

City Leaf Collection will end next week

The City of Marion's leaf collection program is set to conclude next week, weather permitting, as crews make a final sweep across all four quadrants of town. Originally scheduled to end weeks ago, the collection has been extended due to weather delays and other scheduling challenges.



The final collection schedule is as follows:
Area 1: Monday
Area 2: Tuesday
Area 3: Wednesday
Area 4: Thursday
Friday will serve as a general pickup day to address any missed areas across the city. Residents are encouraged to have their leaves ready for pickup by the scheduled dates.

Chamber bags part of Small Saturday

Crittenden County Chamber of Commerce is gearing up to spread holiday cheer and support local businesses with goody bags filled with savings. On Saturday in Marion, 100 goody bags will be distributed in the parking lot of H&H Home and Hardware starting at 8 a.m., as part of Small Business Saturday.
Each bag will contain exclusive deals from local businesses, and one lucky recipient will discover a \$100 bill inside. Additionally, the bags will include a Small Business Bingo card, which offers even more savings and can be used through December 20. Completed Bingo cards can be turned in for a chance to win a prize basket from the Chamber of Commerce.
Shoppers are encouraged to arrive early, as supplies are limited to the first 100 participants.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

•Crittenden County Local Emergency Planning Committee will meet at 6 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 12, in the Crittenden County Volunteer Fire Department / Emergency Operations Center at 275 Industrial Drive. All interested parties, emergency responders and local emergency planners are encouraged to attend this annual meeting where community preparedness is discussed.



Listen to our morning podcast M-W-F on your drive to work, or anytime for that matter. Stay informed on local news & sports. Find it at The Press Online.



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No time capsule located as demo unwinds in town

STAFF REPORT
The \$20 million justice center project in downtown Marion is officially underway, with plans to open the new facility by January 2027. The construction process will unfold in multiple phases.
Demolition of the former courthouse began last week and was almost completed in a single day. Since then, debris removal has been the primary focus, though challenges with material disposal have caused some delays. Crittenden County Judge-Executive Perry Newcom said that recyclable materials from the old courthouse, such as metal, bricks and concrete, are being transported to recycling centers. However, there are no plans to repurpose the courthouse lawn trees or their lumber.
For years, locals have collected buckeyes from a tree located behind the courthouse, hoping to germinate seeds and preserve a legacy of the tree that once stood guard near the rear door. The buckeye tree, also known as horse chestnut, holds some sentimental value for the community.
Memorials and monuments around the courthouse were removed weeks ago. Some have already been relocated and others will be repositioned later in other areas of the community. Fate of the gazebo remains undecided, but replicas of the memorial bricks that surrounded it will be incorporated into the sidewalks of the new justice center.
Asbestos was removed from the courthouse months before demolition, ensuring it posed no

See **DEMO**/page 8



Tree described as living tribute

STAFF REPORT
After years of silence, the Living Christmas Tree is once again glowing at historic Fohs Hall, offering Marion residents a heart-felt holiday experience filled with music, nostalgia and community spirit.
Five performances are scheduled between Dec. 7 and Dec. 15, featuring a carefully curated program of festive classics and sacred melodies, all performed by a dedicated cast of singers, musicians and volunteers.
The revival was spearheaded by the Community Arts Foundation, which chose professional opera singers Corey and Michelle Crider to captain the ship. Corey Crider is director of the production, and his wife, Michelle Crider, leads the children's choir. Together, they've breathed new life



into a cherished tradition with a vision of bringing the community together through the universal language of music.
There's something magical about the Living Christmas Tree, the directors say. The sheer visual

impact of a choir performing in a massive, beautifully lit tree is breathtaking, but it's the sound of people singing together in harmony that really stays with you, the

See **TREE**/page 9

PLAYBILL

Director
Corey Crider

Children's Choir Director
Michelle Crider

Handbell Director
John Michael Gage

Accompanist
Rebecca Johnson

Choir Members
Anna Baker
Randa Berry
Ginger Boone
Sky Brown
Stephanie Camp
Steve Crider
Cade Crider
Michelle Crider
Holley Curnel
Jessica DeBurgo
Danny Gibbs
Haylie Gibbs
Nicky Gibbs
Shane Gibbs
Adam Guess
Colleen Harbour
Ron Harbour
Gordon Hein
LaDonna Herrin
Rhonda Horack
Rob Horack
Shelley Hunt
Abigail James
Katie Beth James
Larry Maness
Regina Merrick
Kim Orr
Terri Shewcraft
Cale Tabor
Mark Vince

Children's Choir
Willa Beth Brown
Will Gass

India Harris
Maddox Harris
RJ Harris
Lynleigh Hubbard
Caroline James
Jaley Melander
Liberty Melander
Knox McDonald
Nellie Singleton
Charlotte Vince

Handbell Choir
John Michael Gage
Trish Gage
Alex Kirby
Kay Kirby
Patti Merrill
Elizabeth Rodriguez
Karen White
Susan Yarbrough

Lights
Cameron Hernandez

Planning
Amanda Alvis
Mary Anne Campbell
Allison Evans
Gaye Porter
Terri Shewcraft
Kim Vince

Set Creation
Brennan Cruce
Larry Duvall
Braden Locke
Cutter Singleton
Fred Stubblefield
CCHS Football Team

Reception Sponsors
FCCLA, Crittenden County Extension Homemakers, Mary Hall Ruddiman Animal Shelter, Woman's Club of Marion

Deaths

Porter

With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of our son and grandson's father, Jason Wardlaw Porter. Jason died Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2024 at his home in Marion.

Jason was born Oct. 4 in 1972 in Greenville and moved to Marion when he was two months old. Jason loved music, musical instruments, UK basketball, the Chicago Cubs, hamburgers, ketchup (IYKYK), and any type of electronic device. Most of all, though, he loved his family, friends, and his precious pup Lucy. He was our entertainer and he was so much fun to be around. I don't think we have ever seen him without a smile on his face and he was always willing to help anyone.

Jason graduated from Crittenden County High School in 1991. While in high school, Jason played the drums and the cornet for four years in the high school band. He also lettered in track and field, and at one point he held the school record for the high jump. Many of you may remember his purple low-rider Mazda truck. It had to be the roughest riding vehicle ever, but it sure did look good and we've been told that's what really matters, lol.

Jason is survived by a son, Peyton Issac Porter of Madisonville; his parents, Joe and Gaye Wardlaw Porter; a brother, Jody Dean (Adria) Porter; his Papaw, John M. Wardlaw; a niece, Carly Addison Porter; and a nephew, Jack Dennison Porter; much loved aunts, uncles, cousins, and his precious pup, Lucy.

Jason was preceded in death by his two precious grandmothers, Hazel (Nanny) Wardlaw and Anna Lee (Granny) Porter; his grandfather Harry (Paw) Porter, and an uncle, Eric Porter.

A Celebration of Life service is scheduled for 1 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 30 at Gilbert Funeral Home. Visitation will begin at 11 a.m. If you can attend, please share with us any funny stories or memories of your encounters with Jason.

Memorial contributions may be made to: Mary Hall Ruddiman Canine Shelter (24 Just-a-Mere Rd, Marion KY, 42064); CCHS Band Boosters; or CCHS Trackers (Track Boosters). Paid obituary.

Todd

James Eugene Todd, 91, of Marion, died Monday, Nov. 25, 2024 at his home.

Surviving are six children, Vance Todd, Darrell Todd, Roy Todd, Wanda Clark, Lisa Holeman and James Todd, all of Marion; several grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Vilas Todd; two sons, Shannon and Larry Todd; a daughter, Martha Conner; his parents, Benjamin Franklin and Mary Todd; three brothers; and three sisters.

Services are at 1 p.m., Friday, Nov. 29 at Gilbert Funeral Home with burial in Whites Chapel Cemetery. The family will receive visitors from 5-8 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2024 at the funeral home.

Daily news at
The-Press.com

News podcast
Mon., Wed. & Fri.

Learn region during LWC 2025 class

STAFF REPORT

Applications for the third class of Leadership West Kentucky are being accepted through Dec. 6.

Crittenden County citizens interested in growing leadership potential and joining an informed network of citizens are encouraged to attend.

Representatives from counties within the West Kentucky Regional Chamber Alliance (WKRCa) will meet six times in various locations January through June and participate in industry tours, interactive exercises and class discussions throughout the multi-county WRCA area.



The intent of Leadership West Kentucky is to introduce participants to regional topics such as transportation, education, economic development, quality of life, advocacy, agriculture and tourism.

The outcome of the program is increased skills, knowledge and perspective from a regional network.

TVA is the presenting sponsor of the program, which will welcome 30 people into its third class in January.

Apply or learn more at wkrca.org.

NC relief collects coats, cash

Money, coats and grocery bags are being collected through Dec. 6 as part of a local hurricane relief effort.

Marion resident Ron Ledford was raised in western North Carolina and has coordinated two projects in conjunction with H&H Home and Hardware, VFW Auxiliary, Challengers Homemakers and Crittenden County Extension's Hooks & Needles club.

Clean and gently used winter coats, hats, gloves and scarves are being collected at H&H Home and Hardware.

Plastic grocery bags are also being collected and will be woven into sleeping mats to aid residents still reeling from hurricane flooding and destruction.

"In the hollers and back woods of the mountains of western North Carolina where I was raised are many families struggling to get back on their feet," Ledford said. "They live in the areas where government doesn't get to."

"These aren't city folk, they are pure country so I ask for your help as you can - even a note of en-

couragement to a kid would be nice."

Monetary donations will be used to purchase coats or trash bags to be made into mats and delivered to North Carolina. Checks can be made payable to VFW Auxiliary or mailed to Connie Hunt at 824 Shelby Rd., Salem, KY 42078 or contact Ledford at (618) 294-6603 to arrange pick-up.



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SMALL BUSINESS

BINGO

November 29-Dec. 20, 2024

RULES:

Shop in these local stores to make a Bingo Nov. 29-Dec. 20.

Bingo can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal and free space may be used once in any location.

