

Drug cases again occupy grand jury

Three Letcher County residents are named in felony indictments charging them with drug-related crimes. The three are among eight persons named in true bills the Letcher County Grand Jury handed up last week to Circuit Judge James W. Craft II.

Billy J. Sturgill, 26, of 373 Combs Br., Ermine, is charged with complicity to cultivation of marijuana (five or more plants), first-degree possession of controlled substance (first offense, methamphetamine), resisting arrest, menacing, attempted murder — police officer amended to first-degree wanton endangerment, first-degree wanton endangerment, and buy/possess drug paraphernalia.

The grand jury says Sturgill acted alone or with Michael Honeycutt and Misty

Breeding in growing five or more marijuana plants with the intent to sell or transfer. Sturgill is also accused of attempting to prevent Letcher County Sheriff's Sgt. Alisha Congleton from arresting him by using or threatening to use physical force and putting her in danger of death or physical injury. Sturgill also created danger of death or physical injury to Justin Phipps.

Sgt. Congleton testified in the case.

Misty C. Breeding, 44, of 5630 Thornton Rd., Thornton, is charged with complicity to cultivation of marijuana (five or more plants). The grand jury says she acted alone or with Michael Honeycutt and Billy Sturgill in growing five or more marijuana plants with the intent to sell or transfer.

Sgt. Congleton testified in the case.

Michael W. Honeycutt, 42, of Thornton, is charged with complicity to cultivation of marijuana (five or more plants) and being a persistent felony offender. The grand jury says he acted alone or with Misty Breeding and Billy Sturgill in growing five or more marijuana plants with the intent to sell or transfer.

Sgt. Congleton testified in the case.

Others indicted are:

- Aaron Caudill, 24, of 2626 Barry Knoll Dr., Kettering, Ohio, who is charged with possession of a handgun by a convicted felon, second-degree fleeing or evading police (motor vehicle), failure to wear seat belts, and reckless driving.

Caudill is accused of attempting to elude or flee a direction to stop given by Deputy Sheriff Sgt. Alisha Congleton. He is also charged with possessing a handgun and failing to operate a vehicle in a careful manner.

Sgt. Congleton testified in the case.

- James Owen Collins III, 42, of 293 Brass Dr., Apt. 3, Whitesburg, is accused of first-degree possession of a controlled substance (first offense, methamphetamine), buy/possess drug paraphernalia, and being a first-degree persistent felony offender.

The grand jury says Collins unlawfully possessed a quantity of methamphetamine and a glass pipe.

Letcher County Sheriff's Sgt. Alisha Congleton testified in the case.

- Drucillia Maggard, 69, of 995 Little Cowan Rd., Whitesburg, is charged with criminal complicity to theft by unlawful taking of \$500 or more, but less than \$10,000, and first-degree

criminal mischief. Maggard is accused of stealing and damaging property belonging to Joyce Frazier on or about April 8.

Letcher County Sheriff's Sgt. Alisha Congleton testified in the case.

- Joseph Maggard, 57, of 995 Little Cowan Rd., Whitesburg, is charged

with complicity to theft by unlawful taking of \$500 or more, but less than \$10,000, and first-degree criminal mischief. Maggard is accused of stealing and damaging property belonging to Joyce Frazier on or about April 8.

Sgt. Congleton testified in the case.

- Brian Norman, 41, of Fish Trap, Elkhorn City, is charged with theft by unlawful taking \$500 or more but under \$10,000. Norman is accused of stealing property belonging to James Addington on or about March 3, 2017.

Addington testified in the case.

Fleming-Neon water plant to be dedicated in January; will be running on 2 pumps

By WILLIAM FARLEY

The Fleming-Neon water plant will soon be operating with two main pumps for the first time in several years.

By operating with two pumps, operators of the refurbished newly refurbished plant at McRoberts will be able to keep up maintenance on both pumps without having to shut the plant down. It will also reduce the strain on each unit.

Ken Reid, an engineer with Nesbitt Engineering, said it is possible that both pumps will be operating when the grand opening ceremony for the remodeled plant is held, hopefully sometime in January.

