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Volume 76 Issue 46 $1.00
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Thursday, November 12, 2026

HISTORIC WINS!

Sneed, Everitt, Turner elected aldermen; Thomas wins open school board position

By Bill Short
The Millington Star

Tammy Sneed, Chris Everitt and Ann Turner were elected aldermen, and Marie Thomas won an open school board seat in the Nov. 3 Millington city elections.

Because Position 2 Alderman Al Bell did not seek a third term, Sneed, Cody Childress and Willis S. DeClue competed for the open seat.

Sneed won 1,311 votes, or 50.5 percent of the total cast. Childress received 1,024, or 39.45 percent, and DeClue got 240, or 9.24 percent.

Sneed thanked everyone who provided support, encouragement and "hands-on engagement" throughout the election process.

"I am honored, deeply humbled and blessed that you granted me the opportunity to represent you and play an active role in securing our city's future," she noted. "I worked extremely hard during this campaign to gain your trust, and I will work even harder to maintain it."



Sneed | Everitt | Turner

Because her "goal" is to serve every resident with "equal dedication," Sneed said she is ready to work for their best interests with "transparency, collaboration and openness."

Everitt and Gordon "Gordo" Higgins challenged Position 4 Alderman John Perales.

At a February 2025 special called meeting, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen appointed Perales to fill the vacancy created in Position 4 when Larry Dagen resigned to be sworn in as mayor.

Everitt won 1,044 votes, or 42.53 percent of the total cast. Perales received 971, or 39.55 percent, and Higgins got 423, or 17.23 percent.

Perales will serve the remainder of Dagen's unexpired alderman term, which ends on Dec. 31.

Then, Everitt will serve a four-year term.

Declaring that he is "truly blessed and grateful," Everitt thanked his wife, his friends, the community and "mostly Smart Local 4" for its endorsement and support.

"I couldn't have done this without so much help from everyone in Millington," he said. "I promise to serve you and be vocal with you. Thank you for believing in me!"

Turner, Chris Denson and Charles P. Reed challenged Position 7 Alderman Gavin Smith,

At a November 2025 special called meeting, the board appointed Smith to fill the vacancy created in Position 7 after Michael Caruthers passed away two months earlier.

Turner won 917 votes, or 36.12 percent of the total cast, and Denson received 703, or 27.69 percent.

Smith got 494, or 19.46 percent, and Reed garnered 414, or 16.31 percent.

On Jan. 1, 2027, Turner will be sworn in to serve the remainder of Caruthers' unexpired fifth term, which ends on Dec. 31, 2028.

She expressed gratitude to her husband Kenneth, her family, friends, volunteers, supporters and every resident who "prayed, encouraged, shared posts, displayed signs, worked the polls" and voted.

"This victory represents progress, fresh ideas, new leadership and meaningful representation," she said. "It sends a clear message that Millington is ready for change."

Turner also noted that her "commitment" to Millington did not "begin" with an election, and

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Stokes of Genius

Simple philosophy guided retiring Police Chief for nearly 30 years at Millington Police Department

By Thomas Sellers Jr.
The Millington Star Editor

Entering his 15th year as a full-time officer of the Millington Police Department, then Sgt. Chris Stokes took on an assignment that was gaining national attention.

One of Millington's newest restaurants Chick fil A was being protested on a summer day in 2012. Stokes stepped up to be the leader of protection on the premises of 8492 Highway 51 North.

On one side were employees and patrons of the eatery known for Christian values. Outside exercising their constitutional rights were protesters voicing the causes of the LGBT community.

In the middle was Millington Police Department's Chris Stokes.

"They don't need to know my political affiliations," he said. "They don't need to know my religious background. All they need to know is that I am here to protect everyone."

Stokes carried that mindset each time he put on his uniform and walked through the doors of 7950 Memphis Avenue.

"My first day full time was November 8, 1997," Stokes recalled. "This Friday will be my last official day, November 6. It went very quick. It just feels like it went very quickly. I've seen a lot of changes around here.

"It's been a lot of good people coming through this door," he added. "A lot of good people I've worked with and taken what they've taught me. And hopefully I will move

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Seeing RED

Photo By Thomas Sellers Jr.
Abandoned Antiques located at 8323 Highway 51 North in Millington rolled out the Red, White and Blue carpet for area veterans Saturday afternoon for a day of appreciation in honor of Veterans Day. Dozens of men and women including the Memphis Belles Unit 151 enjoyed a welcome from Judi Peery, demostration from Millington Central's NJROTC and a speech from Chief Steward of the Memphis Police Association-John Covington. Peery invited the honored guests to a catered lunch and time to fellowship.

SPECIAL SECTION HOMETOWN HEROES '26 INSIDE

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millingtonstar.news

Back in August The Millington Star office moved to 7731 Highway 70 in Bartlett. Now as of September, the latest news and information about Flag City can be found at millingtonstar.news. Scan the QR Code above or instead on Page 2A to access the new Millington Star website.

FIRE reports

OCTOBER 25-31

52358288: Medical - Injury / Trauma - Fall, on Oct. 31 @ 22:24

52351647: Medical - Injury / Trauma - Fall, on Oct. 31 @ 17:51

52347648: Medical - Illness - Diabetic Problems, on Oct. 31 @ 15:33

52340758: Medical - Illness - Psychological Behavior Issues, on Oct. 31 @ 10:49

52340526: Medical - Illness - Chest Pain (Non-Trauma), on Oct. 31 @ 9:55

52340332: No Emergency - False Alarm - Other False Call, on Oct. 31 @ 9:52

52339274: No Emergency - Good Intent - No Incident Found Upon Arrival / Location Error, on Oct. 31 @ 9:00

52322307: Medical - Illness - Back Pain (Non-Trauma), on Oct. 31 @ 6:57

52317850: Medical - Illness - Breathing Problems, on Oct. 31 @ 1:59

52314381: Medical - Illness - Sick Case, on Oct. 30 @ 23:53

52275982: Medical - Illness - Breathing Problems, on Oct. 30 @ 21:21

52259267: No Emergency - Good Intent - No Incident Found Upon Arrival / Location Error, on Oct. 30 @ 16:21

52247853: Medical - Illness - Breathing Problems, on Oct. 30 @ 18:49

52209706: No Emergency - Cancelled, on Oct. 30 @ 14:12

52208926: Public Service - Citizen Assist - Citizen Assist / Service Call, on Oct. 30 @ 13:49

52192332: Medical - Illness - Chest Pain (Non-Trauma), on Oct. 30 @ 0:56

52184505: Medical - Injury / Trauma - Fall, on Oct. 29 @ 18:34

52183141: No Emergency - False Alarm - Accidental Alarm, on Oct. 29 @ 18:09

52181973: Medical - Illness - Chest Pain (Non-Trauma), on Oct. 29 @ 17:37

52178297: Medical - Illness - Sick Case, on Oct. 29 @ 15:27

52171667: Medical - Injury / Trauma - Fall, on Oct. 29 @ 11:14

52171490: Medical - Illness - Chest Pain (Non-Trauma), on Oct. 29 @ 12:49

52168037: Medical - Injury / Trauma - Motor Vehicle Collision, on Oct. 29 @ 11:04

52159814: Medical - Illness - Stroke / CVA, on Oct. 29 @ 5:39

52158014: No Emergency - False Alarm - Malfunctioning Alarm, on Oct. 29 @ 2:31

52157334: Medical - Illness - Breathing Problems, on Oct. 29 @ 1:39

52100816: Medical - Illness - Sick Case, on Oct. 28 @ 12:32

52098541: Medical - Illness - Stroke / CVA, on Oct. 28 @ 11:21

52096548: No Emergency - False Alarm - Accidental Alarm, on Oct. 28 @ 10:07

52095813: Medical - Injury / Trauma - Motor Vehicle Collision, on Oct. 28 @ 9:31

52092845: Medical - Injury / Trauma - Motor Vehicle Collision, on Oct. 28 @ 7:00

52088130: Public Service - Citizen Assist - Lift Assist, on Oct. 27 @ 23:24

52081135: Medical - Illness - Sick Case, on Oct. 27 @ 19:34

52080181: Public Service - Citizen Assist - Citizen Assist / Service Call, on Oct. 27 @ 11:10

