



THE PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

NEWS FOR PIKE, EASTERN AUDRAIN & NORTHERN LINCOLN COUNTIES

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Pure Gold

Man Chronicles Life As A Fortune Seeker



An artist's image of George Stokes mining for gold luck.

Editor's note: This is the fourth part in a story series by contributing writer Brent Engel.

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Pike County native George Stokes returned to Colorado after the Civil War, but did not get back into gold mining – at least not right away.

He worked as a store clerk, grain dealer and vegetable salesman before joining the Denver Tribune as circulation director and eventually becoming business manager. Some cravings, however, don't go away.

"It was a busy and satisfying life I had in this new work in a thriving city out there where the mountains and the plains meet," he said. "But my days in Denver were to be cut short for another series of adventures in a new Eldorado, just then slipping into the spotlight."

Stokes had heard that gold had been discovered in South Dakota, but it took an interview with a government mining expert to confirm the precious metal could be found in the Black Hills.

Much of the land was part of the Sioux reservation and was off limits to most people, but efforts got under way to change that. So, Stokes and three friends loaded wagons in October 1875 for the 400-mile trip

north. Along the way, he humorously compared differences between the staid, alcohol-free town of Greeley, Co., and the rip-roaring bustle of Cheyenne, Wyo.

"I don't know what a 'seething vortex' is, but it seems a good name for what we found in Cheyenne."

At Fort Russell, the party was impressed with George Armstrong Custer, then a lieutenant colonel. Custer and his Seventh Cavalry were just eight months from a date with destiny at the Little Big Horn.

Stokes kept his miner's skepticism as the trek toward South Dakota continued, saying that "many an impoverished prospector lived high on his hints and promises." To discourage attacks by the Sioux, the men usually camped at night with other wagon trains.

Upon being struck in the head by an unsheathed gun and knocked off a runaway horse, a fellow traveler gave Stokes half a tin cup of grain alcohol to soothe his minor injuries. "The fiery liquid would have revived the oldest mummy," he noted.

Bitter cold and abundant snow had settled in by the time the adventurers reached French Creek southwest of present-day Rapid City. One of Stokes' buddies had called it quits along the trail and other members of the wagon train dispersed just as quickly.

Stokes pulled out a map provided by the government mining expert and for the first time showed it to his two remaining friends. They agreed to prospect a promising gulch along Spring Creek at what is now Custer, S.D.

Two cabins quickly were built and the hunt for gold began. The Palmer's Gulch Mining District was formed. Named after engineer George Palmer, the area still bears his name.

The work was tedious. Bedrock and groundwater made mining difficult. Disgusted by the slow pace, John Brennan – the second of Stokes' original four partners – left in February 1876. Three weeks later, Brennan and six other men would lay out Rapid City.

No one seemed to address that settlers inundating the Black Hills were violating the 1868 Treaty of Laramie, which gave most of the land to the Sioux. The government initially arrested and jailed violators, but the trickle of prospectors quickly became an uncontrollable tidal wave.

At the same time, the feds were paying agents to see if the region held mining potential. Stokes admits prospector incursions were "prohibited," but does not address his own violation of the law.

Back at Palmer's Gulch, Stokes joined his engineer friend to investigate a small creek where the labor wasn't as intensive. The decision delightfully paid off. Over the course of a month, the two collected gold dust that today would total almost \$35,000 each.

The windfall caused the men to look toward a burgeoning settlement farther north that promised bigger chunks of bling. It was being touted by beloved comedian and musician Dick Brown, who had nicknames such as "Pretty," "Handsome" and "Banjo."

Hundreds of men had already gone there. Two more were about to join them, and Stokes knew exactly what to expect.

"It was a wild struggle for the yellow dust for which men have always sweat and fought and bled."

Next time: Maddening desire.

City Council Candidate Forum In Vandalia Is March 18

Citizens Encouraged To Attend, Ask Questions

The Informational Forum for Vandalia City Council will be held Wednesday, March 18.

Doors at the Modern Maturity Building will open at 6 p.m., and the forum begins at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Denise Chamberlain and Patty Kraft have organized this Forum. In no way has the City of Vandalia been involved in the planning or organization. This is not a city-sanctioned event.

Chamberlain said "this is an important election for the City of Vandalia, and the citizens need to have sufficient information about each can-

didate. I believe hearing directly from those seeking to lead our city is essential to making an informed decision at the polls."

Candidate that have replied that will be present include: Ralph Kuda and Pete Nasir, mayoral candidates; Larry Shaw and Travis Case, Ward I candidates; Sharon Chatman, Ward II candidate; and John Weiser and Dustin Holt, Ward III candidates.

The forum is open to the public and all of the candidates were invited to attend. This is a voluntary attendance giving each candidate the opportunity to speak publicly about their goals

and future plan.

If anyone has any questions they would like to submit anonymously, please write or type them on a paper and drop them in the mail to Chamberlain. Her address is: Denise Chamberlain, 411 W. Hwy. 54, Vandalia, MO 63382.

The deadline to receive anonymous questions by mail is Monday, March 16 in order to have them included. You will also have an opportunity to place anonymous questions in the box that will be provided as you come in the door of the Modern Maturity Building the night of the forum.



Clopton Hawks - Sectional Champions

Hawks Punch Ticket To Final Four

BY BRICE CHANDLER EDITOR

For the first time in 36 years, the Clopton Hawks are headed to the Final Four.

Clopton defeated the Westran Hornets 49-40 Saturday in the Missouri Class 2 state quarterfinals at Hannibal, sending the Hawks to the Show Me Showdown for the program's first appearance since 1989.

From the opening tip, the game carried the tension expected of a state quarterfinal.

Clopton won the jump ball and wasted little time making its presence known. Adam Matheny buried a three-pointer to give the Hawks the early spark, while Tucker Salmons battled inside for another basket as Clopton grabbed an early lead.

Westran answered with its own scoring run, briefly pulling ahead, but the Hawks refused to give ground. Clopton's defense forced tough shots while its offense continued attacking the basket.

By the end of the first quarter, the Hawks clung to a narrow 7-6 advantage.

The second quarter turned into a physical back-and-forth battle under the basket.

Trey Spoonster provided a surge of energy for Clopton, converting two three-point plays during the period. Salmons knocked down a three-pointer of his own while Larson Hall added points inside as the Hawks steadily built momentum.

By halftime, Clopton had

stretched its lead to 21-12.

The Hawks seized control of the game in the third quarter.

Hall became nearly unstoppable inside, repeatedly finding space in the lane and finishing around the rim. Spoonster and Matheny added key baskets as Clopton pushed the lead into double digits.

Each time Westran threatened to close the gap, the Hawks responded.

A three-pointer from Clopton reignited the crowd midway through the quarter before another strong drive extended the lead once again. When the horn sounded at the end of the third, Clopton held a commanding 38-25 advantage.

But Westran wasn't finished.

