

Gov. Beshear appoints Rich-Swinford to board

Gov. Beshear has appointed Tammy Rich-Swinford of Marion to the Kentucky Board for Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy (KBMIRT).

Rich-Swinford is the radiology director of Livingston Hospital and will represent medical imaging educators or administrators as a member of the board. She replaces Sharon Whitaker, whose term has expired. Rich-Swinford will serve for a term expiring Oct. 31, 2028.

KBMIRT regulates and licenses individuals who use radiation in Kentucky. The KBMIRT's purpose is to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public by ensuring that those who work with radiation are properly licensed.

Sheriff gets clear audit from state's '23 exam

State Auditor Allison Ball has released the 2023 financial audit of Crittenden County Sheriff Evan Head. This annual audit, mandated by state law, reviews the sheriff's accounts, specifically focusing on the tax and fee accounts used to fund and oper-



ate the office.

The audit found that the sheriff's financial statement, while not presented under standard U.S. accounting principles, was compliant with the regulatory basis of accounting, a method approved for all Kentucky sheriff audits. No instances of noncompliance or material weaknesses in internal controls were identified in the report.

The Crittenden County Sheriff's Office, funded through statutory fees and commissions, is responsible for tax collection, law enforcement, and services for the county fiscal court and courts of justice. The full audit report is available on the state auditor's website.

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Dates: Things to Do

- The Living Christmas Tree will have shows at Fohs Hall on Dec. 7, 8, 13, 14 and 15.

- Veterans Day Celebration at Crittenden County Elementary School at 9 a.m., Monday, Nov. 11. Veterans are invited to attend. Caldwell County Elementary will have a similar event beginning at 7:40 a.m. Caldwell County High School is having a lunch for veterans related to high school students.

- Salem's Christmas Parade will be at 5 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 30. The theme will be Christmas Movies. Call 988-2600 for more information.

- Marion's Christmas Parade is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 7. The nighttime parade's theme will be White Nights and Magical Lights. Call 270-965-2239 for information or to register a float.

- Cumberland River Homes in Salem is having a big celebration and fundraising event on Dec. 13 dubbed Christmas Laugh out Loud. It will be held at Salem Baptist Church and feature some big-name entertainers.

Couple indicted in child abuse claim

STAFF REPORT

A husband and wife, Brittany Pitre, 35, and Justin Pitre, 33, both of Marion were indicted last week by the Crittenden County Grand Jury on Class B felonies of first-degree criminal abuse of a child 12 or under.

Authorities were called to a residence on KY 365 on Sept. 28 following a request from the Department of Community Based Services (DCBS) in response to a child welfare complaint. Upon arrival, law enforcement made contact with the parents and their three young children. One of the children, an 11-year-old girl, was found with injuries on multiple areas of her body.

The child's bedroom was in an extremely unsanitary condition, the sheriff's report revealed. Investigators observed what appeared to be human feces on the floor, walls and window air conditioning unit. The room lacked proper lighting and contained only a bed, which had no covers or pillows. A toy box near the door was covered in what appeared to be human feces, court records say. Beneath the bed, dried decomposing feces were found, which the parents claimed was from a dog. The room had a strong odor of feces and urine, making it difficult to breathe inside, according to the police citation.

The door to the room was locked from the outside. The citation said evidence existed to suggest that the child may have been confined there for extended periods, such as scratch marks on and around the door. The citation says the marks may indicate that someone had attempted to escape the room.

GRAND JURY

Additionally, the window was secured with a locking device that required a key to open.

A grand jury does not determine guilt or innocence. It merely decides whether enough evidence exists to continue prosecuting a case in circuit court.

In other cases before the grand jury last week:

- William Hazel, 18, of Marion was indicted on two counts of felony first-degree wanton endangerment and third-degree burglary; and a violation for third-degree criminal trespassing.

Hazel is alleged to have pushed his way into a locked residence on Oct. 6 after being told to stay away from the home. Once inside, court records, say he allegedly confronted two male residents with a pipe and started hitting them. Two victims were treated for injuries at the local hospital.

- Carla Belt, 51, of Marion was indicted on a felony charge of first-degree wanton endangerment and possession of a controlled substance (methamphetamine) and misdemeanors for third-degree terroristic threatening, resisting arrest and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Court records indicate that on Oct. 6, Belt was charged with threatening to shoot responding lawmen during an incident in rural Crittenden County. The defendant is alleged to have pointed a shotgun at a man in the parking lot of Mexico Baptist Church. Authorities were summoned to the scene and Belt is alleged to have barricaded herself inside a nearby residence. According to

court records, Belt then allegedly made threats against law enforcement officers. Eventually, Belt was forcefully removed from inside the residence at which point a shotgun was discovered, according to police reports.

