

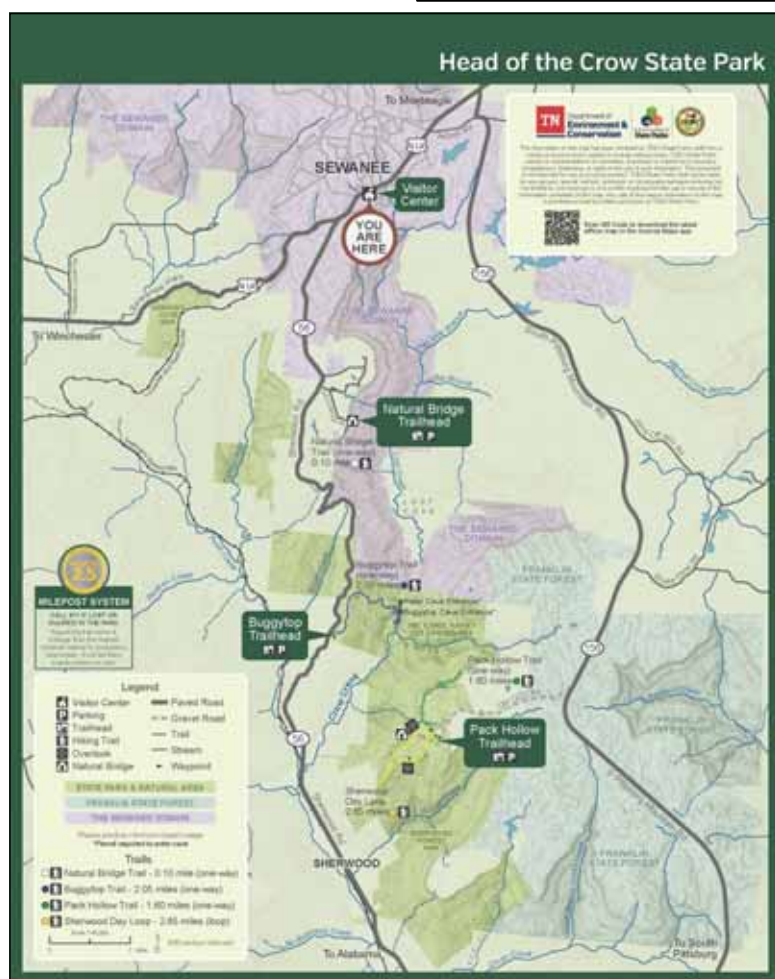


THE SEWANEE MOUNTAIN MESSENGER

Volume XLII No. 28

Published as a public service since 1985

Friday, July 31, 2026



Head of the Crow State Park Expansion Further Protects Biodiverse South Cumberland Plateau

TennGreen Land Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy in Tennessee, and The Conservation Fund have jointly secured another significant conservation victory on the South Cumberland Plateau. The partnership added approximately 550 acres to Head of the Crow State Park in Franklin County through a collaborative acquisition effort made possible by funding from the Open Space Institute (OSI), Tennessee's Heritage Conservation Trust Fund (HCTF), and Lyndhurst Foundation. The project represents the latest example of how conservation partnerships are protecting some of the state's most ecologically important landscapes while expanding opportunities for outdoor recreation and public enjoyment.

Head of the Crow State Park protects the headwaters of Crow Creek and encompasses a remarkable collection of forests, caves, streams, and rare species habitat. The park serves as a gateway to some of the most biologically rich landscapes in Tennessee. These lands support federally threatened and endangered species while safeguarding the clean water resources that flow from the plateau into surrounding communities.

As highlighted by State Naturalist Roger McCoy, Director of TN's Division of Natural Areas, "Head of the Crow straddles both the sandstone-dominated Plateau top that contains acidic bog-like habitats supporting rare orchids and other wetland species. The western edge of the park descends into limestone-dominated Crow Creek Valley with numerous outcrops and caves. These rocky outcrops support species unique to this region including the painted tiger snail,

Morefield's leatherflower, Cumberland rosinweed, and Cumberland pagoda plant."

Conservation in Franklin County continues to be increasingly important as development pressure affects significant natural resources. The South Cumberland Plateau is recognized for extensive forest cover, dramatic sandstone bluffs, caves, and high-quality streams that all coexist with exemplary biodiversity. Conservation efforts in the region help prevent habitat fragmentation by development and ensure that future generations can continue to experience these unique natural resources through Tennessee's world-class outdoor recreation opportunities.

"We're proud to have our partnership add significant acreage into Head of the Crow State Park so current families and future generations can enjoy these forests and creeks," said Christie Henderson, Deputy Director and acquisition lead for TennGreen Land Conservancy. "This diverse state park will no doubt become another premier park not just for Tennesseans, but for the entire country."

The newly protected acreage strengthens an expanding network of conserved lands across the South Cumberland Plateau, one of Tennessee's most celebrated outdoor destinations. In addition to expanding Head of the Crow State Park by 550 acres in 2026, TennGreen, TNC, and TCF also jointly expanded the park by 479 acres in 2025 through the support of Tennessee's Heritage Conservation Trust Fund.

"As Tennessee continues to experience rapid growth in both population and infrastructure, the

(Continued on page 5)

The AI Way: How, Why, No-No's

by Leslie Lytle, Messenger Staff
Writer

"AI should help us think better, not think instead of us," insisted Mel Oliveros who works with school districts throughout Tennessee and the nation helping students learn how to make meaningful use of the AI platform Coursemojo. In her July 23 Monteagle Sunday School Assembly lecture titled "Beyond the Hype: A Practical Look at AI," Oliveros tackled questions about how AI works, how to make AI work for us, and what to be wary of. Although unaware of it, many people already use AI. The new frontier, the hot potato both celebrated and feared, is generative AI.

Anyone who has used Siri or Alexa, browsed Netflix movie suggestions, taken Google Maps advice on a different route, or relied on email spam filters operating in the background engages with AI. "AI means artificial intelligence," Oliveros said. "Think about it as a piece of software, but instead of programmers typing up the rules of what it should be doing, AI platforms have been fed an enormous amount of content and information and it learns patterns to figure out what the next thing could be. It learns by example."

"The main difference in the past couple of years is that AI is now something we can talk to and interact with," Oliveros stressed. "That didn't exist as much in the past. We can reason with it, talk to it, give it follow up questions. This new piece is generative AI. It takes the patterns and creates new things." Guided by the questions and prompts it is given, AI can write anything from emails to novels to computer programs. Oliveros distinguished between a Google search which produces a list of web pages on the search topic and generative AI response to a search prompt or question. "Generative AI has read all the pages," Oliveros explained. "When you ask [AI] a question, it has this vast amount of knowledge that will help the machine answer the question."

But Oliveros cautioned, "because it is just thinking about patterns, it isn't right 100 percent of the time. It can get the patterns wrong. That's what the term AI 'hallucinations' means. AI tries really hard to give you an answer." How to avoid the 'hallucinations' problem? "AI is also really good at following directions," Oliveros observed. "If you tell it don't invent and make things up, it is going to follow the direction. Tell it, 'If you're not sure, say so. Don't guess.'"

Popular free generative AI platforms include ChatGPT, Claude, and Google Gemini. Oliveros's personal preference is Claude. "Claude feels more natural to me. ChatGPT feels robotic," Oliveros said, but added, "others feel differently."

"I'm not a software engineer," Oliveros conceded. "But I'm good at describing what I want to AI.

(Continued on page 5)

Monteagle Tackles Ordinance Amendments Recommended by Planning Commission

by Leslie Lytle, Messenger Staff
Writer

At the July 27 meeting, the Monteagle City Council grappled with a raft of ordinance amendments recommended by the Planning Commission, approving all six, but not unanimously. In other business, the council took up a request for the city to abandon ownership of a portion of two streets.

Arguments challenging two of the amendments reflected concerns about Monteagle having industrial zoning, but no property zoned industrial.

"I'm not going to support this the way it's written," said Alderman Grant Fletcher objecting to the ordinance adding light manufacturing and sales as a permitted use in C-3 commercial zoning. "Light manufacturing can mean a lot of different things. The description is vague. We've been adamant about not zoning anything industrial in this town and now we're throwing in light industrial without a real definition. We've already been in trouble over the planning commission trying to interpret something that doesn't exist."

Fletcher insisted he did not have a problem with the business requesting permission to locate in the area zoned C-3 at the I-24 exit 135. KD3 Construction specializes in custom metal frame buildings and plans to sell building materials, including metal components manufactured on site, to both contractors and the public. The Planning Commission approved the request on the grounds the ordinance allowed the planning commission to "determine whether a proposed use is suitable for the building and surrounding area." Planning Commission Chair Richard Black voted no at the July 7 planning commission meeting. At the council meeting, Black conceded he approved of the business, as well. Black, however, argued the business should be located in Industrial Zoning. "The definition of C-3 the planning commission abides by is for [uses serving] interstate traffic," Black stressed.

Alderman Nate Wilson explained the business did not fit In-

(Continued on page 5)

Hospitality Shop: History in the Making

This summer the Hospitality Shop has two interns: Sarah Grace and Stella, doing research on the history of the Hospitality Shop since its beginning. As they pull the manuscript together, they are asking the citizens of Sewanee for historic pictures of the Shop and for recipes for the famous Shop meals. If you have such artifacts and family stories of shopping at the Shop, please send them to <sarahgracepowell13@gmail.com> as soon as possible. The history will be available on sale in the fall.