52027833: Medical - Illness - Abdominal Pain / Problems, on Oct. 27 @ 10:55

52026797: Medical - Illness - Sick Case, on Oct. 27 @ 10:31

52026551: Medical - Illness - Psychological Behavior Issues, on Oct. 27 @ 12:13

52004327: No Emergency - Good Intent - No Incident Found Upon Arrival / Location Error, on Oct. 27 @ 2:58

52003287: Medical - Illness - Chest Pain (Non-Trauma), on Oct. 27 @ 1:10

51996189: Medical - Injury / Trauma - Motor Vehicle Collision, on Oct. 26 @ 15:04

51995315: Medical - Illness, on Oct. 26 @ 14:33

51994556: Medical - Illness, on Oct. 26 @ 11:57

51993760: Public Service - Alarms (Non Medical) - Other Alarm, on Oct. 26 @ 17:37

51983054: Medical - Illness - Sick Case, on Oct. 26 @ 12:13

51981088: Medical - Illness, on Oct. 26 @ 11:34

51966638: Medical - Illness - Nausea / Vomiting, on Oct. 26 @ 6:29

51963512: Medical - Illness - Breathing Problems, on Oct. 26 @ 2:07

51963080: Medical - Illness - Breathing Problems, on Oct. 26 @ 5:08

51959405: No Emergency - Good Intent - No Incident Found Upon Arrival / Location Error, on Oct. 26 @ 0:05

51957899: Medical - Injury / Trauma - Assault, on Oct. 25 @ 21:43

51957545: Fire - Structure Fire - Structural Involvement, on Oct. 25 @ 21:01

51956273: Medical - Injury / Trauma - Motor Vehicle Collision, on Oct. 25 @ 20:50

51954560: Medical - Illness - Unknown Problem, on Oct. 25 @ 14:16

51944449: Public Service - Citizen Assist - Lift Assist, on Oct. 25 @ 13:54

51944257: Public Service - Alarms (Non Medical) - Fire / Smoke Alarm, on Oct. 25 @ 10:00

51943970: Medical - Illness - No Appropriate Choice, on Oct. 25 @ 8:35

51935609: Medical - Illness - Back Pain (Non-Trauma), on Oct. 25 @ 8:34

areaOBITS

WILLIAM LANDON BEASLEY

William Landon Beasley, 83, passed away peacefully at his home on October 30, 2026. Landon was a devoted husband, loving father and father-in-law, proud United States Air Force veteran, dedicated public servant, and, perhaps his most cherished title of all, "Granddaddy" to his two beloved granddaughters. Funeral services were held Nov. 5 at the Covington Funeral Home chapel with interment in Covington Memorial Gardens.

DORIS CALVIN

Doris Calvin, 87, passed away on October 30, 2026, at her home. The family received friends on, Nov. 3, at Munford Funeral Home Munford Chapel. A graveside service was held at Helen Crigger Cemetery. A memorial contribution can be made to the American Cancer Society.

JACKIE LEE COPELAND

Jackie Lee Copeland, 81, longtime resident of Millington, passed away at Methodist University Hospital in Memphis on October 31, 2026. Jack served in the Navy for 22 years, retiring in 1984 and staying in Millington where he had been stationed for many years. Memorial services for Jack weer held at Crossroads Baptist Church, in Arlington, on Nov. 7. The family received friends with the service. The family requests, in lieu of flowers, please make donations to Crossroads Baptist Church.

MARK EDWARD FERRELL

Mark Edward Ferrell, 75, passed away on November 1, 2026, at his residence in Drummonds. The family received friends on Nov. 9, until the service at Munford Funeral Home - Munford Chapel with the graveside service that followed in Campground Cemetery. In lieu of flowers the family asked that any memorial contributions be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

DONALD H. MONTGOMERY

Donald H. Montgomery, 81, of Millington, passed away on October 28, 2026. Graveside Service for Donald will be held on Thursday, November 12, at 1:00pm in West Union Cemetery. Munford Funeral Home had charge.

CAROLYN FAY SCHROEPPEL

Carolyn Fay Schroeppel, 83 of Millington, passed away on October 28, 2026. Service for Carolyn was held on Nov. 2, 2:00pm at First Baptist Church of Millington, with Chris Coury, officiating. The family will receive family and friends for visitation an hour prior to the service beginning at 1:00pm. Burial will follow in Helen Crigger Cemetery.

DEREK O'NEAL THOMAS

Derek O'Neal Thomas, 60 of Drummonds, passed away on October 31, 2026 at Methodist Hospital - North. There was a visitation for Mr. Thomas on Nov. 7 with his Celebration of Life at Jefferson Mortuary, Inc. - Chapel, in Millington. Interment followed at St. Paul Cemetery, in Drummonds. Jefferson Mortuary, Inc. had charge.

VIRGINIA 'JENNIE' FYFE TURNER

Virginia "Jennie" Fyfe Turner, 82, of Covington, passed away October 29, 2026. Visitation was held Nov. 2, at Maley-Yarbrough Funeral Home, with funeral services immediately following. Burial followed at Covington Memorial Gardens.

JAMES EDWARD WILLIAMS

James Edward Williams, 79, went home to be with the Lord on October 22, 2026, passing away peacefully at his home in Millington. James proudly served his country in the United States Army as a Specialist Five (SP), completing two tours in Vietnam with the 9th Infantry Division. His final military assignment was at Fort Stewart Army Base in Hinesville, Georgia. His service and sacrifice will always be remembered with gratitude and respect. Funeral service was held Nov. 9 at Northridge Woodhaven Cemetery & Funeral Home in Millington with graveside services at West Tennessee Veterans Cemetery in Memphis. Northridge Woodhaven Funeral Home had charge.

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it will not "end" with one.

Aldermen Bethany Huffman and Chris Ford were unopposed for re-election to Positions 1 and 3, respectively.

She received 2,294 votes for a fifth term, and he got 2,279 for a fourth.

Because Childress ran for alderman, Thomas and Donald Holsinger competed for his open School Board Position 4 seat.

She won 1,547 votes, or 55.79 percent of the total cast, and he received 1,220, or 44 percent.

Thomas thanked the city's residents for their confidence, support and the opportunity to serve.

"This journey has not been without its challenges," she noted. "It has been marked by personal obstacles, difficult conversations and genuine concerns about the state of our school system and,

ultimately, the future of our city."

Thomas pledged to not make "vain promises" or offer "empty assurances" about what she can accomplish as a school board member.



Thomas

"Instead," she noted, "I make a commitment to work diligently, ask the necessary questions, advocate boldly and stand up for what is right and in the best interest of the students and families we serve."

School Board members Debra Clifton and Amanda Compton were unopposed for re-election to a second term in Positions 2 and 6, respectively.

Clifton received 2,105 votes, and Compton got 1,937.

www.millingtonstar.news

STOKES, pg. 1A

forward onto the next chapter of my life."

Earlier this year Stokes announced his retirement as MPD Chief and from the department. In October the City of Millington appointed Joe Oakley as Stoke's replacement as Chief of Police in Millington.

As his final week started Stokes conducted routine meetings, checked patrol assignments and made sure all bases were covered. Then he took a moment to reflect back nearly 30 years ago.

"Yeah, I was nervous my first day," he recalled. "You don't really know what you're getting into, until you get into it. Everybody has their perceptions, opinion of what law enforcement is like.

'Community service, you really don't know until you kind of get your hands dirty and your feet wet what you're really getting into,' Stokes continued. "It's had its ups and downs. Overall, I am very happy with choosing this career."

