



MISTRIAL DECLARED IN RAPE, KIDNAPPING CASE — PAGE 7A

<<< LADY TIGERS OVERCOME ADVERSITY
Exeter girls hoops battles injuries, numbers to turn in 12 wins. — 1B



CASSVILLE Democrat

APRIL 8, 2026 | CASSVILLE-DEMOCRAT.COM

Sludge storage planned near Cassville

Proposal would build 800,000-gallon tank one mile north of city

BY SHEILA HARRIS

sheilaharris@gmail.com

A proposal is on the table with the Missouri Department

of Natural Resources (DNR) to issue a Missouri State Operating Permit to HydroAg Environmental (HydroAg), LLC, for the operation of a no-discharge, above-ground, sludge storage facility one mile north of Cassville.

The tank, designed to hold food-processing residuals, or "sludge," will be located south-

east of the junction of Farm Roads 1095 and 2140. Labeled as an "inclement weather facility," the tank "will provide storage for materials licensed for land application during periods of inclement weather or when land application is otherwise precluded," states the project description HydroAg submitted to the DNR.

"When land application can occur, residuals will be transferred from the storage tank to authorized land application sites via sealed tanker trucks," the HydroAg application states.

The circular sludge storage tank will be constructed of interlocking galvanized steel panels, will be 115 feet in diameter and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2A

POLICE CHASE

When: Thursday night starting at 9:52 p.m.

Duration: Lasted 17 minutes through Cassville and south on Highway 37

More: Police believe vehicle is same one that evaded police in Hilltop area a couple months ago

4-wheeler evades police in chase

Vehicle fled at 50 MPH on Main Street, escaped into Arkansas

BY KYLE TROUTMAN

kt troutman@cassville-democrat.com

Cassville police are seeking to identify the driver of a four-wheeler that fled and ultimately evaded multiple agencies in pursuit on Thursday.

Donald Privett, Cassville police chief, said at 9:52 p.m. on Thursday, Office Jacqueline Murray was patrolling within the city limits when she saw a four-wheeler traveling west-bound allegedly fail to stop at a stop sign at 11th and Main streets. Murray attempted to initiate a traffic stop, but the vehicle continued to flee.

Privett said the chase was all over the area of Presley Drive, Ivey Street and Sapp Street, eventually returning to Main Street by the Cassville Branch Library, continuing on Main Street to Highway 37, then south to Seligman and eventually, Arkansas.

"They made that circle around Presley, Sapp and Ivey about four or five times before he came back behind the library and went south on Main to the four-way, turned left on Highway 7 and headed toward Seligman," Privett said. "We continued the pursuit to south of the MoDOT barn hen he started crossing into the opposite lane of traffic. At that point, we terminated the pursuit because of the risk to the public due to him driving southbound in the northbound lane."

Privett said the Missouri State Highway Patrol terminated its pursuit on Main Street, but troopers followed the four-wheeler at a safe distance until it turned onto Butler Hollow Road and escaped into Arkansas via backroads.

The chase lasted 17 minutes before it was terminated, reaching speeds of over 50 miles per hour on Main Street and Highway 37. Privett said two Cassville police cars, two Highway Patrol cars and one

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2A

Drive on in!



Hazel Gripka, left, Cassville resident whose home is in the city park, laughs with former Mayor Bill Shiveley, center, and current Mayor Jon Horner, as Richard Asbill, city administrator in the foreground, explains after ribbon is cut for the 7th Street Bridge. Gripka would be the first to drive over the structure. "No burnouts, Hazel," Asbill said. The new bridge, replacing the old structure washed out in 2017, was built by Hartman and Company at a cost of \$738,000. Kyle Troutman/kt troutman@cassville-democrat.com

Cassville woman facing multi-state theft, fraud cases

Suspect was accused of stealing from pool hall in Cassville in 2023

BY KYLE TROUTMAN

kt troutman@cassville-democrat.com

A Cassville woman was recently arrested on an out-of-state warrant and extradited to Georgia, facing multiple felony cases in multiple states relating to alleged fraud and theft.

Amanda Ross, born 1984, of Cassville,

was arrested on April 1 on a fugitive warrant out of Franklin County, Ga., for four counts of felony fraud. Cases against Ross are also active in at least two other states.

Locally, a police report against Ross was filed with the Cassville Police Department on June 23, 2023. According to the incident report, filed by Det. Stuart Lombard, police took a walk-in report of theft from the H&H Pool Hall. The victim, a co-owner of the business, said Ross had been stealing money from the business for some time and had

been involved in day-to-day operations since March 1, 2023, agreeing to run the business for 20% ownership.

The victim said Ross routinely handled money from food and beverage sales, as well as gambling machines. The victim said the business' co-owner sent Ross \$16,000 to pay all of the bills a couple of weeks prior to the report being taken. The victim said they believed Ross was paying the bills and had no reason to doubt her. However, the business' internet and other utilities

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3A

Wheaton man charged with child molestation

20-year-old being held on \$100K cash only bond

BY KYLE TROUTMAN

kt troutman@cassville-democrat.com

A Wheaton man has been charged with child molestation for allegedly engaging in sexual acts with a minor.

Chase Griffanti, 20, of Wheaton, is charged with fourth-degree child molestation.

According to a probable cause report filed by Det.

FELONY ARREST

Who: Chase Griffanti, 20, of Wheaton

What: Is charged with fourth-degree child molestation

Bond: Set at \$100,000, cash only

James Myers, with the Barry County Sheriff's Office, the alleged crime was committed between August 2025 and March 2026.

On March 22, in the evening hours, Griffanti allegedly drove to the victim's house in Seligman and brought the vic-

tim, a minor under the age of 16, back to his residence in Wheaton. Deputies later arrived at the home after the victim was reported missing by a witness.

A forensic interview was later conducted with the victim, who reported that Griffanti had seen them and later added them on Snapchat in August 2025. The victim disclosed their age at the time, and Griffanti was 19 years old at the time.

Griffanti and the victim met in person in October 2025, and

the victim said Griffanti lied to the victim's relatives, telling he was 18 and another he was 17.

The victim said when Griffanti went to the victim's residence, they would have sexual intercourse. The victim said intercourse happened twice, once with contraception and once without. The victim also reported Griffanti send nude pictures of himself.

The alleged crimes were committed in Seligman.

Myers noted in the report the witness is in fear of Griffanti

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LOCAL

NEWS BRIEFS

'God Loves People' revival at Carr Lane Baptist

Carr Lane Baptist Church, located at 9276 Hwy. 86, south of Shell Knob, will host the "God Loves People" revival meeting April 19-22. The revival preacher will be Pastor Aaron Weibel. Sunday services will be at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday evening services will be at 7 p.m. For more information, people may call 870-480-2764.

Events upcoming at Zone 4

Zone 4 Mini Golf & More will host East Coast Swing Dance Lessons at 7 p.m. on April 17, at \$10 per person; a Love & Marriage Game Show at 7 p.m. on April 18, free admission; and Trivia on the Patio at 6 p.m. on April 25, free to play.

Purdy Special Road District to meet

Notice is hereby given that the Purdy Special Road District will conduct a meeting at 4 p.m. on April 13 at the Purdy District Road Barn, located at 200 South 9th Street (Farm Road 1085).

Community Collective seeking sponsors for CPR/AED/First Aid classes

The Cassville Community Collective has announced upcoming Adult and Infant CPR/AED/First Aid Classes for the Cassville community. These classes will be available to individuals, businesses and organizations who want to be prepared in emergency situations. To help make these classes possible, the collective are currently seeking donations to purchase essential supplies such as CPR manikins, first aid materials and other training equipment. Every contribution goes directly toward equipping the community with the tools and education needed to respond confidently in everyday emergencies.

Monett Historical Society program April 21

Monett Historical Society Monthly program will be held on April 21 at 7 p.m. in the Event Center of the museum. The program for this evening will feature Kaitlyn McConnell, a noted Ozark historian. McConnell began writing about the Ozarks when she was 17 years old. In 2025 she published "The Ozarks Pie Project Diary," a collection of 48 tried-and-tested pie recipes from vintage local cookbooks. The event is free to the public.

Capps Creek Road District to meet

The Capps Creek Special Road District will meet in regular session on April 16 at noon, at the home of Garry and Pam Bartkoski, located at 5086 Farm Road 2057 in Monett. The public is welcome to attend.

Kings Prairie Cemetery Annual Meeting

The Kings Prairie Cemetery Association will hold its annual meeting at 5:30 p.m. on May 11 at New Liberty Church on Highway Z, southeast of Monett. All who are interested are urged to attend. Contributions for mowing and upkeep of the cemetery may be mailed to Kings Prairie Cemetery, c/o Dan Shelton, 2541 Farm Road 1120, Monett, MO 65708.

Barry County Community Garden meetings set

The Barry County Community Garden has scheduled its monthly meetings on the first Monday of every month, at Harvick Farms, located at 16062 Hwy. 76 in Cassville. The work in the garden days are from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Garden, located at on 10160 Farm Road 2160. Tentative working days depend on the weather and will be updated on the organization's Facebook page, "Barry County Community Garden," and people may contact the page for more information. Produce from the garden goes to the Cassville Pantry. New members and/or volunteers may come and reserve a plot.

Ozark Country Quilters show April 10-11

O C the Quilts is a judged quilt show presented by the Ozark Country Quilters of Cassville/Monett. In addition to over 200 items displayed, there will be a quilt turning, demonstrations, vendors, boutique, opportunity quilt, special exhibits and knife/scissor sharpening. The event will be on April 10 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and April 11 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Crowder College in Cassville, located at 4020 N. Main. Admission is \$5, and children under 12 are free.

Cassville preschool, Kinder Academy, kindergarten screenings in April

The Cassville school district screening dates have been set for preschool, kinder academy and kindergarten students for the 2026-2027 school year. All screenings will take place in the FEMA 1 Building, located next to the football field. Families with an eligible child for either preschool or kindergarten screening should call the Primary Office at 417-847-2445 to make an appointment. Preschool screenings are April 13 and April 15. Preschool screening is for children ages three and four who live in the Cassville school district and will be 3 at the time of screening. Please plan for 30-45 minutes for the preschool screening appointment. Current Cassville preschool students do not need to participate in the screening. Kinder Academy and Kindergarten screenings are April 14 and April 16. Children that are 5 years old on or before July 31 should be screened for kindergarten. Families whose children are being screened for kinder academy or kindergarten should bring the following items to their appointment: Official birth certificate, immunization (shot) record, proof of residency (utility bill with name and address, real estate contract or rental agreement) and parent/guardian's photo ID. Anyone with questions may call 417-847-2445.

Cassville Farmers' Market open on Saturdays

The Cassville Farmers Market is open weekly on Saturdays on the Barry County Courthouse Square, from 8 a.m. to noon. Vendors are offering eggs, vegetables, hand-made crafts, baked goods and more. Those interested in becoming a vendor may contact Chad Sprinkle at 417-846-3539.

Lessons offered before Seligman's Saturday dances

The Seligman Chamber of Commerce country dances at the Seligman Chamber Event Center are every Saturday from 7-10 p.m. No alcohol is allowed. Admission is \$10 per person, and 18-and-under are free. There is a potluck, 50-50 drawing and door prizes. Free dance lessons will also be given from 5-6 p.m. For more information, people may call 479-903-3640.

OATS rides available in Barry County

OATS Transit offers regular transportation services for the rural general public of any age, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. People may call the local OATS Transit office at 417-887-9272 or 800-770-6287 to schedule a ride or find out about services in the Barry County area. People may also visit the OATS website at oatstransit.org to view local schedules under "Bus Schedules," then click on the county of service. OATS Transit is hiring drivers statewide to continue serving riders. Openings are listed on the OATS website.



A total of 41 Senior Beta members from Cassville competed in various events at the 2026 Missouri Senior Convention. Those who placed included: Shelby Knoefler, Mason Rillstone, Alex Holycross, Jack Chappell and Lyndsie VanDerhoef. Contributed photo

Beta Club members compete

A total of 41 Senior Beta members from Cassville competed in various events at the 2026 Missouri Senior Convention, held March 13-14 at the Branson Convention Center.

During the convention, senior Claire Reuter was selected as a finalist for the Missouri State University Scholarship and participated in an interview with the Missouri Beta Club Council. While the scholarship was ultimately awarded to another student, being named a finalist is a significant honor.

The following members earned invitations to compete at the National Senior Beta Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, this June:

10th Grade Language Arts - 2nd place

- Shelby Knoefler
- 11th Grade Health & Physical Education - 5th place
- Mason Rillstone
- Visual Arts - Sculpture - 2nd place
- Lyndsie VanDerhoef
- Visual Arts - Pottery - 3rd place
- Jack Chappell
- Visual Arts - Black & White Photography - 5th place
- Alex Holycross

If these students choose to compete at the National Senior Beta Convention, they will represent Cassville as they compete against top Beta members from across the country.

Sludge: Companies based in Ark.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

will stand 11.67 feet tall. The tank can contain a maximum of 828,994 gallons of liquid food-processing residuals, with one foot of freeboard space required above the contents.

According to HydroAg's permit application, the materials stored in the tank will consist of food-processing residuals, including dissolved air-flotation (DAF) skimmings, generated from poultry processing and other food production facilities.

"These residuals originate from washdown water streams only and contain no sewage components," the project plan states. "The residuals are in liquid form and will be land-applied for beneficial use as fertilizer."

The tank will be designed with secondary containment features, a recirculation system, external berm and catch basins to contain possible leaks and spills, a wind-buffering cover and an alarmed leak-detection system.

According to the company's project plan, HydroAg is based in Russellville, Ark., and holds land application permits in Arkansas and services various facilities in Missouri.

HydroAg's proposed permit for the Cassville facility is "subject to certain effluent limitations, schedules and special conditions," states the DNR draft of the operating permit. The draft permit is "consistent with applicable water quality standards, effluent standards or treatment requirements or suitable timetables to meet these requirements (see 10 CSR 20-7.015 and 7.031)"

The proposed, detailed draft permit can be found at <https://dnr.mo.gov/document/draft-missouri-state-operating-permit-m00141003-nov-26-2025>.

mit-m00141020-nov-26-2025.

According to the DNR, public hearings and issuing permits are conducted or processed according to 10 CSR 20-6.020.

A public comment period for the Cassville sludge storage facility closed on Dec. 26, 2025, but, according to Heather Peters, Chief of the Water Protection Section of the DNR, a new comment period may soon be opening.