The Hospitality Shop is located at 574 Georgia Ave., Sewanee. The Shop continues its regular hours: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday, and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please leave donations in the outside bins during the hours the Shop is open. Clothing should be clean and in good repair. Décor and household items should be in working condition. We thank the community for its continued vigorous support.

Come & See: A Free Community Day at St. Mary's Sewanee

St. Mary's Sewanee: The Ayres Center for Spiritual Development invites the community to "Come & See" from 1-4 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 1, at 770 St. Mary's Lane in Sewanee. This free community gathering offers something for everyone: explore the scenic campus, meet local vendors, and participate in spiritual practice demonstrations led by St. Mary's Sewanee program presenters throughout the day.

The afternoon will be filled with live music from the Grundy County Jam Kids, Doug Cloniger, and Sarah Douglas, along with barbecue provided by Triple J BBQ. Guests can also get a taste of St. Mary's Sewanee's own kitchen, with snacks and the retreat center's famous gourmet cookies. A variety of local vendors will be on hand selling arts, crafts, jewelry, food, and more. Everyone in the community is welcome to attend this celebration of connection and exploration. For more information or to RSVP, go to <www.stmaryssewanee.org>.

P.O. Box 296
Sewanee, TN 37375

Messenger Subscription Rate Increase

With the latest U.S. postal rate increase, the Sewanee Mountain Messenger must increase the cost of the first class mailed subscription. Effective immediately, the cost of a subscription is now \$85. This is an increase of 22 cents an issue.

The Sewanee Mountain Messenger remains free for pickup across the Plateau and is available online.

I appreciate your understanding. Thank you for supporting this local newspaper. — KB



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— THE SEWANEE MOUNTAIN — MESSENGER

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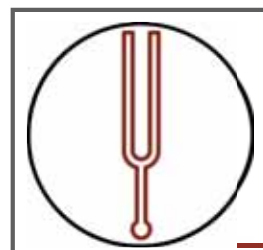
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Letters to the Editor Policy

Letters to the editor are welcome at the Sewanee Mountain Messenger and are a vital part of our community's conversation. Letters need to be no longer than 250 words and may be edited for space and clarity. We make exceptions from time to time, but these are our general guidelines. We strive to print all letters we receive, but publication is not guaranteed. Letters should be factually accurate. Letters that are deemed unsuitable for publication shall not be printed elsewhere in the newspaper, including as a paid advertisement.

Letters and/or their author must have some relationship to our community. We do not accept letters on national topics from individuals who live outside our print circulation area. Please include your name, address and a daytime telephone number with your letter. You may mail it to us at Sewanee Mountain Messenger, P.O. Box 296, Sewanee, TN 37375, leave it at our office, 418 St. Mary's Ln., or send your email to <news@sewanee-messenger.com>. — KB



SERVING WHERE CALLED

Please keep the following individuals, their families and all those who are serving our country in your thoughts and prayers:

Prescott Atkinson
Brandon Brawley
Justin Brawley
James Gregory Cowan
Mark Gallagher
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Andrew Midgett
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Troy (Nick) Sepulveda
Zachary Sherrill
Allison Tucker
Nick Worley

If you know of others in our Mountain family who are serving our country, please give their names to American Legion and Auxiliary member Shirley M. Lawson at <slawson@sewanee.edu>.

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News and Calendar

Deadline: Tuesday, 5 p.m.
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We're also thrilled to celebrate the ribbon cutting of our very own *Little Free Library*, handcrafted by our talented maintenance team—a gift to our community that we hope will be enjoyed for years to come!

BOOK DONATIONS

- Donations accepted now through Friday, August 7
- Please bring books in good condition to the front desk (no damaged books, please).
- As our thank-you, everyone who donates will receive a coupon for **25% off at Shakerag** (valid through December 18, 2026).

Whether you're an avid reader, a casual book lover, or simply looking for a relaxing Sunday afternoon, we'd love to welcome you. Come trade stories, make new friends, and help us write the first chapter of what we hope becomes a beloved annual tradition.

Church News

All Saints’ Chapel

There are two services on Sunday, 8 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite 1, and 11 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite 2.

Christ Church

For about a thousand years the Gospel reading on this Ninth Sunday after Trinity was the Parable of the unjust steward.

In 1928, both the American Book of Common Prayer and the Scottish Book changed it and put in what has a long history of being called The Parable of the Prodigal Son from St. Luke, Chapter 15. It is doubtful if it will ever be retitled as The Parable of the Waiting Father, but a deep look shows a beautiful message of God’s love. We love to share what we think and hope we have loved. You are invited to our Sunday service which begins at 10:45 a.m. We also welcome you to lunch and great conversations on Sunday at noon.

Draw Near

Draw Near is a church that is all about becoming disciples of Jesus one person at a time through real relationships. Come as you are and experience authentic worship at 10 a.m., Sunday. Classes for 2 years old through fifth grade. The church is located at 301 Montgomery St., Cowan

Monteagle SDA

Weekly prayer meeting is at 9 a.m., Wednesday, and Sabbath school is at 10 a.m., Saturday, followed by worship service at 11 a.m. A vegetarian potluck takes place each week after the worship service. Please join us. Monteagle SDA Church is located at 497 College St., Monteagle.

Morton Memorial United Methodist

“We Have Nothing But _____” will be the sermon on Sunday, Aug. 2. The Rev. Melisa Derseweh will explore Matthew 14:13-21 as a lesson for how to live abundantly now. If we think that we have too little left to address the challenges put before us, we need to invite others to be open to sharing and expect a miracle.

This Sunday, we will share Holy Communion with an open table, meaning those who come to this holy meal are not required to be members of Morton, nor are they required to be members of any church. We understand ourselves to be invited by the Host, Jesus Christ. To share in Holy Communion, a person of any age doesn’t have to be a baptized believer. Come to the feast!

Children are welcome at Morton! The Children’s Sermon will follow the same scripture lesson with olive wood figurines and a hands-on activity.

To learn more about life in our community of faith, accept this invitation to worship. Morton is located at 322 West Main St., in Monteagle. Our service begins at 11 a.m., following coffee and refreshments in our Fellowship Center. If you are unable to attend

but want to sample worship at Morton, the service is live streamed at Morton’s Facebook page and is available on YouTube in the week following the service.

St. James Episcopal

St. James Episcopal Church celebrates The Holy Eucharist each Sunday at 9 a.m. We have a Parish Potluck the first Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. Our Daughters of the King chapter meets the second Tuesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. The Men’s Breakfast Group meets the first Saturday of the month. We gather each Sunday after church for refreshments and fellowship. St. James is located at 898 Midway Rd., Sewanee. All are welcome to experience love, hope, and joyful fellowship at St. James.

St. Mark and St. Paul

Beginning Sunday, Aug. 2 the Holy Eucharist is celebrated at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. The 11 a.m. service will be livestreamed on our Facebook page and remains available there.

Nursery Services: Infants and toddlers through three years old are invited to gather on the playground or downstairs in Claiborne Hall.

Morning and Evening prayer services are at 8:30 a.m. and 4:45 p.m., Monday through Thursday in the sanctuary.

Centering Prayer Group: Mondays at 7 p.m. and Tuesdays at 2:30 p.m., both in the sanctuary.

Lectionary Bible Study meets every Tuesday at 3:30 p.m., in Brooks Hall. The class begins with a brief prayer and a reading of the Gospel lesson appointed for the coming Sunday.

Fall Kick Off Events:

Aug. 2, Children’s Sunday school begins

Aug. 9, Back to School Blessing

Aug. 12, Children’s Choir rehearsals begin.

Aug. 23, Youth Sunday school begins. Sunday Forum begins. Welcome picnic after 11 a.m. service.

Sept. 13, Rite 13 & J2A resume.

August Book Study – “Stronger than You Think: Building Lifelong Resilience,” by Sherry Hamby. Tuesdays, Aug 4-25, 5:30-6:30 p.m., in Brooks Hall. Please bring a drink or snack to share.

“We’ve never been in greater need of resilience. We’ve also never misunderstood it more. At one point or another, life will break us open. This is when we need resilience most—but as psychologist Dr. Sherry Hamby reveals, many of us are going about it the wrong way. Resilience isn’t something you either have or don’t. Instead, it is a modifiable process — meaning anyone can learn, practice, and benefit from it across every stage of life.”

On the final night Aug. 25, we will be joined by the author herself. Get your copy of the book now, and join us in August for an enriching experience.

Winchester First United Methodist Church

Embrace a new beginning with Jesus in a new kind of faith com-

munity. Come home to Winchester First United Methodist Church, 100 S. Jefferson St.

Worship services are on Sundays at 10 a.m. On the first Sunday of the month, our service is followed by a free lunch.

For more information, contact senior pastor, Eric Bronkala, at (865) 591-8823, or visit us on Facebook.

If your church is in our print circulation area and would like to be listed in the Church Calendar, please send service times, church address and contact information to <news@sewaneemessenger.com> or phone (931) 598-9949.