The Hornets made a late push in the fourth quarter, knocking down outside shots and capitalizing at the free-throw line to trim the deficit. Clopton players faced two-on-one and sometimes three-on-one pressure trying to move the ball past mid court. With the pressure mounting, Clopton relied on composure and execution.

But the Hornet's aggressive defense cost them in the end as they sent Clopton players to the foul line. Free throws from Spoonster and James Matheny helped steady the Hawks while Hall continued battling inside for crucial points.

When the final seconds ticked away, Clopton had secured the 49-40 victory and a

place in program history.

First-year head coach and Clopton graduate Landon Hall said the team executed exactly the strategy they had prepared.

"It feels really good," Hall told The Tribune when asked about the win. "The guys came out, they executed really well and followed our game plan to a T. Exactly what we needed to do. We knew if we wanted to have a chance we had to hold them below 50 points, and that's what we did. So I'm really proud of them."

Hall said Westran's defensive pressure forced the Hawks to stay disciplined with the ball.

"Just meet our passes and make good passes," Hall said. "We were struggling a little bit because we were getting the ball on the sideline. We just have to keep the ball in the middle, make good passes and meet all of our passes."

Senior Larson Hall and sophomore Trey Spoonster led the Hawks with 14 points each. Adam Matheny added eight points while Tucker Salmons finished with six. James Matheny contributed two points.

Cruze Haynes led Westran with 10 points.

Clopton now turns its attention to Columbia, where the Hawks will face Eugene (25-5) in the Class 2 state semifinal at 8 p.m. Friday at Mizzou Arena.

For a program with deep basketball roots, the opportunity marks a return to one of its biggest stages.

'Steel Magnolias' To Bloom In Clarksville



Mary Lang Fournier greets the audience at a recent Raintree Arts Council Changelings Theatre production.

BY BRENT ENGEL CONTRIBUTING WRITER

There's laughter, tears, wit and wisdom. Raintree Arts Council's Changelings Theatre troupe is staging the comedy-drama "Steel Magnolias." Performances are at 7 p.m. March 21 and 28 and 2 p.m. March 22 and 29 at The Apple Shed in Clarksville.

The stirring tale focuses on the power of abiding friendships in facing romance, sorrow and everyday difficulties. Audiences are taken on an emotional rollercoaster as characters steadily climb to pinnacles of joy or careen around the sharp turns of life.

One line, uttered by a young mother with medical issues, seems to sum things up: "I would rather have 30 mi-

nutes of 'Wonderful' than a lifetime of 'Nothing special.'"

The production "is timeless," said Changelings Director Mary Lang Fournier. "We need a reminder these days of the strength of a good group of friends."

The "good group" consists of six women of varying ages who bond at a Southern hair salon. They're the "steel magnolias" who are a bit crazy, but blessed with the kind of enduring fortitude that helps them face multiple challenges. They can dish the dirt, but also clean up the mess.

"You want in on this group," Fournier said. "It's the relationships that pull you in. It's so well-written that it's not necessarily the humor or the pathos that engage. You grow to love each one and the

group."

People who previously have seen the 1987 stage play by Robert Harling or the 1989 movie featuring some of Hollywood's biggest stars know that amid the pain, there is plenty of humor. It's tough to go wrong with lines such as the following:

"The nicest thing I can say about her is all her tattoos are spelled correctly."

"Don't try to get on my good side. I no longer have one."

"I'm not crazy. I've just been in a very bad mood for 40 years."

"If you can't say anything nice about somebody, come sit by me."

"You have the handwriting of a serial killer."

"You know I love you more than my luggage."

"Well, we went skinny dipping and we did things that frightened the fish."

Fournier says the film is a classic, but that live performances really help bring the message home.

"The show was a play first," she said. "Folks may know the movie, but nothing on a screen can evoke so much as the story unfolding live, raw, in-your-lap. With live theater, every show is different. You never can tell how it will shake out night-to-night once you add the sauce – the audience."

Doors will open an hour before each performance and refreshments will be available.

Community News

From The Mayor's Desk...

Good day, Bowling Green. Isn't it amazing that each day we get a new start, a fresh new attitude to choose whether to have a great day or a miserable day.

Over the past six years it has been exciting to see all the development in our outstanding community. The unity, compassion, giving, and supportive attitude that Bowling Green exudes has been exciting to experience. The true character of our town has only been magnified as new families, singles, and civic-minded people have been grafted into our schools, churches, government, and workforce.

Beautification and expansion of Bowling Green over the years, and it pays off in community pride and civic involvement. New people have stepped up to be leaders, entrepreneurs, business owners and various board members.

For instance, our Bowling Green Park and Rec Board, our Public Library, Housing Authority, Airport Board, our Health Department, and new leaders in our nonprofits and churches emerged. As America will be Celebrating 250 Years of growing, developing, maturing, refining, and working through our challenges, Bowling Green should be partying and rejoicing over the freedom we have as compared to other countries. Do we have problems and opportunities for solutions? By all means. Yet, as I have traveled out of the Country to other continents and cultures, there's still no place like good ole USA!

I hope we celebrate in Bowling Green and Pike County like the rest of the county will be doing and not just blowing it off as "just another Fourth of

July/Independence Day". Have we been around for thousands of years like Europe, Africa, Asia? Obviously not. Have we had and are still having growing pains? Absolutely. We must celebrate life.

Broken families, marriages, friendships, and working relations need to heal and not keep tearing the scab off that only leads to scaring. It's our choice. Bitterness and discontent are too much baggage to drag or carry around and weight us down. Be set free to have joy and peace.

As we are getting closer to the Love Thy Neighbor project around Bowling Green and even other areas around us, it is not too soon to pick up forms for volunteering or for homeowners for external home improvements and repairs.

Love Thy Neighbor is designed to help those that need repairs or replacements where owners are not financially or physically able to do it themselves. Volunteers to help in these efforts range from cooking food, delivering supplies to worksites, to cutting and hammering, to praying for, sending "thank you cards," and to helping owners with various challenges emotionally, physically, and /or spiritually. Contact Second Baptist Church for either or both forms.

However, please understand that other area churches are partnering in these efforts as well. It has been exciting to see this project grow each year and each year the finances and workers join to increase the expansion of improvements and locations of projects.

We always find ways for volunteers to get plugged in.



JIM ARICO, MAYOR
CITY OF BOWLING GREEN

State Representative Chad Perkins Report



Rep. Chad Perkins

"Our office enjoyed another busy, but very productive week at the Capitol. We continued advancing legislation, working through committee hearings and floor action, and addressing important conservative priorities. We especially enjoyed the honor of welcoming many constituents from home. I'm proud of the progress we're making and grateful for the opportunity to serve the people of Missouri."

-Speaker Pro Tem Chad Perkins

This Week In Jefferson City

Missouri Legislature Passes Supplemental Budget to Fund Current State Operations

Missouri lawmakers this week gave approval HCS HB 2014, the state's supplemental budget bill, providing additional funding to state agencies and programs for the remainder of the current fiscal year. Supplemental budgets are used to cover costs that exceed original projections, including program expenses, grant obligations, and required fund transfers. The legislation appropriates approximately \$3.1 billion for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026.

