

Property rights: When private and public collide



Dorman Sturgell (left), trustee of the Sturgell Family Trust, and his son, Randall Sturgell (right), stand in front of gates beyond which, they say, is their private road, a road which is the subject of an ongoing lawsuit in Barry County circuit court.

Sheila Harris

Descending from the ridgetop of Hatcher Mountain Road into Flat Creek Valley one sees, arguably, some of the most breathtaking scenery in Barry County, although few would argue. However, a narrow dirt lane beyond steel double-

gates at the bottom of the descent, proceeding east some 500 yards, has become the subject of argument.

The lane has always been his private property, says Dorman Sturgell, the 90-year-old trustee of the Sturgell Family Trust. The trust has filed a lawsuit with Barry County Circuit Court asking for a judgment to that effect.

The defendants - Barry County commissioners and the Mountain Special Road District - claim the lane is a public road.

Area realtors say this type of argument between private landowners and government is not unusual.

What is unusual with this case is that public money continues to be used to de-

fend it - a fact presiding commissioner and defendant Gary Youngblood confirms.

The lawsuit has been ongoing for almost two years, since a petition was filed in Barry County Circuit Court by the Sturgell Family Trust, naming Current Barry County commissioners, Gary Youngblood and Gary Schad; former commissioner, Wayne Hendrix; and the Mountain Special Road District as defendants, alleging that the defendants are unconstitutionally “taking” the road going into their property without due process, and, by so doing, are interfering with the family’s ability to pursue its cattle-raising livelihood.

The defendants argue that the road is public, because



Barry County commissioners and the Mountain Special Road District claim the lane shown above is public, in part due to low water crossings installed when the road district was formed in the 1980s.

County Aid Road Trust (CART) funds from the Missouri Department of Transportation have been used for its maintenance, they allege.

See PROPERTY RIGHTS 12A

Eunice Thomas Elementary to see change in leadership



Catherine Weaver (above) is retiring as principal of Eunice Thomas Elementary at Cassville.

Sheila Harris

Retiring Eunice Thomas Elementary principal, Cath-

erine Weaver, labels herself an anomaly in the Cassville district.

“I started working for the district as an instructional assistant, after my husband and I moved here from Hannibal,” she said. “I later when on to become certified, first as a teacher, then as an administrator.”

Weaver taught first grade for five years, before taking on the role of elementary principal that she’s now retiring from after 22 years.

Weaver says she plans to focus more on her family after retirement, which includes her husband, James

See WEAVER 5A



Mindi Gates (above) is leaving the position of Superintendent for Purdy R-II Schools. She has accepted the position of principal for Eunice Thomas Elementary in Cassville.

Sheila Harris

Mindi Gates, of Cassville, who is currently filling the position of superintendent of the Purdy R-II School District, will be transitioning to the role of Eunice Thomas Elementary principal with the beginning of the fall 2021 semester.

Gates has nothing but praise for the Purdy community and school district, where she is serving as superintendent for the second year.

“They have treated me so well. The staff and the teachers are some of the highest quality there is, and the community has stood behind me,” Gates said. “I’m very

See GATES 5A



Lisa Schell was chosen to fill the new assistant principal position for Eunice Thomas Elementary and Cassville Intermediate Schools.

Sheila Harris

Lisa Schell, of Cassville, has been an instructor with

See SCHELL 7A

the Cassville R-IV School District since 2002 when she taught first grade. After attaining a Master’s Degree in Reading, she has worked as a Reading Interventionist and a Reading Recovery Specialist with elementary children who need extra help with reading. She now serves as an instructional coach.

After the recent marriage of her youngest child, Schell felt like the time was right to transition into the administration field, so she applied for the position of Cassville elementary principal soon to be open.

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Winter blankets the county

Sheila Harris

Mother nature is playing no favorites across the nation this week, as unseasonably cold weather, snow and ice have affected, or are affecting, the majority of states.

Millions in the U.S. are without power. In Barry County, both Barry Electric and Liberty Utilities issued peak alerts, warning members and customers that load shedding - also called “rolling blackouts” - were imminent.

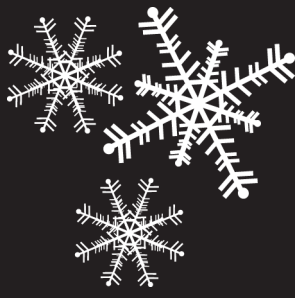
“Our supplier, KAMO Power, provides electricity to co-ops throughout a four-state area,” Holycross

See WINTER



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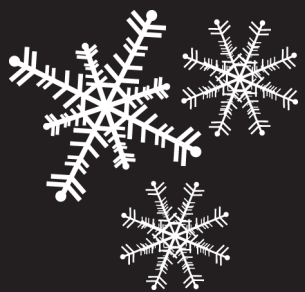
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CoxHealth changes starting wage, compensation model

In a \$4 million investment in its workforce, CoxHealth is moving its starting wage to \$12 per hour.

“We are very excited about this news, which we view as an investment in our workforce,” says Andy Hedgpeth, vice president of Human Resources at CoxHealth. “Despite the challenges of this past year, we feel that this is a very important move for us to make to help our employees, both current and future, know that we value their work and how important they are to our organization.”

The move, which becomes effective in April 2021, is part of a plan to regularly increase CoxHealth’s minimum wage, which last rose in January 2019. In addition to future hires, the 2021 change impacts more than 5,500 CoxHealth employees, who will also receive raises under the adjustment. The shift affects employees throughout the health system.

This growth is only one change in recent months to recognize employees for their exceptional work. In late 2020, \$8 million was invested in market adjustments for nursing and allied health employees. Between that change and the entry level wage adjustment, around 9,300 employees at CoxHealth – approximately 75% of the

health care system – will have received a boost in pay in the last few months.

Additionally, in April 2020, CoxHealth awarded employees in good standing with the highest percentage increase in wages in more than a decade, and created a new incentive program that provided additional merit to the highest performing 30% of the workforce.

Besides the benefit the increase has for employees directly, these changes will ultimately facilitate improved organizational performance, and retain employees for longer periods of time, increasing efficiency and cutting costs across the organization. “One of our primary focuses is ensuring that our employees know how important they are to us, and to our patients. All employees, regardless of which department they work in, are crucial to giving exceptional health care,” says Steve Edwards, president and CEO of CoxHealth. “This move was also overwhelmingly backed by our Board of Directors, all of whom are local and are invested in this community. I think the change speaks to their support of our employees.”

An added benefit to this change includes a more transparent method of communicating pay rates, which allows employees to understand their career choices and the compensation associated with them.

General Municipal Absentee Voting Begins Tuesday, February 23, 2021

Are you registered to vote in Barry County?

- Last day to register to vote is Wednesday, March 10, 2021, for those who are not current registered voters of Barry County and who wish to vote in the April 6, 2021, General Municipal Election.
- You may register to vote at the County Clerk’s Office; the Monett Chamber of Commerce; or the Shell Knob Chamber of Commerce.
- Please notify us if you have moved and have not updated your address or had a name change.
- Absentee voting starts Tuesday, February 23, 2021, at the Barry County Clerk’s Office in Cassville, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- If unable to vote in person, you may send a written request to the office of: Joyce Ennis, 700 Main St. Suite 2,

Cassville, MO 65625 or fax to: 417-847-5311.

We will need: name, physical address, mailing address, date of birth, last four (4) digits of social security number, phone number, reason for voting absentee, and signature.

If you live in the Shell Knob or Monett area, you can go by the Shell Knob Chamber or Monett Chamber Office and fill out the absentee application. They will fax it to the Barry County Clerk’s office for you.

Absentee applications are also available at sos.mo.gov. For more information call: the Barry County Clerk’s Office at 417-847-2561 or email jennis@barrycountyclerk.com or kdeal@barrycountyclerk.com.

Purdy R-II purchases bus radio system

Sheila Harris

According to Purdy R-II Schools superintendent, Mindi Gates, the district purchased a radio system for their school buses with a portion of the Barry County CARES Act dollars the district received last fall. The purchase of the radio system was made in December.

The digital radio system with a repeater, includes nine bus radios (one for each bus), four base radios to be housed in district offices and two portable radios.

The system was purchased from Radiophone in Spring-

field for the total cost of \$30,688.92, which includes equipment, installation and licensing, according to Gates.

“The radio system was much needed for the improvement of district communication regarding the health and safety of our students,” Gates said.

The district has received permission from the City of Purdy to place an antenna for the bus radios on the water tower closest to the school, as well as permission to house some of the necessary equipment in the city’s tower shed.

WINTER from FRONT

said. “They were watching their grid and making the decisions about which substations to shut down to balance the load on their power lines.”

According to Holycross, Barry Electric has seven substations, none of which were shut down during Tuesday’s advisory.

The blackouts have been paused across the KAMO grid, but Holycross does want to remind members to continue to conserve electricity as the cold temperatures are still with us.