Attach receipt or other proof provided by each store in your Bingo line.

Submit completed Bingo cards to The Crittenden Press by Dec. 20 to be entered for a big Chamber of Commerce prize basket.

Crittenden County Health & Rehab

Crittenden Co. Lions Club

Ben E. Clement Mineral Museum

First United Bank • A Brunch of Sandwiches

The Crittenden Press • H&H Home & Hardware

C-Plant Federal Credit Union

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Participant Name: _____

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LOCAL

 <p>Register to save up to 30% OFF</p>	 <p>Attend Supper with Santa on Dec. 7 following the Parade at the Fairgrounds</p>	 <p>10% OFF Gift Shop Purchase</p>	 <p>FREE SPOT</p>	 <p>Free Drink with Meal Purchase</p>
 <p>FREE SPOT</p>	 <p>The Crittenden Press</p> <p>Start a New Email Subscription</p>	 <p>STOP IN and inquire about a product</p>	 <p>Spend \$10</p>	 <p>25% OFF Entire Purchase</p>
 <p>FREE 40 oz. Tumbler with handle with any purchase over \$399</p>	 <p>FREE SPOT</p>	 <p>ELLINGTON Detailing</p> <p>Purchase a Gift Certificate for Christmas</p>	 <p>SUPERIOR TROPHIES</p> <p>Screen Printing and Embroidery</p> <p>50% OFF Rocket Merchandise</p>	 <p>Crittenden County Health & Rehab</p> <p>Participate in Adopt a Resident</p>
 <p>BUY 1 PIZZA BURGER GET 1 FREE</p>	 <p>Hodge's Sports & Apparel</p> <p>\$5 OFF any Boutique purchase</p>	 <p>FREE SPOT</p>	 <p>JOIN THE CHAMBER</p> <p>Call (270) 969-1559</p>	 <p>The Crittenden Press</p> <p>Start a New Email Subscription</p>
 <p>10% OFF Christmas Décor</p>	 <p>Crittenden COMMUNITY HOSPITAL</p> <p>25% off purchase at gift shop (excludes Rada)</p>	 <p>Sign Up for Rewards Program</p>	 <p>CRITTENDEN CO. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE</p> <p>Pick up Calendar and Recipe</p>	 <p>FREE SPOT</p>

BINGO



Maggie Blazina also talks about her experience at the CMAs in Nashville on our Monday news podcast, which you can hear at The-Press.com.

Blazina hopes to parlay Nashville red carpet ride into further opps

STAFF REPORT

At just 20 years old, Maggie Blazina is already charting an impressive path in her public relations career. A senior at Murray State University, this Marion native found herself on country music’s biggest stage last week – the CMA Awards in Nashville.

Blazina, who is studying public relations with minors in non-profit leadership and agriculture, was selected to participate in CMA EDU, a prestigious student development program designed to help aspiring professionals make connections in the music industry.

“It opens you up to so many different opportunities,” Blazina said. “Some students are musicians who want to break into the industry, but others, like me, are focused on public relations or music label work. It was incredible to get a firsthand look at how the industry works.”

Through CMA EDU, Blazina worked on the Red Carpet and After Party for the CMAs, rubbing shoulders with some of the biggest names in entertainment. Her responsibilities included escorting country stars Shenandoah and Lainey Wilson through their red carpet interviews.

“I walked with them and their publicist down the red carpet and through media stops,” she explained. “I helped them navigate interviews with outlets like Entertainment Tonight, Fox, and Country Now. I also carried ID signs to ensure media knew who they were.”

It was such a surreal moment to be that close to the stars, she said.

For Blazina, the experience was a full-circle moment.

“Growing up, I was a big country music fan – I’m a huge Keith Urban fan. To be part of such an iconic event was so exciting. It made me realize the diverse opportunities

in this industry, especially in PR.”

Despite her CMA experience, Blazina is steadfast in her love for her hometown.

“I honestly don’t think I could leave Marion,” she admitted. “I’d love to work remotely, where I can stay connected to my roots while pursuing a career in public relations or the agricultural sector.”

Her rural upbringing continues to influence her goals. As a high schooler at Crittenden County, Blazina was both the 4-H State President and an FFA regional officer. These experiences cemented her passion for agriculture, which she hopes to integrate into her future career.

Through her CMA EDU mentorship, Blazina is also exploring opportunities at the Country Music Hall of Fame, blending her love for country music and public relations.

“I’ve thought a lot about ag sales, but I’m open to whatever opportunities come my way. CMA EDU has shown me just how many possibilities are out there,” she said.

Blazina’s CMA experience is just one highlight in a busy senior year. At Murray State, she was crowned Homecoming Queen this fall and serves as the Executive Vice President of the Student Government Association. On top of that, she interns with Wealth Management Group in Paducah, managing social media and planning events like its upcoming grand opening. She also works remotely for Tammy Owen’s Signature Travel Marketing, further honing her PR skills.

While Blazina may not be ready to call Nashville home, her CMA Awards experience reinforced her belief in the power of connections.

It was inspiring to see how publicists work behind the scenes to shape artists’ stories, she said.

For this small-town girl, there’s a number of opportunities waiting and she’s enjoying the magic carpet ride.



SMALL BUSINESS Saturday

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FINANCIAL FOCUS®

November 28, 2024

What will rate cuts mean to you?

For the first time in four years, the Federal Reserve has cut short-term interest rates. The Fed has indicated that this cut may be followed by several others in the months ahead. What will these lower rates mean to you as a consumer and an investor?

Let's first look at the potential impact on your purchasing abilities. Generally speaking, rate cuts should be good news for consumers who need to borrow — which basically includes all of us. Keep in mind, though, that a lowering of interest rates will affect some types of loans and debt faster than others. For example, you might start seeing lower rates on car loans more quickly than you will on credit cards. And since credit card rates are already quite high, they'll likely remain so even after the Fed's actions. Still, any decline



will be welcome, and your best bet will be to shop around for a card that offers the most favorable rates, along with other features, such as a good rewards program.

If you're looking to buy a home or refinance an existing one, you should also benefit from lower interest rates. One big problem, of course, is that housing prices are likely to remain high for the foreseeable future because of the shortage of homes on the market. Nonetheless, if you took out a mortgage for a higher rate in the past few years, you may be able to save some money by refinancing, though

you'll have to weigh all the factors involved, such as closing costs. Other types of housing-related loans, such as home equity loans and adjustable-rate mortgages, are closely tied to market interest rates, so you may see some movement in these areas before long.

Now, let's turn to what lower rates might mean to you as an investor. Lower interest rates typically are good for the stock market. One reason for this is because it's cheaper for businesses to borrow money to expand their operations, which ideally will lead to greater profitability, and corporate profits are still a key driver of

stock prices. But the picture isn't quite that simple because not all market sectors benefit equally from lower interest rates.

Lower rates may also help you if you own bonds. You may see their value increase as interest rates fall because other investors will be willing to pay more for your bonds and earn the higher rate they offer. Long-term bonds in particular often benefit the most from falling rates because they lock in higher yields over time. On the other hand, some savings vehicles, such as certificates of deposit (CDs), may become less attractive as they follow the Federal



Grant Rogers
Financial Advisor

Reserve's lead and begin paying lower interest rates. But if you have longer-term CDs, your higher rates will continue until your CDs mature.

In any case, as we enter a lower-interest-rate environment, you might consider reviewing your investment portfolio to determine what, if any, changes you may want to make. But you'll always want your investment mix to reflect your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon — and that's true no matter what's happening with interest rates.

BLACK FRIDAY

Nov. 29 & 30 & Small Business Saturday Sale



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15% OFF SELECT LAWN FURNITURE



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UNEMPLOYMENT

OCTOTBER

COUNTY	Labor Force	Employed	Jobless	Oct 24	Sept 24	Oct 23
U.S. Comparable Rate - 3.9%				KY Statewide 4.7%		
CALDWELL	5883	5631	252	4.3	4.6	3.9
CALLOWAY	17310	16474	836	4.8	5.2	4.0
CHRISTIAN	25336	23964	1372	5.4	5.7	5.8
CRITTENDEN	3785	3600	185	4.9	5.0	4.1
HENDERSON	20848	19863	985	4.7	4.7	3.8
HOPKINS	18826	17843	983	5.2	5.3	4.2
LIVINGSTON	3734	3530	204	5.5	5.6	4.5
LYON	3236	3084	152	4.7	4.8	4.1
MARSHALL	15663	14991	672	4.3	4.3	3.5
MCLEAN	3944	3731	213	5.4	5.5	4.5
TRIGG	6171	5865	306	5.0	5.2	4.8
UNION	6100	5779	321	5.3	5.6	4.7
WEBSTER	5383	5107	276	5.1	4.9	3.9



First United recognized as great place to work

First United Bank and Trust Company has been recognized as one of the 2024 Best Banks to Work For by American Banker and Best Companies Group. This marks the third consecutive year the bank has received this honor, ranking No. 26 nation-wide and No. 20 among banks with assets under \$3 billion.

The annual program evaluates banks based on employee surveys and workplace practices, emphasizing positive and supportive work environments. Rankings are determined through a two-step process: 25% based on workplace policies and demographics and 75% on employee experiences and attitudes.

Jason Hawkins, President/CEO of First United Bank, credited the recognition to the bank's team. "This award reflects the dedication and hard work of our team, who are truly the heart of everything we do," Hawkins said.

First United Bank, established in 1996, operates seven banking centers in Kentucky, including one on Main Street in Marion, with assets of \$584.9 million and 106 employees. For more information, visit www.efirstunitedbank.com.

Crittenden County's tax discount is over; penalties start Jan. 1

Crittenden County taxpayers who missed the November discount period will now pay face value of their tax bills throughout December. In January, there is a 5% penalty. After Jan. 31, there is a 10% penalty and an additional add-on fee to the sheriff for late collection. If you have not received your tax bill, contact the sheriff's department.