A memorable part of Stokes' youth helped motivate him to be in public service, the divorce of his parents Holly and John. Both since have remarried with John linking up with Pauline and Holly tying the knot with Charles Pace.

Stokes said having his parents divorce shaped his life in many ways and he turned it into a positive receiving instructions and values from four parents.

"I was born here in Millington," he noted. "My dad was in the Navy. So I was born right here in the Navy Hospital. Traveled all around and landed back here.

"I started as a volunteer three years before I got hired on full time," Stokes added. "I was in the Reserve Program and I did that while I was working a full time job. I was here because I wanted to give back to the community. I was happy to be able to do it."

Stokes went from being a reserve officer to officer to part of the MPD Detective Division for more than 5 years. Then Sgt. Stokes was promoted to Lt. Stokes before taking the top spot in July 2022.

"I felt like being here for 20-something years, I had a handle on the department, how it operated," Stokes noted why he wanted to be chief. "What would could we do? Some things I felt like we could do to make things better, get people to stay. I kind of knew where we fell short compared to some other departments.

"The divisions and expansion of some other departments have things we don't have yet because we are such a small department," he added. "There were some other things I felt like we needed to do for opportunity for our guys."

The MPD was operating with a dwindling force, negative perceptions in the public and under consistent questioning from the media.

Stokes used his quiet, first-to-the-frontline approach of leadership to weather the storm.

"I don't think it's all me," he said. "It's all the other people here too. You had the leaders that stepped in and stuck through. It's a lot of those who worked behind the scenes.

"It's the people below you being the cheerleaders and helping the new officers understand, 'Hey, the city is growing. And you're getting in at the right time,'" Stokes continued. "'As you grow with this city, we're going to see the things you want developed. And you'll be the leader in those departments when they do.'"

Stokes said he hands over a growing department in better shape to Oakley.

"The department is in a good place," he said. "I feel like we're heading in the right direction. We've added over the last 3 years, like 10 positions. So the department is growing. Of those 10 that we've added, we're only like four or five short. We are where we should have been 3 years ago, plus.

"The equipment, you look out, we've got new cars," Stokes added. "All of that is under city leadership. We couldn't have done that without the Board, the Mayor, the (Public Safety) Director and the City Manager all having support of this department. It's the whole city and this team here working together to get that accomplished."

Stokes said he was able to have a successful career thanks to the people he shared the uniform with and had the honor to serve and protect.

"The people here I am going to miss the most," he said. "Seeing everybody's faces everyday and those conversations. Not just at the department, but in the community as well.

I'm a little nervous about the next step," Stokes said. "I've had a job for 30-plus years. But I do feel like I am ready to hand it off. I'm ready to move onto that next chapter. What is that next chapter? But what is the next chapter?

Stokes knows for sure his wife KC will be by his side during the next phase of life. And he passes this advice to any young officer joining any force across the nation, putting protecting and serving the public above your personal interest.

"That comes from your upbringing," he concluded. "You have to have respect for everybody. Everybody has something that they believe in. Those beliefs might be different from mind, but it doesn't make either one right or wrong. You have to respect both sides of that table. I wanted to do the best for everybody that I come in contact with."

aroundTOWN

@ Millington Public Library

STORYTIME Every Wednesday 11am

Every Wednesday at 11am Millington Public Library has a Storytime for 0-5 years old. Storytime includes stories, songs and a craft! Is your little one still struggling to sit still? No problem! Storytime is a great way for littles to learn how to sit still, before preschool, in a low stress environment the includes breaks to dance those wiggles out!

Every Monday at 11 a.m., the Millington Public Library has a Seniors Computer Class. If there is a specific skill you are wanting to learn, you can call the library at 901-872-1585 to make sure you attend the correct date.

Every Monday at 4 p.m., the Millington Public Library has Lego Club for ages 6–12. This program has a challenge each week but free building is always allowed.

For area preschool and toddlers, the Millington Public Library have two programs weekly both at 11 a.m. on Wednesday and Thursday. Wednesday is Storytime and Thursday is an educational playtime called Literacy Gym.

The Millington Library Boosters will be hosting a book sale August 13-16 in the library meeting room. Come out and discover your next great read. The Millington Public Library is located at 4858 Navy Road in Millington.

Millington Food Pantry

The Millington Food Pantry is located on the grounds of Millington First United Methodist Church at 8029 Wilkinsville Road, is available to qualified residents of 38053 living in Shelby County. Hours of operation are each Tuesday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., every first Thursday and the third Saturday of each month 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Call 901-872-2771 to make an appointment. Appointments are not made in advance of the day the pantry is open.

Lions Club

The Millington Lions Club meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at noon. For more information, contact President Linda Overstreet at 286-2094 or email millingtontnlions@outlook.com

The Millington Star

■LETTERS POLICY

The Millington Star publishes Letters to the Editor on almost any topic relevant to Millington or South Tipton County: Send your letters to: Letters to the Editor, 7731 Highway 70, Suite No. 101, Bartlett, TN 38134, email to thomasmstar@yahoo.com, fax 529-7687 or go online at www.millington-news.com by 5 p.m. Friday for the following week's edition. Letters should be hand signed and include writer's full name, address and daytime/evening phone numbers. Letters to the Editor should be as brief as possible and should not exceed 300 words. E-mail letters do not need to be signed, but should include all other information. Anonymous letters and letters that do not adhere to the standards will not be published. Letters endorsing political candidates or advertising business will not be published.

Periodicals postage paid at Millington, TN 38053

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The Millington Star is a member of The Tennessee Press Association and The Millington Area Chamber of Commerce

National Advertising Representative:
Tennessee Press Service, 412 N. Cedar Bluff Road, Suite 403, Knoxville, TN 37923

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The Millington Star is published weekly for a subscription rate of $39 per year for in county, $78 for two years in county and $59 per year for out of county and out of state. Subscriptions must be paid in advance, and are non refundable. Single copies mailed: minimum fee of $2 per issue. Back copies: minimum of $1 per issue. Website: millingtonstar.news

The Millington Star current issue is published for $39 per year by Richardson Media Group, PO Box 529 Covington, TN 38019. Periodicals postage paid at Millington, TN. postmaster: Send Address Change to 7731 Highway 70, Suite 102, Bartlett, TN 38133



Cochran, Coach of the Year

Courtesy Photo
Millington Trojans Head Track Coach John Cochran (center) received his TSSAA Coach of the Year Award last week for District 9 joined by Millington Central Principal Michael Perry (left) and Millington Municipal Superintendent James "Bo" Griffin (right). Cochran led the Trojans to the State title last season for track.

FIRST THING FIRST



Munford erases lackluster start against Dickson County to advance to Round Two

By Thomas Sellers Jr.
The Millington Star Editor

First Round of the playoffs is familiar territory for the Munford Cougars.

Over the years the crew of Head Coach Slade Calhoun have seen highs and lows on the first Friday night in November. Lately the Cougars have enjoyed success reaching the Second Round.

The 2026 Class 5A Playoffs opened with the Dickson County Cougars coming to Tipton County to take on Munford. The host Cougars were generous in the opening moments with a fumble on the opening possession.

Dickson County transformed that gift into a Hunter Webb touchdown reception to take a 6-0 lead.

"The kids think they know everything but they know nothing," Calhoun said of his team's mentality. "Once the playoffs start, Region titles mean nothing. Records mean nothing. Seedings mean nothing. You've got to come out and respect your opponents.

"They're in the Metro-Nashville area, that's high-quality football," he added. "They play a tough schedule and these kids just don't understand that. They look at the numbers. They don't know anything outside of Tipton County and Shelby County."



Photos By Thomas Sellers Jr.
Above: Munford running back Tay Starks secures the football against a Dickson County defender Friday night helping the host Cougars advance with a 53-14 victory.