The bill was modified in the Senate before final passage, including:

- A cut of just under \$15 million originally set aside to hire an owner's representative for a proposed Missouri State Capitol expansion and renovation project.

- A reduction of \$150,000 for sending a Missouri delegation to Washington, D.C., this summer for the Great American State Fair.

- A cut of \$972,000 to build out and furnish space for the attorney general's office at a new state building in Chesterfield.

Major spending items in the bill include:

- \$1 billion for disaster recovery efforts in St. Louis and other areas impacted by tornadoes and storms in 2025.

- \$635 million for the Department of Transportation Road program.

- \$100 million of the \$216 million Missouri received for the Rural Health Transformation Program.

With approval from both chambers, HCS HB 2014 now heads to Governor Mike Kehoe to be signed into law, making it the first piece of legislation this year to reach his desk.

House Expands Benefits & Authorities For Missouri National Guard & Veterans

A broad package of military and veterans-related provisions is included in HB 2593, now approved by the House. The bill extends certain federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act protections to Missouri National Guard members called to state active duty for more than 30 consecutive days. It also provides allowances for certain insurance premiums for Guard members serving extended state duty.

The legislation authorizes cybersecurity operations by the Missouri National Guard for state and local entities and creates a revolving fund for those efforts. It establishes new service ribbons, expands eligibility for military medals and medallions, and revises the structure of the Missouri Military Family Relief Fund. In addition, the bill creates the MO GIVES program, allowing eligible Guard members who serve as living organ donors to receive paid state active-duty orders, modifies tuition assistance provisions, and repeals the Military Council.

House Moves To Improve Transparency For Water, Sewer Billing In Rental Properties

Landlords could have clearer authority to bill tenants for water and sewer services under HCS HB 2105, which passed the House this week. The bill allows charges to be allocated either by actual meter readings or a disclosed mathematical formula, including common area usage. Landlords may include reasonable administrative fees and late charges, provided these are clearly disclosed before a lease is signed. The legislation aims to protect

tenants from unexpected charges while giving property owners flexibility to manage costs fairly.

House Advances Statewide Expansion Of Agricultural Education

Agriculture education in Missouri elementary schools would move beyond a limited pilot program under HCS HBs 2097 & 1905, approved by the House this week. Beginning in the 2027-28 school year, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education may implement the program statewide in any elementary school that elects to participate. The legislation also eliminates the requirement to submit reports to legislative committees and instead requires updates to be posted on the Department's website. The change is designed to broaden access while simplifying reporting requirements.

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Pike To Pike ...



By Wyvetta Davis-Niffen
1-217-320-8438
AN IRISH FRIENDSHIP POEM

May there always be work for your hands to do;

May your purse always hold a coin or two;

May the sun always shine on your windowpane;

May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain;

May the hand of a friend always be near you;

May God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.

Birthdays and Anniversaries for the week of March 11-17:

March 11 - Laura Gleckler

March 12 - Sharon Burgdorf, Wendy Smith

March 13 - Chandler Helm, Sonny Kimmel

March 14 - Ronnie Rush

March 15 - Scott Miller, Lila and Brian Martin

March 16 - Clay Gosnell

March 17 - Dona Hibbard, James Francis, Tom Sims, Sheri and Greg Ketterman

Can't think of anything to do? Read the following to get some ideas.

Band entertainment in the area:

Friday, March 13 - The Buggs' Family Opry will be in Pearl with the show starting at 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 14 - The Big River Band will be at a new location which will be the Red Rooster (what was Hooterville) due to the uptown Pittsfield revitalization construction project. On the menu that evening will be your choice of Smash Burgers with Fries or Chicken Strips with Rooster Sauce, and for Dessert will be Ice Cream with toppings of Brownie Bits or Caramel Sauce. Please come to the RED ROOSTER across from Illini Hospital, next to the motel, and enjoy the Big River Band in concert with the show starting at 6 p.m.

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Do Not Forget, if the weather gets bad and/or iffy, either listen to 97.5 or 102 on the radio, or check on Facebook and look on either Big River Band or Polly Bugg or Jamie Niffen or myself Wyvetta Davis, or give someone a call, including me, at the number above to make sure the Shows will be happening.

The Pike County Senior Citizens Center at 220 West Adams Street in Pittsfield will be holding its fundraiser fish fry this Thursday, March 12, 4:30-6 p.m. The menu will be your choice of catfish fillet or buffalo with three set sides which will include this month potato salad, green bean casserole and pasta salad plus your choice of dessert and tea. Eat-in or carry-out. All ages are welcome. Questions please call 217-285-4969. They also have gift certificates available for any amount.

The Barry United Women of Faith will be hosting a pulled pork and soup meal on Friday, March 13 from 4-7 p.m. The meal will consist of a pulled pork sandwich, choice of soup, and a bag of chips. Desserts will be provided. Everyone can dine in at the church in Barry or carry outs will be available. All the donations will be going to help with repairs in the church basement. They are hoping for a good gathering and that the weather cooperates.

The Pike County Herbal Chat will be meeting Saturday, March 21, starting at 10 a.m., at the Nazarene Family Center in Pittsfield. Anyone interested may attend, and the topic is to be announced.

Single Seniors + One has another "Meet, Greet, and Eat" in the works. It's never too late to be a part of this group so if you are interested in joining, just call or text 1-217-320-8438. Men and /or women, single by choice or circumstance, you are welcome to join. Any questions, just call 1-217-320-8438. This group is not strictly for people in Pike County. If you can drive and pay for your own meal, you will be welcomed.

Uptown Strings Band plays every Tuesday from noon-3 p.m., at the Admiral Koontz Recreation Center, 301 Warren Barrett Drive, in Hannibal. This

is sponsored by the Hannibal Parks and Recreation. Everyone is welcome.

UPCOMING DATES OF INTEREST

The General Primary is Tuesday, March 17. Take time to do your civic duty and privilege, and vote. Or if you want to vote early in Pike County, Ill., you can go to the county clerk's office located on Washington Street in Pittsfield, Ill.

Easter Sunday is April 5.

When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right. Proverbs 16:7, 8

George and Georgia Ruble stopped in to visit with Jamie and I Thursday, March 4, and we all had a nice visit.

To celebrate Jamie's birthday, his son and daughter-in-law, James and Amanda Niffen of Annada, Missouri, and Nathan Davis and Lori Capps all met Jamie and Wyvetta at the Boatel in Naples on Saturday, March 7 for a meal and lots of visiting. A good time was had by all.

The Big River Band had a concert Sunday evening, March 8 at the Pittsfield United Methodist Church. It was well attended with 74 there. The band appreciated being asked to be there.

We are at the age that we decided several months ago that the bathtub needed to go, it was just an accident waiting to happen. So we did some calling and some checking, and we went with Michael's Bath out of Troy. It was installed in a couple days in February, and we both highly recommend it for convenience, safety, and more room.