Abundant Life Assembly of God, Cowan

10:30 a.m. Worship, Sunday

All Saints’ Chapel

8 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite 1, Sunday

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Sunday

Bible Baptist Church, Monteagle

10 a.m. Worship Service, Sunday

5:30 p.m. Evening Service, Sunday

5:30 p.m. Evening Worship, Wednesday

Calvary Baptist Church, Winchester

10 a.m. Sunday School

11 a.m. Worship Service, Sunday

4 p.m. Evening Worship, Sunday

7 p.m. Prayer Meeting, Wednesday

Chapman Chapel Church of the Nazarene, Pelham

9:30 a.m. Sunday School, Sunday

10:45 a.m. Morning Worship, Sunday

6 p.m. Evening Worship, Sunday

7 p.m. Bible study, Wednesday

Christ Church Monteagle

10:45 a.m. Holy Communion, Sunday

Christ Church, Tracy City

10 a.m. Bible Study, Sunday

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Sunday

Christ the King Anglican Church, Decherd

9 a.m. Sunday Service, Sunday

6:30 p.m. Healing/prayer service

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Winchester

9 a.m. Worship Service, Sunday

City Light Church, Monteagle

10:30 a.m. Worship Service, Sunday

Cowan Fellowship Church

11 a.m. Worship Service, Sunday

Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Cowan

11 a.m. Worship, Sunday

Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Monteagle

9:45 a.m. Sunday School, Sunday

11 a.m. Worship Service, Sunday

Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Sewanee

9 a.m. Worship Service, Sunday

10 a.m. Sunday School, Sunday

Decherd Presbyterian Church

11 a.m. Worship (Sunday)

Decherd United Methodist Church

9:45 a.m. Sunday School, Sunday

10:50 a.m. Worship Service, Sunday

Draw Near (non-denominational), Cowan

10 a.m. Worship, Sunday

Epiphany Mission, Sherwood

10 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite II, Sunday

First Baptist Church, Cowan

9:15 a.m. Sunday School, Sunday

10:25 a.m. Worship, Sunday

First Church of the Nazarene, Cowan

11 a.m. Worship Service, Sunday

Good Shepherd Catholic Church, Decherd

5 p.m. Mass, Saturday

10:30 a.m. Mass, Sunday

12:30 p.m. Spanish Mass, Sunday

Goshen C. P. Church, Winchester

11 a.m. Worship Service, Sunday

Grace Fellowship Church

10:30 a.m. Sunday School/Worship Service

Harrison Chapel Methodist Church, Midway

10 a.m. Sunday School

11 a.m. Sunday Morning Service

5 p.m. Sunday Evening Service

Highpointe Apostolic Church, Monteagle

10 a.m. Worship, Sunday

6:30 p.m. Bible Study/Prayer Meeting, Wednesday

Hobbs Hill Community Church, Tracy City

10 a.m. Sunday School, Sunday

11 a.m. Morning Service, Sunday

5 p.m. Evening Service, Sunday

6 p.m. Evening Service, Wednesday

Marble Plains Baptist Church, Winchester

9:30 a.m. Sunday School, Sunday

10:30 a.m. Morning Service, Sunday

Obituary

Charles Lester Finney

Charles Lester Finney, age 89, of Longwood, Fla., died on July 8, 2026. He was born in Sewanee, on Feb. 26, 1937. He graduated in 1955 from Franklin County High School, Winchester. He was retired from Anheuser Busch Distributors of Orlando, Fla.

He was predeceased by his parents Lester and Ocie Finney of Sewanee; sons Ronnie Finney and Larry Finney (Candy) of Florida; sisters June Finney McBee, Madeline Finney Prince and Mary Finney Fain; his brothers, Doyle Finney, and John Finney (Emilie) of Florida. Charles is survived by his wife of over 50 years, Jean Finney of Longwood, Fla.; sons Charles Lesley (Les) Finney, Jr. (Kathy) of Pooler, Ga., Scott Finney (Ginnie), of Leesburg, Fla., Terry and Donnie Smith of Florida, and Fred Smith of Mississippi; daughter, Jeannie Smith of Alabama; brother Mark Finney (Emma) of Orlando, Fla.; sisters Elizabeth Finney Yates of Sewanee, and Susan Finney Clark of Madison, Tenn.; and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A Celebration of Life will be at a later date.

Church Calendar

5 p.m. Evening Service, Sunday
6 p.m. Mid-week Service, Wednesday

Midway Baptist Church

9:45 a.m. Sunday School, Sunday

10:45 a.m. Morning Service, Sunday

6 p.m. Evening Service, Sunday

6 p.m. Bible Study, Wednesday

Midway Church of Christ

10 a.m. Bible Study, Sunday

11 a.m. Morning Service, Sunday

6 p.m. Evening Service, Sunday

Monteagle Church of Christ

11 a.m. Morning Service, Sunday

6 p.m. Bible Study, Wednesday

Monteagle First Baptist Church

11 a.m. Worship Service, Sunday

6 p.m. Bible Study, Wednesday

Monteagle Seventh-day Adventist Church

10 a.m. Bible Study, Saturday

11 a.m. Worship, Saturday

7 p.m. Prayer and Study, Tuesday

Morton Memorial United Methodist, Monteagle

10 a.m. Sunday School, until 10:45 a.m.

11 a.m. Worship Service, Sunday

Mountain of God Tabernacle, Monteagle

Online worship services. Call (931) 924-5339 or go to

<<https://www.tdworldministries.org>>

11 a.m. Worship Service, Sunday

6 p.m. Prayer Service, Wednesday

New Creations Ministries, Rayburn Chapel

4 p.m. Prayer Meeting, Sunday

New Hope Church of God in Christ, Cowan

11 a.m. Sunday Service, Sunday

6 p.m. Sunday Service, Sunday

Pelham United Methodist Church

9:45 a.m. Sunday School, Sunday

11 a.m. Worship Service, Sunday

St. Agnes’ Episcopal Church, Cowan

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Sunday

St. James-Midway Episcopal Church

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Sunday

St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church, Alto

8 a.m. Mass, Sunday

St. Mark & St. Paul

8:20 a.m. Nursery, basement of Kennerly Hall,

Sunday

8:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Sunday

9:45 a.m. Godly Play

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Sunday, also available
livestream Facebook

St. Mary’s Sewanee Retreat Center

4 p.m. Centering Prayer Group, Thursday

Sewanee Church of God

10 a.m. Worship Service, Sunday

Sewanee Zen, Stone Nest Dojo

7 a.m. Zazen, Tuesday-Thursday

10 a.m. Zazen and Ceremony, Sunday

Sisters of St. Mary Convent Chapel

7 a.m. Morning Prayer, Tuesday–Friday

5 p.m. Evening Prayer, Tuesday–Friday

7:30 a.m. Morning Prayer, Saturday

5 p.m. Evensong, Saturday

8 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Sunday

5 p.m. Evensong, Sunday

Tracy City First Baptist Church

10:45 a.m. Morning Worship, Sunday

Trinity Episcopal Church, Winchester

10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Sunday

12:30 p.m. Lectionary Bible Study, Tuesday

Unitarian Universalist Church, Tullahoma

10 a.m. Service, Sunday

Valley Home Community Church, Pelham

10 a.m. Sunday School

11 a.m. Morning Service, Sunday

Warren Chapel Church of the Nazarene, Decherd

10 a.m. Sunday School

11 a.m. Morning Worship, Sunday

Winchester First United Methodist

10 a.m. Worship, Sunday

MMUMC Food Distribution

Morton Memorial United Methodist Church located at 322 W. Main St., in Monteagle, will be distributing food on Saturday, Aug. 8, from 8–10 a.m. All in need are welcome to come. Drivers should enter the line from behind the church and park where our helpers will guide you. Volunteers will load your car for you. Expect several bags of groceries, so please make room for these shelf stable items, some frozen items, and produce before you come. Morton Memorial distributes food the second Saturday of every month come rain or shine.

Monteagle (continued from page 1)

dustrial Zoning parameters because the business wanted to do retail sales. Black countered, "We're on thin ice by not putting this in industrial. We're on thin ice anyway because we have industrial zoning and no property zone industrial."

Fletcher voted against allowing "light manufacturing" in C-3.

The same arguments reared their head in the discussion about the proposed ordinance amendment only allowing data centers in Industrial Zoning as a special exception approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

"I think it's kind of ridiculous when we come up with a use we don't like we put it in industrial because we have no industrial property," Fletcher said. "I'm not saying I want a data center by any means. I don't understand why we aren't dealing with this by saying, 'We don't allow data centers.'"

Wilson conceded, "We could have some problems if someone comes to us and says, 'We'd like to put a data center here. Would you rezone it industrial?' The problem is not where to allow data centers, but how to define data centers."

Explaining the rationale behind the ordinance amendment, Planning Commissioner Katie Trahan said, "[The town planners] are working on a comprehensive state definition for data centers. We were told this would be a good first step."

"We couldn't support [a data center], because we don't have the utilities," observed Mayor Greg Maloof. [Note: a frequent objection to a data center is the large amount of water needed for cooling. See Messenger, May 29, 2026]

Wilson noted if a proposed data center requested rezoning a tract to industrial to allow it to locate in Monteagle, the request would need to be weighed against five criteria judging all proposals to rezone.

"Would that stop a data center from locating here?" Fletcher asked.