The Munford coaches challenged their starters to get focused and the Cougars dominated on defense, offense and recovered multiple onside kicks leading to a 53-14 victory.

Munford returns to the Second Round and looks to advance past this round for the first time since 1997 (reaching the State championship game). Calhoun said if his boys come out with another lackluster beginning against Station Camp, they will extend that negative streak.

"You can't convince them of anything but we'll be a whole lot of sad lads turning our stuff in," he said. "They're never going to learn. I've preached my sermon and they've all heard it."

Dickson County (4-7) enjoyed its lead for almost the entire first quarter. Munford drove down the field and capped off a drive with a Jaheim Smith 2-yard TD run. Braxton Grant added the two-point conversion to give the host Cougars an 8-6 lead.

The visiting Cougars' offense had to get comfortable on the sideline as Munford recovered back-to-back onside kicks. The first Dickson County turnover resulted in a Tay Stark 3-yard touchdown run to make the score 16-6 at the end of the first quarter.

The second onside recovery for Munford led to a Stark to Qua Bell 23-yard touchdown pass to make the tally 23-6 just seven second into the second quarter.

Munford (10-1) surged ahead 31-6 later in the period when Dixon Mooneyham exploded up the middle to the end zone from 48 yards out.

"I don't know how long it took us to score but we rattled off 53 in a heartbeat," Calhoun noted. "We took our starting running backs out with 5 minutes left in the second quarter. But we've got some young cats who are dangerous as well."

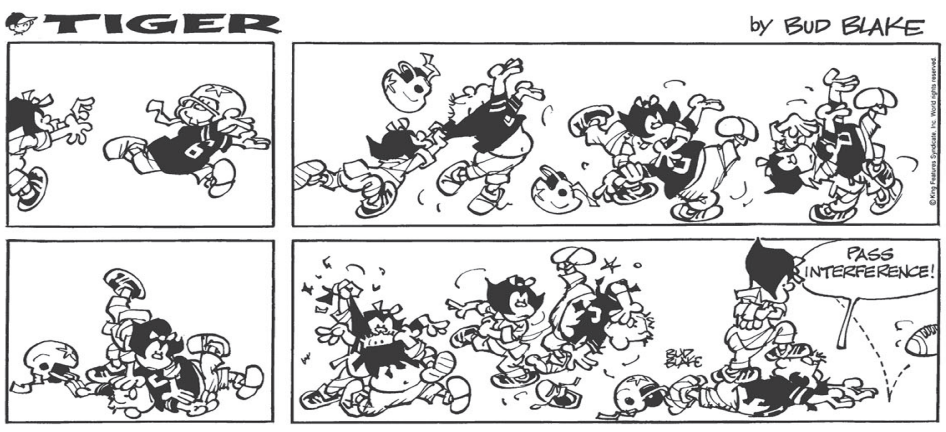
After Bell scored his second touchdown with a 21-yard run, Munford's 38-6 advantage grew to 53-6 courtesy of Patrick Cunningham and Germarione Turner reaching the end zone.

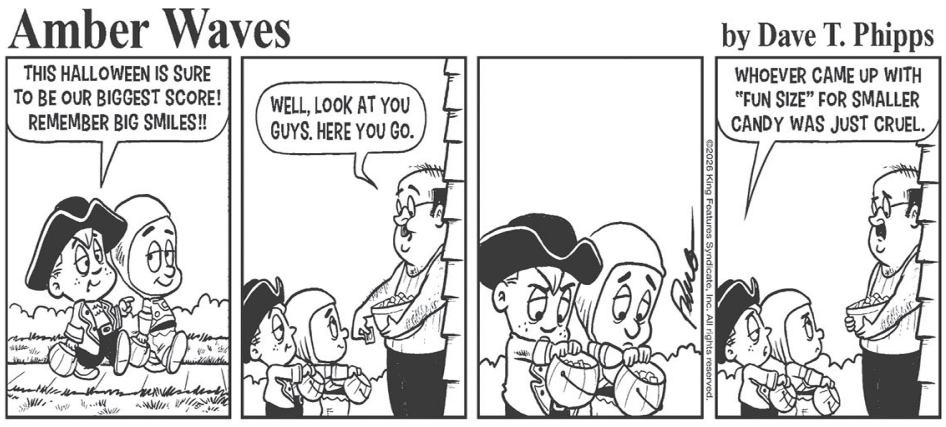
Munford's 39-point victory sets up a date hosting Bison out of Gallatin. Station Camp (6-5) picked up a First Round win over Lawson 45-14.

Many supporters and naysayers of the Cougars lament about Munford's past struggles on the second Friday night in November.

"We've got to play the best that we can play," Calhoun said. "People can say that and I don't really care what people have to say. People don't know anything either.

"They don't understand how hard the 5A Playoffs have been," he concluded. "Prior to tonight, the Clarksville Region going back to where they were, all our schools were making them play up in 6A. The First Round you were playing Beech, Hendersonville, Springfield, Henry County and Portland. People don't understand that each one of those schools got a gold ball or silver ball in the trophy case in recent years."



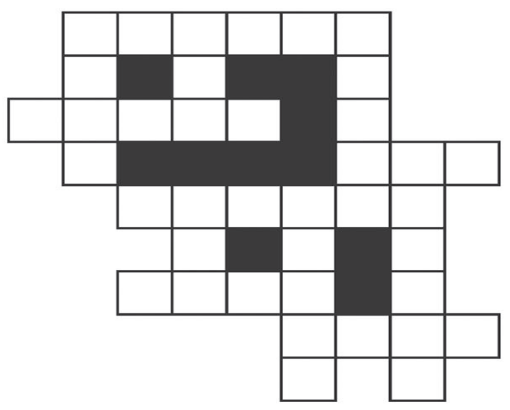


FEAR KNOT™

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

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EVDLE
♥ EDRO



Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. **HAGNEC** becomes **CHANGE**). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked (♥) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥ **RATHE** becomes **HATER** or **EARTH** or **HEART**). Fit each string's word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

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Even Exchange

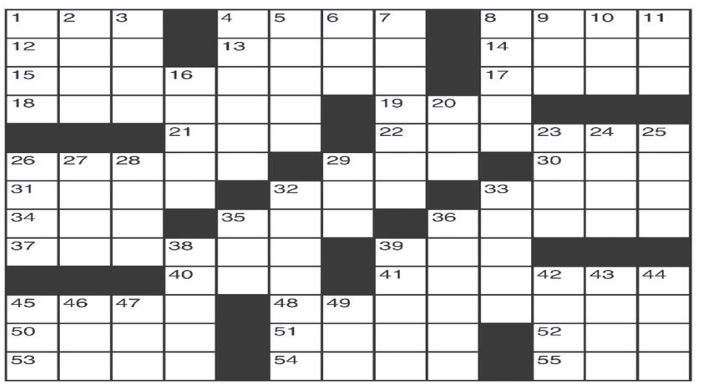
by Donna Pettman

Each numbered row contains two clues and two 6-letter answers. The two answers differ from each other by only one letter, which has already been inserted. For example, if you exchange the A from M**A**STER for an I, you get MISTER. Do not change the order of the letters.