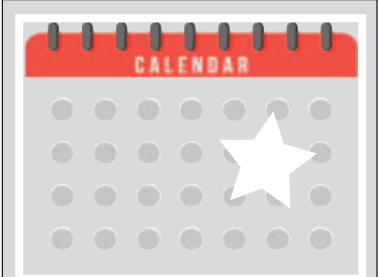
Robinson, Hunt are named to Extension

Libby Robinson and Van Hunt have been appointed to three-year terms to serve on Crittenden County Extension Board of Directors. The appointments were made last week by the fiscal court. Going off of the board are Philip Parish and Karen Mad-dux.

Tabor appointed to Dist. 1 clerk board

Crittenden County Clerk Daryl Tabor was elected last week by his far western Kentucky peers to serve as District 1 representative on the Kentucky County Clerks Association (KCCA) legislative board.

Each year at KCCA's fall conference, new leadership for the coming year is chosen to guide the 120-member association. Comprised of 12 districts representing all county clerks across



HOLIDAY Things to Do

- The Living Christmas Tree will have shows at Fohs Hall on Dec. 7, 8, 13, 14 and 15.
- Salem's Christmas Parade will be at 5 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 30. The theme will be Christmas Movies. Call 988-2600 for more information.
- Marion's Christmas Parade is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 7. The nighttime parade's theme will be White Nights and Magical Lights. Call 270-965-2239 for information or to register a float.
- Following Marion's parade, the Lions Club will host its free Supper with Santa at the fairgrounds Agriculture Building.
- Fredonia Christmas Parade's "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" is at 6 p.m., Friday, Dec. 6.
- Main Street in Uniontown, Union County, will come alive on Sunday, December 8, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Local residents will portray scenes inspired by some of the most beloved Christmas movies and stories, bringing cherished holiday memories to life. Visitors are invited to enjoy this festive event from the comfort of their cars in a special drive-through experience.
- Caldwell County Chamber of Commerce's Christmas Parade, "Sweet Christmas," is at 5 p.m., Friday, Dec. 13.
- Cumberland River Homes in Salem is having a "Christmas Laugh Out Loud" celebration and fundraising event on Dec. 13 at Salem Baptist Church, featuring some big-name entertainers.
- Sturgis Christmas Parade will be at 5 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 14 with a special guest – Santa Claus!

the state, the legislative board helps set policy alongside the executive board, also weighing in on proposed legislation in the General Assembly that would affect elections, vehicle registration and other aspects of the county clerk's office.

Tabor has served as District 1 representative in the past and last year served on the decision-making board as an alternate.

Tyler will head area health department

A familiar face at the Pennyryle District Health Department will take on its top leadership role in early 2025.

Trigg County Judge-Executive Stan Humphries, a member of the district health board, announced Thursday that Ashley Tyler has been selected as the next Pennyryle District Health Department Director, according to a report by Princeton radio station WPKY. Tyler will step into the role following the retirement

of the current director at the end of this year.

Currently serving as the department's assistant director, Tyler has a long history of leadership in public health. She previously worked as the Director of Nursing and as the HANDS/Harm Reduction Supervisor for the Todd County Health Department. Her diverse career also includes time in the Cath Lab at Jennie Stuart Health and as a school nurse for Trigg County Schools through a partnership with the Graves County Health Department.

Tyler is a graduate of Caldwell County High School. She earned an associate degree in nursing from Madisonville Community College in 2001 and earned a bachelor's from Northern Kentucky University in 2021.

The Pennyryle District Health Department, headquartered in Eddyville, serves five counties: Lyon, Trigg, Caldwell, Crittenden and Livingston

Community Christmas accepting donations

Contributions are being accepted for 2024 Community Christmas in Crittenden County.

Donations help supplement angel tree tags for younger children and allow the Crittenden County Inter-Agency Council to purchase gift cards and vouchers from local businesses for older teens.

Financial contributions may be made to Farmers Bank through Monday, Dec. 9.

Checks should be made payable to Crittenden County Community Services, Inc.

Additionally, monetary donations for canned goods that will be distributed through Community Christmas can be taken to Marion Baptist Church through Friday, Dec. 6.

For more information, contact Julie Herrin at Marion Baptist Church at (270) 965-5232.

5K race on Turkey Day

Union County Cross Country invites you to come wobble and gobble down the runway on Thursday, Nov. 28 at the Sturgis Airport. Registration for the 5K run and walk begins at 7 a.m. with race at 8 a.m. Cost is \$25.

A. Legion announces HS oratory scholarship

The American Legion is hosting its annual High School Oratory Scholarship Program, "A Constitutional Speech Contest," open to high school students (including homeschoolers) under age 20. Participants will deliver two speeches: an 8-10-minute prepared oration on the Constitution and a 3-5-minute assigned topic speech, with topics drawn the day of the contest.

The First District contest is set for 2 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 12 at the Lee S. Jones Convention Center in Eddyville. Registration deadline is Jan. 8. Eligible counties include Ballard, Caldwell, Calloway, Carlisle, Crittenden, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Livingston, Lyon, Marshall, Mc-Cracken and Trigg.

Prizes range from \$200 to \$500 at the district level, with winners advancing to higher contests offering scholarships.



50 YEARS AGO

November 27, 1974

■ From a student's view, especially if that student is a first grader, Thanksgiving may mean several things. For some first graders, such as Chris Cook, Stephanie Jenkins and Robert Greenwell, in Miss Helen Moore's first grade at Fohs Hall, Thanksgiving means Indians, teepees and the eventful Thanksgiving dinner in which the Indians brought food to the Pilgrims. The students depicted a scene by making teepees and bringing Indian dolls. All students in the class participated in making the display. Meanwhile in Mrs. Carolyn Barrett's first grade at Fohs Hall, Thanksgiving is seen as a time for giving thanks and for family worship. Kim Martin, Cassandra Moore and Glenn Fritts were pictured with a Thanksgiving display.

■ The 1974-1975 Rocket roundballers were Pat Perry, Bennett Redd, David Perryman, Greg Morrill, Daryl Sherer, Jimmy Croft, Phil LeFan (manager), Steve Roberts, Danny Hodges, David Kelly, Keith Cosby, Clark Towery, Bart Conway (manager), Donnie Mills, Don Thomas, Seldon Howerton, Mike Tinsley, Mike Templeton and Mark Hamby. The varsity Lady Rockets were Estie Thomas, Annette Moss, Lori Jenkins, Jeanne Curnel, Cindy Jepsen, Angie Mussara, Jeanne Hinchee, Markeata Brown, Debbie York, Cindy Wright, Janel Morris, Cindy Brookshire, Mary Ann Greene, Julie Barnes and Tina Roberson.

■ Randy Poindexter, a half-back for the 1974 Crittenden County Rockets, walked away from the football banquet with a handful of coveted trophies and plaques. Poindexter, the son of Mrs. Ruby Poindexter Frantz of Crayne, was selected in secret voting by his teammates to receive the Most Valuable Player and the Most Valuable Senior awards. Rocket Coach Roy Cherry announced that Poindexter had also been named to the All-West Kentucky Conference team. Other awards handed out at the banquet, held at the Marion Country Club went to: Mike Cook, Most Valuable Lineman; Mark Hamby, Most Valuable Back; Greg West, Most Valuable Freshman; Jimmy Hughes, Most Valuable Sophomore; Mike Hunt, Most Valuable Junior; Jay Tabor, Most Improved Player; Gerald Ford and Kent Sturgeon, Sportsmanship Awards; and Roy Cherry and Mike Taylor, Straight A Awards.

25 YEARS AGO

December 2, 1999

■ Roy Hazard of Marion held a 9.25-pound turnip that measured 30 inches in diameter. Hazard said the turnip was grown by a friend in Princeton, Cortez Easley, and that the mammoth turnip was the runt of the turnip litter. Generally, the fall crop is planted about two months prior to the first autumn frost. The fast-growing vegetable belongs to the mustard branch of the cabbage family and can easily be grown in home gardens.

■ The Pennyryle Area Development District awarded \$11,500 to the Mattoon Fire Department for a 40x20 foot expansion at its fire station. The Area Development Fund grant was appropriated by the Kentucky General Assembly throughout the state for public works projects. State Senator Paul Herron and Representative Mike Cherry made the presentation to the Mattoon fire chief David Travis. Crittenden County magistrate Roger Simpson and Judge-executive Victor "Pippi" Hardin and PADD representative Chris Sutton were also at the presentation.

■ Farmers Bank and Trust celebrated its centennial anniversary throughout the month of December. Originally chartered on December 1, 1899, the Farmers Bank would host an array of anniversary celebrations at the main office and branch drive-thru on Main Street.

■ Brandon Sherer took aim at a basket while teammate Justin Hill got knocked off his feet during some physical play under the goal at Dawson Springs. Opening against a non district foe, the Rocket basketball team took care of business handing host Dawson Springs a 79-58 loss. The Rockets played Dawson with little time to prepare as success of Rocket football season cut pre-season basketball short for some players.

10 YEARS AGO

November 27, 2014

■ Crittenden County Clerk Carolyn Byford and county board of elections member Hugh Highful prepared to count ballots as Circuit Clerk Melissa Guill emptied a voting machine in the courtroom of the Crittenden County Courthouse during an election recount in the race for family court judge between Webster County attorney Ben Leonard and Marion attorney Brandi Hagan Rogers. Election Day figures showed Rogers with a slim 50-vote margin over Leonard with 12,336 votes cast across the 5th Judicial Circuit.

■ Crittenden County Middle School's speech team competed at the Calloway County Tournament. Results were James Crider, fifth place in Solo Acting; Sammy Greenwell and Anzie Gobin, fifth place in Duo Acting; Kalysta Jones, fourth place in Solo Acting; Emma Herrin and Ashleigh Dunkerson, sixth place in Improvisational Duo; and Kyron Hicks, was tournament champion in Solo Acting. Also competing and contributing to the team's fifth place finish were Hannah Bell and Leah Fritts.