"Maybe," Wilson replied.

Fletcher voted against the ordinance amendment regulating the location of data centers. Maloof abstained.

The council unanimously approved four ordinance amendments.

Ordinance 06-26 standardizes the site plan submission process and requires developers to pay a fee to cover engineering costs needed to determine water and sewer availability.

The other three ordinances related to the C-1 commercial downtown corridor. Ordinance 08-26 allows more residential uses on secondary streets. The Downtown Overlay ordinance (09-26) sets new rules to create greater density in residential areas adjacent to the C-1 downtown corridor. Among the changes, the new rules allow for dormitory host-style temporary living quarters. Ordinance 10-26 sets new rules for the C-1 downtown corridor. Wilson explained the changes intended to "make the corridor more amenable to commercial development." Among the changes, the ordinance allows for smaller lot sizes, smaller building sizes, and does not require parking. "Parking was the biggest point of contention," Wilson acknowledged, but he went on to point out, "Downtown is full of empty lots. A parking problem would be a great problem to have to fix."

Resident Chris Fox asked the council to abandon ownership of an alley designated on maps as portions of 1st Street and Spur Avenue. Fox argued a section of the alley was on his property and incorrectly designated as city property by a surveyor. The alley borders property owned by Richard Black, Ronald Crabtree, the Monteagle Sunday School Assembly, and Katie and Tim Trahan. Fox explained frequent use by Assembly employees became an issue when the Assembly put in a new parking lot.

All the affected parties attended the meeting, except Crabtree. There appeared to be agreement about how the property would be apportioned if the city abandoned it and about easements to accommodate the affected property owners' interests. But the council was reluctant to take action without written documentation.

"I don't feel comfortable with just abandoning it and letting them figure it out. That's a good opportunity to disenfranchise someone. I want to see an agreement with all adjacent and affected landowners signing it," Wilson said. Maloof requested a survey identifying the property in question.

Fox will pursue providing the documentation.

HOTC (from page 1)

significance of places like Head of the Crow State Park cannot be understated," said Gabby Lynch, Director of Land for The Nature Conservancy in Tennessee. "The decades of land conservation successes in Tennessee's South Cumberland Plateau region happen only through public/private collaboration."

"The Conservation Fund is proud to work alongside TennGreen, The Nature Conservancy and our state partners to protect the places that make Tennessee so special," added Zachary Lesch-Huie, Tennessee state director at The Conservation Fund. "We applaud Tennessee's conservation leadership and are honored to assist in the creation of a new state park. Projects like this show what's possible when strong partners come together with a shared commitment to conservation, creating lasting benefits for both people and wildlife."

By adding these tracts, TennGreen and partners are helping to create a more connected and resilient landscape that benefits wildlife, protects vital watersheds, and enhances public access to nature. The project demonstrates how strategic conservation investments from organizations such as OSI and HCTF continue to deliver lasting benefits for Tennessee's environment, economy, and quality of life.

"The expansion of Head of the Crow State Park represents a conservation investment that delivers lasting benefits for people and nature," said Joel Houser, Sr. Director Capital Grants, OSI. "By protecting these forests and strengthening connections across the South Cumberland landscape, this project helps safeguard wildlife habitat, improve public access to some of Tennessee's most remarkable natural areas, and create new opportunities for outdoor recreation and economic activity in rural Tennessee. OSI is proud to partner with TennGreen, TNC, TCF, and the State of Tennessee to advance a long-term vision for conservation in the Crow Creek Valley."

This project was funded through the Open Space Institute's Appalachian Landscapes Protection Fund, which supports the protection of climate resilient lands for wildlife and communities. The Fund is made possible thanks to major support from the Doris Duke Foundation, and additional funding from the Lyndhurst Foundation, Riverview Foundation, Tucker Foundation, and McKee Family of Collegedale.

AI (continued from page 1)

I've used AI to create programs and apps." However, Oliveros always has skilled coders check her work. She has also used other AI platforms to check work she creates with AI. But Oliveros stressed, "Don't take AI's confidence for truth. AI pulls data from everywhere, good and bad sources." She expects AI to get better at what it does. "It's far better than it was a year ago," Oliveros observed.

Another caution from Oliveros, "Free AI platforms take the information you give them and use it to train larger models." Never give AI passwords, social security numbers, or banking information. Paid business and educational AI platforms are told not to use input data to learn. Users of free platforms can, likewise, adjust their setting to tell AI not to use their information to train larger models.

Asked about data centers and their impact, Oliveros conceded, "The environmental cost is a reality. 'The cloud' is servers and microchips. They've got to be stored somewhere. It takes a lot of space and energy." A top concern is the energy needed creates heat and vast amount of water can be needed for cooling. Another concern is noise. "Data centers are loud," Oliveros said. The noise factor was the issue with a data center locating near the Nashville Zoo.

Asked if it was critical for people to learn to interact with AI, Oliveros said, "In the coming months and years, AI may just be happening in the background." Her advice to users, "The more you tell it, the better answers you'll get. Be specific about what the situation is, what matters to you, and what format you want the answer in." Users could variously ask for a report, chart or map. Citing AI's application in the classroom, students ask AI questions and give it prompts to solve a problem they are confronted with and are rewarded when they find the solution. Attesting to her personal experience with AI, Oliveros said, "AI has made me a better problem solver."

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SENIOR CENTER NEWS

The Sewanee Senior Center serves lunch at 11:30 a.m., Monday through Friday. The suggested donation is \$5, regardless of your age. Please call (931) 598-0771 by 9 a.m. to order lunch. Menus follow:

Monday, Aug. 3: Barbecue ribs, salad, slaw, cornbread.

Tuesday, Aug. 4: Chicken salad cold plate.

Wednesday, Aug. 5: Philly steak and cheese sandwich, chips.

Thursday, Aug. 6: Sweet and sour chicken, rice, egg roll.

Friday, Aug. 7: Stuffed peppers, mashed potatoes, green beans, roll. Menus may vary. For information call the center at (931) 598-0771.

Chair Exercise Class is 10:30–11:30 a.m., every Monday and Wednesday at the Community Center. Game day is 12:30–3 p.m., every Thursday, at the Senior Center. Contact Susan Roberson by text at (516) 987-8440 for more information on chair exercise and Mahjong.

The Sewanee Senior Center does not charge any membership fee. All persons 50 or older who take part in any of the activities are considered members.



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DREMC Invites Members to Celebrate 90 Years at Annual Membership Meeting

Duck River Electric Membership Corporation (DREMC) invites members to join a special celebration at its 2026 Annual Membership Meeting on Saturday, Aug. 15, at Harris Middle School in Shelbyville. Member registration, complimentary breakfast and other activities will begin at 8:30 a.m., offering attendees an opportunity to connect with friends, neighbors and the cooperative team while celebrating a major milestone in DREMC's history. The meeting will commence at 9:30 a.m.

This year's meeting is especially significant as DREMC marks 90 years of serving this region. The annual gathering provides members with an opportunity to learn more about their electric cooperative, meet the employees and board directors who serve their communities, and hear updates about the organization's accomplishments and plans.

By attending, members can register for a variety of premium door prizes and qualify for this year's grand prize drawing for an F-150 4x4 pickup, a retired DREMC fleet truck.

The first 400 DREMC members to register will receive a commemorative DREMC bucket

filled with a variety of additional giveaway items.

In addition to celebrating the cooperative's rich history, attendees will have the opportunity to meet the outstanding students who represented local communities during the annual Washington, D.C. Youth Tour. Sponsored by DREMC, this leadership program introduces young people to the nation's capital while providing a firsthand look at the cooperative business model and its impact on communities.

Families are encouraged to attend, as the event will feature activities and entertainment for children and adults alike. Young attendees can help welcome Watts the Lineduck, DREMC's new mascot, to his first annual meeting. Watts will greet members, take photos and hand out a few surprises.

The DREMC Annual Membership Meeting remains one of the most anticipated DREMC events, bringing members together to celebrate the cooperative spirit that has powered communities across southern Middle Tennessee since 1936. DREMC members are encouraged to attend and be part of this historic day.

CAC Pantry Sunday

Pantry Sunday for the Community Action Committee (CAC) is scheduled for the first Sunday of the month, on Aug. 2. All are welcome to contribute. All donations can be dropped off on the porch outside the CAC office or inside the church doors at St. Mark & St. Paul, both at 216 University Ave., Sewanee. There is an Amazon Wish List <<https://a.co/f6TXKX4>> for those who want to shop online.

The typical bag of groceries includes beans, pasta, macaroni and cheese, peanut butter, canned vegetables, fruit, and soup. This month, CAC is in need of individual snacks, granola bars, apples, macaroni and cheese, toilet paper, and toiletries (shampoo, soap, deodorant).

The CAC is an outreach ministry of the Parish of St. Mark and St. Paul, with generous support from the Sewanee Community Chest, and other organizations and individuals across the Mountain. For more than 50 years, the CAC has provided food, financial assistance, and educational support for persons in the greater Sewanee community. The CAC is open 9–11 a.m., Monday through Friday. For more information contact the CAC at (931) 598-5927.