1. Young canine	__ U __ __ __	Fully of energy	__ E __ __ __
2. Fetch	__ __ __ __ G	Brim	__ __ __ __ K
3. Buy stocks & bonds	__ __ __ __ S __	Concoct	__ __ __ __ N __
4. Time regulator	__ __ __ C __	Mantle	__ __ __ A __
5. More rapidly	__ A __ __ __ __	Promote	__ O __ __ __ __
6. Instilled knowledge	T __ __ __ __ __	Seized the baseball	C __ __ __ __ __
7. More bleached out	__ H __ __ __ __	Author	__ R __ __ __ __
8. Outrigger	__ __ __ __ E	Tenet	__ __ __ __ N
9. Tiger or mako	__ __ __ __ K	Like cheddar cheese	__ __ __ __ P
10. Frontrunner	__ __ A __ __ __	Banker	__ __ N __ __ __

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King Crossword



ACROSS
1 Personal
4 Poi base
8 Fraud
12 Romance
13 — incline (tilted)
14 Unruly groups
15 Message from an admirer
17 Border on
18 On an angle
19 Vinyl records
21 Before
22 "Darn it!"
26 Scrabble pieces
29 Movie format
30 "Little piggie"
31 Rd. crossers
32 Grant's foe
33 1982 sci-fi film
34 "The Newsroom" actor Patel
35 Farm grazer
36 Resided
37 "I, Robot" author
39 Lanka lead-in
40 Storm center
41 Sculpted trunks
45 Sagan or Sandburg
48 Romantic Ella Fitzgerald song
50 Squad
51 — Stanley Gardner
52 PC linking system
53 Short cuts
54 Snitched
55 Vintage

DOWN
1 They give a hoot
2 Scarf material
3 De — (from the start)
4 Printer refills
5 Battery part
6 Squealer
7 Bob Marley hit song
8 Big hit
9 Corn core
10 — Dhabi
11 Rockies hrs.
16 Tools for duels
20 Third degree?
23 To be, in Tours
24 "Neato!"
25 Superman's alias
26 "There!"
27 Currier's partner
28 Jeans maker Strauss
29 Morning moisture
32 Mini-shutout at Wimbledon
33 Spin
35 Demure
36 Buzzed
38 Thaws
39 Unmoving
42 Aviator's milestone
43 Track shape
44 Email command
45 Young lion
46 Year in Spain
47 Chest bone
49 Granada gold

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging ◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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See This Week's Answers In Next Week's Edition

— Weekly SUDOKU Answer —

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

— King Crossword Answers —

Solution time: 25 mins.

S	T	Y	■	H	A	S	H	■	N	A	T	S		
O	U	R	■	A	R	T	S	■	E	T	A	T		
F	O	O	■	J	O	B	O	F	F	E	R	S		
U	L	T	R	A	■	■	G	A	F	F	E	S		
■	■	■	S	A	R	A	H	■	R	E	■	■		
D	E	B	T	■	M	C	S	■	G	E	N	E		
I	W	O	■	A	T	E	■	N	A	H				
B	O	S	S	■	J	O	G	■	M	E	W	S		
■	■	■	R	N	■	B	A	S	I	C	■	■		
S	L	Y	E	S	T	■	T	V	S	E	T			
R	O	B	T	H	O	M	A	S	■	B	O	X		
R	O	U	T	■	N	A	T	E	■	O	L	E		
E	C	R	U	■	K	H	A	N	■	M	A	T		

— Even Exchange answers —

1. Lisbon, Lisbn
2. Aware, Award
3. Umpire, Empire
4. Summer, Simmer
5. Towel, Tower
6. Shove, Shave
7. Bother, Bather
8. Tiers, Tiegs
9. Rhine, Shine
10. Ponder, Powder

CryptoQuip

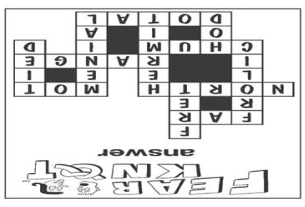
This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: **U** equals **C**

KG ZUDPFYY YDXIF ZIC SFP URXIFY GKRRFC EO Z DSFZDFP, K YEOOXYF XIF NXERC YFF PXNY XG YSZPXI.

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— FEAR KNOT answer —



STICKELERS [sic]

by Terry Stickels

Mike's father-in-law has one daughter only. The daughter's mother-in-law has a son named Robert who has a son named Tyler. Tyler is Mike's:

A) cousin
B) nephew
C) uncle
D) son
E) father

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"I'm afraid that rainy day we saved up for turned into a _____."

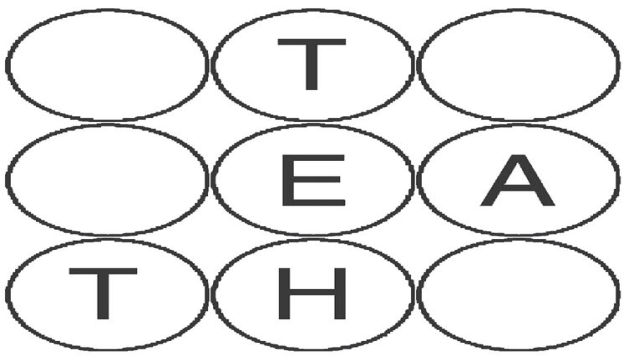
SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Accord CUTER
Later NEECH
Repeat CORNEE
Break AUTHIS

TODAY'S WORD

WORD SPIRAL



Fill in the missing letters to reveal the nine-letter word that starts at one of the four corners and moves clockwise around the perimeter before ending in the center.

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6	7	4	6	7	2	5	6	4	5	4	8	5
T	P	D	A	R	E	S	K	Y	T	N	N	E
2	5	6	3	4	5	4	6	2	6	4	7	5
X	A	E	P	A	D	M	F	E	R	I	O	Y
6	4	5	2	5	3	2	6	3	6	2	8	6
I	C	C	R	L	L	C	E	U	N	I	O	D
2	5	7	4	5	4	6	7	5	3	8	7	2
S	I	B	T	M	H	S	L	B	N	R	E	E
5	7	6	3	8	7	8	5	6	7	4	6	3
T	M	A	G	A	S	I	O	D	O	O	V	E
5	3	2	4	5	6	4	5	8	7	2	3	5
S	I	M	U	U	I	G	C	N	L	I	N	C
4	6	7	4	5	4	6	5	2	5	2	7	7
H	C	V	T	E	S	E	S	N	S	D	E	D

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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— CryptoQuip answer —

If famous singer Dion were storing contact lenses, what fluid might she use? Celine solution.

— Stickelers Answer —

The terms refer to railroading.