- Carl Belt, 52, of Marion was indicted on first-degree, third-or-subsequent-offense possession of a controlled substance (methamphetamine) and misdemeanor possession of drug paraphernalia. Belt was taken into custody on Oct. 9 on multiple warrants. When officers made contact with him on that date, Belt is alleged to have had a clear baggie with white powder inside, which is believed to have been meth. Court records indicate that this is the third time Belt has faced such drug charges.

- Jerreld Ray Jones, 51, of Marion was indicted on felony count of possession of a controlled substance (methamphetamine), second-degree disorderly conduct and misdemeanor charges of third-offense DUI, possession of drug paraphernalia and resisting arrest; and traffic violations for reckless driving and possession of an open alcoholic beverage container in a motor vehicle.

Court records show that on Aug. 25 just before 9 p.m., Sheriff Evan Head conducted a traffic stop on a 2002 Durango driven by Jones after the sheriff alleges that the vehicle swerved into his lane when they met on US 641. The traffic stop was made near the Dollar General Store on the south side of town where Jones was arrested. Inside the vehicle, the sheriff's report says a cooler of beer and bottle of whiskey were found

along with an alleged meth pipe, meth bong and suspected methamphetamine.

- Eddie Ricketts, 45, of Marion was indicted on two felony charges of being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm and a misdemeanor charge of illegally taking or pursuing a deer. According to court records, at around 8 a.m., Oct. 8, Sheriff Evan Head and Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation Officer Randy Conway observed Ricketts sitting in a vehicle with a loaded .30-06 rifle next to him. According to criminal records, Ricketts is a convicted felon and prohibited from possessing a weapon.

- Rashenna Trail, 40, of Marion was indicted on a felony charge of first-degree, second-offense possession of a controlled substance (methamphetamine) and misdemeanor charges of possession of drug paraphernalia and having a controlled substance prescription not in its original container.

- Rebecca Rednour, 36, of Hopkinsville, was indicted on three felony counts for first-degree possession of controlled substance (hydrocodone), first-degree promoting contraband and tampering with physical evidence; and a misdemeanor charge of possession of drug paraphernalia. She is accused of attempting to introduce contraband to the Crittenden County Detention Center on Sept. 17 by tossing drugs over a wall and into the recreation area.

- Travis Whitehair, 27, of Marion was indicted on a felony charge of first-degree sexual abuse involving an alleged 12-year-old male victim.



50 YEARS AGO

November 7, 1974

- Lucinda Belt, Carolyn Herrin, Michael Tinsley and Glenn Conger were four Crittenden County High School seniors named to the Who's Who Among American High School Students.

- Basketball fans had a chance to get an early look at the Crittenden County High School cage team set to participate in the Three Rivers Basketball Jamboree in Lyon County. Coach Jack Keeney was going to send his players against Providence in the second quarter of the preseason game, which would see all eight conference schools playing. Coach Keeney had 43 youngsters practicing on the team and 24 were freshmen. Jimmy Croft and Keith Cosby were the only two starters from the previous year's squad practicing with the team.

- New births recorded at Crittenden County Hospital and the Salem Community Hospital were Scott Allen Bass, Carla Janise Crockett, Kristie Marie Perryman, David Jonathan Bennett, Heather Elana Kirk, Benjamin Bernhardt Johnson, Stacy Marie Davis, Sheri Jean Davidson, Jamie Lee Curtis and Donald Eugene Knight.

- The Kentucky Theatre in Marion was showing the Walt Disney production The Castaway Cowboy, starring James Garner, Vera Miles and Robert Culp.

25 YEARS AGO

November 11, 1999

- The Crittenden County Middle School speech team placed second at the Calloway County High School Tournament of Champions. Earning trophies were Savannah Faer, Jeanne Johnson, Michael Hamilton, Meg Brock, Melissa Cook, Nikki McDaniel, Tyler Etheridge, Shanna Hunt, Morgan Dooms, Abby Adams, Elizabeth Guess, Staci Belt and Olivia Hall.

- Rockets advanced to the regional semifinals in a first-round playoff rematch against Fulton County Pilots. Rocket coach Al Starnes was surprised that the first round victory came so easily. Starting fullback Steve Thompson had 18 carries for 89 yards and scored two touchdowns which earned him offensive player of the week honors in a superb effort. Tanner Tabor and sophomore linebacker David Hunt shared co-defensive player of the week honors.

10 YEARS AGO

November 6, 2014

- Col. Mike Gavin was honored with a Meritorious Service Medal during a ceremony at the Boone National Guard Center in Frankfort. Gavin had retired after more than 30 years with the Kentucky National Guard. He attended the ceremony with his wife Nancy and Brig. Gen. Scott A. Campbell, a Crittenden County native.

