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VOL. 51 NO. 32

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

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Feds come down hard on Milan Health Care

By Victor Parkins

The CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) has ruled that Milan Health Care is out of compliance of requirements established by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

As a result of the findings from the federal agency, Milan Health Care can no longer accept insurance payments from CMS for inpatient nursing services to residents admitted after November 27th. All payments from CMS will cease at the close of business on December 27th, 2016, according to a detailed, 199 page report that was provided to the Mirror-Exchange.

A letter from CMS dated Nov. 18th that was addressed to MHC Administrator John Simonton was titled, “Imposition Notice-On-Going Immediate Jeopardy”.

The CMS reported that ‘Immediate Jeopardy’ to residents and staff was identified on November 4th while a survey by state workers took place at the facility.

Immediate Jeopardy is a situation in which the provider’s non-compliance has caused, or is likely to cause, serious injury, harm, impairment, or death to a resident.

“The survey found that your facility was not in substantial compliance with the participation requirements, and that conditions in your facility constituted ‘Immediate Jeopardy’ to residents’ health and safety and substandard quality of care,” the document said. “The ‘Immediate Jeopardy’ was identified to exist on March 31, 2016, and is considered ongoing. Based on the findings of the November

4th survey, your Medicare provider agreement was terminated at 11:59 p.m. on November 27th.”

The CMS placed an advertisement in the Mirror-Exchange on November 22nd to notify the public of the change.

The CMS alleges that MHC used unnecessary physical and chemical restraints that placed specific residents at great risk for incontinence, skin breakdown, accidents, increased agitation and social isolation.

Although Milan Health Care did not provide comments for this article, it will reportedly close on December 27th. MHC is required to provide written notification to residents of the facility or their legal representatives about the im-



NO MORE ADMISSIONS - All new admissions to Milan Health Care Center have been suspended by the state of Tennessee and the nursing home can no longer receive payments from Medicare or Medicaid.

(Cont. on pg. 3)

Phinnessee enters ‘best interest’ plea

By Crystal Burns

In an emotional appearance in Gibson County Circuit Court Monday, Shaun Phinnessee entered an Alford or “best interest” plea to avoid a jury trial that was scheduled to start Wednesday.



Phinnessee

Phinnessee, a former Gibson County deputy under former sheriff Chuck Arnold, was charged with one count of theft of \$1,000 or more and one count of official misconduct. Phinnessee pled to one count of theft under \$500, a misdemeanor, and received one year of supervised probation and judicial diver-

(Cont. on pg. 3)

Prevention Coalition Health Summit tonight

Prescription drug abuse is running rampant across the state of Tennessee. According to a 2015 study by the Centers for Disease Control, our state ranks second in the nation for opioid prescribing and fourth for overdose deaths, killing approximately 76 people per day.

For that reason, the Milan Prevention Coalition and the City of Milan will be partnering to host a Town Hall/Health Summit to discuss how best to combat the problem in our community.

The Town Hall/Health Summit will be held tonight, December 6, at the Hawkins-Whitby FEMA building in Downtown Milan at 6:00

(Cont. on pg. 3)

‘Tis the Season



SANTA’S HELPERS - The crew of R&R Towing took third place in the Milan Christmas Parade’s vehicle category with their miniature trucking rig, delivering candy and Christmas cheer to the hundreds gathered along Main Street. Photo by Logan Watson.

Milan celebrates the season with tree lighting, parade

By Logan Watson

It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas here in Milan. Wreaths and candy canes line the streets on utility poles and homes shine bright through the darkness like Christ’s love for us all.

Mayor B.W. Beasley began the celebration of the season last Tuesday night, holding the city’s first annual Christmas tree lighting at City Hall. Rain and storms threatened to put a damper on the inaugural event,

but still close to 100 residents lined the sidewalks of Main Street, waiting for the mayor to throw the switch on the city’s display.

The cool drizzle soon stopped and the skies cleared long enough for the crowd to join together in a few Christmas carols before the mayor began his countdown. Once the display illuminated downtown, members of the Milan Middle and High School bands serenaded those in attendance with Christmas music as Santa and Mrs. Claus greeted the children along the

sidewalks and took photos with families in front of the tree.

“It’s was just so nice to see everyone gathered together to share the moment with their loved ones,” said Mayor Beasley. “It really makes you feel all warm and fuzzy inside.”

The following Thursday saw even more gather together in the spirit of the season for the city’s 25th Annual Christmas parade. From Bancorp-South to City Hall, wide-eyed children eagerly anticipated the sights

(Cont. on pg. 2)

Director announces new Principal, Asst. Principal at Milan High School

MSSD School Board in Brief

By Logan Watson

Milan High School is officially under new leadership for the immediate future.

Director of Schools Jonathan Criswell made a formal announcement at last Monday’s meeting of the MSSD Board of Education, naming former MHS Assistant Principal and Athletic Director Greg Scott as the school’s new Interim Principal.

Scott replaces former principal John “Flipper” Burks, who was relieved of his administrative duties at the school earlier last month. Director Criswell stated that Burks has since been transferred to an Academic Coach position within the MSSD.

Joining Scott in the MHS front office will be Guy Causey, who Criswell named Interim Assistant Principal. In addition to his new administrative duties, Causey will continue to serve as Milan High School’s Career and Technical Education Director.