■ The Rockets basketball teams were featured with special coverage for the season. The Lady Rockers were Chelsea Oliver, Kayla Davis, Taylor Johnson, Marie Riley, Kayla Moss, Mallory McDowell, Cassidy Moss, Meredith Evans, Francesca Peirce, Courtney Beverly, Kiana Nesbitt, Amanda Lynch, Emmalea Barnes, Madison Champion and Mauri Collins. The Rockets basketball roster included Landon Young, Colby Watson, Noah Dickerson, Adam Driver, Noah Hadfield, Jacob Greenwell, Dylan Hicks, Dakota Watson, Ryan James, Dylan Hollis, Tyler Coleman, Will Tolley and Bobby Stephens.

*Read Brenda Underdown's
Forgotten Passages column
at The Press Online*



Welding Study Group

A group of Crittenden County High School students from the welding class sponsored by Saturn Machine Shop in Sturgis and Riley Tool and Machine in Marion spent some time recently at Saturn learning first-hand from tradesmen. Pictured are (from left) Saturn co-owner Charles Lynch, Trent Parrish, Brandon Peters, Gage Beard, Darryl Miles, Dalton Rustin and CCHS welding instructor Mickey Bayer.

Crittenden Press

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Religion The Crittenden Press

Thank God in all events

Thanksgiving is our oldest national holiday. It is one of the original four declared in 1870, but its observance pre-dates the Declaration of Independence by over 150 years. The Mayflower arrived in December 1620 with just over 100 English separatists from the Netherlands. What an awful time to try to set up home in Massachusetts.

The chronicler William Bradford described that first winter as “the starving time.” Over half of those who landed in December were dead by the next spring. It was that handful of survivors that gathered for a thanksgiving feast just before winter set in the following November.

In an early Boston newspaper, Publick Occurrences, we read in the Sept. 25, 1690 issue, “The Christianized Indians in some parts of Plymouth, have newly appointed a day of Thanksgiving to God for his Mercy in supplying their extream [sic.] and pinching Necessities under their late want of Corn, & for His giving them now a prospect of a very Comfortable Harvest. Their Example may be worth Mentioning.” (Publick Occurrences, Boston,

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In the middle of the War of Independence when the British had blockaded the colonies and nearly shut down all trade the Pennsylvania Evening Post reported, “Therefore we have thought fit, with the advice of the Council and House of Representatives, to appoint Thursday the twenty-third day of November to be observed as a day of public Thanksgiving throughout this colony, hereby calling upon ministers and people to meet for religious worship on said day, and devoutly to offer up their unfeigned praises to Almighty God, the source and benevolent bestower of all good, for his affording the necessary means of subsistence, though our commerce has been prevented, and the supplies from our fisheries denied us. That such health is enjoyed among us, that the lives of our officers and soldiers have been so remarkably preserved, while our enemies have fell before them.” (The Pennsylvania Evening Post, Nov. 23, 1775).

Fourteen years later during his first year as president of the United States, George Washington

made proclamation for a day of thanksgiving. “Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted; for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.” (Proclamation by George Washington on Oct. 3, 1789)

Spending time reading such proclamations throughout the tumultuous history of our nation is a reminder of our need for giving thanks to God in all circumstances. It is

a reminder that we continually fail in living up to our ideals of justice and equality for all. However, the very fact that we can criticize our government and our nation so harshly at times is powerful evidence that we are free to make things better. Most people in the world do not have access to both voice and process.

There have been such proclamations made nearly every year – through wars, civil war, economic recessions and depressions, times of protest and times of calm. Thanksgiving as a way of living life changes everything for those around us. It humbles those who are privileged and makes those who are less so a powerful example of faith.

Think of the vastness of a nation of over 330 million people stopping for a day to give thanks. For all of those who invite strangers to your table – thank you. For all who are part of community meals – thank you. For all who set aside family tensions for a day or two – thank you. For all who will be missing a loved one for the first time this year – thank you for continuing to honor their lives by continuing to live. For all those who are caregivers and are called to work on this day – thank you.

Dr. Sean Niestrath is a minister in Madisonville, Ky. He holds a doctoral degree in ministry. You may contact him at sean.niestrath@outlook.com.




Sean NIESTRATH
Faith-based columnist
Guest Columnist

Give thanks for America this Thanksgiving

Question: With all the polarization in political parties and in congress, corruption in government, problems of drug abuse, crime and poverty in our nation, what is there to celebrate?

Answer: Granted, America has lots of problems. Yet, we Americans, have a great deal to be thankful for. Economic opportunities abound for those willing to train and educate themselves for the workforce. Jobs are available for any-

ASK the PASTOR
By Bob Hardison



one willing to work hard. And, furthermore, those who live conservatively to save, invest wisely, can enjoy economic success (capitalism).

Our constitution gives us a government with checks and balances between the executive, congressional and judicial branches. Thus,

there is a balance of powers and protection for the rights of the minority. Our political system of elected officials put the ultimate power in the hands of the people and not the politicians.

That document guarantees freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly. If one chooses, he can criticize the government openly without fear of being arrested.

Religious freedom is also a special privilege. People can gather to worship in churches, synagogues,

temples and mosques without government interference.

If America wasn't the greatest place to live on earth, people wouldn't be lined up on our borders to get in. This Thanksgiving, remember to be thankful for living in the greatest nation in the world. This Thanksgiving give thanks for America. “Always (give) thanks to God the Father for everything” (Eph. 5:20).

Send your questions to: bob@bobhardison.com

Religious Outreach

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- Old Salem Baptist Church has a Blessing Box located next to the church at 117 Old Salem Church Rd. Everyone is welcome to take items or place them in the box for others to enjoy.
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- Cave Springs Baptist Church between Lola and Joy in Livingston County offers food 24 hours a day, 7 days week at its outdoor Blessing Box in front of the church.



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of Salem Springlake

this Christmas season

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Rodney Phelps, Pastor
(270) 704-2400
emmausbaptistsalem@outlook.com
Follow us on Facebook

St. William Catholic Church

Sunday Mass 11 a.m. 860 S. Main St. Marion, Ky. (270) 965-2477
Father Jojo Joseph

Mexico Baptist Church

Minister of Music Mike Crabtree
Pastor: Morgan Smith
Sunday Worship Services: 10 a.m., 7 p.m.
Sunday Bible Study: 9 a.m.
Sunday Discipleship Training: 6 p.m.
Wednesday Worship Service: 7 p.m.
175 Mexico Rd. (270) 965-4059
MexicoBaptist.org

DEER CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Sunday Bible Study: 10 a.m. *"Whatever It Takes"*
Sunday Worship: 11 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study: 7 p.m.
Approx. 5 miles from the intersection of Hwy. 60 & Hwy. 297
Phone: (270) 965-2220
Bro. Jamie Baker

Emmanuel Baptist Church

108 Hillcrest Dr., Marion | (270) 965-4623
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship: 10:45 a.m., 6 p.m.
Wednesday Adult Bible Study, Children and Youth Activities: 6 p.m.
Captured by a vision...

Tolu Methodist Church

Pastor: David Brown
We invite you to be our guest
Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

Barnett Chapel General Baptist

Sunday School: 10 a.m. Barnett Chapel Rd., Marion, Ky.
Sunday Worship: 11 a.m. Barnett Chapel...
Sunday Night Service: 6 p.m. where everyone is welcome.

Freedom General Baptist Church

Pastor: Ross Atwell
87 Freedom Church Rd., Marion (about 1 mi. from Marion off Ky. 91)
CHURCH TIMES:
Sunday School 10 a.m. Sunday Evening 6 p.m.
Sunday Worship 11 a.m. Wed. Bible Study 6 p.m.

Marion Baptist Church

College & Depot streets, Marion • (270) 965-5232
Pastor: Bro. Aaron Brown • Children's & Youth Pastor: Bro. Shawn Holeman
SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES: 9 a.m. & 11 a.m., ONLINE 11 a.m., SUNDAY SCHOOL: 10:05 a.m.
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- We are an Independent Baptist Church seeking to know Christ, and to make Him known to the community around us. - Pastor Justin Miller

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Crayne Cemetery Road, Crayne, Ky.
Bro. James Driver, Interim Pastor
Sunday Worship 9 a.m.

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224 W. Bellville St., Marion, Ky.
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m.
David LeNeave, Pastor

growing in grace

2 Peter 3:18
PLEASANT GROVE General Baptist Church
Located on Ky. 723, 4 miles north of Salem
Sunday School 10 a.m. | Sunday Worship 11 a.m., 6 p.m. | Wed. 7 p.m.

Marion Church of God

334 Fords Ferry Road, Marion, Ky.
Morning Service 11 a.m.
Sun. Evening 6 p.m. • Wed. Evening 6 p.m.
"Where salvation makes you a member."

Crooked Creek Baptist Church

261 Crooked Creek Church Rd., P.O. Box 442, Marion, Ky. • (270) 704-0914
Sunday School: 10 a.m.
Sunday Worship: 11 a.m.
"Come and Worship with Us"

PINEY FORK

Speaker: Greg Rushing
CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SUNDAY School 10 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. Bible study 6 p.m.
A new beginning, going forward and looking to the future Ky. 506 | Marion, Ky.

Sugar Grove

Cumberland Presbyterian
585 Sugar Grove Church Rd., Marion, Ky. (270) 704-2455
Pastor Jesse Thornton (618) 200-0884
Sun. School: 10 a.m. | Sun. Worship: 11 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Wed. Bible Study: 7 p.m.

Marion Methodist Church

We love intensely, believe deeply, and pray zealously
SUN: Sun. School 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 p.m.
South College St.

Frances Community Church

Bro. Butch Gray
Worship service:..... 11 a.m.
Children's Church ages 3 & up ... 11 a.m.
"The little church with a big heart"

Hurricane Church

Hurricane Church Rd. off Ky. 135 West
Pastor: Bro. Danny Hincee
Sun. School, 10 a.m. • Worship, 11 a.m.
Sun. Evening services, 6 p.m.
Wed. Evening services, 7 p.m.