— Word Spiral Answer —

BEACHSIDE

— SCRAMBLERS —

Today's Word

1. Parson; 2. Crisp
3. Shrine; 4. Sponge

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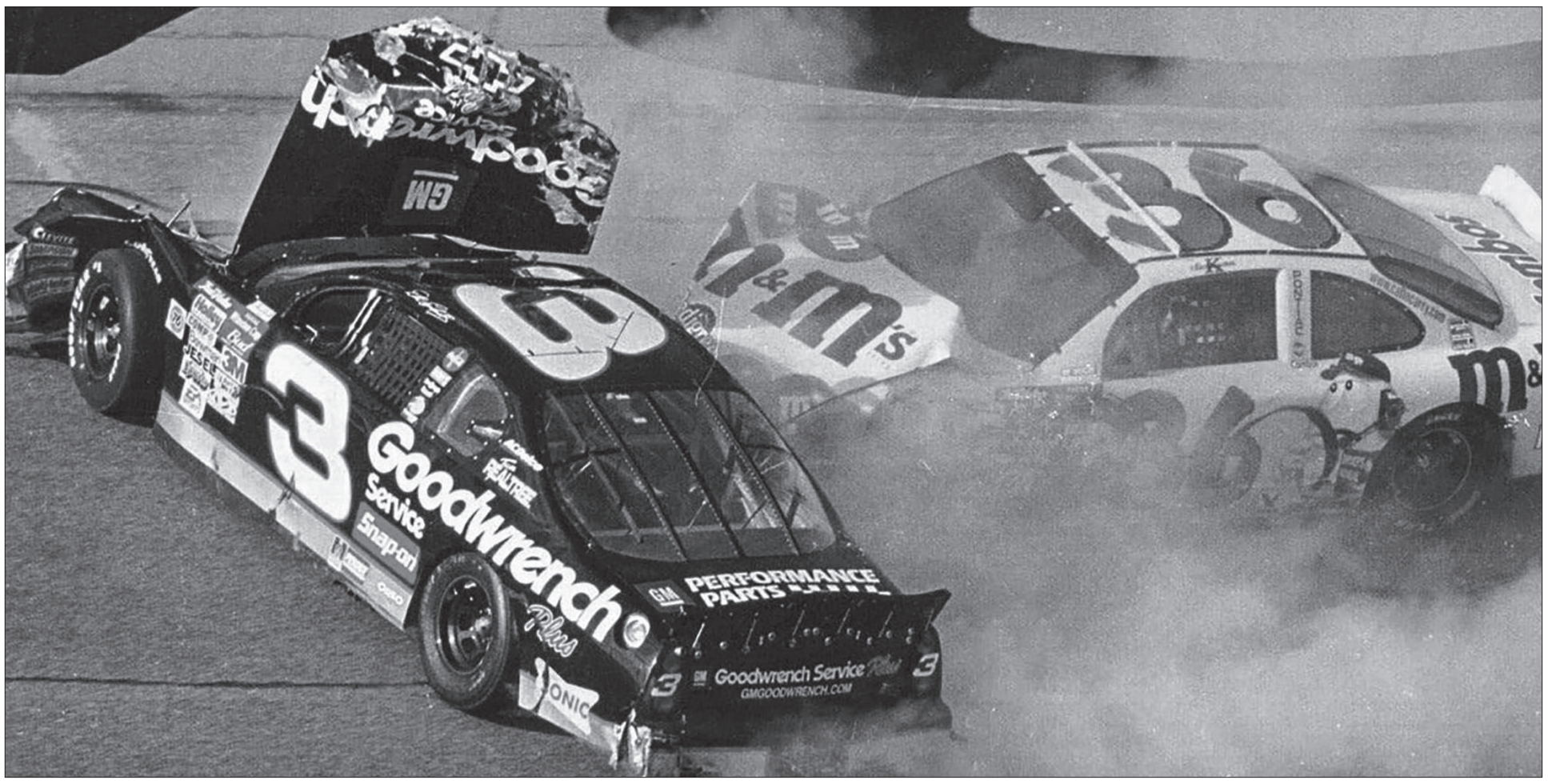
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bestSELLERS



2001, An Oddity

There were other major events that took place the same year as September 11



Courtesy Photos

Above: Several youth were in a hurry in Japan to test out the XBox before it hit markets in the United States back in 2001. Top: February of that year a sporting legend die on the track in NASCAR's Dale Earnhart.

The time has come to look back 25 years and mark the silver anniversary of the biggest news events of 2001.

To make this countdown fairer and more of a thriller, I have excluded the events of September 11. That tragic day has been examined recently in our publications and we've covered the tributes throughout the Mid-South to remember the brave souls that gave their lives to save others. Nearly 3,000 Americans died on U.S. soil that day and rightfully it was the biggest news story of that year and so far the quarter of a century.



What other 10 news events got overshadowed in 2001? The Best Sellers' List is here to remind you these events, happenings and occurrences are now 25 years old.

10. Plugging in the Xbox

My entire teenage life, I had two important choices. It wasn't Pepsi or Coke. It was Nintendo or Sega. Our household was mostly NES for the original edition to the Super version. Then at the turn of the millennium, Microsoft released the Xbox gaming console on November 15, 2001.

The Sellers family was enjoying the Sony Playstation by this point. I turned 20 in September and now faced a new generation of gaming. The Xbox dramatically changed video game consoles. Microsoft CEO Bill Gates first decided to venture into the video game market because he feared that gaming consoles would soon compete with personal computers. Gate's gamble paid off as the Xbox had multiple versions come out in the past 25 years.

9. Harry Potter hits the big screen

Never read or seen Harry Potter, but I know his effect on pop culture. On November 16, 2001, the British author J.K. Rowling's creation debuted in movie theaters. Potter, a bespectacled boy wizard, went from the pages to starring in Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. The vehicle of Potter launched the career of Daniel Radcliffe. The movie and the eventual franchise was based on the mega-best-selling fantasy novel of the same name.

The first Harry Potter book, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, debuted in Great Britain in 1997 and was released in the United States the following year under the name Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. The books are legendary and the movie went on to dominate box offices in 2002.

8. Apple launches iTunes

I remember having a five-disc CD changer in my career in the early 2000s. That meant I had access to five different albums and those songs pressed into the disc.

Then by the middle of the decade, I was neglecting my CDs to rip and burn songs onto my laptop to drop the files on my MP3 player.

The birth of the MP3 was on January 9, 2001 when Apple launched iTunes, a media player that revolutionized the way people consumed digital media.

Bill Kincaid and Jeff Robbin, two former Apple employees, developed an MP3 player called SoundJam MP in the late 1990s. In 2000, Apple re-hired them and their partner, Dave Heller, to work on a similar player that would come standard with Apple computers. The first version of iTunes debuted early the next year.

I still won't admit until this day I know what Limewire was. Do I have to travel to a vineyard in Florida among freshly going limes in order to see this "Limewire."

7. Enron files for bankruptcy

I first heard of Enron when the Houston Astros baseball team named their new stadium after the company. Then by December 2, 2001, I noticed a bunch of negative jokes surrounding the Enron Corporation. On that day, Enron filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in a New York court, sparking one of the largest corporate scandals in U.S. history.

The energy-trading company based in Houston wasn't having much of a sweet sixteen. Enron was formed in 1985 as the merger of two gas companies, Houston Natural Gas and Internorth. Under chairman and CEO Kenneth Lay, Enron was in the top 10 in the Fortune magazine's list of the top 500 U.S. companies. In 2000, the company employed 21,000 people and posted revenue of $111 billion. Then by 2001, Enron stock price went from $90.75 in August 2000 to $0.26 by closing on November 30, 2001.

6. Aaliyah dies in a plane crash

August 25 of this year marked the silver anniversary of singer Aaliyah passing away when her private plane crashed.

Hours after filming a music video for "Rock the Boat," the 22-year-old R&B singer and actor left us over the Bahamas.

The 10-seat Cessna, carrying Aaliyah and seven members of her team, crashed immediately after takeoff from the airport on the Bahamian Island of Abaco. The passengers overloaded the small plane leading to their demise.

5. Bush Officially 43rd U.S. President

My first time voting for U.S. President was in 2000. All my life, I knew who the winner was that November Tuesday night.

For some reason, I went to bed on Election Day 2000 with the presidency up in the air. Was the winner Vice President Al Gore or Texas Governor George W. Bush.

Throughout December we were on a roller coaster as a nation on if Gore won Florida or did Bush take the Sunshine State. Then the U.S. Congress on January 6, 2001, certified George W. Bush as the winner of the 2000 election.

Gore became the third Presidential candidate to win the popular vote but lost the election after the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 to halt Florida's manual recount. The ruling in effect gave Florida's 25 electoral votes to Bush giving him 271 to Gore's 266—where 270 is needed to win the election.

4. Patriot Act

September 11 did lead to multiple changes in our country that affect us today. On October 26, 2001, President Bush signed the Patriot Act, an anti-terrorism law drawn up in response to the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center on 9/11.

The USA PATRIOT Act, as it is officially known, is an acronym for "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism." In theory, we gave a thumbs up as a nation to allow for law enforcement and intelligence agencies to have more power to prevent terrorist attacks on American soil.

3. Dale Sr. dies at Daytona

"The Intimidator' brought me joy in February 1998 by winning his first Daytona 500. The greatest NASCAR driver ever finally won the "Super Bowl" of his sports. Fast forward three years, on February 18, Dale Earnhardt Sr., was the source of one of my saddest moments in sports.

Earnhardt died at the age of 49 in a last-lap crash at the 43rd Daytona 500 protecting the cars he owned including his son Junior. Earnhardt was driving his infamous black No. 3 Chevrolet in third place. Then he was clipped and crashed into the wall. The way his car rolled back and off the track without an effort made my heart sink. It felt lifeless and I knew something was wrong.