In addition to the proposed Cassville sludge storage facility, Denali Water Solutions, LLC, also based in Russellville, Ark., proposes to construct two similar storage tanks for the same purpose: one north of Humansville; and a second tank, 1.3 miles west of Wentworth on Highway J.

A public comment period closed on Dec. 26, 2025, for the "El Dorado" tank, near Humansville. However, the draft permit can be found at <https://dnr.mo.gov/document/draft-missouri-state-operating-permit-m00141003-nov-26-2025>.

A public comment period for the proposed storage tank near Wentworth closed on Dec. 1, 2025. A draft permit was no longer available on the DNR's website.

According to Peters, a public meeting regarding all three proposed sludge storage tanks will be held later in May.

"We intend to have the [storage tank] permit application[s] and a pending permit decision out for public review at the same time that we announce the public meetings," she said.

Peters says her department "is not yet ready to propose a permit decision for Denali's land application permit applications."

Chase: Similar incident at Hilltop

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Barry County Sheriff's Office car were involved.

"At one point, Officer Murray thought the four-wheeler struck her patrol car, but we are unable to determine if that actually happened or not," Privett said.

Privett said police have received tips on who was driving the vehicle, and police are working to ID the suspect.

"When we ID him, we will charge him with felony resisting and a slew of traffic violations," he said.

Privett said a similar incident occurred in the Hilltop area a couple months ago, with the suspect evading police at that time, as well.

"Officer Murray said it appeared to be the same four-wheeler because the tail lights kept flickering," Privett said.

Griffanti: Being held on \$100K bond

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

because he would go inside the witness' residence late in the evening while the witness was present. The witness also has an order of protection against Griffanti.

Griffanti is being held in the Barry County jail on a cash-only bond of \$100,000. A bond appearance hearing is set for Thursday at 9 a.m. in the courtroom of Judge Robert Foulke.

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CORRECTIONS

The *Cassville Democrat* corrects factual errors or clarifies information promptly and courteously. If you have a correction or clarification, please email Publisher Kyle Troutman at ktoutman@cassville-democrat.com.

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Ross: Multiple cases in New York, one in Colorado

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accounts were all past due.

After learning bills had not been paid, the victim began looking into the business' finances and contacted its point of sale provider. The victim said Ross had allegedly changed the account settings so any funds coming through the point of sale system would go directly to her checking account, and Ross allegedly opened a checking account in the victim's name on April 17, 2023.

The victim said payments on the point of sale provider loans were structured as to where they took a percentage out of each sale, and the victim had no knowledge of any loans or authorized any loans.

At that time, the victim accounted for more than \$18,500 being stolen, but believed the total amount was more.

The investigation continued on June 30, 2023, after information later obtained by subpoena from the point of sale provider allegedly showed deposits into Ross' checking account, added on March 1, 2023. There were 10 deposits displayed as ACH under Ross' account, the first on March 3, 2023 and last on March 20, 2023, all totaling \$1,608.28.

After that time, the deposits switched and began being displayed as going to a business debit card with the point of sale provider, and Lombard said he knew from previous discussions with the victim that there was no such card for the business approved by the owners. There were 29 transactions labeled "instant deposit" after Ross allegedly added her account and the business debit card to the account. It is unknown where the funds were deposited to for those transactions, Lombard's report said.

On July 27, 2023, Lombard said he met

with the victim, who confirmed the business never had a debit card supplied by the point of sale provider, nor did Ross have permissions to transfer any funds from the business to her personal checking account added to the system.

Lombard also showed the victim emails sent from hhpoolhall@gmail.com, and the victim said they had not sent the emails, including one signed with the victim's typed signature and had a photograph of the victim's Missouri driver's license attached.

The victim said Ross had been in possession of the driver's license at one point to obtain a liquor license, but the victim did consent to the license being photographed or used for anything other than the liquor license.

On Aug. 22, 2023, Lombard met with Ross at the Cassville Police Department for a recorded interview.

During the interview, Ross claimed:

- The victim's real estate company would pay half of the electric

- She went into the pool hall on the Wednesday after her vacation. The electric bill was past due. They had \$3,000 left. She gave \$2,500 to an employee and \$500 to the victim.

- The victim took his name off of the water bill and wanted his real estate name put on it.

- The victim was always a month behind on payments.

- The point of sale hardware had to be put under her name. She could not switch the name after changing the business name to Route 76 Pool Hall.

- The victim brought his driver's license in to let her take a photo for the point of sale system.

- The point of sale provider loan was for cash, but the equipment lease.

- She said the victim

knew there was a loan in his name.

- Square took a percentage out of every transaction.

- Funds were originally going into an account at Security Bank, and the other co-owner asked her to open a separate account at CS Bank.

- Point of sale transactions went into her account. She would then transfer to the pool hall account.

- The co-owner said he did not want the victim's name on the account.

- The victim would use slot machine money to pay some of the bills. It had left them short when the machine owner came to pick up the money.

- The co-owner wired her money to open a new CS Bank account.

- She admitted to sending emails to the point of sale provider on the victim's behalf. She said he was aware.

Ross provided numerous copies of bank statements, contracts, texts and more. Lombard said he asked Ross if she had ever been short of money and temporarily borrowed from what the business had put into her account, and she said she had not.

Ross said the other co-owner was aware of how she was running things and the movement of money. Lombard said it was vital he speak to that co-owner prior to pursuing any further investigations. Ross said she would pass along Lombard's information to the co-owner, and Lombard escorted Ross from the building.

On Oct. 24, 2023, Lombard completed a statement of probable cause for Ross, requesting charges of identity theft and forgery for using the victim's driver's license and portraying the victim in emails to obtain a loan from the point of sale provider.

Lombard said he

printed copies of the email correspondence and created a file to be delivered to the Barry County prosecuting attorney's office on Oct. 25, 2023.

No charges were ever filed as a result of the information and probable cause statement.

On Monday, the victim provided court documents from the Supreme Court of the State of New York, County of Monroe. The documents summoned Ross to court for a case filed by Wynwood Capital Group LLC against 10 Cassville businesses, as well as Ross and another defendant, William Ross.

Businesses named included: Endless Concepts Contracting LLC, DBA Boss Hog Contracting; AC Beauty and Beyond LLC; Ross Decking & More LLC; 4R Contracting, LLC; Route 76 Pool Hall, LLC; Stubby's Automotive, LLC; 4R Cattle LLC; Country Kiddos Daycare LLC; sunshine Tanning & More LLC; and Boss Hog Barndominiums LLC.

According to the court documents, on or about Sept. 19, 2022, Wynwood Capital Group and the defendants entered into an agreement that Wynwood purchased 6.26% of the defendants' future receipts up to the sum of \$59,960 in exchange for a discounted purchase price of \$40,000.

Pursuant to the agreement, the defendants agreed to remit to Wynwood the amount of receipts sold through a daily remittance amount that was a good faith estimate of the purchase percentage of the defendants' average weekly receipts. The defendants allegedly ceased remitting to Wynwood and breached the agreement by blocking Wynwood's withdrawals while conducting regular business. The defendants

allegedly remitted \$45,781.10 of the receivables purchased by Wynwood, leaving an outstanding balance of \$45,781.10 and default fees of \$2,835.78. The documents allege the defendants failed to direct the agreed-upon payments to Wynwood by changing the bank account from the designated bank account by placing a stop payment or taking other measures to interfere with Wynwood's ability to collect the purchased amount.

There remains a balance due and owing to Wynwood in the amount of \$17,014.68, plus interest, costs and disbursements.

In Colorado, a suit has been filed in the U.S. District Court of Colorado for the amount of \$52,000. Steve Wiggins and Brandilynn Gregg filed suit against Endless Concepts Contracting, LLC, DBA Boss Hog Contracting, based in Missouri; and against Boss Hog Barndominiums, LLC, based in Indiana.

In that suit, the plaintiffs alleged they entered into a contract on May 16, 2024, to construct a home, and that Endless would provide services, including the construction of a full turn-key, move-in-ready build to the plaintiffs' satisfaction.

The suit says ground was broken on the project, but work halted when the defendants and their agents were unable to source sufficient labor and contractors to continue work. The plaintiffs were informed the original contractor was fired and a new contractor would be sourced. After the original contractor was fired, it was discovered by the plaintiffs and defendants the contractor had billed for work previously completed by the plaintiffs and at the plaintiffs' expense,

and the plaintiffs have received no credit for the fraudulent billing.

The defendants sourced a replacement contractor in the late fall of 2024, and the new contractor alleged all previous work was non-compliant and proceeded to demolish all work completed, allegedly destroying other work outside the scope of the project, including destroying a roadway and building pad constructed by the plaintiffs.

The replacement contractor then allegedly abandoned the project after one week, leaving the work completed by the defendants and the plaintiffs destroyed and unusable.

The documents state the plaintiffs, as a result, sustained damages including property damage; past and future repairs; mitigation costs; loss of use of all; loss of use of applicable product warranties; attorneys' fees; litigation costs; and other damages.

The plaintiffs believe the defendants allegedly misrepresented their services and that they were qualified to offer all services to which they agreed.

Another case against them in New York, filed Jan. 26, alleges a breach of contract filed by Calabria Funding LLC against Endless Concepts LLC. And another case in New York, filed by Epic Advance LLC, alleges a breach of contract similar to the case filed by Wynwood. The suit against Endless Concepts claims it sold future receipts having a value of \$120,000 for the sum of \$80,000, and the defendant allegedly put a stop payment on the account.

Information on the case in Georgia, for which Ross was extradited, as well as any possible cases in other states, could not be determined as of presstime.

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COMMENTARY

PUBLISHER'S VIEW



KYLE TROUTMAN

Predictably sad

It's a funny thing, news. Largely, it's unpredictable what will elicit the biggest reactions from the public, especially on social media. Sometimes, what we feel like are our best stories get a mere flicker of attention. Other times, a story lands on my desk that I am certain will bring a waves of attention — and not always the good kind.

As great as we are as a community celebrating our accomplishments and successes, last week proved we are equally as poor as a community at basic human relatability, tolerance and acceptance.

On March 28, such a story occurred. Over the course of 4-6 hours that day, about 75 people came and went from the Barry County courthouse square — a “No Kings” protest that I predicted would elicit a reaction, but it was even more than I expected.

Since the story was posted last Wednesday on Facebook, it's garnered more than 65,000 views, more than 700 comments and more than 35 shares. The views and shares I expected, but the comments exploded far beyond expectations — the majority are highly disappointing.

There were many in support of First Amendment rights, the nature of the story and signs being displayed, and the message participants were trying to send.

But, predictably and sadly, most of the positivity was drowned out by what can only be described as hate.

Here are more than a handful of the comments I am referencing, copied and pasted with no editing:

- Does the nursing home realize they left the door open?
- THERE WILL BE AN EXTRA PILL IN YOUR MEDS TONIGHT AT THE NURSING HOME !
- I wonder how many of them got paid?
- Came in on the short bus
- Useful idiots are everywhere
- Should've called it the “look at us we have no lives” protest
- While the normal people are at work
- Meanwhile the other people in town were busy AT THEIR JOBS
- Look at that... even in small towns you can find at least 75 RETARDS to hold up signs their pets colored for them
- Trumps still y'all's daddy
- We drove by and pointed and laughed.
- Looks like they bused in people from the retirement homes again! Cassville with a population of 3100 people, 75 people come to protest? Why would anybody on their right mind publish this pathetic turnout? 75 mostly elderly people,,,,,geesh!
- Someone keeps pulling these people from the nursing homes and making them stand and hold signs. They can't even remember what their names are.
- A lot of mental illness
- 75 losers
- Collection of morons
- A retard festival
- Leave our Red state.
- Old liberal white women! This is a great argument for repealing the 19th amendment!
- ‘Tards be ‘tardin’
- I was wanting a speed bump for testing my new shocks
- That's a lot of retards!
- You people are so stupid
- You're a menace to society
- I kept driving past but no one would try to block my car. What good is a gaggle of libtards if you can't run them over? Folks in the big cities get to have all the fun.

Regardless of your political beliefs, is this what we've become? Tacky insults with poor grammar? Attacking people's ages, calling them stupid (or worse), implying they don't have jobs (when the event was on a Saturday) — admitting to driving by multiple times in hopes someone would step into the street so they could be run over?

I don't know about you, but for me, this nature of public discourse in response to folks peacefully exercising their First Amendment rights is growing quite old. We've never covered any right-wing protests like “No Kings.” And we would, they just don't happen here. In a county that voted 75%-80% for Trump in every election he has been in, there has not once been an opportunity to cover any similar protest of Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, or even before Trump, Barack Obama.

Most people have opinions about national politics. Truthfully, I despise reporting either side here. People get too worked up, too hateful, too insulting, and occasionally violent.

It's predictably sad — and if we are to be a serious newspaper and report what's actually happening on the ground, we're right in the middle of it whether we choose to be or not.

In the sea of predictably sad comments, there was this one that made sense to me. Maybe it doesn't to you, but it's a point well made:

- So many people on here making jokes about the ages of most of these protesters. Thing is, they lived through the Civil rights movement of the 60's, Jim Crowe, Vietnam, assassinations, fuel and energy crisis, the cold war, and countless other crisis. So, unlike most of us tenderfoots, have proved themselves as bad [a****]. Most people opposed equal rights, basic human rights, of people of color 60 plus years ago. Some things never change.

We are a small town community. Many of us are not even just neighbors — but we are friends, co-workers and even family. If we can't show relatability, tolerance and acceptance toward one another — in our own community — I hate to see where this entire country is headed.

Kyle Troutman has served as editor of the Cassville Democrat since 2014 and owner/publisher since 2023. He is a three-time ISWNE Golden Dozen award winner. He may be reached at 417-847-2610 or ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com.

STAFF VIEW

A word from a boogeyman

I'm reading that, based on an uptick in spiritual interest, our nation is experiencing a religious revival.

It's understandable. There's nothing like the specter of death (will the world still be here tomorrow?) to prompt a search for answers to existential questions that, heretofore, we've never slowed down long enough to ask.

Questioning is not a bad thing, I've discovered. “Seek and ye shall find.” But don't settle into a rut. There's always more to learn. Even the boogeymen on the other side of political and religious divides can have something to offer, if we're willing to listen.

I'll play the boogeyman first. I was raised in a fundamental Christian church, one with a rigid belief system, compared to most. My parents didn't vote — something to do with not involving oneself in the world's political system, I understood.

For someone who didn't vote, my Dad was avidly interested in politics. On presidential election nights, he sat up late, ear to the radio, waiting for a clear winner to emerge.