The Board made no statements about Criswell’s appointments during the meeting, but Board member Yolanda Lett did inquire as to whether or not Scott’s new position would come with an increase in pay. Director Criswell informed the Board that neither of the interim positions would be granted a salary increase.

The Board also approved a grant application request made by Tammy Rushing and Natalie Alexander that would help teachers at Milan Elementary improve the literacy skills of their students. Rushing and Alexander requested that they be allowed to apply for the Tennessee Department of Education’s “Read to Be Ready” mini-grant, which would provide the MSSD

(Cont. on pg. 3)

County employees undergo first random drug tests

By Steve Short

Gibson Co. employees participated in random drug testing for the first time Dec. 2 as part of the county’s effort to qualify for enrollment in the state’s Tennessee Drug Free Workplace program.

The county has been in the program since spring 2016, according to Finance Director Greg Pillow. He said the county has to test a percentage of employees to qualify

for the state program.

64 employees were tested Friday, about one fourth the total, said Pillow. One employee selected did not participate, because the employee was involved in court, Pillow said.

“As long as we’ve got enough employees to hit our percentage each year, we’re fine,” said Mr. Pillow about the number of employees who were tested.

Judge Mark Agee said in a media interview Mon., Dec. 4, that he was busy with Civil



Pillow

Court Friday, and the timing of the drug testing (9 am - 12 noon) did not fit with his schedule. Agee said he had been feeling “under the weather” but did not have anything to hide related to the test.

“I didn’t decline or refuse to participate,” said Judge Agee. “Friday just didn’t work out for me. If they want to have me do it today (Monday), I’ll do it. I’m fine with taking a drug screen. When this first came up, and they said the county would do this policy, I said, ‘Fine, if it helps with the (insurance) premiums.’” Agee said later he would take a drug test Monday.

A Selmer-based company

oversaw the testing. A list of employee names were submitted to a computer program, which randomly picked who would be tested. The drug free policy says employees will undergo urinalysis screening or hair testing for drugs, such as: marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, opiates, phencyclidine or abuse of drugs prescribed by a physician.

Greg Pillow said the cost of workers’ comp insurance was the driving factor behind adopting the new policy. The county can also benefit by detecting employees who might be working while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

“Our insurance carrier came to the county commission and Insurance Committee and pushed this,” said Mr. Pillow. “(The insurance agent) said, ‘You’ve got a big discount coming if you do this.’ We were able to save close to \$14,000 in workers’ comp premiums over a year. There are costs associated with the drug testing, and that reduces the savings. But even if we break even, we are still doing our employees a service.”

The Insurance Committee strongly recommended adopting the drug free policy. County leaders gave several reasons in the original proposal, saying: “Alcohol-

ism and the illegal use of drugs lead to increased accidents and medical claims and can lead to the destruction of an employee’s health. Employees who abuse drugs and alcohol pose a danger not only to themselves and their fellow employees, but also to Gibson Co. property. In addition, the increased cost medical costs incurred by employees with untreated drug or alcohol problems, the decreased productivity of these individuals, and resulting increases in absenteeism and turnover can adversely affect Gibson Co. productivity.”

(Cont. on pg. 3)



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Editorials, Opinions, Letters-to-the-editor

Director announces....(cont. from page 1)

with a minimum of \$5,000 to purchase high-quality, complex books for students that promote knowledge and vocabulary building, as well as books for independent reading that students would find interesting.

Rushing told the Board that literacy levels for third and fourth graders in the MSSD have not improved as much as they should have over the years, and that the Read to Be Ready program would help students maintain and build reading skills over the summer break. The grant would provide 10 teachers with a \$250 stipend for serving as Read to Be Ready Coaches, with the remaining \$2,500 to be spent on materials.

Special Ed. Programs - MHS Special Education instructors April Gonzales, Lynn Gonzales and LeighAnn Dunlap shared the success of the MSSD's various Special Education programs with the Board, including the Best Buddies program and the district's new Work-based Learning program, which prepares the MSSD's Special Education students with the training and skills to become productive members of the workforce. The Best Buddies program, which is only in its second year at MHS, has already become a massive success, according to faculty advisor April Gonzales.

"The support we have received has been overwhelming," said Gonzales. "We have 44 members in the club, and the students that have taken interest in it are totally committed to the program. They've grown up with our Special Education students and they're just so excited about it." Several students and their "buddies" were in attendance at the meeting. The MSSD's Work-based Learning program has also been a hit with both students with disabilities and members of the community, said Lynn Gonzales, the program's director. There are currently nine disabled MHS students that go out into the community and either assist or hold down jobs of their own at participating businesses in Milan, including the YMCA, Vestal Automotive and the Milan middle and high school cafeterias. Gonzales told the Board that the students in the program, some of whom are much older than traditional high school students, need a place to go after they age out of the MSSD's RISE program, and that the Work-based Learning program helps them build employability skills that help them contribute to their community. Three of the students in the program even receive paychecks at their jobs. According to Gonzales,

'Deplorable, working middle class' defeated Ms. Hillary Clinton

Editor,

After Mrs. Clinton came out of her "Wha' happened?" fugue, she began to analyze why she lost her bid for the presidency.

Her conclusion: It was the FBI's fault, for releasing the information that thousands of unreported e-mails had turned up.