TRIVIA ANSWERS FROM LAST WEEK:

1. What is the Washington Monument made of? (marble, granite, and sandstone blocks)
2. What tree in the Garden of Eden did God tell Adam not to eat from? (Tree of the knowledge of good and evil)
3. What U.S. President had the shortest term? (William Henry Harrison was President for 31 days. He caught a cold on inauguration day that turned into a fatal case of pneumonia.)

Callaway Livestock Center, Inc.

Kingdom City, MO

March 5

Receipts: 729 head

Pairs - Better Cows

111 head

1st Calf - Heifer Pairs

\$5,500 - \$6,100

3-6 Yr Old Cows

(Baby to 300 lb Calves)

\$4,400 - \$6,050

6-8 Yr Old Cows

(Baby to 300 lb Calves)

\$4,950 - \$5,500

Short Solid & Aged

(Baby to 300 lb Calves)

\$3,500 - \$4,400

Bred Cows

261 head

Bred Heifers

99 head

\$4,300 - \$5,000

3-6 Yr Old (2nd & 3rd Period)

\$3,900 - \$4,800

3-6 Yr Old (1st Period)

\$2,800 - \$4,100

Short Solid & Aged

\$2,500 - \$4,000

Smaller Frame

Breeding Bulls

8 head

\$3,900 - \$6,500

Slaughter Bulls

12 head

\$2.01 - \$2.19 / lb

Slaughter Cows

97 head

\$1.60 - \$1.85 / lb

Receiving Hours

Tuesday: 8 A.M. - 8 P.M.

Wednesday: 8 A.M. - 8 P.M.

Thursday: 8 A.M. - 5 P.M.

Jack Harrison - 573-999-7197	Jack Harrison, Owner	Myles McWhorter - 573-263-3759
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Obituaries



John Robert Lonon

John Robert Lonon, 69, died Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2026 at his home in Poplar Bluff. Graveside services and urn burial was at 2 p.m., Saturday at Greenwood Cemetery in Clarksville.

A journey we all must take, when the Lord our Savior calls, along the way there is a river beyond the garden wall. John was born May 21, 1956 in Jacksonville, Fla., to the late Johnny Jackson and mother, Mildred Grant Lonon of Savannah, Ga. As a single mother and school teacher, Mrs. Mildred Lonon, with the help of her brother, Willie Bernard Grant and his wife, Evelyn Hightower Grant, raised John in Chatham County, Sandfly, G., where he attended the public schools and later Savannah State University. At an early age, he was converted and baptized at Speedwell Methodist Episcopal Church. He was a member of the choir and attended Bible school where his mother was the director of Vocational Bible School. John had many friends, a host of foster brothers, sisters, and cousins.

He leaves behind a stepson, Cortez E. McDonald of Paynesville, who he loved dearly; a cousin, who he called a sister, Laura Grant Berkstiner of Savannah, Ga.; a brotherly friend, Jonathan McClellan of Atlanta, Ga.; and many childhood friends including the Lutens, Halls, Martins, Beauchamps, and others. He also had many Godchildren that he saw baptized.

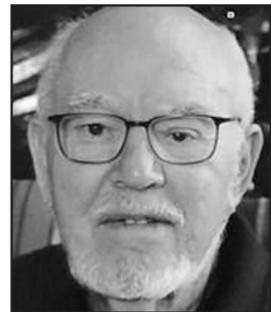
John met his devoted wife, Carrie Scott Lonon in 1982 in Augusta, Ga., and was united in holy matrimony on Jan. 20, 1983 at Speedwell United Methodist Church in Savannah, Ga., by the Rev. William Ashley, witnessed by his mother, Mildred, and uncle and aunt, Willie and Evelyn Grant. John and Carrie eventually moved to St. Louis and later to Hannibal. They both became members of the Second Christian Church Disciples of Christ on June 14, 2009 in New London, where they were both devoted members.

Carrie succumbed to pancreatic cancer and preceded him in death on Nov. 30, 2015. John stayed in Hannibal where he could be close to his son, Cortez. He later moved to Poplar Bluff to pursue a career as a driver for the elderly, which he enjoyed.

John touched the lives of many. He had a good heart and loved to communicate and help others. He will be truly missed. May God have mercy on his soul and may he rest in peace.

Collier Funeral Home in Louisiana was in charge of cremation rites.

Online condolences can be sent at collierfuneral.com.



Robert James Swantner

Robert James Swantner Jr., of Wentzville died Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026, at the age of 94.

Memorial Mass to be held Tuesday (today) at 11 a.m., at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Wentzville. Inurnment will be at Eternal Peace Cemetery Wentzville.

Son of the late Robert James I. and Alvina Griesenhauer Swantner; father of Diane Koch and the late

Robert James "Jim" Swantner, III; grandfather of Erin Davis and husband, Jeff of Curryville, and Bryan Koch and wife, Molly of Defiance; great-grandfather of Kindall Bickel and husband, Dawson, and John Kenawell, Kaylee, Lilly, Tyson, and Tenley Koch; father-in-law of Karen Springer and husband, Gary; beloved uncle, cousin, and friend to many.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Ruth Boland Swantner, a son, Robert James "Jim" Swantner III; granddaughter, Sarah Joanne Swantner; great-grandson, Brady James Koch; and two siblings, Larry Swantner and Mary Jean Prinster.

He loved camping and traveling. Most important to Bobby was his family and friends. He was dearly loved and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Memorial contributions to: Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP) c/o funeral home

Family and friends may sign the online guestbook @ www.mccoymblossomfh.com



Debra Kay 'Debbie' Vandelicht

Debra Kay "Debbie" Vandelicht, 64, of Bowling Green died Thursday, Feb. 26, 2026 at Pin Oaks Living Center in Mexico.

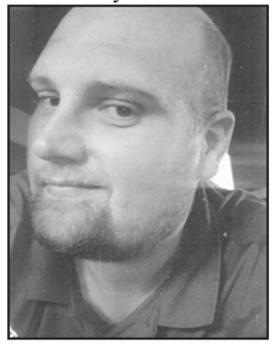
Private services to be held.

She was born Dec. 31, 1961 in Fulton to Harold and Lillian Vandelicht. She attended the local schools with her siblings and went on to attend LPN school. Debbie worked at various nursing homes in the area and her last job was working at the WERDCC in Vandalia for nine years. Debbie loved animals and reading. She was very creative and enjoyed writing short stories.

She is survived by siblings, James Vandelicht and wife, Laura of Bowling Green and Robert and wife Kim of Hannibal; nieces and nephews, Charlie and Lora Evers, Krystal Evers Leipholtz and husband, Jeremy, Jonathan Vandelicht and wife, Alexandra, and Taylor Vandelicht; many other relatives and friends.

Debbie was preceded in death by parents.

Family and friends may sign the online guestbook @ www.mccoymblossomfh.com



Christopher 'Chris' Brown

Christopher "Chris" Wayne Brown, 39, of Schertz, Texas, was taken from this world on Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2026.