Book Swap at the Sewanee Inn

The Sewanee Inn is hosting a Book Swap from noon to 2 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 9. Celebrate National Book Lovers Day with an afternoon of community, cozy vibes, and all things bookish. We are also thrilled to announce the ribbon cutting of our very own Little Free Library, handcrafted by our talented maintenance team — a gift to our community we hope will be enjoyed for years to come.

There will be local vendors and authors, delicious lunch offerings, book-inspired drinks, book trivia, door prize, sweet treats and more.

Book donations are being accepted now through Aug. 7. Please bring books in good condition to the front desk. (No damaged books, please.) As our "thank you," everyone who donates will receive a coupon for 25 percent off at our full-service restaurant, Shakerag. (Valid through Dec. 18, 2026.)

Book swapping and entry is free. We hope to see you soon.

Sewanee Dining Summer Hours

McClurg Dining Hall: Aug. 12–23, abbreviated hours are breakfast 7–9 a.m., lunch 11 a.m.–1:30 p.m., dinner, 5–7 p.m. Board Plan starts on Aug. 23, 5–8 p.m.

Stirling's Coffee House: through Sunday, Aug. 2, open 7 days a week, 8 a.m.–3 p.m. Monday, Aug. 3 through Tuesday, Aug. 25, Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–3 p.m. Closed weekends. Return to regular hours of operation on Wednesday, Aug. 26.

The Cafe at Biehl Commons: Return to regular hours of operation, Wednesday, Aug. 26. Cup & Gown: Return to regular hours of operation, Wednesday, Aug. 26. Tiger Bay Pub: Return to regular hours of operation, Wednesday, Aug. 26.

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Tennessee Sales Tax Holiday

Tennessee's traditional sales tax holiday on clothing, school supplies and computers begins at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, July 31, 2026, and ends at 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 2, 2026. During this time clothing, school supplies and computers may be purchased tax-free. Certain restrictions apply. Items sold online are also eligible. Items must be purchased for personal use, not for business or trade.

Clothing — Exempt: General apparel that costs \$100 or less per item, such as shirts, pants, socks, shoes, dresses, etc. Not exempt: Apparel items priced at more than \$100; Items sold together, such as shoes, cannot be split up to stay beneath the \$100 maximum; Items such as jewelry, handbags, or sports and recreational equipment.

School Supplies — Exempt: School and art supplies with a purchase price of \$100 or less per item, such as binders, backpacks, crayons, paper, pens, pencils, and rulers, and art supplies such as glazes, clay, paints, drawing pads, and artist paintbrushes. Not exempt: School and art supplies individually priced at more than \$100; Items that are normally sold together cannot be split up to stay beneath the \$100 maximum.

Computers — Exempt: Computers for personal use with a purchase price of \$1,500 or less; Laptop computers, if priced at \$1,500 or less, also qualify as well as tablet computers. Not exempt: Storage media, like flash drives and compact discs; Individually purchased software; Printer supplies; Household appliances.

Go to <https://www.tn.gov/revenue/taxes/sales-and-use-tax/sales-tax-holiday/sth-traditional.html>.

FC Master Gardener Volunteer Program

The Franklin County Master Gardener volunteers are dedicated to educating and training the public in the latest gardening techniques and information. These volunteers support the Extension Service by running plant clinics, answering horticultural inquiries, establishing demonstration gardens, and engaging with diverse community groups. They design and implement community projects and coordinate Master Gardener training programs.

The Master Gardener program aims to train citizens as knowledgeable volunteers for The University of Tennessee Extension and Tennessee State University Cooperative Extension Programs. This partnership helps extend educational outreach by providing home gardeners with research-based information and the opportunity to serve in their communities.

Plan to attend a free presentation and learn how to become a Master Gardener volunteer.

In-person, 5:30–6:30 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 6.

In-Person, 5:30–6:30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 10.

Via Zoom, 5:30–6:30 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 14.

The in-person sessions will be at the Extension office, located at 330 Joyce Ln., Winchester. To register call (931) 967-2741 or email <crt@utk.edu>.

School Supply Drive for SES

The Sewanee Civic Association is inviting individuals, local groups and businesses to help collect donations of elementary school supplies for Sewanee Elementary School.

There is an Amazon Wish List from the Sewanee Community Chest for those who want to order school supplies online. The link is <<https://a.co/0bLwZvEO>>. The address will be listed as Allison Dietz, SES. These will be delivered to Sewanee Elementary School.

Sewanee Elementary will oversee the distribution of the available donations to those who need it from 2–4 p.m., Monday, Aug. 3 and Thursday, Aug. 6.

The event is sponsored by the Sewanee Community Chest, the Sewanee Civic Association, and the Sewanee Elementary School.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Aug. 3, Marion County Staff Inservice
Aug. 3–5, Grundy County Staff Inservice
Aug. 3, Franklin County Administrative Day
Aug. 4, Grundy County, Meet the Teacher
Aug. 4, Marion County Registration
Aug. 4–6, Franklin County Staff Development
Aug. 5–6, Marion County Staff Development
Aug. 6, Grundy County Orientation Day
Aug. 7, Franklin County First Day of School, abbreviated
Aug. 7, Grundy County, Marion County, First Day of School

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Community Chest Applications Available

Sponsored by the Sewanee Civic Association (SCA), the Sewanee Community Chest (SCC) is pleased to announce the beginning of the 2026–27 grant cycle. The purpose of the Sewanee Community Chest campaign is to raise funds for local organizations that serve the common good. An important function of the campaign is to minimize the need for excessive area fundraising by many groups; therefore, organizations receiving funds are expected to acknowledge support from the Sewanee Community Chest in other area fundraising efforts.

The Sewanee Community Chest does not allocate funds to those organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, creed, sex, or national origin.

The 2026–27 funding application is available on the website <www.sewaneeccivic.org> in a Word document. The application deadline is Friday, Sept. 11, 2026. There is an online form available <<https://forms.gle/yMTGGeRXz9TLkzECr9>>. It does require you to have a Gmail email account.

The SCC is a nonprofit organization and relies on funding from the community to support programs throughout the greater Sewanee area. As the 2026–27 grant cycle begins, the SCC is also kicking off its annual fundraising campaign.

The SCA urges everyone who benefits from life in this community, whether you live, work, or visit, to give generously. Donations are tax deductible as allowed by law. Contributions, payroll deductions and pledges are accepted at any time at P.O. Box 99, Sewanee, TN 37375. You can also donate through PayPal Giving <<https://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/119597>>.

For more information go to <<https://sewaneeccivic.org>>.

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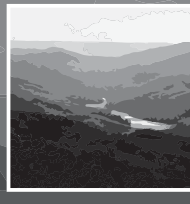
Thurs–Sat 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. (kitchen closes at 10)

Sun 8 a.m.–10 p.m. (kitchen closes at 9)

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Beersheba Springs Arts and Craft Fair

The 59th annual Beersheba Springs Arts and Crafts Fair will be on Saturday, Aug. 22 and Sunday, Aug. 23, at the historic Beersheba Springs Assembly. This annual event showcases handcrafted art and home-produced items from artisans across the Southeast. The fair operates on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free, and the event is open to the public.

The Beersheba Springs Assembly, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, provides a unique and picturesque setting for the fair. In addition to the arts and crafts vendors, attendees can enjoy food from various vendors and food trucks, with options for picnics on the Assembly grounds. You can visit the official Beersheba Springs Arts and Crafts Fair Facebook page for more information and updates.

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Of Wood & Light at Sounding Stone Gallery

This summer, two creative communities will come together at Sounding Stone Gallery for Of Wood & Light, an exhibition uniting the craftsmanship of the Cumberland Furniture Guild with the evocative painted works of the Nashville Painters Salon. The exhibition runs through Sept. 19.

The exhibition brings together two distinct but complementary traditions: the tactile, structural beauty of fine woodworking and the visual poetry of plein air painting.

Founded in 2024 by Kymberlee Stanley, the Nashville Painters Salon (NPS) is a collective of artists who draws on the tradition of the European salon as both exhibition and community. Plein air landscape paintings will be their central focus for this exhibition. NPS actively participates in public painting events across Nashville and has recently expanded its reach to the South Cumberland Plateau.

The Cumberland Furniture Guild is a non-profit Middle Tennessee group dedicated to the craft, education, and preservation of furniture making and fine woodworking. Its members span the full range of the discipline, from nationally recognized studio furniture makers, restorers, and collectors to devoted hobbyists. What unites them is a shared reverence for the materials and traditions of the woodworking craft.

Fine craft and traditional art take center stage at Sounding Stone Gallery, which shares space with stone sculptor Stephen Hutchins. Work created with intention, skill, and respect for materials shines through local artists and craftsmen from across the Southeast. Sounding Stone Gallery is located at 74 West College Street, Monteagle.

'The Beauty of Broken'

Artisan Depot is so excited about the second annual Recycled & Upcycled Community Art Show! The theme is "The Beauty of Broken." It's just around the corner but there is still time to create something unique and fabulous with stuff you might be thinking of throwing away! We are awarding three prizes again this year, so get busy! The show will be up July 31 through Sept. 28. Reception at Artisan Depot will be 2–5 p.m., Sept. 19.

Last year's show was a great success and drew a large crowd. Our reception will take place during the Fall Heritage Festival in Cowan, and we are really looking forward to the excitement the festival always provides with music, artists, creatives and yummy food!