This information, coming so close to the election, was undoubtedly a factor, along with the e-mails already reported, and Mrs. Clinton's equivocations to the Congressional committee, and to the American people via her campaign ads.

But the underlying reason for Mrs. Clinton's defeat was that the American people – the "deplorable" one, middle-class Americans who work to support their families (when they can find a job), who may or may not go to church, whose children attend public school, who shop at Wal-Mart and eat at McDonald's – didn't want the kind of government that Mrs. Clinton was proposing, which was basically a revved-up continuation of the dismal Obama years. We, the people, have spoken clearly, repudiating the super-care state that has signally failed to live up to its promises. We want a change in direction.

And incidentally, the map of the election results illustrates the virtues of the Electoral College, allowing the people in the fly-over states to have a voice.

Perry Boling
Humboldt

the program is already a success, with 25 students waiting to attend the class next year.

Director's Evaluation - Board Chairman Sid Crocker provided the other Board members with a proposed evaluation instrument to use to evaluate Director of Schools Jonathan Criswell. The tool mirrors the instruments already used by the MSSD to evaluate their teachers, rating the Director's performance in 46 criteria on a scale of 1-5, including his relationships with the Board, staff and the community, leadership skills, strategic planning, management of the MSSD's facilities and finances, student achievement and his fulfillment of his job requirements. The Board approved the evaluation tool unanimously.

Revisions & Clarifications - The Board addressed a number of issues that needed to be updated, including budget items and policies. Prior to the meeting, MSSD Supervisor of Special Programs informed Director Criswell and the Board that line items within the Title I-A and IDEA budgets needed to be amended due to under-budgeting, and that the School Nutrition Budget needed to be amended to reflect the grant that was received earlier in the year to purchase a Combi Oven for the elementary school.

It was also brought to the Board's attention that the recently approved policy on Graduation Activities (4.606), which was set by the Board to go into effect at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year was intended by the Tennessee School Boards Association to go into effect immediately. Director Criswell stated that the revised policy would go into effect immediately and allow for students who had completed 10 or more community service hours to be recognized for such at the MHS Graduation Ceremony. Criswell also wished to clarify that the MSSD's policy on Extended Contracts (5.211), which was approved along with a larger group of policies at the October meeting, was intended to be deleted. When the Board approved the policy, they were, in fact, approving its deletion.

Celebrating Success - Several MSSD students were recognized for their achievements at last Monday night's Board meeting. The Board congratulated Autumn Webb, who recently won the prestigious Hendrix Scholarship Competition at Bethel University, which earned her four years of fully-paid tuition, room and board at the university. MHS Marching Band Drum Majors Charity Hopper and Olivia Dickerson were recognized for their First Place finish at the State Division II Marching Band Championship last month, along with the rest of the MHS Marching Bulldogs, who recorded their highest ranked State Competition finish in 34 years. Jacob Rimmer, Offensive Lineman for the Bulldogs, was also recognized for his recent honor of finishing as runner-up in the Tennessee Titans' Mr. Football competition.

It's Crystal Clear Smoky Mountain Rain

By Crystal Burns

When I was a kid, while my brothers were singing Pinkard & Bowden hits, I had the songs of Conway Twitty and Ronnie Milsap stuck in my head.

Snippets of the songs, anyway.

Remember when infomercials sold music? That's how Byron and Clay learned "I Lobster But Never Flounder," a tune that makes an appearance at nearly all of our family get-togethers.

The song titles would scroll on the screen; the highlighted ones were what you were hearing at that moment.

I did a mean impression of Conway – "And as I taste your tender kisses, I can tell you've never been this far before." I didn't know what the lyrics meant; I just knew he sang it low on his register with kind of whisper effect. I thought it was funny, maybe because I didn't know any grown men with perms who also wore their shirts unbuttoned halfway down their chests.

Ronnie Milsap, the piano man who made his name in a guitar town, had a long list of hits scrolling on my screen. "Stranger In My House" and "Smoky Mountain Rain" were my favorites.

Far later in life, I delved into Mr. Milsap's extensive catalog for real and found dozens of songs to vie for favorite status. When I found out the Country Music Hall of Fame member would be performing at The Dixie Carter Performing Arts & Academic Enrichment Center in Huntingdon, I wrote it on my calendar – in ink.

His Saturday night show sold out, and it did not disappoint.

A few years ago when I made friends with The Dixie staff and started writing press releases for them and going to a lot of shows, I bought a small notebook to keep in my purse. I got tired of leaving concerts unable to remember every song I'd just heard so I started writing down the set list.

Realizing this elevated me to a new level of nerdiness, I dropped the notebook a couple of shows ago. But with a guy with 40 No. 1 hits to his credit on stage, I knew I would need help keeping up. I wanted to know how many of my favorites he covered. By the fourth number, I put away my pen and paper.

Through three medleys of his classics, Ronnie Milsap hit "Any Day Now" (my current favorite), "What A Difference You Made In My Life" (a close second), "Pure Love" (purely infectious) and "I Wouldn't Have Missed It For The World" (an easy sing-along). I would love to have heard full versions, but I appreciate how he cleverly packed in even more songs. He did "Stranger In My House" and "Smoky Mountain Rain" in their entirety after intermission.

I learned something too.