Unity General Baptist Church

4691 Mott City Rd. • Marion, Ky.
Bro. David Perryman, Pastor
Sunday School 10 a.m.
Sunday Worship 11 a.m.

Marion Church of Christ

546 West Elm Street • (270) 965-9450
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
- The end of your search for a friendly church -

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Rodney Phelps, Pastor
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emmausbaptistsalem@outlook.com
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Sunday Mass 11 a.m.
860 S. Main St. Marion, Ky.
(270) 965-2477
Father Jojo Joseph

Mexico Baptist Church

Minister of Music Mike Crabtree
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Approx. 5 miles from the intersection of Hwy. 60 & Hwy. 297
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585 Sugar Grove Church Rd., Marion, Ky. (270) 704-2455
Pastor Jesse Thornton (618) 200-0884
Sun. School: 10 a.m. | Sun. Worship: 11 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Wed. Bible Study: 7 p.m.

Marion Methodist Church

We love intensely, believe deeply, and pray zealously
SUN: Sun. School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:45 p.m.
South College St.

Frances Community Church

Bro. Butch Gray
Worship service: 11 a.m.
Children's Church ages 3 & up ... 11 a.m.
"The little church with a big heart"

Hurricane Church

Hurricane Church Rd. off Ky. 135 West
Pastor: Bro. Danny Hinchee
Sun. School, 10 a.m. • Worship, 11 a.m.
Sun. Evening services, 6 p.m.
Wed. Evening services, 7 p.m.

Unity General Baptist Church

4691 Mott City Rd. • Marion, Ky.
Bro. David Perryman, Pastor
Sunday School 10 a.m.
Sunday Worship 11 a.m.

Marion Church of Christ

546 West Elm Street • (270) 965-9450
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
- The end of your search for a friendly church -

Local educator, daughter celebrated by family court

STAFF REPORT

Marion City Hall was filled with heartfelt celebration on Friday as Judge Brandi Rogers, local officials and adoption advocates recognized Melissa Shewcraft and her adopted daughter, Amaryllis, as the Fifth Judicial District Family Court Adoptive Family of the Year. The ceremony, part of the court's 10th annual Adoption Day, also included a proclamation from Crittenden County Fiscal Court declaring the date as Adoption Day in Crittenden County.

Melissa Shewcraft, a single mother and local educator, shared her journey to motherhood, a dream she had nurtured since middle school. Her story became reality in 2020 when she welcomed Amaryllis into her home through an emergency foster placement. Their bond was immediate, and by March 2021, the adoption was finalized.

Shewcraft described her adopted daughter as her greatest joy and the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. Amaryllis, now a vibrant 6-year-old, has brought immense happiness not only to Shewcraft but also to their extended family and community.

Judge Rogers emphasized the significance of Adoption Day and the broader goal of raising awareness about chil-

dren in need of forever homes.

"Our Annual Adoption Day allows us an opportunity to recognize a special family in our community and thank them for giving the gift of love," Rogers said. "This year especially, it is important to pause and remember there is light, even in the darkest of years. Adoption remains a light."

Crittenden County Judge-Executive Perry Newcom joined the celebration by presenting a formal proclamation, underscoring the importance of adoption and honoring families like the Shewcrafts. The proclamation declared Nov. 22 as Adoption Day in the county, with Newcom highlighting the unique and transformative role adoptive families play in the community. Newcom is an adoptive father and grandfather.

"There are many different definitions of family, but adoptive families are particularly special," Newcom stated. "For every child, there is a family – they just need to find each other."

Shewcraft's journey to adoption was not without challenges. Before Amaryllis, she fostered other children, experiencing both heartbreak and joy as she navigated the complexities of fostering and reunification. Through it all, her resolve to provide a loving

home remained unwavering. Foster care doesn't come without heartbreaks, but the rewards outweigh all the hard times, she explained.

The ceremony also shined a light on the pressing need for adoptive families across Kentucky, where over 8,000 children are in foster care, including 322 currently awaiting adoption. Brenda Kirk, supervisor for the Crittenden County Cabinet for Health and Family Services, urged attendees to consider opening their homes to children in need. "These children come from every corner of our state and are waiting for someone to love them," she said.

As part of the celebration, attendees added their fingerprints to a symbolic family tree, a tradition that emphasizes the importance of community in supporting adoptive families. Judge Rogers encouraged attendees to learn more about the adoption process, stressing that "the holiday season is the perfect time to recognize these children and bring attention to them so that maybe the right family will come forward."

The Shewcraft family's story is a powerful testament to the enduring impact of adoption. Their journey was featured in a Mother's Day article in this newspaper in 2023.



Melissa Shewcraft and her adopted daughter Amaryllis were presented the Fifth Judicial District of Family Court the Adoptive Family of the Year award on Friday at city hall. Hear more from the two of them on our Monday podcast at The-Press.com.

Some ideas for managing holiday stress

Very recently, I heard someone say that the thought of Thanksgiving was anxiety-inducing because so many things happened between Thanksgiving and Christmas. If you feel this way, you are not alone. Stress can come from worrying about money, travel, work, childcare, or dealing with the absence of someone you love. While it is not uncommon, it does not have to take over your holidays.

We should find ways to better care for ourselves by engaging in self-care. Self-care is a broad term involving attitudes, knowledge, and activities to improve or maintain our well-being. Focusing on self-care consists of using coping skills, which are a set of activities or skills to reduce stress. Coping skills and activities can vary, often including drawing, painting, sewing, walking or using boxed breathing.

When thinking about stress and self-care, we should consider events or situations that create stress and those coping activities that reduce our stress. A simple way to evaluate your stress is to list and rank those things that cause stress from least to greatest. That way, you can find your most problematic stressors. Once you've made those lists, do the same for your coping skills. Rank them from least to greatest in terms of what gives you the most relief from stress. Lastly, if your stress is not improving or worsening, text or call the three-digit number 988 to speak with a crisis counselor and receive support.



Rebecca WOODALL
EXTENSION AGENT
FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCE

Grief is another common experience during the holidays. Grief is a complex reaction to loss that can often be intense and overwhelming. Although the experience of grief is unique to each person, it can often be emotional, physical, and spiritual.

Emotions may arise when we remember special moments or significant events. It is normal to feel a varying degree of grief when reminded of loss. Holidays often trigger the pain of loss.

To help you cope with grief triggers, it can be helpful to:

- Permit yourself to feel the emotions. It is OK to allow yourself to laugh and cry.
- Reflect on your memories. Tell stories, write, or find ways to communicate that are most comfortable for you.
- Create a tradition. Use the date for a special remembrance or celebration.


Reach out for support. Don't go through grief alone. Reach out to friends, family, professionals, and support groups.

Volunteer your time to a cause. Connect to a specific cause or organization meaningful to you and/or your loved one.

Remember that grief is not a sign of weakness or a setback. Rather, it is a reflection of what's important to you—we all grieve, and you are not alone.

For more tips on getting through the Holidays, join us For "Tips to beat Holiday Stress" on Dec. 2 or 5:30. Please call 270-965-5236 to register

Reference
National Institute of Mental Health (2021). "Caring for Your Mental Health." 2022, from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health>.



OCTOBER 2024

Activity Report

Here is Crittenden County Sheriff Evan Head's monthly activity report for his department.

	October	2023 Avg Monthly
Collisions Investigated	10	5.25
Complaints	68	54.58
Papers Served	50	28.83
Service Attempts	5	8.17
Total Service Attempts	150	56.17
Transports	7	3.17
Special Detail	108	37.83
Training Hours	72.5	11.42
Verbal Warning	15	11.25
Criminal Citation	35	5.33
Officer Assist	5	4.75
Building Checks	50	59.92
Total Manhours	1,010	486.46
Bailiff Court Hours	108.25	47.48
Cases Opened	17	9.58
DUIs	2	0.42
Felony Arrests	17	3.67
Misdemeanor Arrests	23	6.92
Motorist Assists	13	6.08
Traffic Citations	22	6.42
General Policing	223	69.83
Followup Investigations	23	9.42
Call for Service	18	23.75
Vehicle Inspections	58	-

■ Sheriff Head also announced during his report to the county's fiscal court last week that almost 50 percent of the county's taxes had been collected in less than a month. The discount period ends this week. Taxes not paid before the end of 2024 will incur a penalty.

DEMO

Continued from page 1

safety risks during the razing. The building was brought down last week with the help of two large excavators.

Pinnacle, Inc., a Benton-based company, is the project's general contractor. The firm has completed major projects across the region, including work at Murray State University, Patti's 1880s Settlement in Grand Rivers and Kentucky Dam Village Conference Center. Pinnacle's president, Dennis Smith, is a Crittenden County landowner. His wife, June Lamb Smith, grew up in Marion and went to school here.

Efforts were made to locate a time capsule believed to have been placed in the courthouse when it was built in 1961. Newspaper articles from that time detailed the capsule's contents but did not specify its location.

"We searched all potential voids, but without a clear starting point, it was like looking for a needle in a haystack," said Judge Newcom. Despite the efforts, the time capsule remains missing.

A sturdier perimeter fence is being installed this week, reducing available parking around the court square. Eventually, Court Street behind the construction site will be converted to a one-way street, running north from city hall toward the funeral home. Diagonal parking on the west side of Court Street will be ad-

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Crittenden County Fiscal Court

Judge-executive




Perry Newcom (R)
107 S. Main St.
Marion, KY 42064
270.965.5251 (o)
270.704.0457 (c)
Perry.newcom@crittendencountyky.org

District 1 Magistrate




Dave Belt (R)
308 Chandler Farm Rd.
Sturgis, KY 42459
270.704.0199 (c)
Dave.Belt@crittendencountyky.org

District 2 Magistrate




Matt Grimes (R)
301 State Route 297
Marion, Ky. 42064
270.704.9832 (c)
matt.grimes@crittendencountyky.org

District 3 Magistrate




Robert Kirby (R)
1698 Chapel Hill Road
Marion, KY 42064
270.965.9727 (h)
270.889.1504 (c)
Robert.kirby@crittendencounty.org

District 4 Magistrate




Chad Thomas (D)
701 Hebron Church Rd.
Marion, KY 42064
270.965.9727 (h)
270.339.4949 (c)
Chad.Thomas@crittendencountyky.org

District 5 Magistrate



Travis Perryman (R)
1700 Jackson School Road
Fredonia KY 42411
270.969.1168 (c)
Travis.perryman@crittendencountyky.org

District 6 Magistrate



Scott Belt (R)
397 Fishtrap Road
Marion KY 42064
270.704.0366 (c)
Scott.belt@crittendencountyky.org

Fiscal Court meets in regular session at the courthouse at 8:30 a.m., on the third Thursday of each month

LIVING TREE CHOIR PRACTICE



Tuesday was the first rehearsal where performers actually took their place in the Living Christmas Tree. Until then, they'd practiced on the floor at Fohs Hall. The free shows will be presented across five days in December and will last just over an hour. You can listen to our podcasts at The Press Online to hear from the directors and others involved in the production, the first of its kind in almost 25 years. Fohs Hall hosted Living Tree performances many times between the mid 1980s and 2001.