We didn't have a television either, but we did lots of reading.

Every night, Dad brought home copies of the daily newspapers in the city where we lived. I was lucky enough to grow up during the 1960s — so the headlines and images were lurid, probably too graphic for a kid to be looking at, but there I was, learning about massacres in Vietnam, the assassinations of national figures and seeing photos of racially motivated riots and Vietnam War protests happening in streets across the US.

As a child, I never understood the rationale for the Vietnam conflict. The war — as it was called — was always there, a background track running throughout most of my childhood.

Killing other humans, even when it was government-sanctioned, I was taught, was morally wrong. I still feel the same way. However, I



SHEILA HARRIS

also picked up the impression that protesting those same wars was wrong, too. Kind of a catch-22.

“God puts in power those he wants in power. Who are we to question?”

That all-purpose rationale both excused us from voting and from carrying picket signs.

After I got married and began attending a different church, I was shocked to hear, directly from the pulpit, that voting was a person's Christian duty: to not vote was a sin. Furthermore (it was implied), a good Christian should vote Republican. That was my first exposure to Christian Nationalism: the wedding of religion with national politics, an unholy alliance that grants government the ability to speak from pulpits in churches across the nation, to gain the ears of parishioners for political gain, and to coerce those reluctant to fall in line.

I've had lots of years to process that input and to watch where it has led.

During that time, I've voted in some elections and sat out of others, with no particular qualms either way.

Some say that God uses the ballot box for his purposes. Maybe he does. But, if so, can't he use peaceful civilian protests, too? Don't get me wrong; I'm much more comfortable behind my keyboard.

History bears out that civilian protests played a large part in influencing public opinion and ultimately affecting government

policy in Vietnam. Under pressure, President Richard Nixon began withdrawing troops when he took office in 1969, a process that took long years, many more deaths and multiple protests to accomplish.

The Apostle Paul said, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18 KJV).

Sometimes, Paul implied, that wouldn't be possible.

Some say that Christians shouldn't muddy their feet in earthly matters. But where does such an other-worldly attitude leave justice? We face problems, here, that call for solutions. To do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God are requirements, says Micah 6:8 (KJV). Sometimes that edict leaves no room for neutrality.

And, Christians, what are we to do when our leader is using God's name for political advantage and to commit atrocities against innocent people here and abroad? Breaking the commandment to “not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain” can have real-life consequences for citizens of nations whose leaders justify crimes against humanity while flying God's banner.

We can't pretend not to see.

Our days appear numbered. No wonder more people are turning to religion.

Options, at this point, are limited.

But, if we're still around for the next presidential election, and you're adamant against voting for a Democrat, consider not voting at all if spirituality is the only reason.

There's no Biblical mandate to vote or not to vote, so stop being a tool in the arsenal of an administration run amok — one using God's name to leverage your vote.

Sheila Harris is a long-time Barry County resident and a sales executive and investigative reporter for the Cassville Democrat. She may be reached at sheilaharrisads@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Poetry Ain't Dead — It's Alive in Cassville

I am a witness.

I saw it with my own eyes. I heard it clearly. But more than anything, I felt it — somewhere in the chest, where words tend to land when they matter most.

Alexa stood at the front of the room. A single mother, all of 20 hard-earned years, one of Cassville's own, working to get ahead and provide for her child. She paused, searching — like a compass finding true north. She cleared her voice, unfolded a wrinkled sheet of paper, and took a breath that seemed just a little harder to come by.

The room waited. Then, quietly at first, the words came. Not polished. Not perfect. But true.

They moved with a sincerity that did not ask for approval, only to be heard. And as they settled into the room, something shifted. The tension gave way. The air seemed lighter. In that moment, Alexa did more than read a poem; she stepped beyond fear. And in doing so, she gave the rest of us something just as important: a reminder that even in struggle, there is the possibility of voice, and in voice, the possibility of hope.

That moment was not an isolated one.

It has been happening more often in Cassville, with each passing student, class and semester. What we are witnessing is not simply an event, but the quiet emergence of something larger.

Poetry Ain't Dead is more than a title. It is a kind of declaration, that ancient verse, made



TERRY HELD

new again by the voices of our own community, is very much alive. And it is growing, not loudly, but steadily, across Southwest Missouri.

What began as a modest open mic at Crowder College in Cassville has become something far more meaningful than a date on a calendar. It has become a gathering place for voices. Not professional voices. Not perfected ones. Just voices, local, young, honest and increasingly willing to be heard.

On April 23, the City of Cassville will recognize this movement by designating the day as Cassville Community Poetry Day. It is, on its surface, a simple proclamation. But in practice, it says something deeper: that this is a place where language matters.

And that may be the real story.

In recent years, we have spent much time talking about literacy — how to help students read more effectively, think more critically, and navigate a world shaped by speed and screens. These are necessary conversations. But literacy, if it is to mean anything lasting, must lead somewhere. It must move beyond reading words on a page and into shaping words in the world.

That is where poetry enters.

Not as something distant or academic, but as something familiar. It lives in the way a story is told across a kitchen table, in the rhythm of a long day described at its end, in the careful choosing of words when something difficult needs to be said. Poetry, in this sense, is not an academic exercise. It is a human one.

What we are beginning to see, on campus and beyond, is what happens when people are given space to make that shift: from reading to speaking, from absorbing language to shaping it.

The open mic has grown. Participation now extends across Crowder's campuses through a monthly online gathering. Area high school students have stepped into the circle, bringing with them a raw honesty that reminds us why expression matters in the first place. And perhaps most encouraging of all, this growing culture has led to the establishment of the Walt Whitman Scholarship, an investment not only in academic success, but in the enduring value of the written and spoken word.

None of this was inevitable.

It happened because people showed up. Because someone took the risk of reading a first poem. Because others chose to listen. Because, little by little, a space was created where language could be more than functional; it could be meaningful. In

a rural place like ours, that matters more than we might first realize.

There is a persistent narrative that places like Cassville are not where literature happens — that serious writing belongs elsewhere, in cities or institutions with larger reputations. But that narrative overlooks something essential. It misses the depth of experience, the strength of memory and the clarity of voice that exists in communities like this one.

A community that values language is a community that values thought.

A community that makes room for expression is a community that makes room for people.

So no, absolutely not; Poetry Ain't Dead.

If anything, it is doing what it has always done: waiting for a place where it can be spoken and heard. And here in Cassville, that place is beginning to take shape. And on April 23, when voices once again gather, some steady, some trembling, all sincere, we will be reminded of something simple and enduring: Not that poetry has arrived. But, that it was here all along, waiting for us to listen.

I am a witness.

Terry Held is an English instructor at Crowder College, Cassville. The views expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of Crowder College. He would appreciate hearing what you think. He can be reached at TerryHeld@Crowder.edu.

50 years ago

April 14, 1976
— SWEAR-IN, DOGS, 'PORT DEDICATION, WATER, COSTS ON COUNCIL AGENDA

Cassville's city council moved smoothly through a long and sometimes complicated agenda in a regular meeting Tuesday night. Included on Mayor Bill LeCompte's agenda were discussions of water fluoridation under new state laws, water rate study, airport dedication, loss of well pumping capacity, dog problems, matters of warrants issued for city offenses, start of new Neighborhood Center, annual audit, coming assessment, street light increases, and contract extensions on a wastewater treatment project that is a year or two away. Add several other minor discussions to this list and you have a session that was covered in two and one-half hours by the four-member council, with all members, W. E. Leonard, Bill Hailey, Marlee Edie and Gene Schlichtman, present. First order of business was a canvass of the April 6 election and swearing the incumbent aldermen back to their posts. Clerk F. O. Fields did the honors for Hailey and Leonard. Swinging into their agenda, and covered in the order of appearance, not necessarily by importance, the council covered these subjects: Circulated letter from State Department of Health inquiring if city wanted to fluoridate water under new requirement of Missouri law. State funds might be available, information requested from city which would pave the way for the project. Police report, patrol car driven 3,594 miles during month. One speeding, two driving while intoxicated, one peace disturbance and 47 parking citations. Mayor LeCompte informed council that new chlorination equipment had been installed on three wells presently in service for the water system. A radio switch with the sheriff's department and addition of a scanner in the patrol car has been completed. Pool improvements are underway, with Miss Karen Wade of Quincy, Ill., accepting manager's post for this season. New 150,000-gallon water tank is completed, city waiting for inspection by state health authorities before putting into service. Water rate study by auditing firm is to be completed next week. Council looking at possible rate adjustments due to increased pumping costs. Budget meeting set for April 27. Mayor advised council they might need to look for revenue that does not now exist. Airport completion date speculation for May 10 if weather holds. Dedication originally set May 30 changed to June 20 to permit more arrangements for speakers. Concern over Eighth Street well's loss of 100-gallon-per-minute pumping ability will be further observed. There has been no further loss since being reported at March council meeting. Contracts with Chamber of Commerce and South Barry County Ambulance District as new occupants of Neighborhood Center will be reviewed with the respective organizations. Problem of dogs in neighborhoods, both stray and pets, discussed by council. No action taken, mostly through doubt an effective



40 YEARS AGO: CURRY FAMILY POSTMASTERS — Willis Curry's retirement at the end of the month as postmaster at Eagle Rock ends a family era. His mother, Jean, served 45 years and six months in the post. As they two held a photo of the first office dating back to 1854, they related how the family, including the late Noel Curry, had served a total of 86 years in the post. Curry ends his 15-year career April 30. Mrs. Curry is presently a resident of Red Rose Inn in Cassville. Democrat file photo

to control with finances available. Fields discussed with council problem of citations and warrants issued not resulting in pickup of offenders of city ordinances. Mayor LeCompte reported the Neighborhood Center project, a joint effort of the Barry County Court through a HUD grant and city funding, was underway. An annual audit of city fiscal records begins next week by a Neosho firm. Contracts were signed with County Assessor Glen Nicoll for \$400 to complete city property assessments this year and extension of books. City notified by Barry Electric Cooperative of street light costs rising from \$594.60 a month present cost to \$711.10 under new rates effective with May 1 billing. Council approved maintenance contract for city collector's office equipment in annual amount of \$124. Closing out their meeting, the council renewed and revised contracts with Allgier-Martin and Associates of Joplin for a 1977-78 project of major improvements to wastewater treatment facilities here. Costing \$900,000, city funding is in hand for the 10% local costs. The program, started a year ago, would make major line additions to the city and add a treatment facility at the disposal lagoon. Mayor LeCompte explained most of the contract consisted of changes needed by the Environmental Protection Agency covering survey work that would include inspection of all existing lines with TV scans and smoke testing before the pending project is completely designed. Costs in excess of \$20,000 would be covered by Step One grants from the EPA. And, as Clerk Fields usually notes in his minutes, "the boys departed on their separate ways."

40 years ago

April 16, 1986
— FAMILY ERA ENDING AT EAGLE ROCK POST OFFICE APRIL 30

For a total of 86 years out of the 132-year history of the Eagle Rock post office, a member of the Curry family has been in charge. That era will end Wednesday, April 30, when Willis Curry retires. Curry, whose father and mother both served the

rural post office, will be succeeded by Cindy Rogers, a clerk at the Wheaton postal facility. She will serve until a permanent appointment is made by U.S. Postal Service officials. Now serving just under one thousand patrons, the office was first established in 1854 as the Roaring River Post Office. After going through seven postmasters, the office was discontinued in 1864, but reestablished May 16, 1871. After having five postmasters, the office was changed to Eagle Rock in 1886 and remains under that name today. Early postmasters included such area names as Ruble, Weathers, Holmesby, Allen and Farwell. Later-day names included Burris, Munsey, Cornell and again Farwell. From the late 1800s through 1917 the office had eight postmasters, by the names of Farwell, Larecy, Whittington, King, Holman, Ayres and Skelton before Noel Curry, merchant and area leader, took the office from 1917 to 1918. That was the first involvement of the Curry family in the postal facility and involved a move from the original building to the Curry store, located virtually on the banks of Roaring River. The store and post office remained there until the advent of Table Rock Lake, when a new store was constructed on a relocated Highway 86 on the south side of the river. The Whittington family became involved in the office from 1918 through 1922. Alma Stockton was acting postmaster for two years, until 1924. On October 15, 1925, Mrs. Jean Curry, the present postmaster's mother, became head of the Eagle Rock postal facility. She served in that post 45 and one-half years until her retirement in 1971. Willis Curry, a graduate of the Cassville schools who was a builder and stockman in the Eagle Rock community, assumed the postmastership on April Fool's Day, 1971. Prior to that time, he had served as leave replacement clerk for his mother for 24 years. Mrs. Curry, currently a resident of Red Rose Inn in Cassville, recalls many memories of the rural community during her time. The office, presently located

in its fourth building, a modern brick structure, is served by post office boxes and a rural route that originates in Cassville. The present rural carrier, Martha Merritt, begins a route in the county seat but cases mail on her arrival at Eagle Rock. This mail is further distributed to patrons in the growing Table Rock Lake community. Eagle Rock, located at the headwaters of the reservoir, is no stranger to the recreation business. Today's marina and public use facilities and a number of motels are simply growth figures of days when Roaring River and White River were prime recreation float, fishing and vacation sites. Curry says his retirement will mean more time available for travel and involvement with his family. Missed will be the activity that went along with being a postmaster of a rural area. Incidentally, he's still looking for a large-sized eagle to display in the community. The retiring postmaster was among those who made a good try at Eagle Rock's attempts to secure a bronze figure from a Washington, D.C., hotel establishment sometime ago. Curry says the Barry County community wasn't successful in this try, "But, we're still trying, and will have an appropriate eagle one of these days," said the outgoing postal official. Curry's appointment more than likely will be a career Postal Service employee. Speculation is that the service will choose a person who is currently in the postal merit system.

— PURDY BOARD DIDN'T RECONSIDER DANCE ISSUE

Pro-dance people held a rally in the Purdy city park Monday while the R-2 board of education was meeting in the adjacent school facilities. Complete with national

news coverage, the rally included a dance under a barbecue shelter and advocates of a change in school policy carrying placards around the campus. However, the board of education did not reconsider their policy on barring dance socials on the school campus. Glen Garread nor placed the issue on the agenda even though it had knowledge of the intended rally. Parent groups have been attempting for months to have the Purdy board reconsider long-standing policy of not permitting dances or proms on the R-2 campus. Normally, such events are held at the Purdy community center, not over 100 yards from the school buildings.