Visitation was Feb. 20 from 1-3 p.m., followed by a memorial service from 3-5 p.m., at Schertz Funeral Home and Crematory in Schertz, Texas. Directly following the services, a Celebration of Life was held at Our Glass Cocktails in Universal City, Texas.

A Traveling Celebration of Life was held Feb. 21.

Chris was born Sept. 11, 1986, in Hannibal to William "Will" F. Brown Jr. and Abbie Lybarger Brown.

He is survived by his parents; his grandmother, Esther Lybarger; a sister, Heather Lynn Brown Gillihan; one brother-in-law, Bric Tyler Gillihan; a nephew, Zane William Gillihan; and one niece, Genevieve Louise Gillihan. He is also survived by an aunt, Teresa Adams; uncles, Ken Lybarger, John Lybarger, Robert Lybarger, Robert

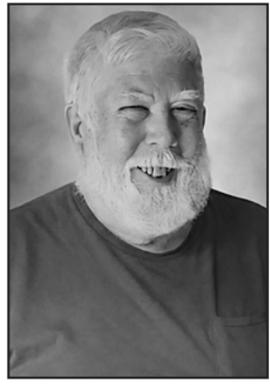
Adams, and Todd Brown; along with many cousins, extended family members, and friends who loved him dearly.

Chris earned his associate's degree in hospitality and was serving as director of operations for Weebler Corporation and the assistant manager at Our Glass Cocktails at the time of his death. Prior to his current positions, he was an associate production manager for Tyson. Raised in the Methodist faith, Chris was a man of strong values, deep compassion, and unwavering generosity. He loved his work and the people he worked alongside and lived by the motto, "Work hard, play hard."

Known for his kind heart and selfless nature, Chris would give the shirt off his back, his last dollar, or whatever was needed to help someone in need. He loved deeply, wore his heart on his sleeve, and made everyone around him feel seen, supported, and valued.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly asks that donations be made in Christopher's memory to one of the following organizations: The Pride Center: San Antonio; Fisher House Inc.; San Antonio.

Chris will be remembered for his boundless generosity, unwavering loyalty, and the way he made everyone around him feel seen and valued. Though his time with us was far too short, his kindness, laughter, and love will live on forever in the hearts of those who knew him.



John W. Ayer Sr.

John W. Ayers Sr., 77, of Rushville and formerly of Louisiana, died quietly Friday, Jan. 16, 2026, at the Rushville Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Rushville.

He was born July 3, 1948, in Ashburn, the son of the late Roscoe and Ruth Anderson Ayers.

John worked for 33 years as a machinist for Hubbell Tooling in Louisiana until the plant closed. Afterwards, John took a part-time job with the City of Louisiana for a few years until he completely retired. He enjoyed watching movies, listening to classic rock music and spending time with his family. One of his favorite holidays was Thanksgiving, which he would often host at his house for family.

He is survived by his sons, Richard Ayers of Camden, Phillip Ayers of Littleton, and John Ayers Jr., and wife, Heather of Coos Bay, Ore.; several grandchildren; two sisters, Golda Turner of Louisiana, and Evelyn Rue and husband, Robert, also of Louisiana.

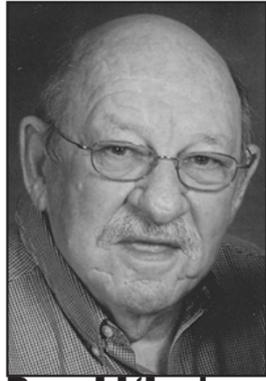
In accordance with John's wishes, cremation rites have been accorded and services will not be held.

The Triplett & Wood Funeral Home of Rushville has been entrusted with the care and arrangements.

Memorial contributions in memory of John are suggested to the family or donations for any cancer research for the cure of cancer.

Anyone is invited to share your memories of John and leave a condolence at www.triplettwood.com.

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Donald 'Joe' Lewis

Anyone who knew Joe knew that he was an early morning kind of guy. Dad woke up before the sparrows, before the sun, and maybe even before God. His many years of morning radio meant he had to rise very early, get to the station, warm up the equipment, rip the news off the wire and be ready to 'sign-on' to wake the good folks of Pike County. It's a habit he could never shake. So, on Tuesday, March 3, 2026 in traditional Joe style, he arose one last time for his biggest sign-on yet...to wake his personal Lord and Savior. Good morning, Pearly Gates.

Joe made his first sign-on Feb. 8, 1939, to Clarence "Gabe" and Beatrice McCann Lewis. His humble beginnings came at the end of the Great Depression, when most had few possessions, land or money. But what the Lewises did have was...You thought I was going to say love, didn't you? Nope. What the Lewises did have was children. Joe was the youngest of 10. Being the youngest, smallest, slowest meant he had to fight for every scrap of attention he could. That's when he realized that humor would be his superpower.

School was his first stage. In preparation for Dad's funeral, the family ran across old grade cards, and it seems he chose to trade good grades for belly laughs. Although wellliked, class clowns don't usually grow into valedictorians. So, he set his sights on employment where he could use his hands and cunning, leading him to a multitude of jobs like gas station attendant, Pepsi and phone repairman, until he heard of a man hiring for a radio station. Paul Salois recognized his bull...talent and hired him right away. KPCR was born.

Somewhere between laughs, Joe caught the eye of a lovely girl from St. Clement. Funnily enough, she didn't think he was funny at all. It took a lot of convincing, like a year or two, but she finally saw he wasn't so bad and eventually succumbed to his charms. In 1961, Rosemary Deters became Rosemary Lewis. Before they settled in their cozy house in the country, he served his country in the United States Army, and eight years of reserves. Soon they welcomed the first of their brood, little Joe, followed by their favorite, Lori and lastly, Christine. (Christine and Joe forced Lori to add this disclaimer: The author has been found to embellish the truth from time to time and takes after her father.)

With family and career underway, Joe began to reflect inward to see what could be missing in his life. What was that emptiness inside? He knew exactly what would fill that hole. A fishing boat. With rod, reel, and stinky Bowker's catfish bait, he set out for the river. And what does every fisherman need? Fishing buddies. And there they were, in the jon boat, on the pontoon, or casting from shore. He and his pals were always ready for a good time and that meant mischief. I would tell you about all the mischief, but the best stories always involved Joe Long, Jack Haley, Arch Jennings, and Sonny Wright and many others who have asked to remain nameless.

Somewhere along the way, Joe noticed another longing inside. This was familiar. It felt like when he was a very young lad and answered a call that led him to walk the seven miles to St. Clement to start going to church. The Mass and Jesus called to him, so he continued to take that long walk every Sunday. And al-

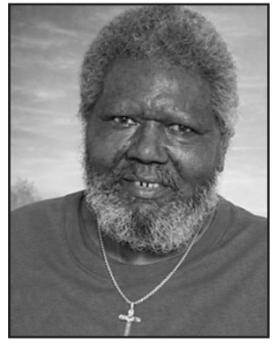
though, Joe still attended church regularly he wanted more. That's when he heard about Cursillo and TEC (Teens Encounter Christ), retreat weekends sponsored by the Catholic Church. Joe and Rosie attended one, then another and before you know it, they were leading the events. Their family of friends grew by leaps and bounds and helped dad forge an even stronger relationship with Jesus. With Cursillo came Don and Jane Powell and Ansel Niemeyer. They did everything together but mostly laughed until their sides hurt.