Liberty Utilities alerted customers Wednesday morning that they were extending their Peak Advisory until noon Wednesday, February 17, to help maintain service reliability and avoid outages. The emergency situation has certainly improved, they say. However, after consulting with Southwest Power Pool (SPP), who manages the electric grid and wholesale power market for the central United States, and after reviewing the forecast, there is still risk of outages due to extreme weather, record-setting demand, and fuel supply issues. They say should additional

controlled service interruptions be required, they will interrupt service in blocks throughout the electric system, starting with blocks that have not yet been interrupted.

Residents are reminded to stagger the use of appliances, shut off unnecessary lights and keep thermostats turned down.

If blackouts become necessary in the future, following are a few ways to be prepared:

- Make sure your cell phones are fully charged.
- Have a supply of water available.
- Check the batteries in your radio and clocks.
- Gather blankets and warm clothing.
- Gather alternate light sources and make sure they are ready to use before dark.

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Community Calendar

Community Calendar page is free as a courtesy to local events. If your event is relying on advertising for attendance, then it is vital for you to place a paid ad. There is no guarantee that your event will be placed in Community Calendar. The deadline for community calendar is Friday at 4 p.m. The contact person is Elaine Phaneuf, class@4bca.com or (417) 847-4475. Thank you for keeping us informed of all updates/changes to local events.

Notice:

Southwest Missouri Coalition of Charities provides a network where non profits can belong, share knowledge and support one another. The organization hosts meetings via Zoom. More information can be found on their Facebook page.

The Missouri statewide tornado drill will be held on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at 10 A.M. The Monett-Lawrence County E9-1-1 center will be activating area outdoor warning sirens at that time. The back-up date in the event of hazardous conditons is Thursday, March 4, 2021, at 10 A.M.

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The Helping Hands Food Pantry services the citizens of Eagle Rock, Golden and Mano and is open from 9 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. every Saturday and Tuesday, and also 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of every month. Questions for the pantry can be answered by calling 417-271-1301 or visiting at 32685 State Hwy. 86 in Eagle Rock. (Just 1/4 mile east of the Hwy. P intersection). The pantry is supported by area churches, business associations and private donations.

Feb. 21

The New Horizons, a family gospel singing group from Lebanon, will be performing at Calvary Baptist Church at 11 A.M. For more information, call (417) 342-3477.

Lawmakers push resolution denouncing Missouri's role in Dred Scott decision

Missouri News Network

Two hundred years after Missouri's founding, some state lawmakers are pushing a resolution with the aim of addressing one of the state's great historical wrongs.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 3 would formally condemn the Missouri Supreme Court's 1852 ruling that denied freedom to Dred and Harriet Scott and their two daughters, who were enslaved in Missouri at the time. The Scotts' case made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which infamously ruled in 1857 that American citizenship did not extend to any Black person, enslaved or free.

The resolution would renounce the Missouri Supreme Court's decision and "affirm that we as Missourians will forever affirm that all people are created equal," said state Sen. Steven Roberts, D-St. Louis, who is sponsoring SCR3.

Speaking at a committee hearing for the resolution Tuesday, Roberts said it enjoys broad bipartisan support in the legislature. He brought an identical resolution forward as a representative in the House in 2020, where it passed committee unanimously but did not reach final passage before the outbreak of COVID-19 forced an early end to the legislative session.

The Missouri Compromise, passed by Congress in 1820, admitted Missouri into the Union as a slave-holding state and Maine as a free state.

"And so it seems fitting that in the 200th anniversary that we would do this resolution," McClay said, "not to deny history or to change history, but to acknowledge it, and then denounce it."

School Menus: Feb. 22 - Feb. 26

All meals served with milk and subject to change.

Cassville High School: Mon: B: biscuit & gravy or breakfast pizza, hashbrown, pears or cereal, granola bar, orange. L: nacho supreme or burrito, refried beans, corn, applesauce or salad meal. Tues: B: biscuit & gravy or pancake on stick, graham cracker, applesauce or cereal, cinnamon toast, tropical fruit. L: chili cheese fries or crispito, green beans, sugar cookie, juice or salad meal. Wed: B: biscuit & gravy or chicken nuggets, go-Gurt, fruit cocktail or cereal, graham crackers, peaches. L: popcorn chicken or pork patty, potatoes, gravy, corn, breadstick, applesauce or salad meal. Thurs: B: biscuit & gravy or oatmeal, toast, sausage, tropical fruit or cereal, Nutri Grain Bar, apple. L: chicken sandwich or cheeseburger, potato wedge, carrot sticks, peaches or salad meal. Fri: B: biscuit & gravy or blueberry muffin, yogurt cups, blueberries or cereal, graham crackers, strawberries.

Cassville PR-IN-Middle: Mon: B: biscuit & gravy or sausage biscuit, hashbrown, pears or cereal, chocolate muffin, applesauce. L: sloppy joe or country steak, Sun Chips, pinto beans, peaches. Tues: B: biscuit & gravy or french toast, sausage patty, strawberries or cereal, Teddy grahams, applesauce. L: tangerine chicken or chicken nuggets, rice, glazed carrots, egg rolls, fortune cookie, fruit cocktail. Wed: B: biscuit & gravy or pancake on stick, Go-Gurt, tropical fruit or cereal, PB&J, fruit snacks. L: grilled cheese or turkey sandwich, chicken noodle soup, broccoli, applesauce. Thurs: B: biscuit & gravy or breakfast pizza, hashbrown, peaches or cereal, Go-Gurt, pears. L: BBQ pork sandwich or hot dog, Sun Chips, carrots, juice. Fri: B: biscuit & gravy or scrambled eggs, toast, peaches or cereal, graham crackers, tropical fruit. L: corn dog or chicken strips, mac & cheese, green beans, tropical fruit.

Purdy: Mon: B: breakfast pizza, fruit. L: mandarin chicken, brown rice, broccoli, carrots, fruit. Tues: B: wg biscuit, gravy, sausage patty, fruit. L: spaghetti, meat sauce, romaine salad, tomato, ranch, garlic bread, fruit. Wed: B: pancake/sausage on stick, syrup, fruit. L: chicken nuggets, mac & cheese, green beans, hot rolls, fruit. Thurs: B: strawberry mini bagel, fruit. L: chili cheese fries, bread slice, black beans, fruit. Fri: B: banana muffin, fruit, Go-Gurt. L: chicken patty sandwich, Sun Chips, California blend vegetables, fruit.

Southwest: Mon: B: breakfast sausage pizza, mandarin oranges, juice. L: cheeseburger, lettuce, tomato, ketchup, mustard, mayo, chips, apple slices with caramel. Tues: B: mini waffles, mixed berry cup, syrup cup, juice. L: personal pepperoni pizza, romaine salad, ranch dressing, baby carrots, peaches. Wed: B: biscuit, pepper gravy, grapes, juice. L: chili & cheese burrito, nacho cheese and chips, romaine salad, pineapple. Thurs: B: cereal, orange wedges, mozzarella cheese stick, juice. L: mini chicken patties, ketchup, BBQ sauce, mashed potatoes, green beans, mandarin oranges. Fri: B: ham & hashbrown sandwich, ketchup, grapes, juice. L: hot dog, ketchup, mustard, relish, Sun Chips, pork and beans, tropical fruit cup.

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Walmart Pharmacies offer COVID-19 vaccines

Sheila Harris

It was reported that Walmart Pharmacies would begin offering COVID-19 vaccinations by appointment, beginning last Friday. However, one area resident says it's difficult to obtain that appointment.

The resident - who prefers that his name not be published - says Walmart is adamant that a person schedule an appointment through their website at walmart.com/covidvaccine, after first creating a log in name and password, a process which in itself is prohibitive to many of the people who most need the vaccine, he believes.

He logged in to the Walmart website, as instructed, but of about eight stores within an hour's radius of his home, none had appointments available, he said.

I called the Walmart Pharmacies in both Monett and Cassville Wednesday morning and was told by an automated voice that they have vaccine available, although I was directed to their website to schedule an appointment. Due to a pressing deadline, I did not create a user name and password to check whether *appointments* were available.

GATES from FRONT

grateful."

Gates emphasizes that she plans to keep her focus on her commitment to the students and community in Purdy throughout the remainder of the school year, but she is also excited about her new position in Cassville beginning in the fall.

"It will be like going home," said Gates, who taught third grade in Cassville for ten years, the school where she also graduated from high school.

Gates has been superintendent at Purdy for the past two years, where she will be greatly missed says R-II communications correspondent, Susan Funkhouser.

Prior to serving as superintendent, Gates held the positions of associate superintendent and K-12 instructional coach in 2013.

In December 2015 she was appointed the district's first associate superintendent, where she created and implemented the Late Start Monday program, which affords educators a dedicated time of professional development and collaboration at the beginning of each new week.

Gates also established Fall Title One Family Nights, bringing parents, children and educators together to reinforce learning and provide opportunities for family bonding and memory making.

As superintendent for Purdy R-II, she oversaw the design and installation of a new high school gymnasium floor and led students and faculty through the immense challenges of the spring 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, including a modified, yet meaningful graduation and other senior celebrations.