30 years ago

April 10, 1996
— EXETER RESIDENTS SPEAK OUT IN SUPPORT OF VO-AG TEACHER

Over 100 students and community members packed the Exeter School cafeteria Monday night in a show of support for Robin Farmer, whose teaching contract was not renewed at the board's March meeting. A total of 14 people addressed the board concerning Farmer. Their statements of support were greeted by audience applause. Each one who spoke asked board members to reverse their earlier decision and renew the vocational-agricultural instructor's contract. Supporters also handed the board a petition of support for Farmer, which included 206 signatures. When asked about the board's initial vote on Farmer's contract, Superintendent Marvin Spragg told the Cassville Democrat that three board members voted in favor of renewing the contract, three voted against it and one abstained. "It would have taken four votes to hire him back," Spragg said. He stressed that this year of teaching was Farmer's last probationary year. If renewed, the contract would have given Farmer tenure. Reasons for ending Farmer's teaching contract have not been made public. Farmer said he was notified of the board's decision in a one-sentence letter handed to him by Spragg. Farmer said he asked why his contract was not renewed, and Spragg answered that he could not discuss anything stemming from a closed session meeting. "The decision came as a total surprise," said Farmer, who has taught at Exeter for four years. "We would have accepted it (the board's decision) but we wanted to know the reasons why." Those who spoke on Farmer's behalf included former students, current students, parents and community members. Brad Porter was the first to address the board. He said he was speaking on behalf of FFA students who had graduated from Exeter. "Mr. Farmer came here

my junior year when I had pretty much given up on the ag program here," Porter said. "He came in and pretty much turned the program around. He's taken most of the chapter under his wing, molded it and made it the chapter it is today. It's not one of the biggest chapters in Barry County but it's one of the most active chapters." Porter went on to add that under Farmer's leadership he was able to earn his American Farmer degree, the highest honor bestowed on an FFA member. Parents Laverna Roller, Vicki Senters, Rhonda Usrey, Jane Divine, Brenda Adkins and Kirk Wynns all spoke in favor of Farmer's re-employment. "The board was elected by the community to make decisions for the community," said Usrey. "This is one decision the community does not agree with. From day one, Mr. Farmer has done nothing but support these kids. We hope his actions will speak for themselves." Jeremy Payne, who is a student currently enrolled at Exeter, told the board that he joined FFA when he was a freshman. "From that time on Mr. Farmer's given me encouragement," Payne said. "He's a very wonderful teacher. He's taken more time with me than any teacher I've ever known." Those gathered at the meeting were told by Board President Leroy Stockton that their statements would be taken under advisement. The board then went into closed session to discuss Farmer's teaching contract. The session lasted approximately two hours. Spragg said the board took no action and tabled the issue. He said the matter will be discussed in closed session again at the May board meeting. Also in attendance at the meeting were two representatives from the Missouri State Teachers Association (MSTA), Yvonne McCarty, director of legal services, and Jim Lee, field service coordinator. McCarty said she and Lee were there in support of Farmer. She said that 10 to 15 teachers from the Exeter School District had contacted her office this year, expressing dissatisfaction with decisions made by the school administrators and asking questions regarding personnel issues. "We're here to make sure his rights are protected," said McCarty. She added that Farmer has also been in contact with Springfield attorney Paul Wacker regarding this issue. When the board returned to regular session, they handled several business items, which included: Installation of newly elected board members and reorganization of board structure. Leroy Stockton will serve as board president, with Ronnie Thomas as vice president, Allen Howe as secretary, and Jan Anthony as treasurer.

Haven of the Ozarks Pet of the Week

Ruger is such a good boy! He is a Hound mixed breed born March 30, 2022. He is good with dogs, cats and kids. He also knows basic training commands. Adopters can complete an application at www.havenoftheozarks.org/adopt. No appointment is needed. The Haven is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., seven days a week. All Haven of the Ozarks pets are fixed, up to date on their vaccinations, and microchipped. For more information, people may email havenozarksanctuary@gmail.com, or call at 417-835-3647. Contributed photo



Attention Pet Parents!

Upcoming Clinics

FREE Vaccine Clinic April 30th
 Register at tinyurl.com/PetClinic2025
 Appointments 10 AM - 2:30 PM

Affordable Spay/Neuter Clinics
Dates: June 4th and June 15th
 Appointments are necessary, and availability is limited—secure your spot now by registering at tinyurl.com/spayneuter2024

Haven of the Ozarks Animal Sanctuary
 A 501(c)(3) Facility

Clinics will be held at:
 9617 Farm Road 2190, Washburn,
 (located off 76 Hwy between
 Cassville & Exeter)

*All appointments MUST be arranged online—no phone calls allowed.
 Don't have access to a computer? Feel free to visit the Haven and use our computer to book your appointment!*

OBITUARIES



CARLA CRIQUI

Carla Criqui, 65, of Monett, Mo., passed away on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at Cox South in Springfield, Mo.

she was born on March 20, 1961, in Hutchinson, Kan., to Carl and Wilma (Brown) Swafford, who preceded her in death.

Also preceding her in death was her husband Bill Criqui, and one sister Brenda Swafford.

She is survived by three sons, Cory Criqui of Hutchinson, Kan., Klint Criqui of Neosho, Mo., and Kyle Criqui and his wife Chelsea of Cassville, Mo.; one daughter Kelsey Criqui of Granby, Mo.; 14 grandchildren; one great grandchild; and one sister Debbie Brown of Grand Prairie, Texas.

She was known for being a wonderful cook and found great joy in preparing meals for her family.

A celebration of life will be held Friday, April 10,

2026, at White Funeral Home and Crematory with Pastor John Hile officiating, and a visitation one will be held one hour prior to service time.

White Funeral Home and Crematory
Online condolences and webcasting of the funeral services may be found at www.whitefuneralhome.org
417-847-8100 or 417-858-8400



GEORGE STEVEN "STEVE" SANCHEZ

George Steven "Steve" Sanchez, 71, of Reeds Spring, Mo., passed away Saturday, March 28, 2026 at his home.

He was born January 27, 1955 in Denver, Colo., the son of George David and Viola (Valdez) Sanchez, who preceded him in death.

Also preceding him in death was a brother, Dale Sanchez.

Survivors his son, Aaryn Sanchez and wife Brandy

of Greeley, Colo.; daughter, Meleah Goodman and husband Nate of Denver, Colo.; brother, Mike Valdez of Denver, Colo.; twin sisters, Yvonne Herrera and husband Gilbert of Castle Rock, Colo. and Lavonne Sanchez of Wheat Ridge, Colo.; five grandchildren and his true love, Michelle Sanchez.

He was raised in Denver, Colo., where he attended school and graduated from Denver North High School. He proudly served his community as a firefighter with the Denver Fire Department for 37 years, dedicating his life to helping others before his retirement.

He made his home in Reeds Spring, Mo., for the past two and a half years, having relocated from Colo. He was a member of the First Christian Church in Reeds Spring.

Private services will be held at a later date. Cremation arrangements are under direction of Fohn Funeral Home in Cassville.

FOHN FUNERAL HOME
Cassville, Missouri
417-847-2141

Visit www.fohnfuneralhome.com for online obituaries, guestbooks and private condolences



DELLA MARIE WARNER

Della Marie Warner, 71, of Ridgley, Mo. passed away Monday, March 30, 2026 at her home.

She was born October 4, 1954 in San Diego, Calif., the daughter of Bert and Inez (Fulfard) Eckert, who preceded her in death.

Also preceding her in death was her husband Stanley Warner, and brother, Homer Eckert.

Survivors include her daughter, Jennifer Stephens and husband Richard of Rocky Comfort, Mo.; sister, Luvon McGinn and husband Sonny of Brownwood, Texas; two granddaughters, and one great grandchild.

She attended school in Wheaton, Mo., graduating from Wheaton High School. She was employed by Walmart Incorporated for 15 years and ended her career as a medical claims processor.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date. Cremation arrangements are under direction of Fohn Funeral Home in Cassville.

FOHN FUNERAL HOME
Cassville, Missouri
417-847-2141

Visit www.fohnfuneralhome.com for online obituaries, guestbooks and private condolences



Junior Beta members compete at convention

A total of 32 Cassville Junior Beta members competed in various events at the 2026 Missouri Junior Convention at the Branson Convention Center on March 11-12. The following members received invitations to compete at National Junior Beta

- Convention in Nashville, Tenn., in June:
- Performing Arts Small Group - 1st Place
 - Layla Rivera
 - Chazlyn Artherton
 - Cara Leach
 - Rayleigh Stehlik
 - Jaxen Anderson
 - Reagan Truman
 - Violette Wright

- Hattie Lyons
- Scoti Blankenship
- Jaelyn Cavness
- Judah Allen
- Performing Arts Solo, Duo, Trio (Vocalist) - 2nd Place
- Jaelyn Cavness Golden Ticket Recipient
- Jaelyn Cavness

The "Golden Ticket" at a Junior Beta Convention is a prestigious, high-level invitation awarded to select students, allowing them to advance directly to the National Convention to perform as part of the opening ceremony.

- 7th Grade Math - 1st Place
- Aiden Harris
- 8th Grade Spelling - 5th Place
- Evan Roney
- Visual Arts - Quilling - 4th Place
- Evangeline Aldridge
- Visual Arts - Fiber Arts - 5th Place
- Addieah Aldridge
- Service Learning Showcase - 1st Place
- Charley Nichols



WHITE FUNERAL HOME Local Death Notices

Mary Shortell • Shell Knob • April 5, 1935–March 27, 2026
Carla Criqui • Monett • March 20, 1961–April 1, 2026
Tammy Howard • Cassville • Jan. 13, 1964–April 5, 2026

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Mistrial declared in rape, kidnapping case

Jury fails to reach verdict following two-day trial

BY KYLE TROUTMAN

kt troutman@cassville-democrat.com
A motion for acquittal has been filed following the jury trial of a Purdy man charged with sodomy, rape and kidnapping, as the jury was unable to reach a verdict and a mistrial was declared.

Jesi Owen, born 1989, of Purdy, was charged in January 2025 with first-degree kidnapping, first-degree rape and first-degree sodomy.

According to a probable cause statement filed by Det. Jeremy Berner, with the Barry County Sheriff's Office, Deputy Forrester responded to a possible disturbance at a home in Barry County on Dec. 26, 2024. Berner

began a further investigation on Dec. 30, 2024, when the victim reported being restrained against their will and physically molested by Owen, who was told to stop multiple times but allegedly refused to stop.

The victim further reported Owen penetrated multiple orifices by his person and with a device, which after an examination at Cox Monett Hospital, resulted in a genital laceration.

On Jan. 7, during a Mirandized interview at the Barry County Sheriff's Office, Berner said Owen stated he had sexual intercourse with the victim and admitted to the victim being tied up.

According to Judge David Allen Cole's docket sheet, the two-day jury trial began on March 23, prosecuted by Barry County Prosecutor Amy Boxx and Assistant Prosecutor John Young,

with Owen being represented by Attorney John Lewright.

Following the jury being seated, the state presented its opening statement, and the defense reserved opening. The state presented its evidence, and the court took a recess for the day.

On March 24, evidence was added on behalf of the state, and the state rested its case. The defense moved for acquittal at the close of state's evidence, which was denied. The defense then made its opening statement, presented evidence and rested its case. The state did not offer any rebuttal, and a second motion for acquittal was denied.

The state and defense made closing arguments, and the jury retired at 3:11 p.m. The jury returned to the courtroom at 7:08 p.m. and returned to deliberation at 7:11 p.m.,

ultimately sending a note at 7:30 p.m. indicating they were hung and unable to reach a verdict.

"Therefore, over state's objection, this court finds that taking all circumstances into consideration, there is a manifest necessity to justify the discharge of this due to their inability to reach a verdict. Mistrial declared," the docket sheet said.

A motion to remove electronic monitoring has been filed, noting the trial was held and resulted in a mistrial. It goes on to state Owen is residing in Seneca and the cost of electronic monitoring continues to cause financial hardship on the defendant and his family. The motion states Owen will not violate the law in any manner and will continue to have no contact with the victim, victim's family or any state's witnesses.

Drive on in!



Hazel Gripka, Cassville resident whose home is within the Cassville City Park, drives across the new 7th Street Bridge, the first to do so after the ribbon for the bridge was cut on March 31. Kyle Troutman/kt troutman@cassville-democrat.com



A hefty turnout participated in the ribbon cutting for the new 7th Street Bridge into the Cassville City Park on March 31. Kyle Troutman/kt troutman@cassville-democrat.com

Arvest Bank's Million Meals Campaign Returns for 16th Year

Initiative to benefit two Barry County food pantries

Arvest Bank has officially launched the 16th year of its annual Million Meals campaign, a two-month effort to raise awareness and funds to fight hunger in Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Kansas.

Money raised through May 31 will support over 70 food partners, including Cassville Pantry in Cassville and the Alliances of Churches Food Pantry in Shell Knob. Every dollar

donated goes directly to these organizations and provides up to five meals for those in need. The Million Meals campaign helps local food pantries meet the expected increase in need during the summer months, when many children don't have access to free school meals.

"At Arvest, we understand that when our neighbors are fed and healthy, our entire community thrives," said Sarah Dalton, Community Bank President for Arvest Bank in Cassville. "Now in our 16th year, we are more committed than ever to fighting hunger, as no family should have to worry about where

their next meal is coming from. We invite everyone to join us over the next two months as we turn donations into meals for those who need them most."

Missouri is tied for 17th in the nation for food insecurity, with 13% of households reporting they lacked the resources to provide enough food to feed their families, according to the latest data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Across the U.S., 18% of households with children under 18 experienced food insecurity in 2024, and 11% had elderly individuals living alone.

Since 2011, the initiative has helped pro-

vide more than 28 million meals and collected more than \$5.1 million in donations. Last year, the campaign helped provide a record 3.08 million meals for hungry families and individuals.

Monetary donations can be made through May 31 in the following ways:

- Donate at a branch. Cash and check contributions will be accepted at Arvest Bank branches. Ask any Arvest associate for details.

- Donate online. Visit arvest.com/millionmeals to donate online.

For more information about Million Meals and the campaign's local food partners, visit arvest.com/millionmeals.

Barry County Health Corner



Detailing the Environmental Program

The community hears about the Health Department's Environmental Program and thinks, "Oh, you mean the health inspector."

People may be familiar with our work in restaurants but do not realize the extent of all we do to ensure our community here in Barry County has access to safe and clean food, water, childcare facilities, and lodging establishments.