Dad loved his kids and was proud of all their accomplishments, but he really loved the babies. He played with any baby he saw in public and always tried to make them laugh, but when he finally got his own grandkids, he turned on the fun. Olivia, Emily, and Cassidi (a special granddaughter by choice) loved their Papa Joe. When they were still small, they especially loved jumping on his belly like a trampoline, and he let them, for a while. And then came the great-grandkids, Luella and Thea who he loved just as much, although he didn't let them jump on his belly. He was always surrounded by his numerous nieces and nephews, too.

KPCR was a big part of this life, and the Bowling Green community and its people meant the world to him. He enjoyed announcing tractor pulls, emceed many functions and entertained anyone who would listen. He started the Cowpasture Concerts that brought people by the thousands, was instrumental in fundraisers like "Goat Days" and lots of hair-brained schemes as Mom would say.

Joe was impatiently awaiting to be reunited in heaven with those who preceded in death, his parents, all his brothers and sisters, and numerous family and friends. His family knows there was a real barnburner of a reunion in heaven on Tuesday.

Please help celebrate his life by joining his family for visitation at Bibb-Veach Funeral Home, Bowling Green on Monday from 3-7 p.m., and a funeral Mass at St. Clement Catholic Church on Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. A luncheon will follow at the Knights of Columbus Hall following graveside services.



Curtis Eugene Kerr Sr.

Funeral services for Curtis Eugene Kerr, Sr., of Elsberry will be held at noon Saturday at Elsberry First Christian Church. The Rev. Brenda Cockrell, The Rev. Charleen Wheeler-Williams, and the Rev. Mary Garrett will officiate,

with burial to follow in the Elsberry City Cemetery.

Visitation will be from 3-8 p.m., Friday at Carter-Ricks Funeral Home in Elsberry.

Curtis, 72, died Sunday, March 1, 2026, at his home.

Born Sept. 4, 1953, in Hannibal, he was the son of Dempsey Wilson and Edward and Laura Mae Overton Kerr. A 1971 graduate of Van-Far High School in Vandalia, he was united in marriage to Marsleen Steele on June 15, 1974, in Vandalia. Their union was blessed with two children, Curtissa and Curtis, Jr.

A dedicated worker, Curtis spent 34 years with Waters Furniture in Vandalia in delivery and setup. Following his retirement, he worked for Abel's Quick Shop in Elsberry for nine years and later served as a Therapeutic Mentor for Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services of Missouri, where he supported at-risk youth. A man of deep faith, he was a longtime member and lay minister of Centennial United Methodist Church in Elsberry.

Curtis was a "gentle giant" and a loyal servant of God. Known for his genuine kindness, honesty, and unwavering respect for others, he truly never knew a stranger. His daily routine revolved around his devotion to the Lord and his community. He spent hours visiting friends and neighbors, whether in person or by phone, even while bedridden. Curtis cared more for others than himself. He was a passionate fan of basketball and football, and enjoyed playing Pokémon Go. Affectionately known as "Mr. Horn" and "Fat Albert," his greatest joy was hosting game nights and spending time with those he loved.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Dempsey Wilson and Edward and Laura Mae Kerr; his wife of 46 years, Marsleen Kerr in 2020; a son, Curtis Kerr, Jr., in 2002; and his "special son," Greg King in 2026; and siblings, Anna Steele, Hazel Walker, Barbra Jean Salmon, Linda Ross, Robert Kerr, and Harold Kerr.

Survivors include his daughter, Curtissa Kerr and her companion, Antonell Wroten; a brother, Thomas (Roland) Kerr and wife, Trae of Rock Island, Ill.; and his former son-in-law, Ezra Allen Hunter, Sr.

He leaves behind a rich legacy through his grandchildren and great-grandchildren: Charlyssa Kerr and children Prince-Gabriel and Briella; Caytron Kerr and wife, Tina and children Devaun, Elaina, Ahmari, Ahlani, Brooklynn, and Baylee; Cayllen Cassaday and husband, Zachary and children Hunter, Emmalynn, Scarlet, and one expected soon; and AJ Hunter and wife, Kimberly and children Kristopher, Katarina, Donavin, Steven, Mathew, Micheal, Savannah, and Danielle; and great-great-grandchildren, Ezra, Malaya, and Kaylina. He is also survived by his Godchildren, Shannon Dawkins, Michael Linson, Shea Erler, Amy King, and Bryon Curtis Mcclai; a loyal, trusted friend, Anita King; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Memorials may be made to Carter-Ricks Funeral Home, 107 South 5th Street, Elsberry, MO 63343 to assist the family with final expenses.

See OBITUARIES on page 6

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THE PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

NEWS FOR PIKE, EASTERN AUDRAIN & NORTHERN LINCOLN COUNTIES



Community News

OBITUARIES

Continued from page 4



Jamie Tomek

Jamie Tomek of Olney died at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis on Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026. She was 79.

A memorial service is planned for Saturday, April 25 at 10:30 a.m., at the Olney Methodist Church with burial at the Olney Cemetery immediately following the service.

Jamie, who dedicated her life to justice and activism, never missed a volunteer shift. A committed leader, her weeks were full of meetings for organizations that supported women's rights, veteran's rights, and youth agricultural education or volunteer shifts at the hospital or prison supporting rehabilitation.

When her schedule called her home for rest, her house filled with the sounds of National Public Radio – keeping her abreast of the latest news.

Jamie married 1st Lt. Glen Tomek, who was killed in 1969 in the Vietnam War. Jamie found herself in dedicated leadership roles for the Gold Star Wives of America, promoting health-care and benefits to the surviving spouses of military veterans.

She developed her passion for supporting youth education while working as an MU extension agent in Cass and Jackson Counties for 20 years. She took delight in interspersing her work for the organization with visits to 4-H meetings and summer day camps, where she loved to sing songs like, "Frogs in Yonder Pond." Her interactions with children brought out her

laughter, genuine and happy. She was one of the original members of the Missouri Association of Extension 4-H Youth Workers Association (MAE 4-HYW), and served in many office roles for the organization.

In later years, Jamie served as a leader for Missouri chapters of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the International 4-H Youth Exchange (IFYE). She was known as one of the best grant writers for the Rain-tree Arts Council, where she was an administrator who handled visual, performing, literary, and music arts.

Jamie enjoyed traveling the world, visiting her nieces in places like Italy, Spain and China or longtime family friends in Belgium. She loved an opportunity to try new foods and expand her experiences.

Jamie was preceded in death by her parents, James and Margaret Sue Harness of Olney.