As students returned to seated school in fall 2020, she implemented a successful masking and social distancing policy, among many other safety measures.

"School-related COVID-19 quarantine numbers and positive cases consistently have been lower than the area average because of her efforts," Funkhouser said.

"Among students, Gates is famous for greeting each one by name at the door every morning," Funkhouser

Health department postpones vaccine clinics

The Barry County Health Department announced that COVID -19 vaccination clinics have been cancelled for this week.

Mass vaccination clinics scheduled for February 16 and 17 at the Monett Park Casino have been cancelled due to the dangerously cold temperatures and possibility of additional snow, according to information received from the health department and office of emergency management.

The clinics were a planned cooperative event between Barry and Lawrence Counties, the State of Missouri, and the Centers for Disease Control to vaccinate eligible people. Those eligible included residents over 65 years of age, individuals with health conditions that increase the risk of serious illness from COVID, healthcare workers, and first responders. These

WEAVER from FRONT

Weaver - pastor at First Baptist Church in Casville - and her two adult daughters and four grandchildren.

"I don't care how much you think you know or how much experience you've had," Weaver said, "circumstances can change drastically and make everything different. Sometimes they force you to reexamine your priorities."

clinics would have been capable of vaccinating nearly all of the 2,500 eligible people on health department waiting lists for vaccine in Barry and Lawrence Counties, according to Roger Brock,, administrator of the Barry County Health Department, and Janella Spencer, administrator of the Lawrence County Health Department.

They stated that everyone who is currently scheduled to receive a vaccination will be rescheduled for the new dates, which will be announced later this week.

Eligible residents wishing to be placed on the waiting list for future vaccination clinics can call the Barry County Health Department at 417- 847-2114, or the Lawrence County Health Department at 417-466-2201.

Weaver said it will be bittersweet to leave the students and staff with whom she's spent so much time.

"I've been in this position long enough to have had a say in hiring most of the teachers here," she said. "I've enjoyed working with all of them and will really miss them."

DHSS collaborates with area agencies to ensure vaccine access for seniors

A program designed to assist older Missourians with accessing COVID-19 vaccine launched today. In partnership with the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), Missouri's Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) will assist seniors with on-line vaccination registration, coordinate round trip transportation to and from their vaccination appointments, and conduct reminder calls for seniors' second doses.

"Navigating the web and registering online can be a challenge for seniors, so we're working closely with the AAAs to provide hands-on assistance with the process and make sure that folks have safe transportation to their appointments," said Jessica Bax, Director of the Division of Senior and Disability Services. "This partnership with the AAAs will ensure all Missouri seniors are able to access their vaccine."

Seniors age 60 and older can seek assistance with the vaccination registration process by calling their local AAAs toll-free hotline.

"AAAs are a trusted resource, rooted in every community across the State of Missouri," said Ann McGruder, Executive Director of the Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging.

"They are dedicated to serving seniors and meeting all their needs, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. AAAs will play a vital role as DHSS works to ensure that every older Missourian has access to a COVID-19 vaccine."

All Missourians age 65 and older are currently eligible for vaccination. Additionally, those with certain high-risk health factors are also eligible now. More information is available at MOStopsCovid.com/seniors.

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Catch-and-keep trout fishing starts March 1

March 1 marks the annual opening of catch-and-keep trout fishing in Missouri at the state's four trout parks: Bennett Spring State Park near Lebanon, Montauk State Park near Licking, Roaring River State Park near Cassville, and Maramec Spring Park near St. James. The catch-and-keep season at the trout parks runs through Oct. 31.

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) operates trout hatcheries at all four parks and stocks rainbow trout daily throughout the season.

"The pandemic created many challenges for all of us over the past year and, even with one hatchery closed due to extensive renovations, our hatchery staff continued to work hard producing fish at the other hatcheries for anglers to enjoy across the state," said MDC Fisheries Section Chief Bruce Drecktrah. "Thanks to the teamwork of our hatchery staff and the coordination of our hatchery system in Missouri, we are looking to another great season in 2021."

Drecktrah added that hatchery staff will again use data on trout tags sold in past years to anticipate the number of anglers expected on opening day. Staff will then stock about 20,000 trout across the four trout parks

for anglers on opening day.

Trout anglers need a fishing permit and a daily trout tag to fish in Missouri's trout parks. Learn more at huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/huntfish/seasons/trout-parks.

MDC encourages trout anglers to buy their fishing permits ahead of time from numerous vendors around the state, online at mdc.mo.gov/buypermits, or through the MDC free mobile app -- MO Fishing -- available for download through Google Play for Android devices or the App Store for Apple devices.

Daily trout tags can only be purchased at each of the four trout parks. MDC encourages trout anglers to have the correct amount of cash for daily tags if possible.

The cost of a daily trout tag to fish at three of Missouri's four trout parks -- Bennett Spring State Park, Montauk State Park, and Roaring River State Park -- is \$4 for adults and \$3 for those 15 years of age and younger. The daily limit is four trout.

MDC is continuing a pilot program at Maramec Spring Park where the daily limit has been raised from four to five trout and the cost of a daily trout tag for adults is \$5 and \$3 for anglers 15 years of age and younger.

Montauk State Park store hours for daily tags will be

Feb. 27 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Feb. 28 from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. The store will open at 4:30 a.m. on March 1.

Bennett Spring State Park and Roaring River State Park store hours for daily tags will be Feb. 27 from 1 to 9 p.m. and Feb. 28 starting at 9 a.m. through March 1.

Maramec Spring Park store hours for daily tags will be 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. beginning Feb. 19 to Feb. 26. Normal hours of 5:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. will begin on Feb. 27.

MDC reminds anglers and others visiting the trout parks to abide by all posted signs regarding wearing masks and social distancing requirements.

MDC notes that extensive hatchery renovations at Roaring River have recently been completed. The modernization of the facility will provide increased trout production, healthier fish, and the reopening of the raceways where trout are raised before release. Due to Roaring River Hatchery being out of production, current trout inventory levels will require adjustments to normal stocking rates, but there will be plenty of fish for anglers to have another great season in 2021. Learn more at mdc.mo.gov/newsroom/renovation-completed-mdcs-roaring-river-hatchery.

MDC also notes that Roar-

ing River has changed some fishing zones and advises trout anglers to check at the park for new information. Changes include changing the lower end of Zone 3 and moving Zone 3 about 545 feet up into Zone Two.

Online viewing of opening day activities at Roaring River State Park and Bennett Spring State Park will be available online at mstateparks.com/TroutOpening2021. The trout cams are located near the most popular fishing spots and follow all the fishing action.

Missouri also offers excellent trout fishing throughout the state on rivers and streams that support naturally reproducing trout. For more information on trout fishing in Missouri, visit mdc.mo.gov/fishing/where-fish/trout-areas.

REMINDER TO TROUT ANGLERS: To prevent the spread of the invasive alga called didymo or "rock snot," the use of shoes, boots or waders with porous soles of felt, matted or woven fibrous material is prohibited at all trout parks, trout streams, Lake Taneycomo, and buffer areas. Get more information at huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/fishing/protect-missouri-fishing/dont-spread-didymo.

Beck Farm recognized as Missouri Century Farm



Above, Marcia Moreland (left), chairman of the Barry County Extension Council, presented the Scroggins Family with recognition for the 2020 Missouri Century Farm at the Extension Council's annual meeting in Cassville, February 4.

The Scroggins operate Beck Farm, near Eagle Rock.

Shown above, left to right, receiving the award, are: Devan, Avery, Mary and Donnie Scroggins.

Applications being accepted for 2021 Century Farm

If your farm has been in your family since Dec. 31, 1921, you can apply to have it recognized as a Missouri Century Farm.

University of Missouri Extension, the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, and Missouri Farm Bureau sponsor the program.

To qualify, the same family must have owned the farm for 100 consecutive years. The line of ownership from the original settler or buyer may be through children, grandchildren, siblings, and nephews or nieces, including through marriage or adoption. The farm must be at least 40 acres of the original land acquisition and make a financial contribution to the overall farm income.

"Family farms have been among our most vital partners since the founding of extension more than 100 years ago," said MU Vice Chancellor for Extension and Engagement Marshall Stewart. "The Century Farm program is one way we express our gratitude to those who have contributed so much to Missouri agriculture."

"Missouri Farm Bureau is a proud partner in the recognition of Century Farms," said Garrett Hawkins, Missouri Farm Bureau president. "We applaud the hardworking farm families who have kept us fed and clothed for generations. They represent an important part of our heritage and laid a foundation for the bounty Americans enjoy every day."

Since the program began in 1976, more than 8,000 Missouri farms have received the Century Farm designation.

A \$120 fee covers the cost of a certificate, farm sign and booklet for approved applicants. County MU Extension centers present these items.

Details and online application are at extension.missouri.edu/centuryfarm. Deadline is May 1. You can also contact your local MU Extension center with questions.

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Basketball
tournament
brackets released

Lee Stubblefield

Due to covid 19 concerns, MSHSAA has modified the schedule for some post season activities.