Yes, we are often seen in restaurants doing routine inspections of food establishments. We use these interactions to educate food service employees, based on what is seen during these inspections. With this we can improve their food safety procedures to protect the public. No food establishment wants to make their customers sick with their food practices; however, if someone has such an encounter at a food establishment a confidential complaint can be submitted to the Health Department.

Environmentalists will then conduct a prompt investigation. If our community does experience a food borne outbreak, our environmentalists are onsite to work closely with public health nurses and state officials to conduct a comprehensive investigation. When there is an emergency involving food establishments, such as power outages due to tornados, a fire or a flood event, our environmentalists are there to help ensure a safe facility.

We provide guidance for when it is safe to reopen, and the best practices to prevent food that has become compromised from being consumed by the public.

To help protect our community's drinking and recreational waters the citizens of Barry County established an ordinance in 1996 requiring property owners to effectively treat their wastewater. To facilitate clean water, our environmentalists, work with homeowners and septic installers to ensure both new and existing homes have onsite septic systems. This is important to ensure wastewater is properly treated before it gets into our drinking water, lakes, and streams.

Environmentalist issue permits for septic system installations or repairs, and conduct complaint investigations when members of the community may be having a system failure. Copies of these permitted systems are then kept on file at the Health Department and available upon request.

Individuals who are on private wells should be confident that their wells are providing safe water. A water sample can be submitted to our office for in-house testing. In addition, our environmentalists collect water samples from wells that offer water to the public on a routine basis. Changes in a home's plumbing or well pump, flooding and droughts can all have an impact on the water we drink. We recommend getting your private well tested at least once a year to ensure the water it provides is safe to drink.

Children are more likely to get sick from their environment and shared illnesses. Their bodies and immune systems are not fully developed making them more susceptible to disease and environmental hazards, such as lead, that can have lasting effects.

Our environmentalists work with the State Health Department to ensure the childcare facilities in Barry County are safe places for our children. We conduct inspections of childcare facilities to help identify safety hazards in the facilities, and educate providers on food safety and disease prevention practices to keep children safe.

To protect our community and those visiting our beautiful area of the state, our Environmentalists also work with the State Health Department to ensure lodging establishments are clean and safe. We routinely inspect lodging establishments to ensure they have the appropriate fire and building safety measures in place, pools are being maintained to prevent waterborne illnesses from occurring, and sanitary cleaning practices are being used to prevent the spread of disease and pests.

It is our goal to prevent through education, investigate with dedication and help be one small part of what makes our community a safe place to live.

Publisher's note: This article is courtesy of Barry County Health Department, located at 90 Barry County Drive in Cassville. The Department may be reached at 417-847-2114.

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Event Center Coordinator

The Monett Historical Museum currently has an opportunity available for an individual to manage the scheduling and facilitation of our Event Center. The successful candidate should have experience in managing independent projects with a high degree of responsibility and good communication skills. A strong commitment to and interest in promoting the Museum and Event Center would be a requirement. You must be 21 years of age to apply. For details, please contact Jeanne Ann, 417-669-3975.

LOCAL

Southwest inducts 10 into NHS



Olivia Clanton lights the candle of leadership during the induction ceremony at Southwest High School on April 1. In the background, Cecilia Gaines reads the meaning of the pillar. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Addison Pendergraft, back middle administers the oath to 10 new National Honor Society members at Southwest High School on April 1. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



National Honor Society member Emma Outhouse lights the candle of service during the induction ceremony at Southwest High School on April 1. Ten new members were added to the NHS ranks. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Five new members of the Southwest Chapter of the National Honor Society take their oaths on April 1. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Five new members of the Southwest Chapter of the National Honor Society take their oaths on April 1. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



His House Foundation receives Strengthening Our Network Grant

Funds used to purchase new commercial cooling units

His House Foundation, located in Shell Knob, recently received a Strengthening Our Network Grant thanks to Ozarks Food Harvest's \$1 million investment in agency infrastructure in southwest Missouri.

The grant funded two new commercial cooling units, replacing failing old equipment and ensuring consistent food safety for His House residents' daily meals and snacks.

Lisa Miller, Kitchen Director at His House Foundation, expressed her gratitude for the grant.

"This grant made it possible for His House to purchase much needed equipment that stores the food we use to provide meals for 33 full time residents, 19 children and 14 adults," she said. "We rely on the food we receive from Ozarks

Food Harvest to provide healthy meals for our families."

Ozarks Food Harvest is the Feeding America food bank for southwest Missouri, serving faith-based and community charities across a third of Missouri. The Strengthening Our Network Grant provides up to \$25,000 for capacity building projects that help The Food Bank's network of charities serve people in the Ozarks more effectively.

"The Strengthening Our Network Grant assists our partner charities with purchasing equipment they need to better serve our neighbors," said Bart Brown, president and CEO of Ozarks Food Harvest. "We're thrilled to be able to help our network partners as the need for food assistance in southwest Missouri continues to grow."

His House Foundation serves families locally, regionally and beyond. Located in rural Southwest Missouri, near Northwest Arkansas, the

Campus of Hope connects essential services and programs to support families and communities. The residential program, FUEL Academy, offers comprehensive tools to help families achieve lasting change. We guide each family toward wholeness through our structured residential program focused on healing, growth, and building a foundation for the future.

Learn more about His House Foundation at www.hishousefound.org, www.facebook.com/hishousefound or www.facebook.com/FUEL.

Ozarks Food Harvest is the Feeding America food bank for southwest Missouri, serving 270 faith-based and community charities across a third of Missouri. The Food Bank reaches 90,000 individuals monthly and provides more than 23 million meals annually. Learn more at ozarksfoodharvest.org, facebook.com/ozarksfoodharvest or instagram.com/ozarksfoodharvest.

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Sunday, April 19th at 6pm

God Loves Family People

Monday, April 20th at 7pm

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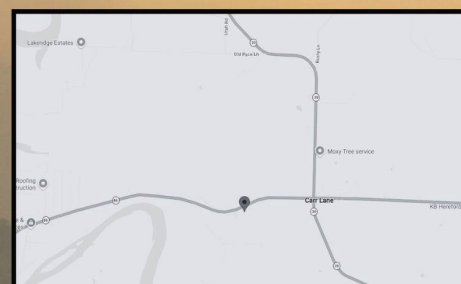
Tuesday, April 21st at 7pm

God Loves Lost People

Wednesday, April 22nd at 7pm



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Pastor Aaron Weibel



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CASSVILLE TRACK AND FIELD

Who: Boys and girls teams
What: Season underway
More: Home meet on April 21

Off and running

Cassville track squads aim to peak in May

BY KYLE TROUTMAN

kttroutman@cassville-democrat.com
The Cassville boys track and field team enters the 2026 season with a focus on steady improvement and postseason performance as the Wildcats build toward the state series.

For the boys, Coach Clay Weldy said the season is all about steady improvement and peaking at the right time.

“Our goals are to get better as the season progresses and to be peaking in May when we get to districts, sectionals and state,” he said.

Cassville returns a large group of contributors from last season, including: Peyton Anderson, Kamden Beebe, Mace Bredeson, Noah Driskill, Preston Driskill, Wesley Garner, Brody Howell, Jacob Hudson, Ricky Norris, Logan Parsons, Jarrett Paul, Tyler Rattigan, Corbin Rhoads and Brextin Sprague

The Wildcats also bring in a sizable group of newcomers expected to compete for roles, including: Yynnies Arguelles, Carlos Barrientos, Colton Beebe, Vincent Buttrum, Jack Chappell, Andon Goutney, Gunner Knight, Isaac Luney, Donavan Mikesch, Zach Myers, Cash Smith, Kaid Williams, Clay Williamson and Dade Zajac.

Leadership will be a key factor, with a senior class expected to set the tone across events.

“Yynnies Arguelles, Wesley Garner, Andon Goutney, Jacob Hudson, Gunner Knight, Isaac Luney, Tyler Rattigan, Corbin Rhoads and Kaid Williams — we want them to lead by example first, and that is through hard work and doing things the right way,” Weldy said. “We want them to be extensions of the coaching staff at practice and at meets as well.”

With the season just underway, Weldy said it will take time to identify strengths.

“This early in the season it’s hard to tell what our strengths are; we will find out more as we go throughout the season,” Weldy said.

Improvement remains a consistent emphasis across all areas.

“We can always improve in each area,” Weldy said.

Cassville will host its lone home meet in April.

“We get one home meet each year and ours is on Tuesday, April 21,” Weldy said.

The schedule is designed to prepare the Wildcats for post-season competition.

“We always have a good meet schedule and I feel like it will prepare us for the conference meet and the state Series,” Weldy said.

Weldy said the team’s balance across events is a defining characteristic.

“We have a good group of seniors and they represent every part of the track team,” Weldy said. “There are sprinters, distance runners, jumpers, throwers, and we have a pole vaulter and a hurdler in the group as well. So it’s a well rounded group of kids.”

Cassville also returns experience from a state-qualifying relay team.

“We return two guys that were part of a state qualifying 4x100 Relay team: Kamden Beebe and Mace Bredeson,” Weldy said.

On the girls’ side, Coach Erin Flehmer said the Lady Wildcats’ goals are similar.

“We want to improve every time we step onto the track or in the ring,” she said. “We are working hard, and there is always room for growth on the track.”

Claire Reuter, Brynn
CONTINUED ON PAGE 8B

LADY TIGERS OVERCOME ADVERSITY IN CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON



Exeter’s Shea Hilburn rises above the crowd to pull down a rebound in the district championship game against Wheaton. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Exeter girls hoops finds rhythm late in season

BY KYLE TROUTMAN

kttroutman@cassville-democrat.com

The Exeter girls basketball team faced a season defined by adversity, but that did not stop the Lady Tigers from turning in a campaign to remember.

“I feel like we had a hard time getting some momentum going this year,” Young said. “We had some really good games, then the next game would just feel like a disaster. Coming back from Christmas break, we lost the first five games in a row. So it took us a while to get a momentum going. Madison Brattin broke her collarbone the third game of the season, and was out eight weeks, which left me with six players. We added five girls to the team over Christmas break to be able to have enough to play. Then one of my starters, was dealing with an illness and ended up in the hospital. So, needless to say we had to overcome quite a few obstacles this season.”

Despite the challenges, Exeter found its rhythm late in the year, punctuated by a 41-37 Class 1, District 4 championship win over Wheaton.

“February is when things finally started coming together and everyone was on the same page,” Young said. “Everyone was finally healthy and understanding their role for the team.”

Free-throw shooting and overall scoring efficiency proved to be key areas that limited the team’s success.

“There were multiple games that we lost simply because we could not make free throws,” Young said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6B



Exeter’s Honesty Hall looks for room to shoot in the district championship game against Wheaton. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Southwest softball enters new era

Leadership, work ethic emphasized under first-year coach

BY KYLE TROUTMAN

kttroutman@cassville-democrat.com

The Southwest softball team begins the season under new leadership, with a mix of returning players and new faces as the Lady Trojans work to establish their identity.

The Lady Trojans have four returning varsity starters and seven total letterwinners, including: Jacee Durossette, Kindred Durossette, Abigail Callison, Brianna Hoover, Gracie Swanepoel, Addyson

LADY TROJANS SOFTBALL

What: Season underway
Returning: Four varsity starters and seven total letterwinners
More: New coach, assistant coach focused on development and building a positive culture

Payne and Bella Meyers.

Melissa Mitchell, in her first year as head coach at Southwest, said in the circle, the Lady Trojans will rely on a pair of pitchers to lead the way.

“Jacee Durossette (Senior) will hold a strong presence on the mound for the Lady Trojans,” Mitchell said. “Jacee will and has been a strong leader throughout her career as a Lady Trojan, and I have no

doubt she will lead in a positive way her Senior season. She will bring control and consistency as well as her leadership to the mound this season.

“Addyson Payne (Junior) will continue to be an asset for the Lady Trojans as she works so hard on and off the field to give the best she absolutely can for not only herself but the team. I expect her to develop more in the game and have a great spring season. In addition, Addyson will bring simplicity to the mound to get the job done!”

Behind the plate, the Lady Trojans will look to a returning contributor and a newcomer.

“Gracie Swanepoel (Junior) has continued to work hard over the years, so I am antici-

pating for her to have a great season full of improvements and goals to be accomplished in the game,” Mitchell said. “Gracie is also such a hard worker willing to go above and beyond to get the job done, very much looking forward to her leadership on and off the field.”

“I also expect us to use Addison Edie as well. She is new to the team, and I am so excited to see all she can do. I think she is going to be a great addition to our team.”

Across the field, Southwest will be working to solidify roles following significant roster turnover.

“We have several new faces and lost six seniors last year, so
CONTINUED ON PAGE 8B



Track and Field

4/9	Mt Vernon Track Meet	Away	4:00 pm
4/14	Clever Track Meet	Away	
4/16	East Newton Track Meet	Away	4:00 pm
4/21	Cassville Wildcat Relays	Home	
4/30	Big 8 Conference Meet	Away	
5/9	District Track Meet	Away	
5/16	Sectional Track Meet	Away	
5/22-23	Class 3 State Track Meet	Away	

Girls Soccer

4/9	Logan-Rogersville	Away	4:30 pm
4/13	New Heights Christian	Home	4:30 pm
4/14	Aurora	Away	5:00 pm
4/21	Monett	Home	5:00 pm
4/28	McDonald County	Away	5:00 pm
5/4	Marshfield	Home	1:00 pm
5/5	Aurora	Home	5:00 pm
5/7	Fair Grove	Home	4:30 pm
5/11	Greenwood	Away	5:00 pm

Baseball

4/9	Mt. Vernon	Away	4:30 pm
4/11	Purdy	Home	10:00 am
4/11	Hillcrest	Home	2:00 pm
4/13	Logan-Rogersville	Home	4:30 pm
4/14	Lamar	Away	4:30 pm
4/16	Monett	Home	4:30 pm
4/17-18	Pleasant Hill Baseball Tournament	Away	
4/21	East Newton	Away	4:30 pm
4/23	Aurora	Home	4:30 pm
4/24	Diamond	Away	5:00 pm
4/28	McDonald County	Home	4:30 pm
4/30	Nevada	Away	4:30 pm
5/1	Hollister	Home	4:30 pm
5/4	Clever	Home	1:00 pm
5/5	Seneca	Home	4:30 pm
5/7	Reeds Spring	Away	4:30 pm
5/11	Blue Eye	Away	5:00 pm

Boys Golf

4/9	Cassville Invitational	Home	
4/16	Aurora	Away	4:00 pm
4/16	Ozark Tiger Invitational	Away	
4/20	Carthage Abbiatti's BBQ Invitational	Neutral	
4/23	Willard Invitational @ Green Hills	Away	
4/28	Marshfield Invitational	Neutral	
4/30	Monett Tournament	Away	
5/4	Big 8 Golf Tournament	Away	9:00 am

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CASSVILLE AREA DEVOTIONAL PAGE

This devotional and directory is made possible by these businesses who encourage all to attend worship services.