Ronnie Milsap worked with Elvis on The King's hit "Kentucky Rain." He said Elvis would instruct him to put more "thunder" on his piano. Years later, when Mr. Milsap was recording "Smoky Mountain Rain," he wondered if the same approach would work on that song. It did, and what his producer warned was a "regional" song became a national hit. It's also a Tennessee state song and one that took on special meaning for all of us at The Dixie Saturday night.

Our friends in Sevier County are suffering after devastating wildfires decimated portions of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge. The decimated streets covered in ash look like what we see in war torn countries where bombs going off are a daily occurrence. One local likened it to the apocalypse.

The people who lost their loved ones, their homes, their businesses, and their jobs need our prayers. They also need financial help if you're so inclined to give. Please make sure you give to reputable organizations to make sure that your money goes to those in need. If you can't give now, that's okay. When you're saving for your summer vacation or a weekend getaway, consider taking it in the Smokies. The tourism dollars will greatly aid the people of East Tennessee and will lift our entire state.

'Dog golf booster club says thanks

Editor,

On behalf of Coach Donny Joyner, MHS Golf Team and the MHS Golf Booster Club we would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the supporters this past year for helping make the 2016 golf season a success. A special thank you goes to the Milan Golf & Country Club for all their support they give to both the MHS Golf team and to our booster club. With all of our contributions it has allowed our team to meet and exceed their goals. Your support enabled us to once again represent the City of Milan and Milan High School in

district, regional and state competition. Thank you again for your continued dedication season after season to help make this a winning endeavor.

On a personal note I would like to say that it has been an honor serving as booster club president for the past two years. I feel with the incoming players and parents that we will continue to have a team that the community can be proud of and would continue to support.

Thanks, God bless and Go Bulldogs!
Ed Webb
President - MHS Golf Booster Club

Feds come down....(cont. from page 1)

pending closure and assure that they will be transferred to the most appropriate facility in terms of location, services and quality. Failure to properly help relocate residents or to admit new ones would subject Simonton to a \$100,000 fine, according to the report.

The CMS levied a Civil Money Penalty against MHC in the amount of \$7,491.00 per day effective March 31-December 27th, 2016.. MHC can either comply with the standards from CMS or terminate their agreement to accept insurance payments.

A report of the survey stated that specific residents referred to as patients, #61, #62 and #47 were not monitored properly and the use of chemical and physical restraints were not used appropriately. The report states that MHC did not have a policy for such restraints.

On March 30th, '16, patient #62 died at Milan Health Care and no cause of death, information or review was provided to CMS.

The survey describes in great detail how patient #47 was struck repeatedly with a lanyard of keys by a nurse. That event was caught on vid-

eo and resulted in the arrest of Christy Dawn Murphy. Officials from the CMS later discovered that Murphy had been charged with Manufacture of Methamphetamine on two occasions in 2009 and 2010. Additionally, her license was on probation status while she worked at MHC. Murphy was charged with Knowing Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation.

The report concludes that MHC failed to ensure an effective Quality Assurance program that recognized and developed an appropriate plan to ensure residents were free from physical and chemical restraints, thus protecting them from abuse and neglect.

According to their website, Milan Health Care, 8060 Stinson Road, is a skilled nursing and long-term care home where up to 66 residents can live. Milan Health Care is owned by Cornerstone Health Care based in Clayton, North Carolina. Cornerstone also owns Douglas Nursing Home of Milan, Oak Manor in McKenzie, Pymayra in Clarksville, Pleasant View HC in Bolivar and Ridgetop Heath Care in Nashville.

County employees....(cont. from page 1)

County Highway Dept. employees and Sheriff Dept. employees have been subjected to drug tests in the past. The state Dept. of Transportation requires operators of heavy equipment to be tested.

The county commission voted 18-0 in 2014 to adopt the drug-free workplace policy and drug testing. At the time, commissioners said the policy could save the county about \$24,000 a year in insurance costs. In 2014, the county paid almost \$710,000 in insurance premiums for liability and workers' compensation insurance. The cost jumped \$60,000 in just one year.

"It will save us some money; that's part of it," said Commissioner Bobby Cotham of Milan, Chairman of the Insurance Committee when he asked commissioners to adopt the drug free policy in 2014. "But that's not the only reason I'm standing here. If

an employee has a problem, maybe that's the only way they can get rid of the problem."

Mayor Tom Witherspoon said the drug free policy would create a safer workplace for employees and save the taxpayers' money.

Greg Pillow said it took time to get all elected officials to agree to the policy. "We wanted to make sure we had buy in from every elected official," he said. "Back in the spring, we got all elected officials to sign off, and got the stamp of approval from the county. We've done this with the cooperative effort of all department heads."

In addition to drug testing, the drug free workplace program includes educational sessions for employees about the detriments of drug use. Employees were watching instructional videos on the effects of drug use, said Mr. Pillow.

Prevention Coalition....(cont. from page 1)

p.m.


The guest speaker for the event will be Thomas Farmer, the Director of the Tennessee Dangerous Drugs Task Force. Farmer will be speaking on the trends of heroin/opioid use across the state and nation, as well as the misuse, abuse and addiction of prescription drugs.

To help combat the theft and misuse of prescription drugs in the home, the Milan Police Department and the Gibson County Sheriff's Office have donated \$500 from their drug funds to the Milan Prevention Coalition to aid in the purchase of medicine lock boxes.