"The Intimidator," was taken to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead of head injuries.

It was fitting Earnhardt passed away on the track of Daytona International Speedway. Legends die too soon and do what they love.

2. DHS is formed

Before the PATRIOT Act, the country formed the Office of Homeland Security was founded on October 8, 2001, less than one month after the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Now a cabinet department, Homeland Security is now one of the largest organs of the federal government, charged with preventing terror attacks, border security, immigrations and customs, disaster relief and prevention and other related tasks.

On October 8, former Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge assumed his role as director. Congress officially voted to make the office a cabinet-level department in November of 2002. The Department of Homeland Security eventually absorbed no fewer than 22 agencies into its fold. Entities absorbed by DHS included the Secret Service, Customs and Border Protection and Coast Guard.

1. U.S. attacks Afghanistan

The War on Terrorism officially started a few months after the October 7, 2001, U.S.-led attack on Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. America and allies executed an intense bombing campaign.

The invasion of Afghanistan was the opening salvo of the United States in retaliation for the September 11 attacks. "Operation Enduring Freedom" was the start of our new mission as a nation to stop terrorism and to capture the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, Osama bin Laden. Our forces identified the enemy, the al-Qaeda organization, which was based in Afghanistan. That was the beginning of a multiple-year battle.

THOMAS SELLERS JR. is the editor of The Millington Star and both the sports editor and a weekly personal columnist for West 10 Media/Magic Valley Publishing. Contact him by phone at (901) 476-7116, by fax to (901) 529-7687 and by email to starmillington@gmail.com

Shacks, Zones & the Ones That Got Away



Dave's Raves

BY DAVID PEEL

Every so often somebody in a boardroom makes a decision that seems mighty important at the time. Give it a few decades, and it turns into good front-porch material.

Take the Great Shack War. In 1979, Memphis businessman Pitt Hyde started a chain of auto parts stores called Auto Shack. Radio Shack, which back then had a store in every strip mall in America, did not care for that one bit. Its parent company sued over the word "Shack," and in 1987 the Memphis upstart gave in and became AutoZone.

After more than thirty years of practicing law, I can tell you that most folks do not come out of a lawsuit better off than they went in. AutoZone did. The new name sounded like a destination instead of a knock-off, and the company took off. Then, in 2004, came my favorite part. AutoZone sued RadioShack for calling a section of its stores the "PowerZone." Revenge is a dish best served cold, and apparently with a side of barbecue.

Today AutoZone has thousands of stores and still calls Memphis home. Finding a RadioShack, on the other hand, takes some real effort.

Blockbuster had its own shot at greatness. Around 2000, it passed on buying a little DVD-by-mail outfit called Netflix for about $50 million. Netflix is now worth hundreds of billions. Blockbuster is down to one store in Bend, Oregon, which mostly sells T-shirts to tourists taking selfies.

Then there was Pepsi, which once ran a commercial offering a Harrier fighter jet for seven million Pepsi Points. A college student actually raised the money and sued when they would not hand it over. He lost, but law students still read about him in their first year.

The lesson? Be careful who you sue, and be careful who you snub. Today's giant can become tomorrow's punch line, and sometimes the little guy from Memphis gets the last word.



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(901) 872-2349
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10:45 a.m. Service

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(901)872-3411

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hfadmin@hfum3.org

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Along the Journey

One of the joys I have claimed in my retirement (semi at least according to some of my family and friends) is the opportunity to write more, read more in areas that I have longed to delve into but never seemed to have the time, and move about with a much lesser schedule. One of those has been a study and reading in reference to contemplative meditations, Celtic meditation and faith practices, and philosophy. Having taught for many years courses on the world's religions and having worked with individuals on their personal spiritual journey has set the appetite for these now enjoyed aspects of my own life journey.

The absolute goodness of God has been further exposed for me during this process and I am most grateful for this gift to deepen my own faith journey. One of the things I have realized is the absolute genius of Jesus (God) in that he utterly refuses all debt codes, purity codes, religious quarantines, and the searching for sinners. He refuses the very starting point of historic religions . He refuses to divide the world into the pure and the impure, much to the chagrin of almost everybody … then and now.

Jesus (God) is shockingly not upset with sinners. This is a shock so total that most Christians, to this day, refuse to see it. He is only upset with people who do not think that they are sinners: these denying, fearful, and illusory individuals are the actual blockage. They are much more likely to hate and feel no compunction. Formerly, religion thought its mission was to expel sin and evil. Through Jesus (God), we learn that sin lies in the very act of expelling. There is no place to expel it to. We have met the enemy, and the enemy is us. We either carry and transform the evil of human history as our own problem, or we increase it efficiency and power by hating and punishing it "over there." The Jesus pattern was put precisely and concisely by Paul: "for our sake he made the sinless one a victim for sin, so that in him we might become the uprightness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). I admit, this is counterintuitive for most people. (Only mystics and sinners seem to get it.)

In the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:3-37), Jesus tells of a man by the side of the road waking up in enemy territory, realizing that he has been loved by the very one who is supposed to hate him and whom he is supposed to fear. Could this be everybody's awakening? Could this be an accurate image of discovering God and truth? Jesus is clearly presenting the foreign Samaritan as an image of God. He ends the shocking parable by saying, "Go and do the same" (Luke 10:37). The human task has become the very imitation of God, which seems almost unthinkable. God, the one that history has taught to "fear … be afraid of," is in fact the utter "Goodness" that enfolds us and creates a safe and non-threatening universe for us … a renewed universe that we can pass on to others.

For Jesus (God), there are no postures, group memberships, behaviors, prayer rituals, dietary rules, asceticism, or social awareness that, of themselves, transform us or make us enlightened, saved, or superior. There are no contaminating elements or people to expel or exclude. These answers are exposed as inadequate only when goodness is exposed as the divine field of action. Everybody and everyone belongs!

… in the journey with you!
Kenneth S. Uselton

NEW FACE

TRA Basketball trying to bloom up something special with Rose


Zadie Reburn



One of the most recent underdog basketball stories in the Memphis area was authored by Shelvie Rose.

The veteran basketball coach stood at center court in the Murph Center in March 2023 raising up the golden ball alongside his Overton Wolverines. With teams like East, Houston and Bartlett expected to represent the Memphis area in Class 4A, Overton kept overcoming the odds to be champions.

Now Rose is trying to plant a similar field of success at Tipton-Rosemark Academy taking over both the Lady Rebels and Rebels.

"It feels great, just glad to be back home a little bit," Rose acknowledged. "Even though I'm not from here, I am from Covington, Tenn. Where I was born, raised and graduated. A lot of these children I teach in elementary school, their parents went to school with me. Everybody has welcomed me with open arms. Just ready to get this basketball season rolling. I am on deck and I just love this support here."

Rose got his break with the Hillcrest Vikings back in 2006 as an assistant. Then after coaching stops on the middle and high school levels, he arrived at Overton building a champion.

"I did win State there but I just want to give praise to those guys who were there before me," he acknowledged. "One thing just led to another, being able to get into that limelight and people knowing me and now know my background. I was a pretty decent guy to the point people wanted to bring their sons to play for me. We ended up getting a small fish who was a big fish for us — Jordan Frison."

The All-State guard graduated and left his name in the upper echelon of Memphis Hoop legends.

Rose moved on to East and FACS before arriving at TRA. Quickly Rose identified a couple of players who put him in the mind of Frison.

"You can't come into a situation much better than I came into with Roman Taylor and Brennen Patel," he noted. "Those two are some really good guards. They can handle the ball. They can shoot it. I am tough on them.