The story of the cross and resurrection is a way of living

We just celebrated the most important events on the Christian calendar.

The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus are the center point of the Christian faith. The idea that God would come in human form to live among people was heretical to Jesus' own Jewish community. A God who loved people at all, let alone loving to the extent of dying for them, was unheard of and a ridiculous idea to the larger Pagan culture.

Even the first followers of Jesus who had been drawn to him by his miraculous signs and authoritative, moral teachings and deep spiritual insights, struggled to make sense of Jesus' death. It was only after

the resurrected Jesus interpreted scripture to them concerning himself that the disciples began to put it all together.

The love of God demonstrated on the cross and the power of the resurrection, became the good news that the first generation of witnesses carried to their families, neighborhoods and beyond. Belief in a God of power was nothing new to Jews or Pagans. The message that God actually loved people, however, transformed the entire culture, one life at a time.

In short order, historically speaking, Christianity replaced Paganism as the dominant worldview across the vast Roman Empire.

In John 12:32 Jesus said,



JEFF FUGITT

"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

There is something deeply attractive about someone who loves you. The deeper the demonstration of love, the more powerful the appeal. "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends," Jesus said in John

15:13.

Generation after generation, people have been drawn to the love that was demonstrated on the cross. Many believers have found themselves radically transformed by experiencing the unconditional love of God. That message most often becomes believable when it is conveyed through flesh and blood demonstration of its power.

Jesus said in verse 12 of John 15, "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

How did He love? By laying down his life.

God's life-altering love for us is in the process of making us more like Christ himself. Unfortunately, it is easy to con-

fuse the goals of discipleship. We tend to measure growth in terms of knowledge and religious activities. But the biblical yardstick for apprenticeship to Jesus is consistent. The tell-tale sign of becoming more like Jesus is more sacrificial love. The resurrection assures us of the power of God to accomplish his will.

Ultimately, the story of the cross and resurrection isn't just a fact to know, it is a way of living.

Jeff Fugitt is the pastor of Cassville United Methodist Church, located at 601 Gravel Street in Cassville. He may be reached at 417-847-2328 or cassvilleumcpastor@gmail.com.

BIBLE VERSE:

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

— JAMES 5:16

CHURCH DIRECTORY

<p>ANGLICAN ST. MARY MAGDALENE 205 Commercial St., Exeter 835-2102</p>	<p>602 West. St., Cassville 847-2965 FIRST BAPTIST Wheaton FIRST SOUTHERN BAPTIST Exeter, 835-5433 FIRST SOUTHERN BAPTIST 104 W. Hwy. J, Golden 271-3605 GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH 14970 FR. 1150, Cassville, Mo. GRACE COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP P.O. Box 352, Shell Knob 858-6868 GRACE SOUTHERN BAPTIST 1/2 mi. off 248 corner of FR 2150 & 1150, Cassville; 847-4691 HIS WAY FELLOWSHIP Highway 62, 1 mi. N. of Garfield 847-9289 MINERAL SPRINGS BAPTIST HC #64, Cassville; 846-1115 MISSION SOUTHERN BAPTIST RR 1, Washburn 826-5232 MT. OLIVE SOUTHERN BAPTIST F.R. 2188, Cassville, 417-847-1245 MT. ZION BAPTIST Hwy. 37 S., Washburn 826-5840 NEW HOPE BAPTIST 3 mi. W. of 37 on W Hwy. then 3/4 mi. N. to FR 1052, Exeter 652-3885 OAK RIDGE MISSIONARY BAPTIST 16722 State Hwy. 248, Cassville Pastor: 501-538-6261 Local: 417-847-4597 PLEASANT HILL BAPTIST RR 1, Box 1710, Washburn 435-2319 PURDY FIRST BAPTIST 3rd & Washington St., Purdy 442-7435 SHILOH BAPTIST Hwy. 248, Jenkins 574-6466 PROSPERITY BAPTIST CHURCH Rocky Comfort PRAIRIE HILL BAPTIST RR 1, Box 1956, Washburn 826-5158 RIDGLEY BAPTIST CHURCH Rt. 1, Box 931, Exeter 652-7884 ROARING RIVER BAPTIST</p>	<p>HC #881 - Hwy. 86, Eagle Rock 271-3142 ROCK SPRINGS BAPTIST RR 1, Seligman; 826-5770 SOLID ROCK SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH Rt. 1, Exeter, 652-3592 VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH Business 37 N., Cassville 826-5295 VIOLA BAPTIST Hwy. 39, Shell Knob 858-2597 WASHBURN FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH 618 N. 2nd Street, Washburn 826-5000 WAYMARK CHURCH 2581 State Hwy 37 235-7466 WHEATON FIRST BAPTIST Hwy. 86 & Hwy. A, Wheaton 652-3898 WHEATON SOUTHERN BAPTIST 11676 State Hwy. 86, Wheaton PO Box 175, 652-3186</p>	<p>Hwy. 86, Golden 271-3134 SPIRITUAL STREAMS FELLOWSHIP Hwy. 112, Cassville 846-6339</p> <p>EPISCOPAL ST. THOMAS A BECKET Hwy. 112 and State Hwy. AA, Cassville 846-2155</p> <p>LUTHERAN COMMUNITY LUTHERAN Hwy. 86, Eagle Rock 271-4383 PEACE LUTHERAN N. Hwy. 39, Shell Knob 858-3900</p>	<p>NEW LIFE TEMPLE Business Hwy. 37 N., Cassville 847-3106 GRACE POINT FELLOWSHIP Washburn Community Building 479-366-2561 NEW LIFE TABERNACLE 30755 State Hwy. 37, Seligman 662-0076</p> <p>PRESBYTERIAN TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN Hwy. 39 N., Shell Knob 858-3902 WALDENSIAN PRESBYTERIAN 1 mi. S. of Monett 235-3337</p>
<p>ASSEMBLY OF GOD FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD Bus. Rt. 37 N., Cassville 671-8131 ASSEMBLY OF GOD RR 1, Box 1158, Seligman 662-3333 ASSEMBLY OF GOD Front & Pierce, Exeter 835-4492 BRIDGEWAY ASSEMBLY OF GOD Hwy. 39 N., Shell Knob 858-3770 FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD 209 W. Jefferson, Purdy 442-3898 OK ASSEMBLY OF GOD 6121 Hwy. 90, Washburn, Mo. 737-9477 RIDGLEY ASSEMBLY OF GOD 16544 FR 1027, Exeter 846-3513</p>	<p>CATHOLIC HOLY FAMILY PARISH Hwy. 39-30, Shell Knob 858-2518 ST. EDWARD PARISH 107 17th St., Cassville 847-4948</p>	<p>METHODIST ALL FAITH UNITED METHODIST Hwy. 86, Eagle Rock 271-3737 CASSVILLE UNITED METHODIST 7th & Gravel, Cassville 847-2328 UNITED METHODIST Hwy. YY, Shell Knob 858-6707 WASHBURN UNITED METHODIST Washburn Corner of 1st and North, Washburn WHEATON UNITED METHODIST 101 Santee St., Wheaton 652-3858</p>	<p>OTHER BELIEVERS FULL GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP 1st. & South St., Washburn 826-5875 BLESSING HEIGHTS WORSHIP CENTER 1107 Farm Rd., Cassville 847-4061 CASSVILLE SDA Old Exeter Rd. & Hwy. 37, Cassville 847-3622 BODY OF CHRIST Wheaton, 417-652-3709 COMMUNITY FAITH CHAPEL 13372 State Hwy. 248, Cassville 847-4643 GOD'S HEALING CENTER Seligman, 662-3118 EAGLE ROCK COMMUNITY CHURCH Hwy. 86, Eagle Rock 342-0516 FIRST CHRISTIAN Hwy. 39 N., Shell Knob 858-8200 FIRST CHRISTIAN Old Exeter Rd. & Hwy. 37, Cassville 847-2460 GOD'S HEALING CENTER Seligman, 662-3118 LAKE SIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH 22321 Oak Ridge Drive, Shell Knob 278-6674 OZARK CHRISTIAN CHURCH Hwy. 37, N. of Purdy 442-3361 REAL LIFE WORSHIP CENTER 709 W. 10th St., Cassville</p>	

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CLASSIFIEDS/LEGALS

SPECIAL NOTICE
IMPORTANT INFORMATION:
 Please check your ad the first day of publication. If it contains an error, report it to the *Cassville Democrat*. Errors will be corrected, and credit will be issued for the first day of publications only. The *Cassville Democrat* shall not be liable for any loss or expense that results from the publication (whether published correctly or not) or omission of an advertisement.

FOR RENT
FOR RENT: 2BR, 1BA, country setting, close in Cassville, \$850 per month, Serious inquiries only. 417-848-5556.

LOST & FOUND
LOST WALLET: If you find a wallet belonging to Sandra Molton, please call 417-346-5226. Reward if contents are intact.

MISCELLANEOUS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI AT CASSVILLE

Stuart Carson
 Plaintiff
 VS.
 Linda Blakenship,
 Her unknown heirs,
 spouses, consorts,
 devisees, grantees and
 assigns
 Defendants
 Case No
 25BR-CC00028

NOTICE UPON ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION
 Stuart Carson to Linda Blakenship,
 her unknown heirs,
 spouses, consorts,
 successors, devisees,

grantees and assigns:
 You are hereby notified that an action has been commenced against you in the Circuit Court of the County of Barry, Missouri, the object and general nature of which is Petition for Quiet Title.

The names of all parties to the said suit are stated above in the caption hereof and the name and address of the attorney for Plaintiff is James J. Randall, Jr., 405 Broadway, P.O. Box 151, Monett, MO 65708.

You are further notified that, unless you file an answer or pleading or shall otherwise appear and defend against the aforesaid petition within forty-five (45) days after the 18th day of March 2026, judgment by default will be rendered against you.

It is ordered that a copy hereof be published according to law in *Cassville Democrat*, a newspaper of general circulation published in the County of Barry, Missouri.
 Witness my hand and seal of the Circuit Court, State of Missouri, the 11th day of March, 2026.
 Craig Williams
 CIRCUIT CLERK
 By Kami Stanton
 DEPUTY CLERK
 1st Publication:
 March 18, 2026
 2nd Publication:
 March 25, 2026
 3rd Publication:
 April 1, 2026
 4th Publication:
 April 8, 2026
 RANDALL, MASRI &
 RANDALL, P.C.

405 Broadway, P.O. Box 151
 Monett, Missouri 65708
 Telephone (417) 235-8688
 MoBar No. 58732
 Attorney for Plaintiff
 1st insertion 03/18/26
 10-13

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI AT CASSVILLE

H.E.,
 a minor by and through his
 Next Friend,
 HAYLEY EARP, and
 HAYLEY EARP,
 individually,
 Petitioners,
 v.
 ROBERT EADE,
 Respondent,
 Case No. 24BR-DR00078

NOTICE UPON ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION

The State of Missouri to: ROBERT EADE
 You are hereby notified that an action has been commenced against you in the Circuit Court of Barry County, Missouri, the object and general nature of which is paternity of H. E.
 The names of all parties in this action are HAYLEY EARP, and the name and address of the attorney for the Petitioner is
 J. Michael Riehn,
 Attorney at Law,
 P. O. Box 324,
 Cassville, Missouri
 65625.

You are further notified that, unless you file an answer or other pleading or otherwise appear and defend against this action within 45 days after March 18, 2026, judgment by default will be entered against you. It is ordered that a copy hereof be published according to law in the *Cassville Democrat*, a newspaper of general circulation published in the County of Barry, State of Missouri.
 A true copy from the record.
 Witness my hand and the seal of the Circuit Court his 12th day of March, 2026.
 First publication:
 March 18, 2026
 Second Publication:
 March 25, 2026
 Third Publication:
 April 1, 2026
 Fourth Publication:
 April 8, 2026
 Craig Williams,
 Circuit Clerk
 by S. Parker,
 Deputy Clerk
 1st insertion 03/18/26
 10-13

THE ROARING RIVER SPECIAL ROAD DISTRICT BIDS
 The Roaring River special Road District is now taking bids on the following:
 General Road Repair and maintenance.
 Mowing of right of way within district.
 Tree trimming and storm damage of trees within district.
 Backup with snow removal as needed.
 Please mail your bid, with BID written on the envelope to:
 P.O. BOX 9
 Eagle Rock, Mo 65641
 Include your name, bid amount, and phone number.
 Also a copy of insurance policy.
 Bids will be opened and read on April 14th 2026.
 Any questions call 417-665-9839 Marc Landrith
 1st insertion 03/25/26
 11-13

HELP WANTED
 The City of Washburn is accepting applications for a Water Utility Position. This role supports the daily operation, maintenance, and monitoring of the municipal water and wastewater systems.
 Preferred Qualifications (Not Required):
 • Level D Wastewater Treatment Certificate
 • DS Water Distribution Level 2 Certificate
 Compensation: Pay will depend on experience
 How to Apply: Applications available at Washburn City Hall, 321 Main St, Washburn, MO 65772
 Completed applications must be turned in to the City Clerk at Washburn City Hall For Questions Contact Washburn City Hall at 417-826-5242.

PART-TIME COURT CLERK IN WHEATON
 The City of Wheaton is seeking a part-time Court Clerk for 30 hours per week. The position will be responsible for creating court dockets, attending court proceedings, collecting payments for court fines and court costs, organizing and filing documents, and answering phone calls. Hourly pay rate starting at \$15.00 per hour, negotiable depending on experience. Benefits include paid holidays, 20 hours of vacation leave, and 32 hours of sick leave. Applications are available at Wheaton City Hall. They may be returned to City Hall or emailed to jogina@cityofwheatonmo.org. For more information, please contact Wheaton City Hall at 417-652-3314.

