer was answered before it was ever prayed! The very day Tammy thought she could not go on. Precisely as Tammy had asked, “I need to hear it from Allyson herself.” If God hadn’t showed off enough, he had one additional gift to offer. As Tammy began looking closer she noticed in different handwriting going up the left side of the page of Allyson’s entry, where it was written simply,

“I’ll be there. Shaunta.”

There are two headstones sitting about 20 feet apart in a beautiful cemetery in North Knoxville that stand as memorials to two young friends who shared all they could for others. One shared her testimony in the hope that her friends and loved ones would follow her to heaven. The other shared her organs to help others continue on living a joyous, healthy life. To each other, they promised to meet in heaven. Who could have foreseen they would make the trip together.

Since this story has been told, it has been used as album covers for gospel recording artists and read at the funerals of countless people who have passed too soon. When living, Ruth Graham, the wife of Reverend Billy Graham, heard of the story and corresponded with the family.

In closing it’s also important to know this story has been preached to youth groups at rallies around the nation and has helped win countless souls to the same God who answered my mother’s prayer.

David and Tammy Shepherd have been living in LaFollette again for over 15 years now. David owns Powell Valley Cemetery and Memorial Gardens and the idea for this came, in part, through the experience with Allyson. Tammy and David have in the past stated, “Who would have thought Allyson, through her passing and testimony, has won more souls to the kingdom of God in her short 11 years on earth than many of us will ever win in our entire lifetime?”

There are so many more aspects to this story but space just would not permit. Perhaps someday we can do a follow-up and give everyone a deeper glimpse into the years following this unfolding. I can personally attest to each and every statement made in this article as Allyson Shepherd was my niece. I wanted to tell Allyson’s story from my oldest sister’s point of view to a new generation of readers. It deserves to be told and to be remembered. I’ve stated this before: This is my family’s way of giving a very public “thank you” to God for giving us a very private miracle in 1997. The Miracle of Allyson Leigh Shepherd.

We want to hear your miracle story no matter how big or small. Feel free to email us at thevolunteer-times@comcast.net or reach out to us on Facebook.
But these people, most of whom could not coach if their life depended on it, or even worse are the parents living vicariously through their children, continue to fire off their uneducated opinions anonymously.

I know that there are some of you thinking, “well what does this actually hurt?” The answer is that while it seems harmless, and for the most part probably is, there are still consequences. Once this shifted to the internet everyone has access to these opinions. As a coach you expect a certain amount of criticism sent in your direction. Even a coach's spouse has to expect some of this. But when it starts to effect the student athletes it starts to truly cross the line.

One of the prevailing arguments by these critics is that only the children of wealthy or influential parents ever get to play. I can tell you right now that if that were the case every single team in the county would have a losing record. It is the unfortunate case of class-ism always existing as an easy excuse. As a coach I always played the players who gave me the best chance of winning. I put my best eleven on the field. I did not care who their parents were. Donald Trump's children would have been given the same opportunity and consideration for playing time as the local poop-smith's children. My goal was to win. If my goal were money I sure would not have been coaching.

So here is my advise to you in the stands/internet troll sports critics. If you think you have a legit beef with the coach take it up with either them or the athletic director. Do not run and post your “oh so insightful opinions” anonymously on the internet. If it is bothering you that bad and you do not mind pulling your student athlete out after all the hard work they did to get on the team, then by all means pull them and walk away. But do not do things that will effect the other kids on the team. And yes let us remember that they are all still kids. Do not doubt that these student athletes are online reading what you have said. Do not doubt that it is at least in the back of their mind. Do not doubt it hurts them emotionally to hear someone badmouthing their coach.