"We educate in order to raise awareness, increase understanding of key issues and mobilize support with the goal of positive change," said Marty Elliott, Treasurer of the MPC. "Follow your prescriber's instructions and properly store and dispose of your unneeded prescriptions."

Beginning on July 1, the Milan Prevention Coalition received funding from the State of Tennessee to help get the word out about the dangers and consequences of substance use, one of only nine in West Tennessee to receive state assistance.

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INSIDE THIS WEEK
The South Gibson Lady Hornets improved to 5-3 Friday night with a 66-56 win over Bolivar. Tatum Russell scored 7 points in the victory.



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Community group seeks funds to renovate Polk Clark gym

By Steve Short

Joyce Vonner hopes people will be in the giving spirit this Christmas season and the months ahead.

Ms. Vonner, Director of the Milan Polk Clark Enrichment Center, is leading an effort to renovate and restore the building's old gym. Leaks in the roof and broken windows have led to extensive damage to the gym, which hasn't been used in about ten years. The floor is buckled and ruptured to the point that the room is an unusable, safety hazard.

"This holiday season is a time of giving, so maybe somebody will want to give to help this cause," said Ms. Vonner about the gym project. "We are calling on all former students. If everybody just donated something, it wouldn't be so hard."

The Graves-Anderson Gymnasium,

built in 1951, was an addition to the Gibson Co. Training School-Polk Clark High School that opened in 1926 and saw several building expansions. The building was placed on the "National Register of Historical Places" in 2012. It is owned by the Alumni Association of the Gibson Co. Training School - Polk Clark School.

Sections of the massive building now function as a community enrichment center, banquet hall and museum. Leaders hope to renovate the gym to use it for an indoor walking trail, rec-

RESTORATION PLANS FOR GYM - Wayne Minton and Cheri Childress (right), members of a community advisory panel, met last week with Joyce Vonner, Director of the Milan Polk Clark Enrichment Center, to look at the facility's gymnasium. Ms. Vonner and leaders of the center are conducting an effort to renovate and restore the gym to serve the community as an indoor walking trail, general recreation, "pee wee" youth sports, nutrition and healthy eating education for children, senior Olympics and other programs. Donations to help restore the Polk Clark gym can be sent to: The Bank of Milan at 2011 E. Van Hook Street; Milan, TN 38358, or to the Milan Polk Clark Enrichment Center, 1041 S. Harris Street, P.O. Box 734, Milan, TN 38358. For more information call 731-723-3577.

(Cont. on pg. 3)



Lions finalize plans for food basket project

The Milan Lions Club is gearing up for their annual Christmas Basket Drive, where nearly 200 food baskets will be distributed to less fortunate families in the community. The basket contains enough food to prepare a complete holiday meal.

Community volunteers are always welcome to help with the goodwill project, and are especially needed to help deliver all the baskets.

Food baskets will be packed this Thursday night, December 15th at Rhino Construction at 6:00 p.m. Volunteers that want to help with the project should report at 5:30 to help build boxes and set up the assembly line.

The baskets will be delivered at 7 a.m. the next morning from Rhino, and volunteers are needed to complete this massive undertaking.

Adult, licensed volunteers that want to help with delivery are encouraged to let a member of the Lions Club know at Thursday's packing party.

The Lions Club has set up donation boxes at 8 locations around town, including all banks, The Mirror-Exchange, Copies Unlimited, Chow Wagon, Total Wellness Chiropractic, City Hall, and Flippin, Collins & Hill Law Office.

The Lions Club is also selling pecans and cashews to help offset costs associated with the project. Pecans can be purchased at any Milan Bank.

Donations for the annual project can also be mailed to: Milan Lions Club, P.O. Box 261, Milan, Tn. 38358.



Amazing Rescue



TOUCHING REUNION - Captain John Horner of the Gibson County Fire Department returns a soaking wet and scared puppy to his owner, Gary Poole, after rescuing the dog from a fire that engulfed Poole's home last Wednesday morning. The dog, uninjured in the blaze, is expected to make a full recovery. Photo by Lori Cathey, Tri-City Reporter. Story on page 2.

Williamson saves the day for Titans

By Victor Parkins

NASHVILLE - Clinging to a 13-10 lead with less than a minute left in the game, Milan's Avery Williamson made the play of the game to seal the Tennessee Titans' win over the Denver Broncos Sunday afternoon.



Williamson

Williamson, the team's leading tackler this season with 90, stripped Broncos tight end A.J. Derby of the ball after a long pass completion and the Titans pounced on the loose ball and sent the home crowd into a frenzy.

Avery said he felt an opportunity to get the ball out, got a good grip on it, and ripped it loose.

"I had one on one coverage and I knew I couldn't get beat over the top because it was a critical part of the game," explained Williamson. "My first reaction after he made the catch was to strip it. I was able to grab the football, and just do what I do at practice all the time. I had a hand on the ball and just ripped it and it popped out. To do something like that to win the game is an awesome feeling. I couldn't believe it happened like that—that I made the play to save the game. It was a great feeling," he said.

When asked if the forced fumble was the biggest play of his career, Williamson answered with a resounding 'yes'.

"Who knows what could have happened had I not made the play. It might have made a difference in whether or not we make the playoffs. Maybe not-who knows. But it was a huge momentum shift for this team and we're thinking it

(Cont. on pg. 2)

Milan Health Care fined over \$2M

By Victor Parkins

After state and federal agents suspended admissions to Milan Health Care last week, they also hit them hard with fines over \$2,000,000.