She is survived by a sister, Joyce Sweet; three nieces, Nikki Anderson, Ashley Anderson, and Shelley Anderson; and great-nieces, Evie Huffman, Annika Anderson-Kozien, and Sage, Brooke, and a great-nephew, Henry Pendergrass.

Jamie graduated from Silex High School in 1964 and from the University of Missouri with bachelor's (1968) and later a master's degree.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Missouri 4-H Foundation or charity of your choice. Missouri 4-H Foundation, 109 Whitten Hall, Columbia, MO 65211. 4hfoundation@missouri.edu.



Bobbye Whalen

Bobbye Jean Whalen, 77, of Troy died Friday, March 6, 2026, at her home.

Family and friends will be received from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Friday at Kemper-Keim Family Funeral Chapel located at 351 Monroe Street Troy, MO 63379.

Funeral service will be held at 1 p.m., Friday at Kemper-Keim Family Funeral Chapel in Troy. Interment will follow at Old Alexandria Cemetery in Troy.

She was born Nov. 11, 1948, in Beaumont, Texas and was the third of seven daughters born to Terrell Terry "T.T." and Creola Virgie Hampton Poole. As a child, she was a tomboy who loved to climb trees, but as a teenager, she loved boys and make-up. She moved to Missouri in 1972 and lived in Troy since 1986.

She worked since she was 15 years old, starting in coffee shops and truck stops in Texas and Louisiana. She was a school bus driver in Bowling Green and a real estate agent in Troy. For over 35 years, she served her community in healthcare as a certified nurse's aide, director, and regional supervisor until her retirement from Pyramid Healthcare Services. Her most important and cherished role was as a homemaker and mother to the six children she raised. She had a gift for interior decorating and making every space feel like home. Perhaps her greatest talent was single-handedly preparing and presenting home-cooked meals for her large family on every occasion. She loved her blue healers, Rambo (2019), and Rebel, who was at her side until the end. She also loved flowers, feeding, and watching wild birds, and her many cats through the years. She was a MAGA, America-First patriot and number one supporter of President Trump and our nation's military.

She is survived by her husband, Jack Whalen, who was the love of her life; sisters, Bilbie Chesser, Brenda Shriner, and Olissa Smith; children, Karen Kerns and husband, Bob, Alton Kendall and wife, Teresa, Terrell Kendall, Stormye Smith, Michael Kendall, Bobby Kendall and wife, Jodi, and John Whalen

and wife, Kayla; 17 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren who knew her as Grams; and numerous nieces, nephews, and other relatives whom she cherished.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Terrell and Creola Poole; and three sisters, Virgie Lee, Wanda Gregory, and Alissa Dyson.

In lieu of flowers, expressions of sympathy may be made to Old Alexandria Methodist Church, c/o Kemper-Keim Family Funeral Chapel, P.O. Box 222 Troy, MO 63379.



Catherine Rousan Vallejo

Catherine Rousan Vallejo, 66, of Louisiana died Thursday, March 5, 2026 at DePaul Hospital in St. Louis.

Visitation will be held from 4-7 p.m., Tuesday (today) at Collier Funeral Home in Louisiana.

Catherine was born Oct. 30, 1959 in St. Louis to William and Sylvia Morris Rousan.

She is survived by two sons, Jimmy Huckstep of St. Peters, and Nathan Huckstep and wife, Christy of Louisiana; grandchildren, Madison Morelock and husband, Michael of Louisiana, and Nathan Husckstep of Louisiana; two brothers, Walter Miller of Bowling Green, and Paul Rousan of Clarksville; a sister, Janice McCormick and Jake Pilkington of Bowling Green; and several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, a sister, Debbie Rousan, two brothers, Bill Rousan and Gomer Rousan, two nieces, Michelle Rousan and Sarah Miller, and a nephew, Chuck McCormick.

Catherine loved to cook and being a homemaker.

March Farber News

By RUTH WILLIAMS
Feb. 9 board of alderman highlights: Meeting was called to order with Pledge of Allegiance. Agenda, minutes and accounts payable were approved as presented. Public comment: possible ball-field upgrades were presented.

Maintenance report: a water leak has been located in the ditch near the south City limit. Unfinished Business: DNR Water Safety and Security Act Project grant to develop valve and hydrant inspection programs and GIS mapping of shut off and hydrant location has been submitted. Manhole replacement will be done when weather allows.

New business: Procurement policy draft presented. DNR State Historic Preservation Office has been contacted regarding Farber depot. Yes, the emergency siren test is the first Tuesday of each month at 1 p.m., and the chimes sound each day at noon (except Sunday). If you notice you don't hear it, please let us know so we can check and be sure it isn't broken. The Farber Community Betterment/Fun Fest added playground equipment at the city park and Sportsman Park. Installation will soon be finished and ready for use.

A new Sportsman Park sign at the ball field is coming soon too. Watch for an all

call for volunteers to come to a park painting party so everything is ready for warm weather.

More good news: Farber was awarded a Mark Twain Regional Council of Governments' Community Impact Grant, and we will be adding new sidewalks around the community building.

History question-USA is 250 years old this year, how old is Farber? Last month's answer-1980, we peaked at 503 residents.

Farber Library News: book sale going on now. Lots of children thru adult books. Kid's Messy Art Saturday, March 14. See Brenda to sign up for "glue art". Library assistant needed at Vandalia and Farber. Details on the library website <https://www.mexico-audrain.lib.mo.us> or contact Director Christal Bruner at 573-581-4389, or email director@audrain.mexico.audrain.mo.us, for more information.

Watch for the plant swap & share announcement, scheduled for May 2 on the library lawn.

See you at the Community Supper on March 20. Enjoy good food, Meet new friends, Come have a great time. Door open 5:30 p.m., eat at 6 p.m. Bring your favorite side dish or dessert. Spaghetti will be provided by the Farber Community Betterment Committee.

She worked at Stark Bros. Nurseries in Louisiana. Mostly she loved spending time with her grandkids, loved her dog, Otto, and loved talking with her sister

on the phone frequently. Memorials may be made to donor's choice. Online condolences may be sent at collierfuneral.com.

NOTICE

Farber Cemetery Association is asking all winter flowers at the Farber Cemetery to be removed by Wednesday, April 1 or they will be discarded for spring mowing to start. Thank you.

Henderson Part Of 14th Amendment Debate

By Brent Engel, Contributing Writer

John Brooks Henderson took part in one of the biggest constitutional battles in American history, and the legal shock waves are still being felt.

In spring 1866, the Missouri U.S. Senator from Pike County became embroiled with colleagues over what to include and what to leave out of the proposed 14th Amendment.

By then, the mastermind of the 13th Amendment outlawing slavery had some of the strongest constitutional credentials in Congress. When it was all over, Henderson could rightly be counted among the few who rose above petty politics and kept the country's abiding iAs Henderson saw it, the federal government had a right and duty to use the pen as it had the sword in quelling racial intimidation in the South after the Civil War.