"I told them when I got the job, 'If you want somebody that's going to spoon-feed you and let you have your way,'" Rose continued. "'I am not the one for you as a Coach. So you can go ahead and leave now. I don't want you to leave…' They both said, 'Naw Coach, we want to be coached hard if that's what it takes.' They're really good kids. You can't get much sweeter than that."

TRA will be boosted by a pair of newcomers Jensen Powers and Taheim Elohem. Elohem's eligibility will be determined later this month.

"Really, really need him," Rose acknowledged. "He's a big time player. I call us the TRA 'Runnin' Rebs. We're going to be one of those teams where we're going to get that ball out and go. We don't have time to walk the ball up the floor, setting it up. "We don't have an interior presence," he added. "Our tallest guy is our quarterback Cason Gilmore, 6'3. He's not bad but he's really now a post player. I just told him to find his niche. We need rebounds. Rebounds equals toughness. They've bought into that."

Rose said if his boys follow his simple system that worked at Overton, they can make a deep run in 2026-27.

"I told them, 'Everybody can't be the star,'" he said. "'When I was at Overton I had my Michael Jordan. I had my Scottie Pippen and my other guys who were No. 3. I told the rest to find your role, find your niche. Don't try to do too much. When your opportunity comes and Michael Jordan passes you that ball you better make your shot.

"That's kind of the motto I am taking with me the rest of my career," Rose added. "Give me three good ones that I know can go and everybody else plays a role."

On the girls' side, the Lady Rebels are still young featuring seniors Zadie Reburn, Jayden Hoy and newcomer JaHailey Bonds.

Freshman Malin Baker is entering her second year of varsity basketball getting major minutes last season as an eighth grader. Allie Nicholas is another key returner.

"With the girls it's hard because with boys they might play two sports but the good ones play basketball," Rose acknowledged. "With the girls, they're playing volleyball, softball at a high level. Sanfratello does an awesome job. I got three or four girls who play for the defending champs. His main thing was, 'Hey Coach, keep them in the weight room.'

"We come back with three seniors and two juniors," he added. "The rest are some puppies. We're going to take it one game at a time. We're grinding because we're having to make up for lost time."

The Lady Rebels finally all came together Oct. 26 with some girls involved in other sports.

"We're going to get after it and see what happens," Rose said. "Energy and effort in practice. I want to make practice harder than a game for them."

"I told my girls the immediate goal is to win more games than we won last year," he added. "I would like to get double digits wins."

As for the boys, teams like ECS, St. George's, USJ, Trinity, Lausanne and Goodpasture want to eliminate any dreams of a State title.

"I am assuming a 20-win season," Rose concluded. "I am not going to say anything about the playoffs. I do want to win the district. That's the goal of mind. I do want to win State but I know that is going to be a little hard because we don't have a post presence."

FAMILIAR PLACE

Cooper returns home, taking over entire Brighton Hoops program


Peyton Meacham

By Thomas Sellers Jr.
The Millington Star Editor

In recent Brighton Basketball history some of the top players to pass through the BHS Gymnasium were Zach Lewis, Aaron Alston, CayDen Young, and all-time leading scorer Taelyr Gatlin.

The guard who helped Gatlin adjust to the varsity level his first couple of years was his running mate Tra Cooper. Cooper was the key piece as a junior when Taelyr's dad Stan Gatlin took over the program as head coach.

Fast forward 10 years, now Cooper is back and stepping into the role of the elder Gatlin. Before leaving Brighton, Stan coached both the Cardinals and Lady Cardinals. Now his former player is taking on that challenge in Year One.

"After 10 years I hadn't really been back but to watch the 2017 team and the Sub-State game," Cooper said. "Whenever I was in town I would come back to support Coach (Stan) Gatlin. These past five/seven years I hadn't been here much.

"Then I started showing my face more to see what was going on and get the culture," he added. "We necessarily didn't have it rocking the way we wanted to, but now I've seen it rocking, I want to get it back there."

Cooper noted the Cardinals were on the brink of something special with the likes of Young, Isaiah Standard and Clint "Junior" Johnson. All three of those standouts are currently at other Memphis area schools.

Cooper has been busy since graduating from Brighton in 2016 going to Bethel University enduring an injury-plague season. Then he finally earned his degree from Memphis and joined the staff at E.E. Jeter for six years.

"I feel like it's God's timing mostly," he said. "I've been asked, 'When are you coming back to high school?' I was about 21, 22, 23 — close to these kids' ages. I know myself and how laid back I am. I know how these high school kids can be. They will look at me as their friend.

"They still do but at the same time now I have a mature mindset," Cooper added. "Now I will be in more of that leadership role."

Coaching on the middle school level gave Cooper time to start his family, work on his coaching style and widen the age gap.

"I am glad I am now capable of taking the position coaching at home coaching both boys and girls," he said.

When Cooper officially arrived back on campus, he pulled his current group of 11th graders to the side for a chat..

"The juniors on both teams, I told them that they are in the same position that I was in my junior year," he noted. "The literal same position. Freshman and sophomore years, we didn't have the record we wanted — not winning much. Getting the experience and the reps, but having a new face coming in. New face coming in implementing his things still going to some of the old things we do putting a new wrinkle on it.

"Having that new coach come in when I was in the 11th grade," Cooper continued. "Having a year under my belt, figuring him out and taking those bumps in the road heading into my senior year. That senior year we were up. We still didn't have the results we wanted my senior year but it led to that third year of going to Sub-State. Getting there and competing against that loaded East team."

Cooper has to grow both of his teams. With the Lady Cardinals he has been leaning on the knowledge and experience of assistant coach Aaron Hudson.

"The state of the Lady Cardinals, it has its ups and downs," There are still a couple of familiar faces in the program starting with Coach Hudson. He's been phenomenal."

Hudson had been direct and straightforward with the girls trying to help them reach their potential. Cooper said Hudson's daughter Erin is working her way back from an ACL injury. She is nearing her return to a lineup featuring Sicily Moore, Myah Burton and Peyton Meacham.

Cooper said he talks to Meacham the most.

"We're in the same position literally from position on the court to grade level and expectations," Cooper noted. "She's going to be a big leader for us with a lot of experience. She has taken the losses and now she's ready to win."

Meacham is eager to lead the girls and is dedicated and passionate to the cause. Moore is the best shooter of the roster and has to build her confidence and make her shots more consistently.

Cooper said the future is bright with nearly 10 freshmen in the program coming from Sharronda Thomas' BMS program.

On the boys' side Cooper said the Cardinals can make some noise in 2026-27.



"Believe it or not, there is a good group of boys here at Brighton High School," he declared. "I anybody who reads this think I am just talking? So when we play and they see, 'Hey that Cooper guy wasn't just talking.' We've lost all those pieces.

"But we've gained a point guard from Munford Antonio Logan," Cooper continued. "He didn't get as much time as he wanted at Munford. He has a chip on his shoulders. He is ready to come and show what he has. He has leadership. He's fast as lightning and can jump out of the gym."

Cardinals expected to fly high this season are JJ Link, Caynan Taylor, Silas Clark and Ryan Riley.

Taylor is a 6'5 sophomore with leaping ability and will be a matchup nightmare. Clark came back late in the summer and has been fully committed since school started. Cooper said he is the best shooter on the team. Link has a scorer mindset and is tough on defense.

Riley will be a bruiser and take over on the boards. He needs to also be a senior vocal leader.

Zayden Russell is a 6'5 sophomore with power and will be a bruiser in the paint. With the boys helping Cooper will be assistant coaches Gary Murdock and Chris Coleman.

"Without them I wouldn't be able to do this," Cooper said. "They are the perfect help and like with Coach Hudson, I know I can trust them all."

Cooper said the Cardinals will be trouble for their opponents in 2026-27.

"They see Brighton on the schedule, those teams are going to be licking their chops," he concluded. "They're going to tell their camera man to come out and get some film of this game. It's a highlight game. We're going to change that too. It might start sweet for them, then we'll no longer be the 'mixtape' game."