Tennessee Health Commissioner John Dreyzehner, announced last week that the nursing home facility was being fined a one-time state civil monetary penalty of \$4,000. Dreyzehner said in

a news release that a special monitor has been appointed to review the facility's operations.

Dreyzehner summarized that MHC was ordered not to admit any new residents based on conditions found during a complaint survey conducted Sept. 26 through Nov. 4, 2016. The investigation was completed Dec. 2. During the inspection, surveyors found violations of the following standards: administration, performance improvement, nursing services, social work services and resident rights.

The Commissioner of Health may suspend ad-

missions to a nursing home when conditions are determined to be, or are likely to be, detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the residents. The order to suspend admissions remains effective until conditions have been and continue to remain corrected. A copy of the order must be posted at the public entrance where it can be plainly seen.

The nursing home has the right to a hearing regarding the suspension of admissions before the Board for Licensing Health Care Facilities or an administrative judge.

Additionally, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid

(CMS) headquarters in Atlanta, GA. levied a fine of \$7,491 per day effective March 31 to

December 27th, 2016. That 271 day period at \$7,491 per day totals \$\$2,030,061.00

A letter from CMS dated Nov. 18th that was addressed

(Cont. on pg. 2)

Administrator responds to deficiency report

Milan Health Care has enjoyed serving our community for over fifty years. Our caregivers and staff have worked tirelessly, giving of themselves to ensure that our residents are well taken care of and know that they are loved. We are saddened that we will no longer be able to serve the community, but are grateful for those who have honored us by letting us care for them and their loved ones.

In November of this year, the Center for Medicare and Medicare Services (CMS) surveyed our building and cited deficiencies. Our team put together a plan to correct those areas where we showed room for improvement, but that plan was rejected by CMS. CMS required us to transfer all of our residents to other facilities by December 27.

We have worked with other long term care facilities to en-

sure that our residents have safe transitions to their new homes. We are working with our employees to help them secure other employment as well. We appreciate the dedication of our employees and recognize that this has been very stressful for them.

Stated John Simonton, the Administrator of Milan Health Care for the past 8 years, "The comfort, care

(Cont. on pg. 3)



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By Logan Watson
Lori Cathey of the Tri-City Reporter contributed to this article

Once the flames were under control, Bradford firemen Zach Culver and Mikie Kiser and Gibson County fireman Captain John Horner, Gage Luter and David Hazard entered the home, where they found the dog, frightened but alive, hiding under a bed. Luter crossed the bed aside and Horner rushed the dog to his owner, Gary



"You'll never know how much

Poole's home was a total loss, but the dog, who will be held for the next 24-48 hours to receive breathing treatments for carbon monoxide poisoning, is expected to make a full recovery.

Mr. Moos said that some of the current residents at MHC had exercised their right to move to other facilities owned, operated or managed by Cornerstone.

“The survey found that your facility was not in substantial compliance with the participation requirements, and that con-

MHC is a skilled nursing and long-term care home where up to 66 residents can live. During the survey period, MHC reportedly had about 55 residents and about 45 employees.

A cartoon illustration of Santa Claus. He is wearing a red suit with white trim, a red hat with a white pom-pom, and a white beard. He has a small mustache and rosy cheeks. He is standing with his arms slightly out to the sides, wearing green gloves and black boots. The background is a solid green vertical bar on the left and a white background on the right.

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Editorials, Opinions, Letters-to-the-editor

Vic’s Place

The bookworm in me

I came across a random John Grisham book about a month ago simply by chance. There was an old hardback copy of *The Testament* in a pile of paperback books and for some reason it caught my eye. I guess it was Grisham’s name that got my attention because I’ve read (and finished) 2 or 3 of his books over the last 47 years that I really enjoyed.

Anyhow, this huge pile of books had already been considered trash by someone else so I grabbed *The Testament* and took it home.

Now let me tell you that I’ve never been a big book reader. I remember early on in high school doing everything I could do to avoid reading *To Kill A Mockingbird*, among other books I deemed worthless. I bought and read the cliff notes and jumped around the book trying to get to the end. I even re-crafted the front cover of the book with a crafty ‘101 Ways’ (To Kill A Mockingbird) tag at the top of the cover. I thought it was pretty funny at the time but Ms. York didn’t quite think so.

When the *Hunger Games* series came out I read those, then another Grisham book about football before dropping the habit for something better. But something about *The Testament* lured me in and I looked forward to getting home everyday to find out what was going to happen next. I was giddy to finish it in 5 or 6 days but down right mad when I got to the end only to find out that one of the main characters had died of Malaria and didn’t get to become one of the richest women in the world or ride off into the sunset with her newfound love.

I was so disappointed I was intent on finding another book that would have a great ending so I grabbed *Rogue Lawyer*, another Grisham best seller that once again ended with a big fat thud. After that I’ve moved on to the Jack Reacher ‘who done it’ series with much more action and better endings. I like those better. Right now I’m starting a series by David Baldacci about an international hitman named Will Robie and it’s also hard to put down.

The ‘book worm’ phase probably won’t last forever but for now it makes deer hunting more interesting than ever and I find myself going to Wal Mart just to check out the new selections. And I’m sure when I come across *To Kill A Mockingbird* a second time, I’ll be sure to read it from cover to cover.