TREE

Continued from page 1 husband and wife team explain. The hour-long program is designed to offer something for everyone. Expect familiar tunes like Sleigh Ride and Let It Snow alongside sacred pieces such as Do You Hear What I Hear? and a beautiful Gregorian chant performed in Latin. Plans are to make the shows more than just a performance, Corey Crider said. He continued by describing the program as a blend of joy, nostalgia and introspection performed inside a decorated and appropriately detailed and dimly lighted Fohs Hall. "I think it will create a contemplative mood," he said. Rebecca Johnson is the piano accompanist and John Michael Crider will direct a handbell choir, something new to the Living Tree lineup. The couple believes the handbells will add an ethereal quality to the performance with both prelude and program pieces. John Michael is an accomplished director and producer. He studied music media production in college, has been involved in musical ensembles virtually his whole life and was a choir director for his acapela group in college. The

bells choir is made up of local Methodist church members, who perform regularly during Sunday worship. "We've been working on this for six or seven months now, practicing our program which will include five pieces," he said. "It should be exciting. A couple of the songs will be familiar." The children's choir will perform two delightful numbers, Joy to the World and a medley of Frosty the Snowman and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. Michelle Crider sees the children's involvement as both a highlight of the show and a way to inspire future generations. "Part of our long-term goal is to get more kids in the community to become involved in singing," said Michelle Crider, who grew up performing at madrigal concerts in Henderson. The production's centerpiece is, of course, the towering, light-adorned Christmas tree itself. Choir members stand within the tree structure, which is decorated and lit to evoke a serene, contemplative atmosphere. Bringing the Living Christmas Tree back to life has been no small feat. From recruiting a 30-member adult choir and a dozen children to crafting a set and coordinating logistics, it's been a community-wide effort. Volunteers from the

Community Arts Foundation and Fohs Hall, Inc., along with local sponsors, have pitched in to make the production possible. "For me, the most rewarding part has been watching everyone come together," Corey said. "There are a lot of people we see in the old pictures of those Living Tree programs from the past," Corey said. "A lot of them are no longer here with us, and it is a great way to remember and to honor them; by doing something that was important to them and bringing this back to Marion." The Criders hope the production sparks a renewed appreciation for choral music in the community - and perhaps even inspires local churches to embrace it again. "Choral singing used to be an essential part of worship and community life," Corey said. "Unfortunately, that's faded over time. But judging by the enthusiasm from both our cast and what will be our audience, it's clear people still crave that sense of connection." The performances are free to the public, with donations accepted. Receptions, sponsored by local organizations, will follow each show, offering a chance to mingle and celebrate the season.



We are NWS StormReady

The National Weather Service (NWS) was in Marion last week to recognize Crittenden County Emergency Management in its efforts to make Crittenden a StormReady County. Signage denoting the designation will be posted at the county line on major highways. To earn the distinction, local emergency management personnel alongside other first responders had to provide proof of various preparedness measures in order to receive the accreditation. Pictured are (from left) Crittenden County Emergency Management Director Jason Hurley, NWS Warning Coordination Meteorologist Christine Wielgos, NWS Meteorologist in Charge Steve Eddy and Crittenden County EM Assistant Director Scott Hurley, who is also the county fire chief.



Crittenden County's chess team won first place last weekend in match play at Marion. Pictured are (from left) coach Dr. Derrick Ford, Kayleigh Duvall, Aria Ford, Lyliah Householder and Russell Vince. Not Pictured, Ryker Bryant.

Chess team delivers top prize as it hosts regional competition

The Crittenden County Blue Knights Scholastic Chess Tournament on Saturday brought together almost a dozen regional schools for an exciting day of strategic competition at Crittenden County Elementary School. The tournament showcased impressive talents of local and regional chess players, with many students participating in their first official competition. Seven local students competed in the tournament, with outstanding individual performances from Crittenden County Elementary students and

homeschool participants. Russell Vince claimed first place, leading the individual standings in the K5 division, while Ryker Bryant was fifth, Aria Ford sixth, Kayleigh Duvall seventh and Lyliah Householder 11th, all strong finishes. From the homeschool community, Sawyer Bock secured fourth place, and Knox McDonald achieved eighth place. In team competition, Crittenden County Elementary School earned top honors, finishing in first place and underscoring the strength of

the Blue Knights chess program. Excellence in scholastic chess competition has a longstanding history in Crittenden County. "The tournament was a fantastic opportunity for our students to develop their critical thinking and sportsmanship skills," said Blue Knights' coach Dr. Derrick Ford. "We are thrilled to see their hard work and dedication to chess pay off." The Blue Knights will continue their competitive season at Paducah Tilghman on Dec. 7.

Eddyville gets 3 med-cannabis dispensary licenses

STAFF REPORT Gov. Andy Beshear has announced the first group of medical cannabis dispensary license recipients following a randomized lottery. Among the selected businesses are several in western Kentucky, marking a significant step forward for the state's medical cannabis program. Following are the licensees in the three regions across western Kentucky.

- Mallard Club LLC, Oak Grove, Christian County
- ARKY Capital Investments LLC, Eddyville, Lyon County
- River City Relief House LLC, Eddyville, Lyon County
- DPDMJF Cannabis Holding Company LLC, Eddyville, Lyon County
- OM MED LLC, Paducah, Mc-



- Cracken County
- KY-CannCo LLC, Paducah, McCracken County
- Green4U LLC, Mayfield, Graves County
- Leiber Canna II LLC, Paducah, McCracken County
- OTC KY 3 LLC, Henderson, Henderson County
- Bungalow House LLC, Owensboro, Daviess County
- Tree Soft LLC, Henderson, Henderson County
- CP Investment LLC, Owensboro, Daviess County

Selected applicants must finalize license fees within 15 days to proceed. A second lottery for additional licenses is scheduled for Dec. 16. This initiative aims to provide safe, affordable treatment options for Kentuckians with qualifying medical conditions. For more details, visit kymedcan.ky.gov.

ELECTED CITY MAYOR | COUNCIL MEMBERS

Marion City Council

City of Marion Mayor

D'Anna Browning
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Marion, KY 42064
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mayorbrowning@marionky.gov

Council Member | Mayor Pro Tem

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On Facebook: Marion, KY City Hall | Mayor's Office - City of Marion, KY

Marion City Hall, 217 S. Main St., Marion, KY 42064 | City Council meets in regular session at city hall at 5 p.m., on the third Monday of each month

SportsShorts

BASKETBALL LaRue wins 3p contest

Freshman Coby LaRue won the three-point shooting contest Saturday night at Rocket Arena. The contest was something new in conjunction with Meet the Rockets, an annual kickoff to the basketball season. LaRue made 11 threes in one minute to win the final round tiered competition. Lady Rocket freshman Jordyn Hodge scored seven against LaRue in the championship round, but had made an event record 16 earlier in the contest.



FOOTBALL KHSAA Playoffs

LAST WEEK'S PLAYOFF SCORES
Tilghman 56, Louisville DeSales 14
Union County 41, Hart County 21
Lex. Christian 47, Mayfield 7
South Warren 42, North Bullitt 7
Owensboro Catholic 42, Monroe Co. 14

THIS WEEK'S STATE SEMIFINALS
Class 6A
Great Crossing (10-3) at Ryle (11-2)
Frederick Douglass (9-4) at Trinity (11-2)
Class 5A
Highlands (11-2) at Cooper (13-0)
Bowling Green (11-2) at So. Warren (12-1)
Class 4A
Cov. Catholic (11-2) at Franklin Co. (12-0)
Corbin (12-1) at Paducah Tilghman (13-0)
Class 3A
Lex. Catholic (7-6) at CAL (10-3), 7:30
Belfry (11-2) at Union County (11-2)
Class 2A
Somerset (9-4) at O'boro Catholic (13-0)
Lex. Christian (11-2) at Beechwood (12-1)
Class 1A
Raceland (9-4) at KY Country Day (10-2)
Campbellsville (11-2) at Sayre (13-0)

OUTDOORS Hunting Seasons

Here are some of the most common hunting opportunities currently in season or coming up:

Deer Archery	Sept. 7 - Jan. 20
Turkey Archery	Sept. 7 - Jan. 20
Deer Crossbow	Sept. 21 - Jan. 20
Raccoon	Oct. 1 - Feb. 28
Turkey Crossbow	Nov. 9 - Dec. 31
Rabbit	Nov. 11 - Feb. 10
Quail	Nov. 11 - Feb. 10
Raccoon Trapping	Nov. 11 - Feb. 28
Woodcock	Nov. 11 - Dec. 11
Bobcat	Nov. 16 - Feb. 28
Squirrel Fall	Nov. 28 - Feb. 15
Dove	Nov. 28 - Dec. 8
Duck	Nov. 28 - Dec. 1
Canada Goose	Nov. 28 - Feb. 15
Coyote Night (lights)	Dec. 1 - March 31
Duck	Dec. 7 - Jan. 31
Turkey Shotgun	Dec. 7-13
Deer Muzzleloader	Dec. 14-22
Dove	Dec. 21 - Jan. 12
Deer Youth Free	Dec. 28-29
Coyote	Year Round
Ground hog	Year Round

Deer numbers lower

Crittenden County's November deer harvest has been falling since 2019 when 2,695 deer were taken during the month. November is always the heaviest harvest month because it includes the 16-day modern firearm season. So far, hunters this month have taken 1,964 deer, including just 1,883 during the rifle season, which ended Sunday.