Once a supporter of states' rights, he now believed a reunited nation was impossible without enshrining additional safeguards in the Constitution. Laws fluctuated with political whims, but constitutional edicts were tougher to toss out. The position put the Republican at odds with Democrat President Andrew Johnson and 11 defeated Southern states that wanted to rejoin the Union on their terms.

On March 8, 1866, Henderson reminded America that Congress, not Johnson, was empowered to decide "whether armed resistance to the national authority yet exists" and "whether the causes of the rebellion have been removed."

Henderson argued that because secession had "alienated and denationalized" the Confederate states, the Northern victory meant it was up to Congress to determine "what rights they are now entitled to claim as citizens of the United States."

He then addressed race in political representation, a subject that would be a major sticking point in verbal joust-

ing over the 14th Amendment. He said while it was unfair to tax people in states that had not yet been readmitted to the Union, it was equally unjust that many of them "deny representation" to freed slaves.

The resolution asked that those in charge of Reconstruction "inquire at once into the propriety and expediency of providing by law for the reorganization and re-establishment" of state governments. If the South refused to take care of business, he thought, the feds would do it for them.

Henderson listened as the Republican majority made it clear that disenfranchising black voters would not be tolerated. He then offered a simple proposition of his own to be included in the amendment: "No state, in prescribing the qualifications requisite for electors therein, shall discriminate against any person on account of color or race."

Notice should be taken that Henderson, a well-known suffragist at a time when just about every woman in America could not vote, did not use the word "men" but "person."

"I believe that the amendment I offer is the true proposition; I believe that it is just to the North and just to the South," he said. "I believe today, as conscientiously as I ever believed anything on earth, that the southern people themselves will be bettered by this amendment."

Henderson realized the Senate wasn't quite ready to pass the proposition, but appealed to his colleagues' sense of morality and predicted that black voting was imminent.

"Why not come up squarely and do it?" he asked. "The South itself cannot exist in peace without extending modified suffrage to the negro, and we all know it."

On March 16, Henderson again spoke about black suffrage, telling his colleagues that President Johnson in a personal conversation with

the senator had said he was for it, as first outlined in a letter the chief executive sent to the Mississippi governor in August 1865.

"If I am a radical for being in favor of negro suffrage, the President is equally a radical," he said.

There were many more debates over the amendment's language. In the end, suffrage for blacks was dropped in favor of citizenship rights, due process and equal protection of the laws.

Even with such compromises, the South, except for Johnson's home state of Tennessee, refused calls to ratify. So, Congress ordered the Army to take over civil operations until the former Confederate legislatures agreed to adopt the amendment – a move some argued was a blatant abuse of government power.

The Senate adopted the compromise amendment on June 8, 1866, and the House agreed five days later. Missouri ratified on Jan. 25, 1867, and the document was declared part of the Constitution on July 9, 1868. Five Southern states voted before that date and six after.

Perhaps because it was so ambiguous, the 14th Amendment remains a lightning rod for legal discourse. It has been brought into topics ranging from abortion and school desegregation to the results of the 2000 election and the 2016 discussion of birthright citizenship.

Though he had left the Senate by the time it was adopted, Henderson saw his attempt to outlaw voter discrimination against people of color incorporated into the 15th Amendment in 1870. The first clause reads: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

The words were strikingly similar to those Henderson had proposed four years earlier.



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Community News



Pictured are members and coaches of the Van-Far third grade girls team, front row, (l-r): Laken Jennings, Anlyn Donovan, Avery Schuckenbrock, Harper Gibson, Legacie Pittker, and Yamileth Lopez Guzman. Second row: Emma Burnett, Jade Jarmuszkiwicz, Keeley Gibson, Claire Schlueter, Savannah Schuckenbrock, LilyMae Fuget, and Klaralynn Housman. Coaches are Benny Burnett, and Ashley Schlueter, pictured and Ryan Schuckenbrock, not pictured.

Strong Turnout As Van-Far Third Grade Girls Wrap Up Fun-Filled Basketball Season

The Van-Far third grade girls basketball team recently took part in the Community R-VI Youth Basketball League playing seven games between Jan. 3 and Feb. 14.

The young athletes showed steady growth on the court while building confidence and friendships along the way.

Led by coaches Benny Burnett, Ryan Schuckenbrock, and Ashley Schlueter, the team focused on developing strong funda-

mentals, improving individual skills, and learning the value of teamwork. Above all, the coaches emphasized having fun and creating a positive first experience in organized basketball.

The season included a memorable team outing on Sunday, March 1 when the girls attended a University of Missouri Women's basketball game. The highlight of the day came when the team gathered onto the court to scrimmage during half-time, giving the girls a thrilling opportunity to play

where college athletes compete.

In addition to league play, the girls will also represent Van-Far playing in tournaments at Mark Twain and Wellsville-Middletown adding more game experience while continuing to sharpen their abilities against a variety of opponents.

From learning the basics to stepping on a college court, it was a season full of growth, teamwork, and fun.

They can't wait until next year.



Clark Inks To Place At William Penn

Bowling Green senior football player Jakarri Clark signed a letter of intent to play football for William Penn in the fall. Pictured, sitting, from left: Amber Clark, mother, Alora Schneider, Jakarri Clark, Steve Clark, dad. Cody Speagle, BGHS head coach is pictured standing.

March Is Problem Gambling Awareness Month

The Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling (Alliance), in partnership with the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), recognizes March as Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM).

This year's theme, "Caring Communities, Stronger Futures," emphasizes the importance of a community-driven approach to problem gambling awareness and support.

The annual campaign aims to increase public awareness of problem gambling and the availability of prevention, treatment and recovery services, as well as encourage healthcare providers to screen for problem gambling and connect individuals to appropriate support.

Problem gambling, defined as gambling behaviors that disrupt or damage personal, family or professional lives, affects millions of Americans. In the United States, 2.5 million adults (1 percent) are estimated to meet the criteria for a severe gambling problem each year. Another 5-8 million (2-3 percent) are considered to have mild or moderate gambling problems. Additionally, in the past year, approximately 20 million American adults reported experiencing at least one indicator of problematic gambling behavior.

If you or someone you know is struggling with a gambling problem, help is available by calling Missouri based 1-888-BETSOFF (1-888-238-7633) or visiting www.888betsoff.org - it is free and confidential.

When the community comes together — friends, families, educators, healthcare providers, local partners, and policymakers — silence is replaced with support, and isolation is replaced with connection. To learn more about problem gambling, please visit NCPGambling.org/FAQs

Thank You

The Van-Far third grade girls team would like to thank the team's sponsor, C.E. Grain of Farber.

Thank you to Van-Far Booster Club. Thank you to all of the parents, families, and community members who supported their fundraiser and cheered from the stands. Your time, generosity, and encouragement have helped these girls grow on and off the court.

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Fischer Signs With MO Valley

Van-Far senior Jackson Fischer signed a letter of intent to play football for Missouri Valley College in the fall. Pictured, from left: Van-Far head coach Lucas Gibson; mother, Lara Bell; Jackson Fischer; and dad, Terrance Bell.



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