VP

Flag burners are ignorant

Editor,

It is less than laughable that we have some “alleged” Americans that know so little about America and it’s history, and will burn our national symbol to show their dissatisfaction with some political rules or policies.

The American flag is but a symbol of our country, designating it as independent from all others. It represents America as independent and free, and has nothing to do with the current politics that the burners are upset with.

The burners might take the time to read the history of America and learn, (maybe for the first time since it’s apparently not being taught in our schools), just how many Americans have fought and died for our freedom, the freedom that permits them to do their stupid flag burning. Maybe they might learn something about America since their ignorance of America spills over every time they decide to stage a protest to make their dissatisfaction known by

burning a flag.

Watching those burning the flag gives evidence to their youth and ignorance. It would serve them well if they were to be given the “opportunity” to fight for THEIR freedom, as so many other Americans have already.

Dave LeBarre
Atwood

Administrator... (cont. from page 1)

and well-being of all our residents at Milan Health Care has always been our primary focus. Our staff members have worked hard every day to meet the needs of our residents and their families, and it is a responsibility we have taken very seriously.”

Milan Health Care has a long history of providing quality care to the Milan and surrounding communities and we appreciate the continued support from our family members, staff and community.

It’s Crystal Clear Twelve Days of Christmas

By Crystal Burns

You probably wouldn’t expect a song as seemingly nonsensical as “The Twelve Days of Christmas” to be packed with hidden meaning, but the carol dates back to a time when Catholics feared persecution from the Church of England. They went underground, holding secret meetings to avoid prison and even death. “The Twelve Days of Christmas” was a powerful tool to teach the tenets of their faith.

A partridge in a pear tree symbolizes Jesus on the cross. This is the time of year that we celebrate Jesus’ birth, but his entire life is important to Christians and his death on the cross and resurrection is the foundation of our salvation.

Two turtledoves represent the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

Three French hens are the gifts – frankincense, gold, and myrrh – the wise men brought young Jesus.

Four calling birds are the four gospels included in the New Testament. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell the good news of Jesus’ birth, ministry on earth, death on the cross, and glorious resurrection. We should all be calling birds for Christ.

Five golden rings take us back to the Old Testament where we find the Law of Moses or the Torah – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Six geese a-laying signify the six days of creation as outlined in Genesis.

Seven swans a-swimming are the gifts of the Holy Spirit – prophecy, ministry, teaching, encouragement, giving, leading, and compassion.

Eight maids a-milking are the Beatitudes Jesus preached in Matthew 5:3-10. Blessed are the peacemakers, etc.

Nine ladies dancing give us a picture of the fruit of the Holy Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Ten lords a-leaping are the Ten Commandments found in Exodus.

Eleven pipers piping represent the 11 faithful apostles. If you want to make a trivia games out of “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” give extra points to anyone who can name the apostles. I can usually reel off eight or nine with no problem, but those last ones are difficult. The eleven were Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John the sons of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. The twelfth apostle was Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus.

And finally, twelve drummers drumming are the 12 points of doctrine in the Apostles’ Creed. That’s a tough one for Protestants to figure out because we aren’t as familiar with it as our Catholic friends.

When you’re gathering with friends and family this Christmas, there may be an awkward moment in the conversation. You could save the day! Just stick this in your back pocket and impress everyone with your knowledge.

Do it before Uncle Hanks railroads you with his recitation of the “Twelve Redneck Days of Christmas.” There is no symbolism in, “Twelve-pack of Bud, eleven wrasslin’ tickets, ten o’ Copenhagen, nine years probation, eight table dancers, seven packs of Redman, six cans of Spam, five flannel shirts, four big mud tires, three shotgun shells, two hunting dogs, and some parts to a Mustang GT.” None whatsoever.

Community group...(cont. from page 1)

reaction, “pee wee” youth sports, nutrition and healthy eating education for children, senior Olympics and other programs.

Milan Fire Dept. staff member Belton Luter plans to work with youth sports programs. The gym is next to a large recreation area that can be used for outdoor activities.

“We want to teach all types of sports and teach children to appreciate various sports,” said Ms. Vonner. “We want to teach teamwork and sportsmanship, and just get children moving.

Studies show young children with high blood pressure. Children need activities. We want citywide sports programs. It will benefit all of Milan, not just the Fourth Ward. Mayor Beasley has assured me that through a joint effort we can get this done.”

“Renovations to the Polk Clark gym would be a valuable assist to the entire community,” said Mayor B.W. Beasley. “Milan is concerned and focused on the health and wellbeing of our youth. The renovation of Polk Clark gym would be a giant step in adding facilities that would enhance that initiative.”

Ms. Vonner said the city’s other school gyms and recreation facilities are not easily accessible to children and adults in the Polk Clark neighborhood. She believes the Polk Clark gym can be a city asset.

Donations are being sought to raise about \$300,000 needed for renovation of the 6,300 sq. ft. gym. An evaluation done by Fisher Construction Co. lists about 20 steps needed for renovation, including demolishing the roof and windows and pouring a new concrete floor.

“Your partnership will have a very important impact to those who have worked hard to accomplish this mission,” said Ms. Vonner in a letter which will be sent to potential donors.