“Basketball modifications have been made to the district tournament, sectional and quarterfinal games. All rounds of the district tournament, sectional and quarterfinal games will now be hosted by a member school. District tournaments will be held from Feb. 20th to Feb. 27th for Classes 1-3.”

Class 1 District 4

• The Exeter Tigers, the #5 seed, will play at School of the Ozarks on Saturday, February 20.

• The Exeter Lady Tigers, also the #5 seed, play at Hurley on Saturday, February 20.

Class 2 District 12

• The Wheaton Bulldogs are seeded #2 in C2D12, and receive a first round bye. The Bulldogs will host the winner of College Heights Christian and Greenfield on Tuesday, February 23.

• The Wheaton Lady Bulldogs are the #4 seed, and will host Jasper on Monday, February 22.

Class 3 District 12

• The Purdy Eagles received the top seed, and a first round bye. The Eagles will host the winner of Sarcoxie and Pierce City on February 25.

• The Southwest Trojans are seeded #3 and will host Diamond on Tuesday, February 23.

• The Purdy Lady Eagles, seeded #5, play at Pierce City on Monday, February 22.

• The Southwest Lady Trojans, seeded #6, play at Diamond on Monday, February 22.

Blue Eye edges Southwest

Lee Stubblefield

Two weeks of quarantine. No practices. What would Southwest do in a tough road game at Blue Eye on Tuesday? The Trojans almost won, dropping a 60-58 heartbreaker after leading throughout the contest. Southwest’s outside shooting belied the long layoff, hitting 10 bombs in the game.

Rusty Roe’s team came out on fire, dropping 22 points in the first quarter to take a 10-point lead at the first break. Six Southwest shooters scored in that first frame, led by Zak Starr with 8.

But Blue Eye fought back in the second quarter. Isaiah Mitchell poured in 13 points as the Bulldogs trimmed the lead to 31-29 at the half.

The two teams played a dead even 17-17 third quarter, and then the Blue Eye bombers took over. The Bulldogs scored 14 points in the final stanza. Four treys and a pair of free throws propelled the home team to the 60-58 win. Ryan Cardenzana pumped in three long jumpers - his only points of the night - in that final quarter.

Southwest slipped to 9-11 with the loss. Blue Eye improved to 12-9.

Blue Eye scorers: Isaiah Mitchell, 27; Lance Clark, 21; Ryan Cardenzana, 9; Lucas Estes, 3.

Southwest scorers: Cruz Marquez, 14; Zak Corwin, 14; Zak Starr, 13; Caden Uthe, 10; Brendyn Paulsen, 5; Lucas Paulsen, 2.

Treat yourself to less stress

Many people experienced unprecedented stress during the past year, notes University of Missouri Extension human development specialist Jeremiah Terrell.

Stress is part of everyday life, Terrell says. It may be short-term or chronic, and can lead to poor health, reduced quality of life and even suicide.

Terrell is part of an MU Extension project funded by a three-year USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant to provide stress assistance and suicide prevention services for farmers, ranchers, youths and farm families, and others in agricultural occupations.

MU Extension health and safety specialist Karen Funkenbusch says Valentine’s

Day is a stressful holiday for many. “Remember that caring about others is not just a Valentine’s Day thing. Show you care 365 days a year,” she says. “Having that as your main focus may turn out to be a lot more rewarding than placing all your hopes and dreams on what happens on just that one day during the year.”

Many stressors are real; others are imagined or exaggerated, Terrell says. Knowing which is which can reduce stress.

“Thoughts are not equal to facts,” he says. “Sometimes there is a story we tell ourselves and it may not be true.” He says it is important to look at feelings from a distance and decide if stress is coming from an internal or external source.

Sometimes we have little control over external stressors—just how we react to them, Terrell says. We have more control over internal stressors, but they can be harder to recognize. Stressors, whether brief or chronic, can manifest themselves in physical responses that are harmful to long-term health and quality of life.

He points to the work

of author, academic and speaker Brene Brown. In her TED talks and 2012 book, “Daring Greatly,” she teaches people to tell others how they are interpreting a situation. Transparent conversations that begin with “This is how I think you feel about...” can help build trust and reduce misunderstandings.

When you jump to conclusions based upon the past, stress occurs. Stress follows disappointment, anger and other feelings when you react instead of respond by analyzing the situation, says Terrell.

When this happens, slow down, he says. Avoid external influences such as media and focus on things that bring you joy and a sense of gratitude.

Missourians experiencing stress can access the toll-free Iowa Concern Hotline through North Central Region Farm and Ranch Alliance Network at 800-447-1985 or extension.iastate.edu/iowaconcern.

Find more information from MU Extension’s Taking Care of You program at extension.missouri.edu/programs/taking-care-of-you.

CHS announces Mask & Gavel
Tournament Results

Big 8 Conference Tournament Final Results

- Kalia Miller: Poetry, Conference Champion
- Josie Guevara: Prose, 4th
- Camron Sloan: Prose, 2nd
- Jazmin Carroll: Dramatic Interpretation, 6th
- Jillian Lecompte: Humor-

- ous Interpretation, 3rd
- Jillian Lecompte: Radio, 3rd
- Audrey Goutney & Audrey Gosvener: Duo Interpretation, 5th
- Audrey Goutney: US Extemporaneous Speaking, 4th
- Gabe Moore: US Extemporaneous Speaking, 5th

- Eli Pickett: Foreign Extemporaneous Speaking, 5th
- Treva Samuel & Kalia Miller: Policy Debate, 3rd
- Gabe Moore & Audrey Goutney: Policy Debate, 2nd

SCHELL from FRONT

Instead, she said, she was offered the job of assistant principal for not just Eunice Thomas Elementary, but for the Intermediate School, too. It was a position previously non-existent.

“I knew they’d been talking for the past few years about adding an assistant principal position,” she said, “but nothing had ever been decided. I knew the position was needed, though. Imagine my surprise to have it offered

to me.”

She says her job as assistant principal will free up the principals from both the elementary and the intermediate schools, so they can spend more time with students.

Schell, who lives in Cassville with her husband Danny, says she’s looking forward

to working with new principal, Mindi Gates, who was her daughter’s third grade teacher when Gates taught in Cassville.

Schell’s oldest daughter is a school nurse for the Cassville district, and her son is a meteorologist for the Air Force.

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60178581 - **SPLIT LEVEL HOME** on 10 acres m/l. 3 BR on upper level and 1 BR in basement. 1 BA on upper level and 3/4 BA in basement. Detached 2 car garage with opener. Lots of out buildings. 2 mobile home spots. 40x60 wood frame steel-sided building built as a flea market with HVAC and bathroom. Hwy 37 frontage, asphalt drive and large parking area. Unlimited possibilities. **\$219,000**

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60156508 - **8.42 ACRES M/L.** Great piece of property to build a home. Enough land to have some livestock, plus plenty of room for your family to grow. Convenient to Highway 37 and Cassville, Butterfield, or Monett. Cassville Schools. No restrictions. **\$40,000**

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60172511 - **LOTS OF POSSIBILITIES** in this restaurant building in Cassville. Several dining rooms, some kitchen equipment. Set up so that it could be a living quarters in the back with business in the front, or divide into apartments. This would also be an ideal location for a furniture store, flea market, florist, you name it! **\$225,000**

60181096 - **1.8 ACRES M/L** part in the city limits and part in the county. Roof is about nine years old. Updated electrical. Central heat and A/C with wood burning fireplace and pellet stove. Large shop/garage. Storage building. City water with septic. Good location with newer homes next door. Does need some TLC. Could have chickens and livestock on part that is out of city limits. **\$89,900**

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Eunice Thomas January Students of The Month

Word of The Month: Responsibility



At left, Kindergarten students, left to right, are: front row : Skilynn Jereczek, Damien Case and Adalaide Anderson; second row: Jaxton Beyer, Alec Smith and Maisyn Granger; third row: Audriana Cieslin-ski, Annlee Ennes and Kaiser Craig; back row: Eli Ortiz, Pip-er Mildfeldt and Aaron Davis. At right, Kinder Academy, left to right, are: front row: McK-enna Dillow and Raegan Stott; back row: Emily Hurd and Curtis Shelton.



“Today might be the day a kid reminds you about 20 years from now.”

- Dr. Robert Dillon



Shown above, First Grade students, left to right: front row: Kaizen Haney, Levi Thomasson, Holden and Kelley-Hitchens; second row: Danny Beuterbaugh, Harper Hayward and Savannah Doucet; third row: Ella Yates, Shalee Lowe and Unique Vang; back row: Oliver Fields and Charlie Salas-Reuda; absent from the photo, Elise Remenar.



Shown above, Second Grade students, left to right, front row: Tanner Ray, Kynadee Carter and Addyson Nichols; second row: Hunter Thomasson, Will Holycross and Arlow Ritchie; third row: Brody Sorenson, Skyeland Robeson and Liset Ibarra; back row: Coraline Hickman, Marley Beebe and Trenton Winchel.