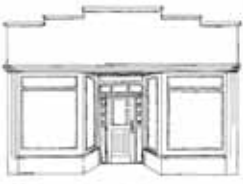


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'Anastasia' at the MAC

Join us for an epic journey from Russia to Paris in the roaring 20s, filled with romance, intrigue, laughs and music. Millennium Rep's Teen Actors Guild brings you the hit Broadway musical "Anastasia" beginning Friday, July 31 at the Manchester Arts Center. Eliza Griffey as Anya, along with Jordan Colwell and Thomas Keith as Vlad and Dmitri, headlines a cast also featuring Carter Jernigan (Gleb), Lucy Smith (Lily), and Leah Deuermeyer (the Dowager Empress).

Director Haylee Eaton's cast includes Kaitlyn Huddleston, Audrey Jones, Sara Tucker, Ella Brain, Jeremiah Jones, Elijah Castaneda, Jonathon Williams, Hunter Hill, Kayson James, Lola Smith, Chloe Turner, Grace Herod, Aniah Sando, Peter Celedonio, Taveon Hillsman, AnnaLee Crosslin, Ethan Bennett, and Jacob Estep. The dance ensemble is Kaylee Hensley (captain), Leah Kate Sullivan, Olivia Bryan, Annabel Weintraub, Tabitha Hansen, Annabelle Keith, Amethyst Phillips, and Sophie Lusby.

Nick Mullins is music director, and choreographers are Kaylee Hensley and Alyssa Freeze.

Anastasia runs July 31–Aug. 2 and Aug. 7–9, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$17 for adults, \$15 for seniors and military, and \$10 for students, and are available at millenniumrep.org or by calling (931) 570-4489. The Arts Center is located just off Manchester's historic square at 128 E. Main St.

Arts Center of Cannon County Presents 'Big Fish'

"Big Fish," directed by Matt Smith, is set to open Friday, Aug. 7, and runs through Saturday, Aug. 22, in the Blackbox theatre at the award-winning Arts Center of Cannon County.

Based on the celebrated novel by Daniel Wallace and the acclaimed film directed by Tim Burton, "Big Fish" tells the story of Edward Bloom, a traveling salesman who lives life to its fullest ... and then some! Edward's incredible, larger-than-life stories thrill everyone around him — most of all, his devoted wife Sandra. But their son Will, about to have a child of his own, is determined to find the truth behind his father's epic tales. Overflowing with heart and humor, "Big Fish" is an extraordinary musical that reminds us why we love going to the theatre — for an experience that's richer, funnier and bigger than life itself.

Get tickets today by visiting www.artscenterofcc.com/tickets or call (615) 563-2787 during regular business hours.

Tickets for adults start at \$17, with prices for students or seniors running for \$15 and are currently on sale at artscenterofcc.com, by calling 615-563-ARTS (2787), or in person at the Box Office, 1424 John Bragg Hwy., Woodbury.

Big Fish is rated PG. Performances are at 7:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday, and 2 p.m. on Sunday.



THEC Approves New Focused Bachelor's Degree Policy, Expands Academic Pathways for Tennessee Students

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) today approved a new policy establishing the approval process for Focused Baccalaureate Degrees, which may provide students with a more streamlined path to completing a bachelor's degree. Commissioners also approved two new academic programs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and acted on statewide policies related to outcomes-based funding and campus planning at two community colleges.

The Commission approved a new policy establishing the approval process for Focused Baccalaureate Degrees, which may allow institutions to develop bachelor's degree programs requiring as few as 90 credit hours.

These focused degrees are designed to provide students with a more streamlined path to completing a degree quickly while addressing workforce needs. The

policy also creates a common naming convention and provides a framework for institutions seeking approval to pursue a Focused Baccalaureate Degree.

"Tennessee's new Focused Bachelor's Degree policy gives our institutions the flexibility to redesign a century-old model while preserving the high standards that define a bachelor's degree," said Dr. Steven Gentile, THEC Executive Director. "The true measure of a degree is not the amount of credit hours it takes to earn it, but the knowledge, skills, and opportunities it creates."

Commissioners also approved two new academic programs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville: a Bachelor of Arts in Civic and Constitutional Thought and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Industrial Design. The Civic and Constitutional Thought program will prepare students with civic knowledge, analytical and communication skills that can transfer across career paths, including government, law, education, journalism, public relations, and management. The Industrial Design program, the first four-year program of its kind in Tennessee, will prepare students for careers supporting the state's manufacturing, healthcare, and other industries through human-centered design and innovation.

THEC also approved the next steps in the 2026–2030 review of Tennessee's outcomes-based funding formula, which helps evaluate

and fund public higher education institutions based on measures of student success and completion. The review will help ensure the formula continues to support student success and the state's higher education goals.

THEC highlighted the opening of applications for institutions interested in participating in the Workforce Pell initiative, which will expand access to federal Pell Grant funding for eligible students pursuing short-term workforce training programs. Commissioners also approved campus master plans for Jackson State Community College and Motlow State Community College, supporting each institution's long-term plans for campus growth and development.

Commissioners also received an update on research conducted by the University of Michigan and THEC examining the long-term impact of the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship. The research found positive academic and economic outcomes for HOPE recipients, including stronger outcomes along four-year degree pathways and greater employment stability. THEC and the University of Michigan began the research through a grant from the Institute of Education Sciences awarded in May 2024. As Tennessee's largest state scholarship program, the HOPE Scholarship awarded \$366 million to students during the 2024–25 academic year.

tnAchieves Students on Their Way to an On-Time Degree

Students across the state have completed another successful year of the tnAchieves Summer Bridge Program. This summer, 90 percent of participating students successfully increased their test scores, lessening the number of remedial courses required and increasing their likelihood of earning an on-time college credential.

Beyond academic achievement, the program also helped students increase confidence in their ability to succeed. In post-program surveys, 89 percent of participants reported feeling more prepared for college after completing the Summer Bridge Program.

Funded by Governor Lee with support from the Tennessee General Assembly and private philanthropy, the Summer Bridge Program is designed to support students as they make the transition from high school to college. Students participating in the program receive additional academic instruction, personalized support and opportunities to develop the skills necessary for postsecondary success. By strengthening foundational knowledge while fostering a sense of belonging and self-confidence, the program helps students enter their first semester ready to meet the challenges of college.

Since tnAchieves began operating the program in 2012, 6,760 students have participated with an overall 88 percent success rate. Even more important, Summer Bridge Program participants are much more likely to earn a college credential.

The 2026 Summer Bridge results reinforce tnAchieves' commitment to supporting students before classes even begin, helping remove barriers that can impact long-term success. As tnAchieves continues its mission of increasing higher education access and success across Tennessee, this program remains a key strategy for helping students build the knowledge, resilience and confidence needed to thrive in college and their future careers.

For more information about the tnAchieves Summer Bridge Program, visit <www.tnAchieves.org>.

TWRA to Host Second Annual Tennessee Biodiversity Summit

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) has announced the second annual Tennessee Biodiversity Summit will take place on Oct. 21, 2026, at Middle Tennessee State University. All wildlife enthusiasts, including experts, birdwatchers, hunters, and anyone interested in nature, are invited to participate in this experience packed with opportunities to learn about wildlife diversity, habitats, and conservation in Tennessee.

The theme of this year's event is "Moving the Needle, Wins in Conservation." Eight dynamic speakers will deliver presentations focused on successes in conservation work across the state. Participants will also hear updates on the State Wildlife Action Plan, a federally guided blueprint to prevent biodiversity decline, and on the Red-cockaded Woodpecker reintroduction plan, announced at the inaugural summit last year. The event also hosts 21 partnering agency booths where attendees can further learn about conservation efforts and ways to get involved in conservation efforts.

Because of the overwhelmingly positive response in the 2025 summit, this year's event attendance has been capped at 900 participants. Josh Campbell, TWRA's Chief of Biodiversity, said, "We're heartened by the overwhelming response to this event and the interest in the health of the state's wildlife diversity. The 2026 summit will be equally captivating."

Those traveling from out of town or those in the area the day before the event have the option to register for pre-event hikes taking place at two locations. Registration is currently open <<https://pci.jotform.com/form/261335399195164>> and more information can be found on the Tennessee Biodiversity webpage <<https://www.tn.gov/twra/wildlife/tennessee-biodiversity-summit.html>>.

Event sponsors include the Greg A. Vital Center for Natural Resources and Conservation at Cleveland State Community College, Tennessee Valley Authority, and Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation.

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency is responsible for protecting, managing, and conserving fish and wildlife species for the benefit of Tennesseans and visitors. The Agency also maintains public safety through law enforcement and safety education on waterways.

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NATURENOTES

by Yolande Gottfried

I am on the road this week and don't have anything to report but our ever-watchful community members have sent these photos.

Bill Kershner captured this young female coyote, whose range includes part of the domain, on a game camera, and encourages us to admire her grace and beauty.

Ellis Mayfield spotted the yellow fringed orchid, writing: "Each year at this time I have an abundance of these wild orchids pop up around our pond and under our power line. I eagerly anticipate their appearing but I don't see them popping in other locales." He asked Mary Priestley, "Are we special or do you see these flowers elsewhere?" She answered, "They're around, but not everywhere for sure. I have seen them most often in spots like yours — reservoir edges and low wet places.