That's significantly less than just five years ago. Still, the November harvest over the past few seasons has been higher than 2011 and 2009. Back in 1999, the November take was 1,645, the lowest in 25 years. Deer season opens the second Saturday of November each year. Because of the way the calendar fell this fall, season opened perhaps a few days before the rut got going well. Plus, it was warm most of the season and Thanksgiving's long holiday weekend didn't fall within framework of the season. Each of those factors may have been in play, creating a moderate harvest during rifle season. Beyond the low gun season harvests of this year and 2023 in Crittenden County, you'd have to flip back to 2011 to find a rifle hunt with under 2,000 whitetails harvested. Top harvest counties during the rifle season were Christian at 2,249 followed by Hardin, Breckinridge, Grayson, Nelson and Graves. Statewide, Crittenden's modern firearm season total ranks ninth. In overall harvest, counting all types of weapons, Crittenden is eighth. Traditionally, the county has been among the top two or three.

In Livingston County, the rifle harvest was up slightly at 1,197 over 2023's take of 1,112, but down from 2022, which was 1,295 in 2022. Caldwell County has seen a similar trend with the harvest down from 2022's 1,395 to 1,290 this fall. Last year, Caldwell rifle hunters took 1,265 deer.



Lady Rocket Basketball team members (seated from left) are Georgia Holeman, Ayanna Matthews, Chloe Hunt, Elliot Evans, Jordyn Hodge, Andrea Federico, (back) assistant coach Jessie Johnson, manager Breanna Walker, Brodi Rich, Abigail Champion, Anna Boone, Morgan Stewart, Bristyn Rushing, Adri Berry, Sarah Grau, assistant coach Bristyn Prowell and head coach Shannon Hodge.

Hodge thinks No. 32 could be special

STAFF REPORT

As coach Shannon Hodge prepares to cut the wrapper off of her 32nd basketball campaign, there's very little that escapes her seasoned scrutiny. She picks at her team's ruggedness and doggedness with the frankness of a minister. She expects more in that department and covets better communication on the floor, something she preaches on until her face matches that blue coaching shirt.

A critic indeed, the veteran skipper misses nothing – be it good or bad. And, she's mighty high, if not outright confident in the abilities of a team she calls the most athletic of her decades-long tennancy on the Lady Rocket sideline.

Built for a championship run, armed with experience and a lineup that returns the top seven players from last year's 19-14 squad, Hodge knows it could be banquet time if certain things fall into place, according to her plan.

With two district titles and two All A Classic regional championships over the past three years, the Lady Rockets are focused on adding more hardware to their already impressive resume.

"This group has what it takes to compete with anyone in the region," the coach says. "The key will be how physical we play, how well we rebound and if we bring intensity every night."

Leading the way is junior guard Anna Boone, who averaged 22 points per game last season, scoring 725 total points while shooting 43% from the field. Boone also hit 68 three-pointers at a 42% clip and knocked down 215 free throws, converting 80% of her attempts. She's expected to be the team's go-to scorer once again after being tapped as the Second Region Player of the Year last season.

"Anna has worked hard in the off-season, improving her strength and passing," Hodge said. "A lot is expected of her, not just by me but by everyone."

Elliot Evans, another key junior, brings energy and versatility to both ends of the floor. She averaged 9.7 points per game last season while shooting 42% from the field and pulling down 7 rebounds per game. Evans also contributed defensively as the team's perimeter stopper.

"Elliot is explosive and runs the floor better than anyone," Hodge said. "She needs to continue rebounding well and scoring in double digits."

Freshman guard Jordyn Hodge is a rising star, averaging 9.5 points per game while hitting 38% of her three-point attempts a year ago. She's improved her strength and ball-handling, making her a more complete player.

Junior center Bristyn Rushing could be the team's X-factor, the coach says.

LADY ROCKET ROSTER

Adri Berry	14	Fr	F
Anna Boone	2	Jr	G
Abigail Champion	12	8th	G
Elliot Evans	22	Jr	G
Andrea Federico	20	Jr	F
Jordyn Hodge	11	Fr	G
Georgia Holeman	15	Jr	G
Chloe Hunt	34	Jr	G
Ayanna Matthews	44	Fr	F
Bristyn Rushing	25	Jr	C
Morgan Stewart	4	So	F



Coach Shannon Hodge 32nd Season
Hodge's Coaching Recod 412-427

LADY ROCKETS' RESUME
All A Regional Champion
1998, 1999, 2001, 2008, 2011, 2017, 2021, 2023, 2024
District Champion
1978, 1984, 2011, 2017, 2018, 2022, 2023
Second Region Champion
2011

She averaged 5.5 points and 5.4 rebounds per game last season. Her ability to stay out of foul trouble and dominate on the boards will be critical.

"Bristyn is capable of rebounding in double figures every night," Hodge said. "If she stays disciplined, she can make a huge difference for us."

The team averaged 57 points per game last season while shooting 39% from the field. Its 34% accuracy from three-point range highlights the girls' ability to score from beyond the arc, while a solid 73% free throw percentage gives them a reliable weapon at the charity stripe.

Rebounding remains an area for growth, as the Lady Rockets averaged 29 boards per game. Hodge is pushing her team to improve in that department, especially against tough regional opponents like Henderson County and Christian County, who bring to bear those type strengths and are among the top teams in the region again this winter.

"There's a lot of parity in the region this year," Hodge said. "It's up for grabs, and consistency will be the key. If we play to our potential, we can be right there."

CCHS SCHEDULE

Dec 2 at Caldwell Co.
Dec 4 at Todd Central @Marshall Hoopfest
Dec 6 UNION COUNTY
Dec 10 at Trigg County
Dec 13 LYON COUNTY
Dec 17 at Lyon County
Dec 21 at Carlisle County
Dec 27-29 at South Warren Tournament
Jan 3 WEBSTER COUNTY
Jan 6 LIVINGSTON CENTRAL (All A)
Jan 9 All A Semifinals at Crittenden
Jan 11 All A Championship at CCHS 4 pm
Jan 14 TRIGG COUNTY
Jan 17 at Livingston County
Jan 21 at Mayfield
Jan 24 CALDWELL COUNTY
Jan 31 at Lyon County
Feb 1 at Christian County
Feb 7 DAWSON SPRINGS (Homecoming)
Feb 8 at Union County
Feb 11 at Hopkins Central
Feb 13 HENDERSON COUNTY
Feb 15 HOPKINSVILLE
Feb 18 at Madisonville
Feb 20 MCLEAN COUNTY
Feb 24-28 District at Trigg County

Junior Andrea Federico is the team's most physical and vocal player. Hodge believes "Fed's" improved confidence on the offensive end could be a real gamechanger.

"She's starting to look for her shot and take the ball to the basket. If she can add that to her game and continue to be a physical player for us, it will be big," Hodge said.

First off the bench will be junior Georgia Holeman and sophomore Morgan Stewart. Both have plenty of playing time under their belts and provide reliable depth – Holeman on the perimeter and Stewart in the paint.

Junior Chloe Hunt, the team's would-be point guard, continues to rehab knee injuries that have already cost her most of her high school career to date. The coach says Hunt could be back and ready to practice by mid December. She said Hunt's leadership and skills would add more spark to an already dynamic lineup.

Otherwise, CCHS will rely on freshmen Adri Berry and Ayanna Matthews for further depth, and perhaps some eighth graders like Abigail Champion.

Crittenden County will open its season Dec. 2 at Caldwell County. Rocket Arena will host this season's All A Classic, a tournament in which Crittenden County has carved out a great deal of success.

Crittenden County High School's soccer team held its annual awards ceremony recently. Players were recognized with certificates and awards. Among those honored were (front from left) Ruby Peek, Heart of a Rocket Award; Haley Moore; Aliza Maraman; Adri Berry, Rising Star Award; Kylie Bloodworth, Up & Coming Award; Zoey Hodge, Dixie Hunter, Defensive MVP; (back) assistant coach Heather Bloodworth, Joslyn Silcox, Macibelle Hardesty, Lifesaver Award; Ella Whitney; Ella Geary, Offensive MVP; Mollie Blazina, Best Adaptability Award; Hayden Peak and Madison Walker, Most Coachable Award; and head coach Jessica DeBurgo.



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Members of the 2024-2025 Rocket Basketball team are (seated from left) seniors Tyree McLean, Chase Conyer, Kaiden Travis, Cam-Ron Belcher, Andrew Candelario, Klayton Murray, Ethan Rhodes, managers Addie Morris and Erin Korzenborn, (second row) Caden Howard, manager Caden Blazina, Ethan Thomas, manager Aiden Fralix, Colton McLean, assistant coaches Coley Rogers and Devin Belt, head coach Matt Fralix, assistant coach Earl Fralix, Logan Martin, Brady Dayberry, Brayden Poindexter, (back) Conner Poindexter, Junior Cowsert, Hudson Stokes, Emmitt Ellington, Coby Larue, Shane Fricke, Jack Porter, Jayden Jones and Drake Young.

Rocket depth will be an asset

STAFF REPORT

After a challenging 3-25 campaign last year in Matt Fralix’s first season as head coach, Crittenden County is looking to turn the page with a revamped roster, newfound depth and a fast-paced style of play that aligns with the team’s athleticism.

Fralix has generated a great deal of renewed interest in the program by recruiting a deep roster and the Rockets are focused on long-term improvement starting this winter and building toward a brighter future.

“We’ve revamped the playbook and shifted our style to maximize our speed and athleticism,” Fralix said. “Last year, we slowed things down, but this season, we’ll push the tempo to create opportunities when we can.”