LOST DOG

Missing since 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 2. She is black & white. Her nose, underbelly, & tip of tail & legs are partially white. Most of her upper body is black. Her name is “Lady.” Reward.

If you have seen her or know where she is, please call me!

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Haven of the Ozarks: Pet of the Week

Meet Stormy, the Haven of the Ozarks Pet of the Week! She came to the Haven after her owner passed away. Stormy has only known the life of a beloved pet and is anxious to be back in a loving home. She uses her litter box, does well with dogs, other cats, and is good with children. She will fit in well nearly anywhere! Stormy was also front-declawed in her former home, so she won't be able to spend any time outside. Her DOB is 10/8/2012. Come meet Stormy soon and help her get back in a family!

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Purdy January medalists announced



Purdy Elementary Principal Julie Dalton and Purdy Elementary Counselor Gary Jurgensen are pleased to present January Acceptance Medalists. Left to right, front row: Abby Nickol, Kinleigh Rock, Zayden Vang, Lorraine Phillips, Aleah Diediker, Samuel Flores and Camilla Arias; back row: Daniel Aldava, Jose Castaneda, CJ Diediker, Lucero Ramirez, Hector Rueda, Paison Taylor, Kayedynce Evans, EJ Patterson and Gary Jurgensen, PK-6 Counselor. Absent for the photo, but earning Acceptance medals, were Mya Walters and Carson Tate.

Photo by Kimberly Utter.

Southwest Elementary
Students of The Month Named



During the month of January, the following students were chosen to be Students of the Month. These students exhibited the character trait of Fairness.

Left to right, front row: Isabella Arnold, Oliver Cannady, Wesley Barras, Scott Reed, John Young; middle row: Meriya Jalbert, Kayla Trager, Zaylee Horton, Willa Outhouse, Cody Washam; back row: Payton Neukam, Grayson Payne, Cooper Hendrix, Gracen Varner, and Breagan Mayse; not shown: Briggs Myers and Allie Fixico.

MDC offers hunter education opportunities

Now is the time to start preparing for spring turkey season or other hunting opportunities later in the year. If taking hunter education is one of the things you need to do to enjoy firearms hunting opportunities this year, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has several options available, but the opportunities are more limited due to COVID.

Individuals born on or after Jan. 1, 1967, hunting in Missouri during a firearms season or acting as an adult mentor to another hunter must have hunter education certification unless exempt (see exemptions listed below). You must be at least 11 years old to take hunter education in Missouri. MDC offers two hunter education options; an all-online format and a blended format.

The all-online format may be completed by Missouri residents age 16 and older. It consists of an online course and requires a fee paid to the online course provider (not MDC). The all-online option requires the passing of a final exam, but does not require attending a hands-on

skills portion. In addition to the convenience this option offers, it is also encouraged at this time to avoid any COVID risks.

The blended format has two parts. The knowledge portion provides information to participants on all aspects of hunter education and can be taken online (there is a fee with this option), or through a free student manual requested online at: <https://huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/hunter-education-skills-training/hunter-ed-study-guide-order-form>. In the southwest part of the state, these student manuals can also be obtained at MDC's Southwest Regional Office (2630 N. Mayfair, Springfield), Springfield Conservation Nature Center (4601 S. Nature Center Way, Springfield), Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center (4897 N. Greene County Farm Road 61) and the Shoal Creek Conservation Education Center (201 Riviera Drive, Joplin). No in-person knowledge sessions are being offered this spring in southwest Missouri.

Participants must also complete an in-person four-hour skills session that includes a multiple-choice final exam. The skills portion is a hands-on demonstration of skills learned by participants. Participants must complete and pass both portions to earn certification. For youths in the 11-15 age range who aren't offered hunter education at their schools, there will be classes offered in southwest Missouri at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center, at the Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center, and at the Shoal Creek Conservation Education Center. Individuals are encouraged to visit mdc.mo.gov/hunter-education to find upcoming in-person skills sessions at these three MDC facilities because classes are limited and will fill quickly. The absence of in-person knowledge sessions and the limited number of in-person skills sessions being offered are due to COVID concerns.

At these in-person skills sessions, MDC will abide by applicable local health requirements and strongly

encourages participants to bring and wear masks. Hand sanitizer will be available to participants, but masks will not be provided by at the above-listed classes.

"To help staff, volunteers, program participants, and others stay safe, MDC has changed the format and structure of some of our programs, including hunter education," said MDC Hunter Education and Shooting Range Coordinator Justin McGuire. "MDC still offers ample opportunities for people to legally hunt in Missouri through youth exemptions, our apprentice hunter education authorization, and online hunter education."

Exemptions to Missouri's hunter education requirements are:

- Hunters born before Jan. 1, 1967
- Hunters age 15 or younger who will be hunting with an adult mentor age 18 years or older who is certified in hunter education.

Hunters with a disability exemption from MDC Hunters age 16 or older who have purchased an apprentice hunter authorization and

will be hunting with a properly permitted adult mentor age 18 or older. Hunters who are landowners hunting on land they own. Hunters who can prove completion of an approved hunter education course in another state. More information about

hunter education opportunities in southwest Missouri can be obtained by calling MDC's Southwest Regional Office at 417-895-6880 or going to mdc.mo.gov.

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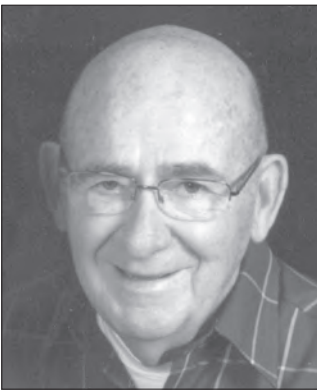
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CHARLES G. SHORE
Charles G. Shore, age 81, of Cassville, passed away Friday, February 12, 2021, at his home. He was born July 20, 1939, in Cassville, son of Earl and Nora Shore. Preceding him in death were his parents and one brother, Lavern Shore.

Charles was a 1957 graduate of Cassville High School. He was an employee of Fasco for 26 years, then worked for the Highway Department prior to retirement. He enjoyed refinishing old furniture, working in the yard and spending time with family. Charles was a member of First Baptist Church of Cassville.

Survivors include his wife, Jan; one son, Chris (Marla), of Cassville; one daughter, Molly Chapin (Bob), of St. Louis; three grandsons, Jordan Shore, Derek Shore and Jacob Chapin; two sisters, Lois Petty, of Cassville, and Joan Harvey (Raymond), of Cassville; special caregivers, Desiree Corn, Megan Vandegrift, Hallie Stover, Ashlynn Craig and Cox at Home Hospice.

Services will be held at 2:00 P.M. Friday, February 19, 2021, at Fohn Funeral Home in Cassville. Pastor James Weaver will conduct the services. Burial will be at Oak Hill Cemetery in Cassville.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Parkinson's Research Foundation in care of Fohn Funeral Home.

Visit fohnfuneralhome.com for online obituaries, guestbook and private condolences.

**FOHN FUNERAL HOME
CASSVILLE, MO.
417-847-2141**

CLEO JOANN (SHRUM) ROBBINS
Cleo Joann (Shrum) Robbins went to her Heavenly home Saturday, February 13, 2021 at Cox Hospital Monett. Joann, as she was known to everyone, was born September 23, 1943, in the Mt. Olive Community, Cassville. She is the youngest child of Abie and Mary Frances (Cooper) Shrum. She was united in marriage to William Loran Robbins, who survives, on October 28, 1962. Joann was preceded in death by her parents; one brother, Leroy Shrum; two sisters, Mildred Myers and Irene Harris; and one daughter-in-law, Tammy Robbins. Surviving are her husband and her children, David Robbins, of Jenkins, Mary Steer and husband, Lloyd, of Yukon, Okla., Richard Robbins and Virginia,

OBITUARIES

of Monett, Lynna Cooper and husband, Michael, of Cassville; her grandchildren, Casey Rash and Robert Chapman, of Yukon, Okla., Brandy Rash, of Yukon, Okla., Tracy Rash and Brandon Brodus, of Yukon, Okla., Marine SGT Kendal Cooper and wife, Korissa, of Oceanside, Calif., Emily (Cooper) Pendergraft and husband, Army Specialist Ty, of Colorado Springs, Colo., Katelyn Bradshaw and husband, Zach, of Humble Texas, and Tyler Steer, of Oklahoma City, Okla.; great-grandchildren, Jake, Journey, Malachi, Sawyer, Lucas, Collin, Ethan, Blake, Paislee, Rilee, Porter, Liam, Levi and great-grandbaby #14 due in July.

Joann, Nannie to all her grandkids and great-grandbabies, was a devoted Nannie to them. She loved to hear about their life adventures. She was so proud of all of their accomplishments.

Joann is survived by two sisters, Sue Brown and Willa Dean Shrum, both of Cassville; one brother, Fred Shrum, of Oregon; and many nieces and nephews.

She received her education eight years at Butterfield and four years at Cassville. For several years, she was employed as a seamstress for Fabritec in Butterfield. She was a member of Liberty Bible Church, Jenkins. Joann enjoyed many hobbies of sewing, quilting, crocheting, embroidery, cross stitch, gardening, baking and reading her Bible.