But occasionally on roadsides in areas that don't seem wet at all. Either way, what a find!"



Canis latrans. Photo by Bill Kershner



Yellow fringed orchid. Photo by Ellis Mayfield

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State Park Offerings

To confirm that these events will occur as listed and to register, go to <<https://tspg.itinio.com/register/>> and select the park. All times are central.

Fiery Gizzard State Park

It's Knot Time, Sunday, Aug. 2, 1–2 p.m. Register <<https://tspg.itinio.com/register/KNOT-TIME-7-2-26>>. Join Ranger Josh for a free hands-on knot tying program focused on practical outdoor skills. We will meet at the park visitor center and depending on weather will be outside at the pavilion or stay cool and dry inside. During this interactive program, participants will learn several essential knots commonly used for camping, securing gear, setting up shelters, and outdoor safety. Each knot will be demonstrated step-by-step, followed by time to practice with guidance from the ranger. We'll also discuss when and why each knot is used, and how these skills apply to real situations you may encounter while enjoying the park. This program is beginner-friendly and designed for anyone. No prior experience is required. All materials will be provided. Whether you're new to outdoor skills or just want to sharpen your knot knowledge, this program offers a fun and practical way to build confidence on the trail and in camp. Registration is required, and space and supplies are limited. Participants must register in advance to attend.

Leaves and Sticks Arts and Crafts, Friday, Aug. 7, 11 a.m.–noon. Register <<https://tspg.itinio.com/register/leaves-and-sticks-crafts>>. Join Ranger Orion at the Visitor Center for out-of-the-box arts and crafts with sticks and leaves! Open for all ages.

Secret Swimming Hole Tour, Friday, Aug. 7, 2–4 p.m. Register <<https://tspg.itinio.com/register/secret-swimming-hole-tour>>. Join Ranger Orion to swim in some of the most beautiful swimming holes in the area and enjoy the sights and sounds along the way. The hike is about 2 miles long on rocky elevated terrain. It is a moderate to strenuous hike. Please come prepared to swim and bring sunscreen, water, and sturdy footwear.

Head of the Crow State Park

Stick, Stones and Skills, Wednesday, Aug. 5, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Register <<https://tspg.itinio.com/register/stick-stones-and-skills>>. Join our Seasonal Interpretive Ranger at the Head of the Crow Welcome Center to learn about and throw two historic tools and create two natural crafts that you can walk home with.

Buggytop Cave Trip, Saturday, Aug. 8, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Register <<https://tspg.itinio.com/register/buggytop-cave-trip-8-8>>. This guided cave tour will last about 6 hours, covering just about 5.5 to 6 miles. During the cave tour, even though marketed as a beginner level cave, there will still be some crawling, mud, and water. There is a chance that during our tour we may get wet, up to our knees, since Crow Creek flows through Buggytop Cave. Participants must be able to walk across rocky, slick, uneven surfaces. Participants will also need the ability to climb up and down some rock ledges. So be prepared when arriving at the trailhead with proper footwear to be able to hike 2 miles to the cave, scramble over rocks in the cave, and for the 2-mile hike back to the trailhead. Please also bring plenty of water. Head of the Crow staff will provide headlamps and helmets. We also recommend packing knee pads for your convenience, though these are not required.

Savage Gulf State Park

B.A.R.K. Ranger Hike, Saturday, Aug. 1, 8:30–10 a.m. Register <<https://tspg.itinio.com/register/bark-ranger-hike>>. Love hiking with your fur-baby through state parks? Then join Interpretive Ranger Haley for a hike out to the Stone Door with your furry friend. At the end of our hike, your fur-baby will become a certified B.A.R.K. Ranger with Tennessee State Parks. We will meet outside the gift shop at the Stone Door, 1183 Stone Door Rd., Beersheba Springs. The Stone Door hike is considered a 2.0-mile easy to moderate hike with little incline and decline. On this hike you will be surrounded by beautiful views of Savage Gulf and a unique perspective of the Stone Door. Make sure you wear comfortable shoes and bring water for our hike. Your dog is required to be on a leash the entire hike.

Floral Hike, Friday, Aug. 7, 2–3 p.m. Register <<https://tspg.itinio.com/register/Floral-hike890478>>. Join Interpretive Ranger Haley to learn about the different plants that inhabit our beautiful State Park. While we learn how to identify some of the plant life, we will also get to see a beautiful waterfall! We will be going around the Laurel Falls loop, which is about 0.3 miles. It is moderate to hard strictly due to the fact that we have to go downstairs and a bit of rocky terrain. Be sure to bring water, suitable hiking clothes, and sturdy shoes. You will also need to bring your own journal to write in, but we will have some pencils provided.

Share your news. <news@sewaneemessenger.com>

WEATHER

DAY	DATE	HI	LO	Week's Stats:	
Mon	July 20	85	68	Avg max temp =	82
Tue	July 21	87	72	Avg min temp =	69
Wed	July 22	87	72	Avg temp =	76
Thu	July 23	84	68	Precipitation =	1.83"
Fri	July 24	73	67		
Sat	July 25	81	65		
Sun	July 26	79	71		

Reported by Sandy Gilliam
Domain Ranger



Murphy



Spice

MARC's Mountain Adoptables: Meet Murphy & Spice

Hi, I'm Murphy. I'm a 4½-year-old, 94 pound Great Pyrenees mix with a big heart to match my big size. Around my house, I'm known as the gentle giant and the referee of my pack of four. I like to keep the peace and make sure everyone gets along. I'm a quiet, loving boy who enjoys the simple things in life — long walks on a leash, car rides with my favorite people, and spending time by your side. I'm loyal, supportive, and happiest when I'm with my humans, whether we're out on an adventure or just relaxing at home. If you're looking for a calm, gentle soul who will be your faithful companion through life's journey, I just might be the perfect match. I can't wait to meet my forever family!

Meet Spice. This adorable orange tabby boy is as sweet as his name. He may be a little shy when meeting new people, but give him a little time and he'll quickly become your best friend. Spice is lovable, playful, and full of spunky kitten charm. He gets along well with other cats and dogs, making him a wonderful addition to a variety of homes. If you're looking for a fun, affectionate companion, Spice is ready to steal your heart!

If you would like to learn more about Murphy or Spice, please fill out an Adoption Application found on our MARC website <www.marc4change.org> and/or contact Sue Scruggs, cell phone 423-619-3845. All MARC animals ready for adoption are spayed or neutered and up-to-date on their vaccines and preventatives. MARC has a trainer available to work with dog adopters and dog fosters as needed.

MARC - Marion Animal Resource Connection is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit animal welfare organization. It is not a shelter and relies on foster homes to save animals. MARC also provides low cost spay/neuter procedures for animals and is available for teaching humane care of animals in schools and to community organizations.

Messenger Classifieds

FOR LEASE

FOR LEASE: Very nice 2BR/2BA Coach House in Sewanee. Available Aug. 1. New flooring, C/H/A, W/D, all appliances. Wi-Fi and all utilities included. \$1,750/mo. Will consider dog with applicable fee. Call (954)830-4760 for further information. Garage not included.

FOR RENT

FOR RENT: Clifftops Gated Community. 4BR/3BA. 3-car garage. Gas log fireplace. Front and back porches. Back porch screened in. Remodeled in 2023. Offered unfurnished. \$4000/mo. for 12-month lease. Utilities covered by owner up to \$250/mo. Enjoy the Clifftops community and all it has to offer: Pickleball and tennis courts, pool and lake. For more information, please text or call Millie at (925) 698-4310.

AVAILABLE RENTAL: In Sewanee. Includes two bedrooms, living room/office, patio, bathroom with tub and shower, backyard deck, and washer and dryer unit. Private entrance. 900 s/f. Kitchen is shared with owner (female). Rental is currently furnished (but furniture can be removed). Full year long, or academic year long, or semester-by-semester, or month-by-month rental agreement (flexible start and end date). \$1,050 per month, which includes utilities. Address: 45 Carpenter Close, Sewanee. Contact <esweygan@sewanee.edu>. (484) 753-5406.

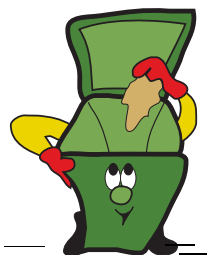
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AKC-REGISTERED ENGLISH BULLDOG PUPPIES FOR ADOPTION: We have AKC-registered male and female English Bulldog puppies available for adoption. They are looking for loving, responsible, forever homes. If you're interested or would like more information, please contact: <malyschristine65@outlook.com>.