Reid told the Fleming-Neon City Council at its December meeting Monday night that once contractors worked through a problem in setting the casing for the new pump, they were able to install it and the electricians will be here to wire it up this month.

Reid said that when the hole for the pump was drilled, the bit bypassed a mine rail possibly left over

from the old Beth-Elkhorn Mine 25. Reid said the bit probably pushed the rail aside, but made it impossible to set the casing fully. So, the contractors welded a piece of steel on the bottom of the casing to act as a ram to push the rail out of the way and it worked. Reid said the casing was installed and the pump is set.

The pumps were one of many issues that were addressed by the council during a discussion involving the first phase of what is officially known as the Fleming-Neon Water Plant Rehabilitation Project. Reid said the city will soon seek funding for the second phase of the project, which will address distribution, including water line replacement.

Mayor Susie Polis announced that the grand opening for the plant will be held in January on a date to

be announced later.

In a related matter, the city council also voted unanimously to allow water company employees to rent work uniforms and have the cost deducted from their pay.

Also, water department manager Chris Banks reported that the city experienced a 17 percent loss of treated water in November. Kentucky Rural Water estimates that most rural municipalities average around a 20 percent loss. Banks asked water customers to make certain their lines are in closed or insulated areas so they won't freeze in the coming colder winter. He added that if people feel it is necessary to let their water run at night, they should run the thinnest stream possible, no more than pencil sized. Banks said that 400 houses running a tap all

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College dropout ...

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a life. And you don't want your child to learn these lessons in an environment that is as toxic as it is expensive."

The alternative is to join a community that does allow children to learn these lessons. That's why I recommend joining a nonprofit I co-founded to help make it easy and legal to give kids some freedom. It's called Let Grow, and membership is free. Join and you'll be able to find other Let Grow families who want to give their kids some freedom.

I must also recommend joining our Facebook page, "No More Helicopter Parenting" (a name we chose for search engine reasons). There, parents can ask questions of one another, such as, "How do you get your kid

to WANT to play outside?"

Finally, I also recommend asking your schools to do the Let Grow Project (whereby one night's homework is to "go home and do something by yourself") and start the Let Grow Play Club (schools stay open for free play from 3 to 6, with an adult on the premises but not organizing the games or solving the spats).

Society seems determined to cripple young people by making over-protection the norm. It's time to fight back. Young people need a chance to spread their wings before they leave the nest.

Lenore Skenazy is president of Let Grow, founder of Free-Range Kids and author of "Has the World Gone Skenazy?"

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McConnell okays vote on bill

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supporters denied.

McConnell said he was moving the bill as soon as this week "at the request of the president" and following improvements to the legislation. The revised bill makes some changes requested by Cruz, other Senate Republicans and law enforcement groups who had concerns it would be too soft.

The Senate's most vocal opponent, Arkansas Sen. Tom Cotton, said the revised legislation "still has major problems and allows early release for many categories of serious, violent criminals." Cotton said he will introduce amendments

to the legislation on the floor, suggesting he could delay its passage as senators try to wrap up before Christmas.

While senators have been pressuring McConnell to take up the bill for years, the pressure ramped up in recent weeks as the session neared an end and supporters were concerned that a Democratic House would want to rewrite the bill. Kushner spoke with senators regularly — daily, in some cases — and appeared on Fox News Channel's "Hannity" on Monday night, urging McConnell to take up the legislation. He said the legislation was "very close" and expressed

optimism it would pass.

Trump said Tuesday that the bill has "great" support and was "going to be passing, hopefully." Last week, he and Grassley teamed up on Twitter to push for a vote.

"Hopefully Mitch McConnell will ask for a VOTE on Criminal Justice Reform," Trump tweeted. "It is extremely popular and has strong bipartisan support. It will also help a lot of people, save taxpayer dollars, and keep our communities safe. Go for it Mitch!"

Grassley responded minutes later, tweeting that he and the president had spoken about "the growing support" for the legislation.

"Pres Trump told me he wants it done THIS CONGRESS," Grassley wrote.