Some injury and illness could slow progress out of the chute, however. Still, the likely starting five right now exemplifies the coach’s new approach. Senior CamRon Belcher, the team’s engine, will run the point and spearhead the defensive effort by guarding opposing teams’ best players on most nights. His quickness makes him a threat to be among the area’s best in steals and assists, while his ability to attack the basket will keep defenses honest.

Joining him in the backcourt is senior Andrew Candelario, who spent the off-season building strength and confidence. Candelario has transformed into a reliable offensive weapon, capable of hitting key shots from long range.

Junior Brayden Poindexter will be a versatile presence in the lineup, filling whatever role the team needs. With the loss of several seniors, Poindexter has stepped up as a leader and will be counted on for his ability to play multiple positions and contribute inside and out.

In the frontcourt, senior Kaiden Travis brings physicality and experience. Known for his tough defense and rebounding ability, Travis is looking to expand his role this year and become a consistent offensive contributor in the post.

Rounding out the likely early-season starters is senior Chase Conyer, a newcomer with a unique skill set. At 6-foot-5, he’s a gifted athlete who can pass, sees the floor well and could stretch defenses with his developing outside shot.

The Rockets’ bench is loaded with young upstarts, particularly from the ninth-grade class. Freshman Coby LaRue, likely the first man off the bench, has shown flashes of brilliance that could elevate him into a starring role. Standing at 6-foot-3, LaRue has become a confident scorer with the ability to score from outside, drive to the basket and finish at the rim.

Freshman Jack Porter is another key piece off the bench. He is a multi-positional guard who plays with intensity. Porter’s ability to handle the point

ROCKET ROSTER

CamRon Belcher	3	Sr	G
Jonah Reddick	31	Sr	C
Ethan Rhodes	25	Sr	F
Chase Conyer	32	Sr	C
Andrew Candelario	14	Sr	G
Tyree McLean	4	Sr	G
Kaiden Travis	24	Sr	F
Klayton Murray	23	Sr	F
Jay Stevenson	12	Jr	F
Caden Howard	5	Jr	G
Brayden Poindexter	30	Jr	F
Colton McLean	-	Jr	-
Logan Martin	20	So	F
Brady Dayberry	10	So	G
Hudson Stokes	11	Fr	G
Coby Larue	1	Fr	G
Junior Cowsert	-	Fr	F
Drake Young	13	Fr	G
Conner Poindexter	21	Fr	F
Jayden Jones	-	Fr	F
Jack Porter	2	Fr	G
Ethan Thomas	15	Jr	F
Emmitt Ellington	-	Fr	F

against varsity competition over the summer impressed the coaching staff, and his continued development will provide valuable depth at the guard spots.

Freshman Drake Young has emerged as a sharpshooter, capable of knocking down shots from beyond the arc. His outside scoring touch will be essential in stretching defenses, and his rebounding ability adds value despite his size.

Freshman Hudson Stokes is learning on the fly but already fits seamlessly into the team’s uptempo style. His speed and athleticism make him a natural for the fast-paced system, and as he gains experience, he’s expected to become a key contributor and is learning the point guard position.

“Our depth is much better this year,” Fralix said. “It gives us flexibility with lineups, and it means guys like (Belcher) don’t always have to handle point guard duties. We can adapt to different matchups and situations.”

Despite the excitement around this team, injuries remain an early hurdle. Senior Jonah Reddick, who grew to 6-7 and is the leading returning scorer, is sidelined for at least a month as he recovers from an illness. Over the summer, he added significant muscle, but will miss the start of the season. He averaged five points a year ago.

Meanwhile, athletic forward Tyree McLean, senior, is working his way back from a knee scope (football injury) and is expected to return in a few weeks. His ability to rebound, defend and push the tempo will further bolster the team’s versatility. Junior Jay Stevenson, another tough and gritty player, is sidelined until mid-to-late December after recovering

CCHS SCHEDULE

Dec 2 WEBSTER COUNTY
Dec 6 UNION COUNTY
Dec 10 at Trigg County
Dec 13 LIVINGSTON CENTRAL
Dec 14 at Apollo
Dec 17 at Lyon County
Dec 19 HOPKINS COUNTY CENTRAL at St. Mary (St. Mary Christmas Classic)
Dec 28 SOUTH PANOLA (Batesville), MS at Caldwell County (Western Kentucky Hoops Classic Boys)
Jan 2 MAYFIELD
Jan 3 at Heritage Christian Academy
Jan 7 LYON COUNTY
Jan 14 TRIGG COUNTY
Jan 17 at Livingston Central
Jan 21 at Union County
Jan 25 at Hopkinsville
Jan 27 at Paducah Tilghman
Jan 28 CALDWELL COUNTY
Jan 31 LYON COUNTY
Feb 4 HERITAGE CHRISTIAN
Feb 7 DAWSON SPRINGS
Feb 8 HICKMAN COUNTY
Feb 11 at Caldwell County
Feb 14 at Webster County
Feb 18 HOPKINSVILLE

from a torn labrum (football injury) but is expected to bring strength and physicality upon his return.

Another guy coming off a record-setting football season is Caden Howard, who is a top-notch receiver, and was injured in the season’s final game. He will bring remarkable athleticism to the lineup once he’s cleared to play.

Senior Ethan Rhodes and freshman Conner Poindexter are scrappy players and could work themselves into some varsity minutes.

Crittenden will face stiff competition in the district, with Lyon and Livingston County returning experienced rosters and Trigg County emerging as a dark horse. However, Coach Fralix remains optimistic about his team’s potential.

“Our goal is to win the district and grow every single night,” he said. “This team is versatile, and the starting lineup may change depending on matchups. We’re focused on improvement.”

The Rockets will rely on their experienced core, led by Belcher, Travis and Poindexter, to set the tone early. Scoring will be the first place the team will want to improve as Belcher and Poindexter averaged a combined six points last season, but will need to be in double digits right away to improve the team’s hopes of winning.

Younger players like LaRue and Porter will play pivotal roles as the season progresses. The return of Reddick in January along with others nursing injuries will bolster both ends of the floor.

Goose sees special stuff in UK Pope

Even before the season started, former Kentucky All-American Jack Givens knew that Mark Pope was the perfect hire for UK.

“He went back and watched every game for every player from last year. How much commitment does that take with an entirely new roster?” said Givens. “He did that for every player. That’s how dedicated he is.

“He is going to do some special stuff. Beating Duke was just the beginning. It is going to be so nice. We are not going to win every game. It ain’t going to be that easy but it is going to be fun. Every guy is going to work hard every night. You are not going to be saying this guy doesn’t play hard this year.”

Givens, the UK Radio Network analyst, likes the mix Kentucky has even if it does remind him of some not so pleasant times from the last few years.

“If you think about teams over the last four or five years that Kentucky has lost to, and I am not just talking about tournaments which have been bad enough, but during the season and that is the team we have now,” Givens said. “It is a team with a couple of point guards who know how to play the game.

“We used to have veteran players on every team we had and teams that have beat us have had that. I like those young lively guys who come in but I am an old school guy. Give me some experience when it comes to winning. Give me experience along with talent and we can win games. We are fortunate to have that this year.”

Givens knows beating Duke was just one win and that UK has major road tests at Clemson Dec. 3 and Gonzaga Dec. 7. However, the 1978 Final Four MVP knows the Duke win was important.

“I really liked that our guys said you (Duke) are good but we know how to play, too. It was fun to see how we won that game and that stays with us,” Givens said.

Givens was a scorer and appreciates offense. He loves the weapons Pope was able to assemble and how he uses those weapons.

“We are a hard team to guard. The only thing you can do wrong in Mark’s offense is not move,” Givens said.

At practice Givens has seen Pope have a drill where players can only have the ball in their hand for a half second before doing something with it.

“You have to be thinking about what to do with the ball before you catch it,” Givens said.

Pope also randomly asks players for three key words off the scouting report from a player they will be guarding in the next game. The UK coach also demands total silence at the shoot-around when players are shooting free throws.

“I asked him why he wants it to-tally quiet and he said because it might be the only five minutes of quiet time the players have all day where they just have to focus on what they are doing. He does things I have not seen before and it works for him.”

Givens marveled at what Pope did after he got the UK job to connect with former players.

“He had a meeting and called all the former players in. He individually called every player,” Givens said. “He asked everyone what he can do to make this thing better. Then he invited us to come around and these young guys saw us and thought it was amazing all these guys came around, so there must be something special here.”

Givens often watches practice and gets a chance to talk with Pope. He likes how the former UK team captain does things differently from other coaches.

“It’s fun talking to him because I learn stuff. He puts a lot into analytics. He even studies how long he can keep a guy in a game and how long he stays productive,” Givens said. “He told me Andrew Carr is a guy who the longer the game goes, the better he gets. But then he told me BG (Brandon Garrison) after two minutes he has to get him out but when he comes back he can go four or five minutes. Those are the kinds of things I had never heard a coach talk about.”

Larry Vaught is a freelance columnist who covers Kentucky sports for various newspapers across the state.



Larry Vaught
UK Sports Columnist
Vaught's Views

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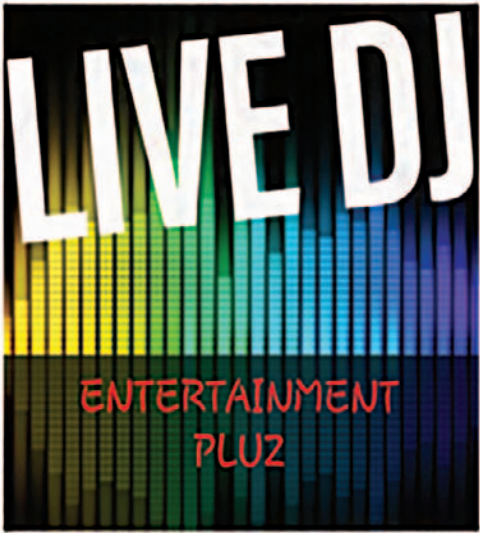
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