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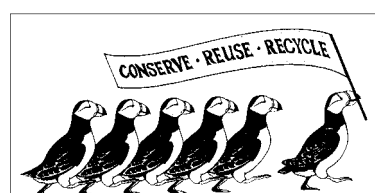
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HUGE SELECTION & SAVINGS! Marketplace Consignment Sale's 32nd Annual Fall Pop-Up! EPIC NEW SPLIT SALE! Amazing quality, assortment & prices! SAVE up to 90% off retail on brands you love! Phase One – KIDS + Maternity, 6 public/free entry days: Aug. 28–Sept. 5 (closed Sun/Mon/Wed); Sizes infants & Kids clothing, shoes, PLUS toys, furniture, sports, baby gear, Maternity, etc. Phase Two – Teen, GrownUP + HOME – 4 public/free entry days: Sept. 10 – 13: Stylish, gently used clothing (sizes teen/adult), shoes, accessories, furniture, home décor, garage/shop, and MUCH MORE! Want to SELL with us? Or want to SHOP first? *Early Access ticket details plus complete schedule and consignor details on website: <www.marketplaceconsignment.com>. Worth the drive for this twice a year sustainable shopping! Monterey Station, 104 Monterey St., Cowan, TN. Cash or Cards* (*photo ID +3.5% fee on all cards). BYOB(s)/totes. All bags inspected upon exit.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE: AUG. MEETING DATES, TOWN OF MONTEAGLE. The Monteagle City Council will have workshop meetings in the conference room at City Hall. These will be at 4:30 p.m. Workshops in August: Aug. 3, 2026, Aug. 10, 2026, Aug. 17, 2026, Aug. 24, 2026. The regular Planning Commission meeting will be Aug. 4, 2026 at 4 p.m. There will be a Public Hearing on Ordinance 07-26 at 4 p.m., on Aug. 11, 2026. There will be a Special Meeting to have the second reading of Ordinance 07-26 at 4:30 p.m., on Aug. 11, 2026. The regular City Council meeting will be Monday Aug. 31, 2026 at 5 p.m.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE: The Monteagle City Council passed Ordinance 06-26 on July 27, 2026. This Ordinance is an ordinance to amend section 1005 Site Plan Submission and Staff Review of the Monteagle Zoning Ordinance.

WEAR WHITE AT NIGHT.

Walkers and bikers should wear light, reflective clothing after dusk. Don't assume drivers can see you — be on the lookout for your own safety.



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FROM BARD TO VERSE

by Robin Bates

First Day of Area Public Schools

You could travel up the Blue Nile
with your finger, tracing the route
while Mrs Tilscher chanted the scenery.
Tana. Ethiopia. Khartoum. Aswān.
That for an hour, then a skittle of milk
and the chalky Pyramids rubbed into dust.
A window opened with a long pole.
The laugh of a bell swung by a running child.

This was better than home. Enthralling books.
The classroom glowed like a sweet shop.
Sugar paper. Colored shapes. Brady and Hindley
faded, like the faint, uneasy smudge of a mistake.
Mrs Tilscher loved you. Some mornings, you found
she'd left a good gold star by your name.
The scent of a pencil slowly, carefully, shaved.
A xylophone's nonsense heard from another form.

Over the Easter term, the inky tadpoles changed
from commas into exclamation marks. Three frogs
hopped in the playground, freed by a dunce,
followed by a line of kids, jumping and croaking
away from the lunch queue. A rough boy
told you how you were born. You kicked him, but stared
at your parents, appalled, when you got back home.

That feverish July, the air tasted of electricity.
A tangible alarm made you always untidy, hot,
fractious under the heavy, sexy sky. You asked her
how you were born and Mrs Tilscher smiled,
then turned away. Reports were handed out.
You ran through the gates, impatient to be grown,
as the sky split open into a thunderstorm.

--Carol Ann Duffy, In Mrs. Tilscher's Class

Community Calendar

Friday, July 31

TN State Sales Tax Holiday, until Aug. 2

- 9 a.m. CAC office open, until 11 a.m.
- 10 a.m. Summer Meal Program, Sherwood/Crow Creek Community Center, 10225 Sherwood Rd., Sherwood, until 1 p.m.
- 1:30 p.m. Art Reception, "The Shape of Thought," Stirling's, until 2:30 p.m.
- 5:45 p.m. Kundalini Yoga, Breathwork, Meditation, Nati, Sewanee Community Center, until 7:15 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 1 • Early Voting Ends

- 8 a.m. Sewanee Gardeners' Market, Hawkins Lane, until 10 a.m.
- 10 a.m. Hospitality Shop open, until 2 p.m.
- 1 p.m. "Come & See" Event, St. Mary's Sewanee, 770 St. Mary's Lane, until 4 p.m.

Sunday, Aug. 2 • CAC Pantry Sunday

- 1 p.m. Knitting Circle, Mooney's, until 3 p.m.
- 4 p.m. Hatha Yoga, Helen, Community Center

Monday, Aug. 3

- 9 a.m. CAC office open, until 11 a.m.
- 9 a.m. Pilates, intermed, Kim, 293 Ball Park Rd.
- 10:30 a.m. Chair Exercise, Susan, Sewanee Community Center, until 11:30 a.m.
- 4:30 p.m. Monteagle City Council workshop, conference room, City Hall
- 6:30 p.m. Kundalini Yoga, Pippa, Sewanee Community Center

Tuesday, Aug. 4

- 8 a.m. GC Food Bank, 114 S. Industrial Park Rd., Coalmont, until 10 a.m.
- 9 a.m. CAC office open, until 11 a.m.
- 10 a.m. Hospitality Shop open, until 1 p.m.
- 10 a.m. Pilates, beginner, Kim, 293 Ball Park Rd.
- 10 a.m. Story Time, Cowan Center for the Arts, 303 Montgomery St., until 11:30 a.m.
- 11 a.m. Social Fabric Group, Stirling's, until 1 p.m.
- 11:30 a.m. Grundy County Rotary, Dutch Maid Bakery, Tracy City

- noon Pilates, intermed, Kim, 293 Ball Park Rd.
- 4 p.m. Monteagle Planning Commission, conference room, City Hall
- 4 p.m. S. Cumberland Farmers' Market pickup, Community Center, until 6 p.m.
- 5:30 p.m. Yoga, Pippa, 293 Ball Park Rd.

Wednesday, Aug. 5

- 9 a.m. CAC office open, until 11 a.m.
- 9 a.m. Pilates, intermed, Kim, 293 Ball Park Rd.
- 10 a.m. Art Wednesday, (free), Artisan Depot, 204 E. Cumberland St., until noon
- 10:30 a.m. Chair Exercise, Susan, Sewanee Community Center, until 11:30 a.m.
- 5:30 p.m. Hatha Yoga, Helen, Community Center

Thursday, Aug. 6 • Election Day

- 7:50 a.m. CCJP Observance of Hiroshima Day, Texas Ave., entrance to Abbo's Alley
- 8 a.m. Monteagle-Sewanee Rotary, Joe Freitag, U of S Football Coach, St. Mary's Sewanee
- 9 a.m. CAC office open, until 11 a.m.
- 9 a.m. Nature Journaling, email <mpriestley0150@gmail.com> for details/meeting location
- 9:30 a.m. Body Recall, Judy, conference room, Monteagle City Hall
- 10 a.m. Hospitality Shop open, until 1 p.m.
- 10 a.m. Pilates, beginner, Kim, 293 Ball Park Rd.
- noon Pilates, intermed, Kim, 293 Ball Park Rd.
- 12:30 p.m. Mahjong, Susan, Senior Center, until 3 p.m.
- 3 p.m. Fresh Mess Market, Harton Park, 123 College St., Monteagle, until 6 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 7

- 9 a.m. CAC office open, until 11 a.m.
- 5:45 p.m. Kundalini Yoga, Breathwork, Meditation, Nati, Sewanee Community Center, until 7:15 p.m.



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Every vote counts!
Please vote on Aug.6 and Nov. 3!

WE HAVE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES FOR:
School Board • Governor • US Congress • Senate

Voter Registration Deadline for Nov. 3: Oct. 5
Early Voting: July 17–Aug. 1, and Oct. 14–29
Absentee Ballot Request Deadline: July 27, and Oct. 24

For more information about candidates:
🌐 <https://tndp.org/franklin-county-democrats/>
✉ franklincountytndemocrats@gmail.com
📍 Franklin County (TN) Democratic Party

PAID FOR BY FRANKLIN COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Local 12-Step Meetings

Friday
7 p.m., AA, open, Christ Church, Tracy City

Saturday
7 p.m., NA, open, Decherd United Methodist

Sunday
6:30 p.m., AA, open, the Wesley House, Morton Memorial United Methodist Church

Monday
5 p.m., 12-Step Women's Study Group. Call (931) 327-5551 for information and for the Zoom link
7 p.m., AA, open, Christ Church, Tracy City

Tuesday
11 a.m., Grundy Recovery Alliance Community Endeavor Open Narcotics Anonymous Meeting
7 p.m., AA, open, First Baptist, Altamont
7 p.m., AA, open, Trinity Episcopal Church, Winchester
7 p.m., AA, open, the Wesley House, Morton Memorial United Methodist Church

Wednesday
10 a.m., AA, closed, Clifftops, (931) 924-3493
6 p.m., NA, community room at 187 Raulston Ave., Monteagle
7 p.m., NA, Decherd United Methodist

Thursday
6 p.m., Life's Healing Choice, Grundy County Recovery Alliance, Coalmont
7 p.m., Serenity in Sewanee AA, open, Brooks Hall, Sewanee
7 p.m., Al-Anon, First UMC, Winchester



DEPOT CAFÉ

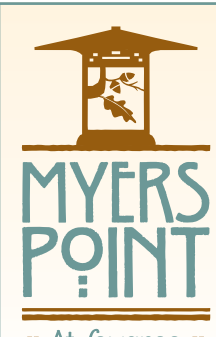
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