REAL ESTATE AUCTION
Saturday, April 18 — 1:30 PM
Location: 23219 Cedar Way, Shell Knob MO

Real Estate: 3 bedroom 2 bath home. Attached garage. Directly across from turkey mtn 1 airport. We will also offer a boat slip immediately after offering the house. **Real Estate Terms:** Qualified buyers only w/pre-approved bank letter of approval. Nonrefundable 10% paid day of auction w/balance due in cash or certified funds within 30-45 days. Buyers and sellers will be responsible for their own portion of their closing cost. Taxes will be prorated to the date of close. Sells as is where is with no warranties or guarantees. Bidders, buyers, or agent of the buyer is responsible for conducting own inspection of property prior to auction and should rely solely upon their own due diligence and inspection. This property is offered with absolutely no contingencies of any kind, no contingencies on financing, surveys, appraisals, or final walk throughs. Seller has the right to accept or reject final bid. A 10% buyer's premium will apply on Real Estate. Any announcements made day of auction supersede any and all printed material.

Owner: Sorensen Enterprises LLC




STUMPF'S
 REALTY & AUCTION SERVICE, INC.
 www.stumpffauction.com
417-847-2507

Auctioneer: Donnie Stumpff
 MO & AR State
 Champion Auctioneer
 #1409 | PB00051442

Auctioneer: Parker Stumpff
 AR State Champion
 Auctioneer
 #2352

BOAT SLIP AUCTION
Saturday, April 18, 2026 — 2 PM
Location: Shell Knob, MO. Turkey Mt. Estates #1 area. Auction on site at (23075 Oak Lane, Shell Knob MO)

Boat Slip: 12'x32' slip with boat lift, Cedar Creek Dock, Permit #7677. **Note:** WOW, look at the size of this slip up for auction. Slips of this size don't come up for sale very often. We will sell the slip on site at 2:00 PM on Saturday April 18th. Don't be late, the slip is the only thing selling so the auction won't take long. Call 417-847-2507 for further information.
Terms: Cash, good check or credit card with current photo ID. If paying by check, 2 checks will be required. Balance will be paid in full day of auction. Buyer will receive a bill of sale when funds have cleared. 10% buyer's premium will apply. Any announcements made day of auction will supersede any and all printed material.

Owner: Chuck Singleton




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417-847-2507

Auctioneer: Donnie Stumpff
 MO & AR State
 Champion Auctioneer
 #1409 | PB00051442

Auctioneer: Parker Stumpff
 AR State Champion
 Auctioneer
 #2352

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
 NOTICE is hereby given to all citizens and parties in interest that the Planning and Zoning Commission will conduct a
PUBLIC HEARING
 On Monday, April 20, 2026
 at 12:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 300 Main St., Cassville, Missouri.
 The hearing will be conducted to ascertain public opinion regarding the following:
 1. Case Number 2026-01 A zoning request from R-2 (Two-Family Dwelling District) to C-2 (General Commercial District) of the following described real property:
LEGAL DESCRIPTION:
 Lots 1,2,3,4 in Block 10 in S.M. Mitchell's Second Addition to the City of Cassville, Barry County, Missouri.
 And any such additional business as required. Copies of the agenda may be obtained by contacting Monzell Hagins, City Clerk, City of Cassville, 300 Main St. Cassville, MO 65625;
 4 1 7 - 8 4 7 - 4 4 4 1 ;
 mchagins@cityofcassville.com
 Posted — City Hall
 Wednesday, March 25, 2026
 Published — Cassville Democrat Wednesday, April 1, 2026
 Monzell Hagins
 City Clerk
 City of Cassville
 1st insertion 04/01/26
 12-14

SHELL KNOB SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 78 BIDS
 The Shell Knob School District No. 78 is soliciting Audit Bids for three years, starting in fiscal year 2026-27.
 Audit specifications and information may be obtained by calling the Financial Office at 417-858-6743 x235.
 Bids can be mailed to the Shell Knob School Board, 24400 State Hwy 39, Shell Knob, MO. 65747, or emailed to Christy Copeland at copeland@shellknob78.com.

JOB OPENING AT HATCHERY
 Roaring River Fish Hatchery is seeking a highly motivated individual to work hourly, 12am to 8am, 2 days on the weekend.
 Duties include but are not limited to:
 • Monitor and ensure adequate aquaculture health, fish production, care, and distribution.
 • Performing all janitorial duties including cleaning and disinfecting public restrooms and offices.
 • Working independently will be required for this position.
 Starting Pay: \$16.58/hr
 Visit jobs.mdc.mo.gov to apply or contact Terry Gerke or Brad Farwell at 417-847-2430 for more information.

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JOB OPENING - ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
 The City of Cassville is seeking an Administrative Assistant. The position will be responsible for assisting with taking payments for utility bills and permits, organizing and scanning documents and files for the Finance Department and helping maintain fixed asset records. This position will also serve as clerical support for the Cassville Police Department, duties will include processing, maintaining and releasing records and reports and other responsibilities as needed. Competitive hourly rate starting at \$15.50 per hour or composite experience. Benefits include employer paid health, vision, and dental insurance and retirement benefits. Applications are available at Cassville City Hall and online at www.CityofCassville.com. For more information about this position and a full job description, please contact Monzell Hagins @ 417-847-4441. Resumes and application can be taken to Cassville City Hall, or can be sent via email to mchagins@cityofcassville.com

CLASSIFIEDS/LEGALS

ESTATE AUCTION

Monday, April 13, 2026 — 10 AM

Location: Cassville, MO. From Cassville go South on Hwy 76/112, 2 miles. Turn East on hwy 76 and go 2.9 miles to auction on right. (19607 State Hwy 76, Cassville MO)

REAL ESTATE – ZERO TURN MOWER – GUNS – MOTORCYCLE - TOOLS – HOUSEHOLD – MISC



Mower: Troy Bilt XP, 4 wheel steer, 46" zero turn mower. **Guns:** Mossberg 12 ga pump – (2) Sportster's single shot, .22 mag rifles with scopes – Ithaca double barrel 20 ga mdl 100 – New England single shot 45/70 – New England single shot 243 with scope – misc ammo such as 44 mag, 45 colt, 410, 12 ga, 20 ga, 300 Savage, 35 Remington – gun cleaning kit – gun rest & more. **Motorcycle:** 2019, Chonda TBR7 Tao, low miles. **Tools:** Troy Bilt 2700 psi pressure washer – Craftsman high wheel string trimmer – Murray 21" push mower – Briggs & Stratton 5550 watt generator – Black & Decker table saw – Bolens 22" snow blower – Craftsman roll around tool chest – Campbell Hausfeld 200 psi upright air compressor – drain snake – sm shop vac – misc long handle tools – 6' step ladder – 15 gal 12v sprayer – wheel barrow – yard wagon – misc sm hand tools & sm power tools – propane space heater – more tools & shop items not listed. **Household & Misc:** American Drew oak head & foot board & matching dresser, chest of drawers & night stands – Electric sofa w/recliners on both ends & matching love seat – glider chair – chest of drawers – twin beds – glass door 6 gun cabinet – fofa table – 2 drawer oak file cabinet – oak computer desk – (2) DVD cabinets – mirror with hat rack – dining hutch – sm roll around kitchen island – California King size bed – Vizio 43" flat screen TV – Sanyo 47" flat screen TV – sm desk – Thomson med size chest freezer – cast iron skillet – turkey fryer – BBQ – patio set – smoker – (2) wood pantry cabinets – sm Frigidaire chest freezer – sm kitchen appliances such as Kitchen Aid mixer, vac & seal, crock pot, blender, air fryer, George Foreman grill, kitchen wares such as pots & pans, misc Tupperware, SS pots, etc – plastic shelf – (3) chain link dog pins – garden bench/cart – sm chicken coop (needs work) – folding table – room screen – wire shelf – 3 drawer storage bin – bookshelf – wood yard swing. **Antiques & Collectibles:** Dazey #4 churn – misc glassware – old double wick oil lamp (nice) – oil lamp with Scotty dogs – past Presidents pitcher & lamp – (2) oil lamps – North Pole Express train. **Household Plants:** Dragon tree, Peace Lilly – many more items not listed. **Real Estate:** 3 bedroom, 2 bath metal sided home. Enter this home under a full length covered front porch into an open floor plan, living room and kitchen area with dual ceiling fans, windows, front entry door & back entry door leading out to a big covered back deck. The kitchen features Frigidaire side by side Refrigerator/Freezer, Whirlpool smooth top elect range with built in Frigidaire microwave/hood, double SS sink, Bosch dishwasher, cabinets & good countertop space. On the East end of the home is a bedroom with ceiling fan, windows and closet. Also the master bedroom with ceiling fan, large walk in closet, window & master bath with step in shower. On the West end of the home is a bedroom with ceiling fan, windows and walk in closet, a full bathroom & utility room/pantry. Outside **Amenities:** Covered front porch, covered back deck, asphalt driveway leading into the oversized detached 2 car garage, storage building plus a large underground storm shelter. All this on 1.6 acres m/l with a wooded back yard with lots of wildlife. Country living however only 4.9 miles to Cassville on Hwy 76 and a short drive away to Shell Knob & Table Rock Lake. **Note:** This is a very neat home. Mostly maintenance free. Open floor plan. One level easy to get around. For anyone looking to buy real estate, here's a good one. Call 417-847-2507 to preview the property before auction day. **Terms:** Cash, good check or credit card with 2 forms of current ID. Must have current drivers license to obtain bidders number. All terms on bidder card apply. If paying with credit card a 5% convenience fee will apply. All sells as is where is with no warranty expressed or implied. Any announcements made day of auction supersede any and all printed material. **Real Estate Terms:** Qualified buyers only w/pre-approved bank letter of approval. Nonrefundable 10% paid day of auction w/balance due in cash or certified funds within 30-45 days. Buyers and sellers will be responsible for their own portion of their closing cost. Taxes will be prorated to the date of close. Sells as is where is with no warranties or guarantees. Bidders, buyers, or agent of the buyer is responsible for conducting own inspection of property prior to auction and should rely solely upon their own due diligence and inspection. This property is offered with absolutely no contingencies of any kind, no contingencies on financing, surveys, appraisals, or final walk throughs. Seller has the right to accept or reject final bid. A 10% buyer's premium will apply on Real Estate. Any announcements made day of auction supersede any and all printed material.

**Estate of: Doyle Crotwell
Owner: Sharon Crotwell**



Auctioneer:
Donnie Stumpff
MO & AR State
Champion Auctioneer
#1409 | PB00051442



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Auctioneer:
Parker Stumpff
AR State Champion
Auctioneer
#2352

April 1, 2026
Date of second
publication:

April 8, 2026
Date of third publication:

April 15, 2026
Date of fourth publication:

April 22, 2026
Craig Williams,
Circuit Clerk
by S. Parker,
Probate Clerk

Receipt of this notice
by mail should not be
construed by the recipient
to indicate that the recipient
necessarily has a beneficial
interest in the estate. The
nature and extent of any
person's interest, if any, can
be determined from the files
and records of this estate in
the Probate Division of the
above referenced Circuit
Court.

1st insertion 04/01/26
12-15

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
OF BARRY COUNTY,
MISSOURI
PROBATE DIVISION
AT CASSVILLE**

In the Estate of:
CAROLA A. GIRTH,
deceased
Estate No.
26BR-PR00043

NOTICE OF LETTERS
OF ADMINISTRATION
GRANTED
(SUPERVISED
ADMINISTRATION – NON-
RESIDENT FIDUCIARY)

To All Persons Interested
in the Estate of
CAROLA A. GIRTH,
Decedent:

On APRIL 2, 2026, the
Application for Letters
of Administration having
been filed with the court,
as provided in Section
473.444, RSMo. or any
other applicable limitation

representative of the estate
of CAROLA A. GIRTH,
decendent by the Probate
Division of the Circuit Court
of Barry County, Missouri.
The name, business
address, of the personal
representative is:

GREGORY GIRTH,
806 W. CENTRAL AVE.,
BENTONVILLE, AR
72712.

The personal
representative's attorney's
name, business address
and phone number is:

HARRY D. SCHWARTZ,
ELLIS, CUPPS &
HERRIN,
P. O. BOX 276,
702 WEST STREET,
CASSVILLE, MO 65625,
417-847-2734.

The non-resident
personal representative's
designated agent's name,
business address and
phone number is:

HARRY D. SCHWARTZ,
ELLIS, CUPPS &
HERRIN,
P. O. BOX 276,
702 WEST STREET,
CASSVILLE, MO 65625,
417-847-2734.

All creditors of said
decendent are notified to file
claims in court within six
months from the date of the
first publication of this notice
or if a copy of this notice
was mailed to, or served
upon, such creditor by the
personal representative,
then within two months from
the date it was mailed or
served, whichever is later,
the fullest extent permissible
by law. Such six-month
period do not extend the
limitation period that would
bar claims one year after
the decedent's death,
as provided in Section
473.444, RSMo. or any
other applicable limitation

periods. Nothing in Section
473.033, RSMo. shall be
construed to bar any action
against a decedent's liability
insurance carrier through a
defendant ad litem pursuant
to Section 537.021, RSMo.

Date of decedent's death:
11-MAR-2026

Date of first publication:
08-APR-2026

Craig Williams
by Savannah Parker
Probate Clerk
1st insertion 04/08/26
13-16

TRUSTEE'S SALES

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S
SALE for default in the
payment of debt secured by
a Deed of Trust ("Deed of
Trust") executed by
Willard Bellon and Bonnie
Bellon,
husband and wife,
as Grantors,
in which Arvest Bank is
named Lender ("Original
Lender") and James Kevin
Checkett, was named as
original trustee (Book 22,
Page 3012); and Deed of
Trust executed by Willard
Bellon and Bonnie Bellon
to Tammy Wilhoit, Trustee
for Arvest Bank, recorded
on March 13, 2024 (Book
24, Page 1143); and Sarah
Dalton, is named as
successor trustee
(instrument recorded March
17, 2026 in Book 26, Page
1330), all filed for record
with the Recorder of Deeds
for Barry County, Missouri
(the "Records"):

The undersigned
Successor Trustee will on
April 21, 2026, between the
hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00
p.m., more particularly at

after Decedent's death,
as provided in Section
473.444, RSMo, or any
other applicable limitation
periods. Nothing in Section
473.033,
RSMo, shall be construed
to bar any action against
a decedent's liability
insurance carrier through a
defendant ad litem pursuant
to Section 537.021, RSMo.
Date of the decedent's
death:
06-DEC-2025
Craig Williams,
Circuit Clerk
by S. Parker,
Probate Clerk
Date of first publication:
April 1, 2026
Date of second
publication:
April 8, 2026
Date of third publication:
April 15, 2026
Date of fourth publication:
April 22, 2026
Receipt of this notice
by mail should not be
construed by the recipient
to indicate that the recipient
necessarily has a beneficial
interest in the estate. The
nature and extent of any
person's interest, if any, can
be determined from the files
and records of this estate in
the Probate Division of the
above referenced Circuit
Court.