- Crittenden County's fifth- and sixth-grade cheerleading squad won the performance championship at Rocket Stadium during West Kentucky Junior Pro competition. It was the second year in a row the squad won the title. Members were Callie Brown, Savannah Esquivias, Hadlee Rich, Aliyah Frutiger, Mallory Lynn, Emma Williams, Mary Perryman, Laurel Brown, Raina West, Ryleigh Tabor, Madison Johnson, Charity Conyer, Jaelyn Duncan, Hannah Faughn, Taylor Stoner, Kate Keller, Kennel McDaniel, Cameron Howard, Allie Geary and Ashlyn Hicks. Coaches were Wendy Williams, Shannon Stoltenburg and Chasity Bradham.

- Jordan Hutchison, Gage Russell and Logan White got off to a good start at the CCES color run, which saw students race around the school three times for a 1-mile run. CCHS runners Sean Zahrt, Cassidy Moss, Kayla Davis, Tyson Steele and Ryan Belt ran in the color run at Marion-Crittenden County Park. The run promotes fitness among youth.

- Crittenden County High School's marching band advanced at regional competition and qualified for the KMEA State Marching Band competition in Lexington. The band placed 13th out of the 16th in class 1A with a score of 75.8. Band director was Jacob Carroll. Rachele Perryman and Ali Shewcraft.

*Read Brenda Underdown's
Forgotten Passages column
at The Press Online
between newspaper issues.*

PARK

Continued from page 1 in the camper, along with marijuana, rolling papers, blood spatter on the walls and pools of blood on the floor, the sheriff said. A subsequent search of Rodriguez's truck uncovered additional firearms, pre-packaged marijuana, digital scales, baggies, and suspected fentanyl and oxycodone.

The victim, identified as a woman from Marion, told investigators that Rodriguez held her in the camper against her will, pressing a handgun to her head and threatening her life. Sheriff Head testified that the victim had marks consistent with strangulation and described how she told him in an interview that she feared for her life as Rodriguez allegedly assaulted her.

Public defender Rich Walls insinuated through a line of questioning that there were perhaps procedural issues with the search of Rodriguez's truck, noting that no body camera or dash camera footage was available and ques-

tioning the legality of the initial search of the Dodge pickup without a warrant.

The sheriff clarified that a search warrant was later obtained. The vehicle, he testified, was in a public area and scheduled to be towed, so he initially searched it as an inventory procedure. He said the keys were provided to him by the suspect, which the suspect denied during testimony in court.

The sheriff said the vehicle is part of an ongoing investigation, and there is some potential that it could be linked to jewelry theft in Florida where \$104,000 in valuables are missing.

The defense requested a reduction in Rodriguez's bond, asking for 10 percent of the bond to be paid and for the vehicle to be released. Prosecutor Evans strongly opposed any bond reduction, arguing that Rodriguez posed a significant danger to society, citing the multiple firearms involved, alleged physical violence against the victim and severity of the charges.

According to a press release issued days earlier by the sheriff's

department, Rodriguez has a lengthy criminal history in Florida. A review of Rodriguez's federal criminal court history shows that he is a convicted felon on multiple state charges, and has twice spent time in the federal corrections system on a weapons charge. State criminal history records, held here as part of the case file, indicates various felony-related charges over the past decade or more, including homicide and robbery, but those had been dismissed or no longer pursued by a Miami court. In federal court filings, Rodriguez is alleged to have been associated with a Florida gang known as 137th Avenue Boys.

Judge Leonard ultimately found probable cause for the charges and took the request for a bond reduction under advisement. Rodriguez's case will be presented to a grand jury on Dec. 14.

No contact with the victim was ordered as part of the conditions of Rodriguez's detention and/or possible bond release. For now, the truck will be kept in evidence.

Crittenden Press

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The Crittenden Press (USPS 138-260) is published weekly by The Crittenden Press Inc., P.O. Box 191, 125 E. Bellville St., Marion, KY 42064. Periodicals postage paid at Marion, KY and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions \$38 to \$75 per year. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Crittenden Press, P.O. Box 191, Marion, KY 42064. The Crittenden Press is your primary source of news and information for this community. We're proud to serve our community and we take great pride in bringing you real news, sports reporting and other information that helps you know what's going on in town and across the county. Help ensure that real reporting continues in this community by subscribing today. You can subscribe online to the full version of the newspaper for only \$3.89 a month. Try our new e-Edition newspaper emailed straight to your inbox every Wednesday. Go online to The-Press.com for more about how to subscribe electronically.