Pallbearers will be Marine SGT Kendal Cooper, Army Specialist Ty Pendergraft, Lloyd Steer, Michael Cooper, David Robbins, Cole Blades, Donnie Wolf and Aubrey Wolf.

Visitation will be from 6:00 until 8:00 P.M. Friday, February 26, 2021, at Fohn Funeral Home in Cassville.

Graveside service will be held at 10:00 A.M. Saturday, February 27, 2021, at Clio Cemetery in Jenkins under direction of Fohn Funeral Home in Cassville.

Contributions may be made to Cystic Fibrosis in honor of Rilee and Porter or American Cancer Society in honor of Lian in memory of Joann.

Face masks are required. Visit fohnfuneralhome.com for online obituaries, guestbook and private condolences.

**FOHN FUNERAL HOME
CASSVILLE, MO.
417-847-2141**

SUE ANN CHILDRESS
Sue Ann Childress, 82, of Monett, passed away Tuesday morning, February 16, 2021.

A private funeral service will be held at a later date. Arrangements have been entrusted to Buchanan Funeral Home, Monett.

JOHN LARRY ALTIZER
John Larry Altizer, age 81, of Shell Knob, passed away Saturday, February 13, 2021, at his home.

Services will be held at

a later date. Cremation arrangements are under direction of Fohn Funeral Home in Shell Knob.

Visit fohnfuneralhome.com for online obituaries, guestbook and private condolences.

**FOHN FUNERAL HOME
SHELL KNOB, MO.
417-858-3151**

BERNICE BRANUM
Bernice Branum, 87, of Monett, passed away Sunday, February 14, 2021.

Funeral services will be held at 2:00 p.m. Friday, February 19, 2021, at Buchanan Funeral Home, Monett. Visitation will begin at 1:00 p.m. Friday. Interment will be in I.O.O.F. Cemetery, Monett.



JAMES DALE MUTRUX
James Dale Mutrux, 90, passed away Feb. 10, 2021, at his home in Springfield. Mr. Mutrux, son of Harold and Effie (Hankins) Mutrux, was born Aug. 20, 1930, in rural Barry County near Cassville.

He served in the US Air Force in the Korean War as a radio mechanic, and later as an electronic test equipment technician. He retired from the Federal Aviation Administration in Oklahoma City, Okla., where he was employed first as an electronic technician and later as an electronic engineer, technical writer, and instructor in the FAA Academy.

JD married Elsie E. (Jean) Huitt on April 5, 1958, in St. Louis. She preceded him in death.

Survivors include many nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents and wife, he was preceded in death by his four brothers: Lynn, Leland, Charles (LaVerne), and Dr. Robert Mutrux.

It is requested that memorial contributions be made to Integrus Foundation-Hospice, 3030 NW Expressway, Oklahoma City OK 73112.

A memorial service will be held at a future date.

Cremation arrangements are under the direction of the White Funeral Home and Crematory, Cassville.

White Funeral Home and Crematory
www.whitefuneralhome.org
417-847-8400 or 417-858-8400



RALPH WAYNE PEERY
Ralph Wayne Peery, age 76, of Shell Knob, passed away on Friday, February 12, 2021.

No services are scheduled at this time.

Cremation arrangements are under the direction of the White Funeral Home and Crematory, Cassville.

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OBITUARIES



DALE CURTIS ALLEY

Dale Curtis Alley, age 88, of Seligman, went home to be with his Lord and Savior on Thursday, February 11, 2021. Mr. Alley, son of Glenn and Reba (Notestine) Alley, was born on September 6, 1932, in Oxford, Kansas. Subsequently graduating high school, Dale enlisted in the United States Army and served his country proudly during the Korean Conflict. On October 10, 1955, he was united in marriage to Therma Beeman. Dale was a hard worker by trait; it was his passion and something he enjoyed. He had a hard exterior but had the biggest heart. Dale will always be remembered for the stories he told of the fourteen years he worked offshore in Louisiana, wearing his overalls, taking his cookie breaks, his poetry, and so much more. He taught his grandchildren the values of life from hard work, to appreciating the little things in life such as sitting on the front porch gazing at the hay fields, and that anything can be made into something beautiful, especially pinecones. Dale was a member of the Believers Full Gospel Church in Washburn. He left a lasting impression

on so many lives and will be greatly missed.

Survivors include his loving wife of sixty-five years, Therma Alley, of Seligman; one son, Greg Alley and his wife, Karen, of Seligman; one daughter, Lisa Mitchell and her husband, Charlie, of Seligman; ten grandchildren, Jessica Lombard, of Wheaton, Caleb Mitchell and his wife, Melissa, of Seligman, Michaela Foster and her husband, Josh, of Higginsville, Shannon Mitchell, of Seligman, Shawn Alley and his wife, Amanda, of Garfield, Arkansas, Brandon Alley and his wife, Samantha, of Exeter, Dillon Alley, of Washburn, Jason Batson and his wife, Christina, of Jenkins, Jamie Pinkley, of Aurora, and Tia Morgan and her husband, Austin, of Washburn; six great-grandchildren; one brother, Tommy Alley and his wife, Mary, of California; and several nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, Dale was preceded in death by one brother, Gene Alley, and one sister, Donna Light.

No services are scheduled at this time.

Memorial contributions may be made to Believers Full Gospel Church in Washburn and entrusted to the White Funeral Home and Crematory P.O. Box 890, Cassville, MO 65625.

Cremation arrangements are under the direction of the White Funeral Home and Crematory, Cassville.

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www.whitefuneralhome.org
417-847-8400 or 417-858-8400

Did you know?

The official beginning of spring is a highly anticipated day among people who can't wait to put away their winter coats and soak up some warm sunlight. But the day of the spring equinox is just as worthy of celebration for its uniqueness as it is for its symbolic connection with the end of winter. According to the Old Farmer's Almanac, on the spring equinox, which is sometimes referred to as the "vernal equinox" or the "March equinox," the sun crosses the celestial equator going south to north. Equinoxes (there's another one in September each year) are the only two times a year that the sun rises due east and sets due west for everyone on Earth. As the sun passes overhead on the equinox, the tilt of Earth is zero relative to the sun. That means that the planet's axis neither points toward or away from the sun. Though it's understandable why so many people appreciate the spring equinox, which ushers in increasing sunlight hours and later sunsets, the day's uniqueness makes it even more worthy of celebration. This year the spring equinox happens on Saturday, March 20 at 5:37 a.m. EDT in the northern hemisphere.

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Romans 15:13

20c

Online workshops set for fruit, vegetable growers

Missouri fruit and vegetable growers can enroll in upcoming no-cost or low-cost online produce safety training.

Webinar topics include creating a food safety plan for USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification, Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) training, produce safety best practices and wildlife control for produce growers, said Londa Nwadike, an extension associate professor of food safety for the University of Missouri and Kansas State University.

In addition to the webinars, MU Extension and the Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA) can provide a free On Farm Readiness Review to produce growers, Nwadike said. MU Extension also continues to provide free microbial water testing to produce growers and currently has cost-share funding for growers interested in GAP certification.

"We can also provide general technical assistance in produce safety to growers," she said.

Upcoming webinars

Feb. 24 OR April 21, 3-5 p.m. – Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) food safety plan.

March 18 AND 25, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. – Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Alliance training.

March 24, 6-7 p.m. – Wildlife control for produce growers.

May 10, 3-5 p.m. – Introduction to produce safety and post-harvest handling.

Pea Ridge National Military Park Announces Public Comment Period

Pea Ridge National Military Park draft White-tailed Deer Management Plan/Environmental Assessment (DMP/EA) will be available for public review and comment from February 10 to March 12, 2021. The purpose of the plan is to address issues associated with the overpopulation of white-tailed deer at the park. Where there is an overabundance of deer there is an increase in deer-vehicle strikes, deer-related diseases, and deer browsing, which has a negative impact on native vegetation. This DMP/EA seeks to improve the health of the deer herd, the habitat, and to increase human health and safety.

The DMP/EA describes the no-action alternative and one action alternative and analyzes the environmental consequences of implementing each. Under Alternative A, the no-action alternative, the NPS would maintain current management practices, including not taking measures to reduce the deer population. Alternative B, the action alternative, proposes to reduce the deer population to 20-35 deer per square mile.

Participation by the community is an important part of developing and refining this plan. We now request your thoughtful evaluation and comments on the proposed alternatives. The 30-day public comment period

A full list of upcoming trainings is available at www.ksre.k-state.edu/foodsafety/produce.

Nwadike said the workshops and other resources are available to produce growers through funding from various sources, including the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the Missouri and Kansas departments of agriculture, and the Food and Drug Administration.

"These efforts have helped hard-working produce growers understand the FSMA produce safety rule and incorporate these requirements into their production system to ensure they are providing safe, healthful food for consumers," Nwadike said.