1st insertion 04/01/26
12-15

**IN THE 39TH JUDICIAL
CIRCUIT, BARRY
COUNTY, MISSOURI
JUDGE OR DIVISION:
PROBATE**

In the Estate of
PAMELA L KOHN,
Deceased.
Case Number:
26BR-PR00025

NOTICE OF LETTERS
TESTAMENTARY
GRANTED
(INDEPENDENT
ADMINISTRATION - NON-
RESIDENT FIDUCIARY)

To All Persons Interested
in the Estate of
PAMELA L KOHN,
Decedent:

On March 19, 2026, the
last will of Decedent having
been admitted to probate,
the following individual was
appointed the personal
representative of the estate
of PAMELAL KOHN,
decendent, by the Probate
Division of the Circuit Court
of Barry County, Missouri.
The personal representative
may administer the estate
independently without
adjudication, order, or
direction of the Probate
Division of the Circuit
Court, unless a petition for
supervised administration is
made to and granted by the
court.

The name and business
address is:
RYAN KOHN,
3778 WEST STATE HWY
41,
CORTLAND, NE, 68331

The personal
representative's attorney's
name, business address
and phone number is:
CODY FENTON,
500 W. MAIN ST. SUITE
401,
BRANSON, MO 65616,
417-335-3550

The non-resident
personal representative's
designated agent's name,
business address, and
phone number is:
CODY FENTON,
500 W. MAIN ST. SUITE
401,
BRANSON, MO 65616,
417-335-3550

All creditors of said
decendent are notified to file
claims in court within six
months from the date of the
first publication of this notice
or if a copy of this notice
was mailed to, or served
upon, such creditor by the
personal representative,
then within two months from
the date it was mailed or
served, whichever is later,
or be forever barred to the
fullest extent permissible
by law. Such six-month
period do not extend the
limitation period that would
bar claims one year after
Decedent's death, as provided
in section 473.444, RSMo, or
any other applicable limitation
periods. Nothing in section
473.033, RSMo, shall be
construed to bar any action
against a decedent's liability
insurance carrier through a
defendant ad litem pursuant
to section 537.021, RSMo.

Date of the decedent's
death:
28-AUG-2025
Date of first publication:

APRIL 8, 2026
Craig Williams,
Circuit Clerk
by S. Parker,
Probate Clerk
1st insertion 03/18/26
10-13

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
OF BARRY COUNTY,
MISSOURI
PROBATE DIVISION
AT CASSVILLE**

In the Estate of:
JOAN BECK,
Deceased
Estate No.
25BR-PR00104

NOTICE OF FILING OF
FINAL SETTLEMENT
AND PETITION FOR
DISTRIBUTION

TO ALL PERSONS
INTERESTED IN THE
ESTATE OF
JOAN BECK,
deceased:

You are hereby notified
that the undersigned
Personal Representative will
file a Final Settlement and
Petition for determination
of the persons who are
the successors in interest
to the personal/real estate
of the decedent and of the
extent and character of
their interest therein and
for distribution of such
property, on April 23,
2026, or as may be
continued by the Court,
and that any objections
or exceptions to such
Final Settlement or
Petition or any item
thereof must be in
writing and filed within
twenty days after the
filing of such Final
Settlement.

HARRY D. SCHWARTZ,
Attorney
SAM MADSEN,
P U B L I C
ADMINISTRATOR

Ellis, Cupps, Herrin &
Schwartz
Personal Representative
P. O. Box 276
Cassville, MO 65625
(417)847-2734

Dates of Publication –
3/18/26,
3/25/26,
4/1/26,
4/8/26

THE ABOVE
REFERENCED DATE
IS NOT A COURT
APPEARANCE DATE.

It is an estimated date
as to when the Final
Settlement will be filed
with the court.

1st insertion 03/18/25
10-13

LOCAL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5B
 1:00 p.m. at the East Front Door of the Barry County Courthouse, 102 West Street, Cassville, Missouri, sell at public venue to the highest bidder for cash paid:

The real property situated in the County of Barry, State of Missouri, described as follows:

Commencing at the NE Corner of the SW ¼ of the NW ¼ of Section 33, Township 23, Range 27; thence S 368'; thence N 89°56' W 896' to a point of beginning; thence N 89°56'

W 412.41', to an existing fence; thence Northerly along said fence to the SW Corner of Lot 39 in Southern Hills Subdivision; thence Easterly 411.23' along the South side of Lots 39, 36 and 27 in said Southern Hills Subdivision to a point North of the point of beginning; thence S 363' to the point of beginning and being a part of the SW ¼ of the NW ¼ of Section 33, Township 23, Range 27, Barry County, Missouri.

ALSO: All of Lot 39 in Southern Hills Subdivision, as per the recorded plat thereof. Said Lot being part

of the West Half of Section 33, Township 23, Range 27, Barry County, Missouri.

The sale of all of the foregoing property shall be "AS IS, WHERE IS", for the purpose of satisfying said indebtedness and the costs of executing this trust, and shall be subject to all conditions of title, of records and in fact and neither the Successor Trustee, nor any other party makes any representation or warranty of any kind or nature regarding the condition of, the description of, or title to the property.

Sarah Dalton
 Successor Trustee
 503 Main Street
 Cassville, MO 65625
 (417) 846-1500
 Published in the Cassville Democrat
 Publication Dates:
 March 25,
 April 1,
 April 8
 and April 15, 2026
 1st insertion 03/25/26
 11-14

TRUSTEE SALE

In Re:
 Thomas Eugene Loftis,

a single man.
 TRUSTEE'S SALE –
 Under the terms of the Deed of Trust executed by Thomas Eugene Loftis, a single man, dated 12/20/2024, and recorded on 12/26/2024 Book 24 Page 6492 Document 202406668 in the office of the Recorder of Deeds for Barry County, MISSOURI, the undersigned Successor Trustee, will on 04/20/2026 at 10:00 AM at the East Front Door of the Barry County Courthouse, 700 Main St Cassville, Mo. 65625, sell at public venue to the highest bidder for

cash subject to the terms announced at the sale, the realty described in said deed of trust, to wit:
 LOT 9, ENGLAND ADDITION TO WHEATON, BARRY COUNTY, MISSOURI, AS PER RECORDED PLAT THEREOF FILED IN PLAT BOOK 5 PAGE 179.
 Eastplains Corporation
 SUCCESSOR TRUSTEE
 Published in the CASSVILLE DEMOCRAT
 File #: LOFTHRCK
 First publication date 03/25/2026
 1st Insertion 03/25/26
 11-14



Exeter's Breely Willis brings in a rebound in the district championship game against Wheaton. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Exeter's Madison Brattin puts up a 3-pointer in the district championship game against Wheaton. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Exeter: Lady Tigers finished season at 12-16, want 15 wins next year

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

One of the season's standout performances came on the road against Northeast Vernon County.

"Besides the obvious answer — the district championship game — the Northeast Vernon County game stands out," Young said. "First of all, it's a two-hour drive just to get there, which makes it harder for us to get warmed up and ready to play usually. But, we had a great night. Shea Hilburn had 35 points, including seven 3-pointers, Beatriz Alcaraz had

18 points. As a team, we had 28 steals, 29 deflections, and shot 53% from the free-throw line."

Leadership from the senior class played a critical role throughout the season.

"Seniors Shea Hilburn and Honesty Hall were my captains, and both started the entire season," Young said. "Without them, we could not have had any success this season. Shea shines on the offensive end, and Honesty on the defensive end. Honesty's defense was like night and day

compared to last season.

"Shea scored her 1,500th point against Seneca. We were hoping she would make it to 2,000 but she ended the season with 1,841 career points."

Losing only the two seniors, Exeter will return a core group of players heading into next season.

"I will have two freshman coming in, so we should have about the same numbers," Young said. "I will return three starters in Jaylee Hawkins, Beatriz Alcaraz

and Breely Wills. I am hoping someone will step up over the summer to fill the two open spots."

Young said recounting the season, the team met most of its preseason goals.

"My goal was 15 wins, a district championship, and Shea to score her 1,500th point," Young said. "I would say two out of the three goals being achieved would be considered success. Overall, I am happy with what we achieved and proud of each and every girl on the team. Everyone showed

improvement throughout the season."

The Lady Tigers finished the season with a 12-16 record.

Looking ahead, improvement and offseason work will be critical, Young said.

"I am still hoping to have a 15-win season," she said. "We have big shoes to fill from the loss of the two seniors before next season gets here. Summer games and workouts are going to be very important this year. We are going to have to put in the work if we

want to see good results next season. I am hoping Bobbi Hall or Kahlan Fuller can put in the work over the summer to fill the post position we will need filled.

"Sophomore Ava Aldridge and the two freshman coming in, Jasia Lokot and Zanna Jones, may have to learn to play positions they have never played before — only time will tell."

Exeter's season came to a close in the round of 16 of the Class 1 state tournament, falling to Walnut Grove, 63-30.

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TWINZ

Which two are exactly alike?

ANSWER: 1 AND 8

JUST kidding

Q: Why did the man run around his bed?
A: Because he was trying to catch up on his sleep!

JUST kidding

Q: What do you call a pig that knows karate?
A: A pork chop!

JUST kidding

Q: What do you call an old snowman?
A: Water.

DOT TO DOT

MIRROR IMAGE

DRAW THE MIRROR IMAGE OF THE PICTURE YOU SEE

Sudoku 6x6

	○	+			
				+	◇
	□	◇			
			□		△
×		△		□	
○			△		+

COMPLETE EACH GRID WITH THESE SIX SYMBOLS.
Symbols can only appear once in each line, once in each column and once in each box of six squares. Each box of six squares is marked by darker lines. Some symbols are already included in each box to help you get started. Don't forget: a symbol can't be repeated in the same line, column or box.

+	×	▽	□	◇	○
○	□	◇	▽	+	×
▽	◇	□	○	×	+
×	○	+	◇	□	▽
◇	+	○	×	▽	□
□	▽	×	+	○	◇

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On March 30 at Republic, Frost leaped 1.9 meters (6 feet and 3 inches) to win the high jump. He beat the 2007 mark established by Randy Burns at 6 feet and 2 inches. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com



Southwest Senior Dylan Frost set school records in the high jump and the long jump. Kyle Troutman/ktroutman@cassville-democrat.com

Southwest senior sets 2 school track records

Over the span of four days in two meets, Southwest Senior Dylan Frost set school records in the high jump and the long jump.

On March 30 at Republic, Frost leaped 1.9 meters (6 feet and 3 inches) to win the high jump. He beat the 2007 mark established by Randy Burns at 6 feet and 2 inches.

"It was just a matter of time," said Steve Voyak, Southwest track coach. "On day one of practice, he set the goal of breaking it. I thought it might come at the conference meet or district, but his form and attention to detail made him improve quickly. He jumped 6 feet pretty quickly. He's a real threat at the district, sectional and state

level now if he keeps working fine-tuning his technique."

On April 2 at Carthage, Frost broke the 2008 long jump mark held by Codie Harmon (20 feet and 3 inches). Frost jumped 6.19 meters (20 feet and 4 inches) and placed fourth in the event.

"This was shocking," Voyak said. "The talent is undeniable, but his footwork and technique are still inconsistent. He has scratched more jumps than he has made, but when he hits the board, look out."

Voyak said Frost is in his second year of track, so he's still learning some of the detail work and nuance that goes with the sport. In his eight years at the helm

of the Southwest track program, Voyak has witnessed records fall in the 4x800 boys relay, 2-mile, boys and girls javelin and the girls open 400.

"I watched the boys 4x8 relay team, maybe the best relay in the history of the school and then Travis Sickles (who is a Senior standout at Pitt State University) beat the two-mile record twice, but what Dylan did over a four-day period is remarkable," Voyak said. "He wants to get to state to compete against the best so he needs to work on his fundamentals, technique and conditioning so he can get there."

Southwest has meets at Seneca, Monett, and Mount Vernon this week.

Southwest: 4 seniors leading team

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

we are eager to determine the best fit for this season," Mitchell said.

Leadership will come from both upperclassmen and key returning players.

"My four seniors, Jacee, Kindred, Abigail and Bri, will be our leaders," Mitchell said. "Addy and Gracie will also serve as leaders. As a first year coach, I can tell that these girls will be a wonderful example of the leadership I want for our team."

Mitchell said the team's willingness to learn and improve stands out early.

"I think some of our strengths will be that this group seems to be very coachable," Mitchell said. "They want to work to improve and are constantly working hard."

Establishing a foundation will be a priority in the program's first year under new leadership.

"I want us to work on being fundamentally sound and doing the little things the right way," Mitchell said.

Expectations for the season center on development and building a positive culture.

"My expectations are for the girls to work hard,

improve their game and skills, and to have fun this season," Mitchell said. "I am looking forward to getting to be a part of it this spring!"

Mitchell said the coaching staff is focused on creating the right environment moving forward.

"Me and my assistant coach are both in our first year of coaching in our

positions," she said. "We are looking forward to creating a positive 'work for it' environment and hope to give the girls some ownership in our team. We are excited to work and have fun this season."

The Lady Trojans are currently 1-4 and will next host Hurley on Thursday at 5 p.m.

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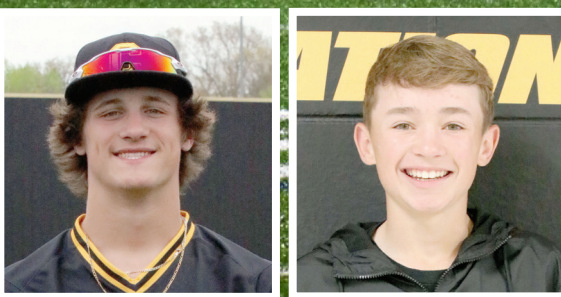
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WILDCAT PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

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Ava Hinson Kayli Anderson



K

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Track:

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

Whittenburg and Kayli Anderson are the returning letterwinners from last year.

"They are working hard and continuing to get better," Flehmer said. "We also have several freshmen this year that look to contribute to our success."

Flehmer said Reuter and Anderson have taken on the leadership roles for the squad, and the team is most excited for the home meet, also on April 21 in conjunction with the boys.

Outside of that meet, Flehmer said the schedule this year is honed in on evaluating postseason competition.

"Our schedule is set to see other schools outside of the Big 8 to see some of the schools in our district," Flehmer said. "We are a young team with a lot of potential."