“Over the 90 years’ history of this institution, administrators, faculty and students have joined a great number of individuals, groups and agencies to improve the facility,” said Ms. Vonner. “It has been a collaboration that

That Little Black Dress

By Clayburn Peebles

“It wasn’t like Miracle on 34th Street,” my eight-year-old daughter Sarah said after being in court with me one day last week.

It was the first time I’d ever taken any of my kids to court with me. For a number of reasons, I don’t think that’s a good idea, but on this particular Friday, her sisters and mother were in Jackson, taking part in the performance of *The Nutcracker*, so Sarah was left with me, and we went to court together.

The only case on the docket that morning was a Workers’ Compensation matter, and it had settled the day before, so it didn’t take long at all.

I didn’t realize how little my children knew about what I do, but Sarah gave me a clue as I was taking off my robe.

After commenting on the fact that neither Mr. Kris Kringle nor the little boy from the movie were in the courtroom, she asked, with a pensive look on her face, “Why do you wear that black dress?”

Now believe it or not, no one has ever asked me that before, and even though it’s a simple question, I didn’t have much more than a clue about the answer, and it turned out I was wrong.

Or at least, I wasn’t completely right.

I thought that judges wore black robes, sort of like a uniform, to remind them, the judges, that their decisions should be uniform as well. The plain black robe, I thought, is to remind every judge that his or her personal ideas and preferences are secondary to the uniformity required by the law.

The black robe also reminds people in court, I told Sarah, that they are not just dealing with an individual wearing the robe, but the court system the robe wearing judge represents, and that the robe enhances the authority of both the judge and the court.

And while that may all be true, and those may be good reasons for judges to wear robes today, they have nothing to do with why the custom began.

It all started, as most of our legal practices did, in England, in this case more than 700 years ago, during the reign of Edward II. That much we know, but that’s about all we know. The rest is conjecture.

Academics and clerics had been wearing robes for a couple of centuries by then, partly, it is thought, to keep warm in the drafty medieval churches where the first university classes were held, but partly to set them apart as well. This academic garb began to be worn in other settings also, especially on visits to the royal court.

At some point judges took up the practice of wearing robes too, but the first judges’ robes weren’t black; they came, at this point it seems, in three colors, violet for summer wear, green for winter and scarlet for special hearings. In 1635, a guide was published suggesting that judges wear fur trimmed black robes in winter, and violet or scarlet robes featuring pink taffeta in the summer, but most judges in the 1600’s wore scarlet robes with black scarves and scarlet hoods when they were hearing criminal cases, and solid black silk robes for civil matters.

English judges also wore powdered wigs, but in the American colonies, which largely emulated England’s legal customs, the patriots balked at wearing wigs. The story goes that John Adams, who wanted American judges to wear all the finery of English jurists, and Thomas Jefferson, who wanted American judges to wear ordinary suits, rather than robes, in court, argued about the matter but finally reached a compromise whereby American judges would wear robes, but not wigs.

But neither Adams nor Jefferson addressed what color the robe should be. Scarlet was a popular color, and numerous early judges often wore scarlet or ermine robes when hearing cases, but in 1801, Chief Justice John Marshall chose a plain black robe for his swearing in ceremony, and just like that, black was the new red, and one by one the other justices on the court, and judges all over America as well, fell into line, and the black judge’s robe became one of the most distinctive work uniforms in the world.

So even though no more than one or two states have any laws at all about what judges are required, or allowed, to wear in court, nearly all judges wear robes. If you go to almost any courtroom in the country you will probably find at least two things, an American flag and a judge wearing a plain black robe, ideally one clean and in good repair, that conveys the gravity and dignity of justice and reminds litigants that business in court is serious and that everyone will be expected to conduct themselves in a formal and dignified manner.

They’ve done studies about this, of course, and it turns out, judges’ intuitions about wearing robes over the centuries have been correct. Research shows that people respect robe wearing judges more and feel they are fairer and more considerate and consistent than judges who do not wear robes. They even rate judges wearing robes as being smarter than judges who don’t.

Of course it could be it’s not people’s perceptions of judges that change when judges put on robes. It could be that the judges themselves behave differently when they’re wearing the regalia of their profession. It could be that the robes are affecting, not the litigants and others in the courtroom.

Because like it or not, to paraphrase an old saying about food, “you are what you wear.”

has been mutually satisfying, enlightening, inspirational and highly successful. We believe in partnerships, because they work for the communal good. Partnering will be a bridge that will bring others to an important educational facility where all believe in celebrating the history and past of the African-American education.”

A community advisory group met with Joyce Vonner last week at Perkins Restaurant to share fundraising ideas. Wayne Minton, president of The Bank of Milan, is a member of the panel. An account has been established at The Bank of Milan to receive donations. Other members of the advisory panel are Cheri Childress of BC Enterprises, former Mayor Don

Farmer, alumni members Carolyn and Henry Williams, and former Sheriff David Woolfork, a graduate of the school.

The group hopes to receive grant writing help and apply for community improvement grants. The Tennessee state legislature this year donated \$250,000 to help restore Tanner school, an old Rosenwald-funded school in Newport, Tennessee.

Donations to help restore the Polk Clark gym can be sent to:

The Bank of Milan at 2011 E. Van Hook Street; Milan, TN 38358, or to the Milan Polk Clark Enrichment Center, 1041 S. Harris Street, P.O. Box 734, Milan, TN 38358. For more information call 731-723-3577.

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