"I can't say enough good

about the FSMA training," said Alicia Ellingsworth, co-founder and executive director of the KC Farm School. Three members of her staff attended an earlier FSMA Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) training jointly organized by MU and Kansas State. "Our staff so much appreciated it," Ellingsworth said. "Not a day goes by that a couple people don't say how much they learned or reference the training for some reason or another."

For more information about produce safety workshops in Kansas or Missouri, contact Nwadike at 913-307-7391 or nwadikel@missouri.edu, or MU Extension horticulture specialist Patrick Byers at byerspl@missouri.edu.

Pea Ridge National Military Park

15930 Hwy. 62, Garfield, Arkansas 72732

The park will host an open house, Saturday February 27th, at Pea Ridge National Military Park. The general public will have the opportunity to view the draft plan and comment in person, from 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the open house will be outside, where social distancing can be maintained. Masks must be worn at times when social distancing can not be achieved.

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Understanding County Aid Road Trust (CART) Funds

Sheila Harris

According to a funding history of Missouri's roadways published by the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), Missouri's first motor fuel tax was adopted by the vote of the people in 1924, by way of an initiative petition.

In 1962, the County Aid Road Trust (CART) program was established, after a constitutional amendment was approved by voters allowing

cities and counties to share in state motor fuel tax revenues. A county's allocation was based on the ratio of a county's and city's roads to the total number of the state's rural and municipal roads.

In 1979, voters approved another constitutional amendment which changed the distribution formula for CART funds. The percentage of revenue counties received from the state for their rural road maintenance jumped

from 5 percent to 10 percent, while the percentage of revenue for city roads remained the same.

While one can't say for certain that this jump in prospective state revenue provided an incentive for county officials to take on the maintenance of more rural roads, it would be naïve to suppose that it didn't play a part. Rocky roads throughout the county gradually began to disappear beneath chip and

seal surfaces, not altogether a bad thing for some who lived in remote areas.

Barry County now claims about 1,000 miles of rural roads, according to presiding commissioner, Gary Youngblood. That number is compared to the state's total 2020 rural road mileage of 73,651.70, a ratio on which 50 percent of CART funds received by Barry County from the state are based.

The other 50 percent of

Barry County's CART funds are based on the county's rural land valuation, compared to the state's total rural land valuation - \$27,138,270,550, in 2020 - according to MoDOT records.

Barry County ranks 14th among 114 counties in the state in terms of size, with 779 square miles.

In 2020, Barry County received the 12th largest allocation of CART funds among counties in the state, with

\$1,377,704.09, as reported by MoDOT. That number includes the combined allocation for both rural roads and rural land valuation.

CART fund revenue for 2021 is projected to be \$1,306,890, according to the MoDOT website, slightly less than funds received in 2020. Still, that projection is almost \$100,000 more than the projection made six years ago for the 2015 budget, which was \$1,208,320.

PROPERTY RIGHTS from FRONT

The use of CART funds specific to that bit of road, however, hasn't been documented, says the Sturgells' attorney, Russ Schenewerk, of Schenewerk & Finknbinder in Branson.

The Sturgell property – around 200 acres – has supported the Sturgell family since 1954, the year Dorman Sturgell came home after serving in the Korean War and purchased his first parcel of the property, about 120 acres. With the help of his father, Marlett Sturgell, he began grazing cattle and raising forage crops in the fertile valley, on land located at the end of what is

commonly called Hatcher Mountain Road which ends in the valley two miles east of Highway 39. The Sturgell family has run cattle continuously on the land since that time.

Hatcher Mountain Road didn't have a name back in 1954, Dorman Sturgell said, in the deposition he gave the courts in March of 2020.

"The road was mostly just a wagon trail," Sturgell said. "My dad and I graded it from Highway 39 back to my farm with a tractor and blade. He drove the tractor; I sat on the blade."

Now, Sturgell says, he has been forced to file a lawsuit

to protect his family's interest in part of the road he once created.

No easements or right-of-ways to his property have ever been granted, he says, nor are any recorded with the county.

The Sturgell Family Trust alleges that the county's attempt – beginning in 2015, they say - to prohibit the family from locking the gate across the lane leading into their property affects their ability to run cattle on the land.

The story dates back to the formation of the Mountain Special Road District in the 1980s.

"We were all friends and neighbor and lots of things were done by a handshake back then," Ed Fink, one of the three original road commissioners said.

As a child, Fink lived on the property the Sturgells now own.

"The lane at the end of Hatcher Mountain Road has always been private," he said. "Dorman Sturgell never gave the road district any right-of-way to improve his road.

"But when the road district was formed, we needed a place to turn our grader around at the end of the road, so Dorman installed a

cattle guard at his own expense and told us we could turn the grader around on his property," Fink said.

"Because Dorman helped us, we did favors for him, too, like putting in some concrete low-water crossings and a little gravel. He never asked us to. We just did it."

Though he doesn't label them as "favors," Gary Youngblood alleges maintenance to the road on the part of the road district continued over the ensuing years, long after Ed Fink left the road commission around 2003 and commissioner Mike Collins took

his place. Taxpayer' dollars in that road district will be wasted, says Gary Youngblood, if the Sturgells win their case.

When Dorman Sturgell's new neighbors – James and Ginger Hicks - moved in from out of state in the late 1990s, Sturgell helped them out, too, according to Dorman's son, Randal Sturgell. Dorman, he said, told them they could use his lane to access the new house they built on their property (which bordered Sturgell property on the south), until they could improve their own old lane which once connected to the public road. The old lane, according to Dorman Sturgell and Ed Fink, once ran across the Hicks' property to historic Doty Cemetery, located just south of the Sturgells' land, on the Hicks' parcel.

The Hicks, however, never revitalized the old lane which the Sturgells claim once connected to the portion of the road which they *do* acknowledge as public.

Instead, they sold off the west portion of their land which would have provided access to the *unquestioned* portion of public road, the Sturgells say. The Hicks then continued to use what the Sturgells say is their private lane to get to their home, as if it was their right to do so, the Sturgells allege.

When the Sturgells' cattle began to get out some years later because random people began using the lane as a thoroughfare to the creek (without the Sturgells' permission) and leaving the wire gate across the cattle guard open, the Sturgells installed double steel gates - and locked them.

That's when trouble with the county and their neighbors began, the Sturgells allege, trouble which involved law enforcement.

The neighboring Hicks house now sits vacant. James Hicks died in 2017 and Ginger Hicks moved out of state.

Old Doty cemetery hasn't been used for new burials in decades. Like many others in the county, it now resides behind fences and a locked gate.

The lawsuit, however, continues.



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See PROPERTY RIGHTS 13A

PROPERTY RIGHTS from 12A

Schenewerk, counsel for the plaintiff, says he is puzzled by the county’s persistence.

Gary Youngblood says the persistence is because taxpayers’ money is at stake: the taxes of those who pay into the Mountain Special Road District.

“The road district’s spent a lot of money over the years maintaining that road,” Youngblood said.

“Would you want your tax dollars used to benefit a private landowner?” He asked.

The Sturgells ask where due process of law which should be afforded a private landowner comes into play.

Former presiding 39th Circuit presiding judge, Jack Goodman, dismissed re-

quests for summary judgment from all parties’ attorneys. The case will go to trial, although a date has not yet been set.

David Cole, of Ellis, Cupps & Cole Law Firm, former counsel for the Barry County commissioners, has been appointed to the position of 39th circuit judge, where, he said, he will recuse himself from the case.

Don Cupps, of Ellis, Cupps & Cole Law Firm, will take Cole’s place as defense attorney for the commissioners.

The Mountain Special Road District’s case is being defended by Katherine Ann Thompson, of Baird, Lightner, Millsap, P.C.

MU Ext. Beginning Gardener online series offered

University of Missouri Extension will offer homeowners an online program on the basics of growing vegetables.

The five-part course, “The Beginning Gardener: Getting Started With Vegetables,” begins March 1. Participants not familiar with MU Extension’s online learning format will receive a brief orientation and access to the course.

Each chapter contains short prerecorded videos, a self-assessment quiz and a simple activity through the guidance of course instruc-

tor and MU Extension horticulture specialist Kate Kammler.

Participants may ask questions as they view videos and work on assignments. Each chapter runs Monday through Saturday, repeating until the end of the course.

“For those interested in growing their own food, this is a good course to start with, focusing on the basic knowl-

edge for gardens,” said Kammler.

Schedule of topics

- March 1: Vegetable Gardening Basics
- March 7: Improving Soil Quality
- March 16: Management of Insects and Disease
- March 22: Know Your Garden Style
- March 29: Vegetables in the Garden

Register at extension.missouri.edu/courses/the-beginning-gardener-getting-started-with-vegetables-2021.

To access your course after initial enrollment, log in to your account on the MU Extension website and select “My online courses.”