Supporters who have been pushing the bill for years — including many law enforcement organizations, liberal advocacy groups and major GOP donors — were elated at McConnell's announcement.

"It's an incredibly groundbreaking moment and it's really emotional for the broad coalition who has worked so hard on this legislation for so many years," said Holly Harris, executive director of the advocacy group Justice Action Network. "I never doubted the leader would be on the right side of history on this bill."

The Way We Were: 1998 to 2008

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ity may open temporarily in the large building that is now partly occupied by Whitesburg City Hall. London-based Image

Entry has been looking for a temporary home since it announced it late October that it would open a plant in Letcher County that will hire up to 150 people. The

company eventually hopes to build a permanent facility on the Whitesburg Industrial Site.

The jobless rate in Letcher County rose eight-tenths of a percent to 7.8 percent in October, according to figures released by the Kentucky Cabinet on Workforce Development. The county's jobless rate was down .9 percent from October 1997.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2008

A Letcher County grand jury says Kentucky's timber theft problem could be reduced significantly if laws were enacted to require special licenses for loggers and landowners. The jury also recommends that the logging industry be required to buy public notice advertising similar to that now required of coal companies before they start mining operations.

The City of Fleming-Neon is "holding its own" with drought conditions, and water levels in the city's two wells are slowly inching upward, according to Water Department Superintendent Carlos Phillips. Phillips told the Fleming-Neon City Council that thanks to a rainy autumn and voluntary conservation measures taken by water customers, the city's water supply is making a comeback, even if it is slow.

The Ermine Senior Citizen Center won the Senior Center of the Year Award,

writes Lizzie M. Wright. "Twenty-five members from our center went to Hazard to see our site manager, Debbie Slone, receive the award. County Judge Jim Ward and Eddie Meade were there also."

Writing about winter-time fishing, columnist Greg "Gabby" Caudill says, "Planning a winter trip ahead of time can really make all the difference in the world in your success and safety of your winter trip. One of the best tips I could give for a winter fishing trip would be to know the behavior of the type of fish you want to catch and to choose a lake that is know to have good winter fishing for that fish."

In Appreciation

In appreciation to all who were there for us in the loss of our wife, mother, and nan, Jean A. Blair. May God bless them all (P-nut) Benson Blair, Debbie Fugate, and Terry Dixon and grandkids. "Yesterday we all gathered once more 'over on the mountain' to lay my Aunt Jean to rest. While it was a dreary day, I couldn't help but notice how bright and colorful the blanket of leaves made the ground, and it reminded me



of her. Warm, compassionate, and a bit of a spitfire, she could brighten up any room. We've all joked you might not be able to see Jean, but you'll definitely hear her!

"Jean never met a stranger. She could tell you anything about a person . . . genealogy, history, and of course a little gossip. Over the past week we have shed many tears, but we've also laughed into the wee hours telling tales and sharing memories. Her shorty-shorts she cut the grass in, the time she and Pnut got locked INSIDE of the house, the fact that she decorated every square inch but NOTHING had dust on it and looked professionally styled, her wacky jewelry collection, the kinky tight curl perms she had to have, her fondness for The Mountain Mission, to name a few.

"Jean would proudly show off her three-dollar articles of clothing, but always made them look like a million bucks. She also loved her flowers and taught most of us all the botany we know. Her vast knowledge has guided us all through transplanting trees or baking a pone of cornbread, or matching curtains to the couch . . . and when we made the wrong choice she'd let us know rather quickly.

"I even heard through the grapevine that she was a bit salty that my Boston Fern was doing better than hers this year! I assured her it was only because of something she had taught me. I'm sure she still threw some shade.

"The loss of Jean leaves a huge void in all of our hearts. There are many tears to be shed, many sorrows still to be felt. Family gatherings will be a little more quiet, yet she will live on. The laugh of a grandchild, the squeals of a great-grandchild, the blooms of her flowers, the shrill bark of Snuggles, the blood of her daughters, the love in the heart of Pnut, the precious memories of us all."

Go to SKCTC for them!

Spring semester begins Jan. 14

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