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Initiative proposals face
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Missouri News Network
 The Missouri House Elections and Elected Officials Committee held public hearings in early February on 11 resolutions and bills related to making the process of introducing and adopting initiative petitions more difficult. These petitions are codified in the Missouri Constitution to allow citizens to have a direct say in legislation. If enough signatures are gathered, the petitions can be used by citizens to get issues onto ballots and potentially adopted, typically as constitutional amendments.
 Initiative petitions are reviewed by the secretary of state and attorney general, and if they meet the requirements, petitioners may gather signatures. It takes signatures from two-thirds of the congressional districts in Missouri — with at least 8% of registered voters in each district signing on — to get an initiative petition onto a

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law are designed to restrict what some bill sponsors characterized as a rampant proliferation of initiative petitions and constitutional amendments.
 These include the back and forth on Clean Missouri that witness Allen Griffin said opened a lot of eyes to flaws in Missouri's initiative petitions process. One such flaw was the lack of enforcement on the requirement that initiative petitions address only a single issue.
 This point was debated at length throughout the hearing but not addressed in any of the proposed bills.
 Some recently passed ballot initiatives have also been at odds with the platforms of the majority Republican Missouri legislature, notably the passage of a mandate for Medicaid expansion and the legalization of medical marijuana. The marijuana amendment, because of the technical issues encountered in enacting it, was a frequent touchstone throughout the hearing.
 "I feel like IPs (initiative petitions) are for citizens to hold us accountable," Rep. Crystal Quade, D-Springfield, said. "You'd mentioned, there have been lots of things that were done wrong through IPs. Medical marijuana is a great example — the language was a little weird and we've had to go back in. But if we did our job in the first place, citizens wouldn't have to resort to that. They had been asking for that for a long time."
 Several proponents of the bills argued that the Missouri Constitution is growing too long and pedantic. Rep. J. Eggleston, R-Maysville, said the Missouri Constitution is now 10 times the length of the U.S. Constitution.
 But many proponents of the bills focused on concerns that well-funded and out-of-state groups wielded too much power with the current petition process.
 "What is being done right now is outside special interests are using billions of dollars and deciding what laws and regulations that people of Missouri will live under," Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft said. "I don't think that's right. I think the people of this state should be in control of their constitution."
 The sponsor of one bill, Rep. Bishop Davidson, R-Republic, spoke to the general sentiment of the lawmakers in the room. "I think we can all agree this is the most important document in Missouri," he said. Davidson and many others argued that the "ease" and frequency of the IP process doesn't reflect the gravity of the document.
 Kevin Fitzgerald, a St.

Millions in CARES money for
businesses, farms unspent

Missouri News Network
 Almost \$13 million of CARES Act funds meant to help small businesses and family farms went unused by the Missouri Department of Economic Development.
 The state was allocated \$30 million, but no more than \$17.1 million will be distributed, even if the rest of the pending applicants are approved.
 Rep. Peter Merideth, D-St. Louis, was frustrated by the department's handling of the program during a House budget committee hearing Tuesday.
 "Shouldn't the goal have been to get emergency dollars into the hands of people applying for it as fast as possible?" Merideth asked.
 Rob Dixon, director of the Missouri Department of Economic Development, said some states gave the funds out without asking many questions and that "their goal was prioritizing speed."
 "The state of Missouri is ultimately responsible for the proper administration of those funds, and if we emphasized haste and getting the dollars out over complying with the federal law, the federal government could very well come back and ask the state of Missouri to reimburse what we should not have paid out in the first place," Dixon said.
 About \$22 million was initially set aside for small businesses from the CARES Act funds. If 50 remaining applicants are approved, the most that could be distributed would be \$15.2 million.
 Dixon said all of the \$22.5 million was initially approved for businesses, but \$7.3 million ultimately went unused when businesses decided not to utilize the program or they didn't present eligible reimbursable expenses.
 Merideth expressed frustration that approval did not necessarily equal distribution.
 "...This is not the time to be sitting on dollars that are for emergency relief, and I don't understand why this is not being addressed."
 "It was something that we tried to account for," Lanahan said. "And it exceeded expectations, unfortunately."
 Merideth talked about small businesses in his district that have been waiting more than eight months to receive funds.
 "Why in the world is it taking eight months?" Merideth asked. With only 600 applicants approved, he questioned why it was taking the department so long to review the applications.
 Merideth said Dixon and the Office of Administration previously told him payments would be done by the end of January, but all payments are still not finalized.
 "What would we have done if this money had to be out the door by the end of December?" Merideth asked, referencing the initial date the CARES Act funding was set to expire.
 Dixon explained that approved applicants were allowed to keep their applications open through November to maximize eligible expenses, and federal rule changes slowed things down.
 Family-owned farms were allotted.
 \$7.5 million of the \$30 million from the grant. Only \$1.9 million of the \$7.5 million was distributed. Dixon said the Department of Economic Development only received \$2.8 million in applications for the grant.
 Scott Cupps, R-Shell Knob, focused on how only \$1.9 million of the \$7.5 million was distributed.
 "By percentage, that's horrific," Cupps said.
 Cupps said he thinks applications were low because most farmers were unaware of the program.
 "I just find it hard to believe that, with all of the hardships that our agriculture community faced this last year, that was the case," Cupps said. "It clearly was not because of a lack of need. It was because of a lack of having any sort of clue that it existed."

Louis-area resident who spoke in opposition to one of the proposed bills, said he can "attest that the petition process is not easy."
 Fitzgerald said he has been involved in several grass-roots-led petitions, without receiving any compensation, and believes it's vital that the tool be kept accessible for citizens trying to advocate for change.
 Quade said while the role of special interest groups and petitions being funded from out of the state concern her, she isn't sure these sorts of proposals effectively take outside money out of the equation. She said that adding barriers to the process is effectively blocking true grass-roots petitions, rather than the lobbyist groups with the funds to vault the additional cost they'd impose.
 "I hope that the committee is looking at this through a lens of how we can increase citizen access," Quade said.
 A few participants said the ostensible overuse of the initiative petition actually speaks to a larger problem.
 "My belief is that the initiative petition is the people's voice," Rep. Doug Clemens, D-St. Ann, said. "One of the reasons the people need that voice to counter our voice is because we don't always get it right."

The Wildcat Takedown Club brings home awards



The Wildcat Takedown Club participated in the Missouri Nationals Tournament held in Lebanon on February 6 and 7. There were three tournaments: Open, Novice and Girls.

Shown above, left to right, are: front row: Brooklynn Homewood, 3rd Novice and 4th, Girls; Lynkin Carter, 1st Novice and 1st, Girls; Seann Lee, 1st Novice; Lane Cope, 2nd Novice; James McClelland, 2nd Novice.

Second row: Chael Naugle, 1st Open & 8U Open Outstanding Wrestler; Trystan Moore, 1st Novice; Julian Daniels, 4th Novice; Easton Stone, 1st Novice; Michael Winchell, 3rd Novice; Brylar Beranek, 4th Novice.

Back row: Braydyn Sizemore, 2nd Open; DJ Glidewell, 1st Open; Tristan Thompson, 4th Open; Colton Roark, 1st Open; Analeigh Winchell, 5th Open & 2nd Novice.

Not shown: Keegan Snodgrass, 4th Open; Austin Woodruff, 4th Open; Riley James, 4th Open; Will Finch, 1st Novice; Shailey Hodge, 3rd Novice, Brendan Flynn, 4th Novice.

Wildcat Takedown Club took 9th place out of the 115 teams that participated in the tournament on Saturday, February 6.

Sheila Harris

Linda Thompson, of Cassville, can't say enough good things about how her son Tristan's participation in the Wildcat Takedown Club has benefited both her son and her family.

The club, part of a national wrestling league for youth is open to both boys and girls who are between the ages of five and 14, but not yet in high school.

Thompson's husband Troy is head coach for the local team. He and Linda are, in part, responsible for its for-

mation several years ago, after their son, Tristan, first participated on a team in Monett.

"I'm just so impressed with the self-discipline the kids learn," Linda Thompson said. "Not only that but it's good for weight control. They also learn how to be good losers."

Troy Thompson, who wrestled in high school, was interested in forming a local team, and discovered there was plenty of interest.

The wrestling program is not based on school districts.

"We have wrestlers from Exeter and Cassville," Linda Thompson said. "Basically, it just depends on how far you want to drive for practices, which are typically held twice a week."

There is an \$80 entry fee, per child, to participate, Thompson said. A singlet is included for that price.

Tournaments are held almost every weekend from December through February in various locations in southwest Missouri, although there is no obligation for a child to participate in all of them.

"You can pick and choose the ones you want to drive to," Linda said.

Thompson said the local club has grown from 25



Chael Naugle, above, won 1st place in the 8U 75 lb. bracket, and won Outstanding Wrestler in the 8U Division. Chael had the most wins, and the most pins in the shortest amount of time in all the wrestlers participating in the 8U Division.

members to about 75 in the years since it was formed.

"The beauty of wrestling," she said, "is that it's an individual sport, even though it's called a club."

Jeff Myers, of Cassville, is the president of the Wildcat Takedown Club. For more information about participation, he can be reached at 417-342-4416.

Registration for the next season will begin in October.

"Gold medals aren't really made of gold. They're made of sweat, determination and a hard to find alloy called guts."

-Dan Gable



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