



# THE LEWIS COUNTY HERALD

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**Amy Johnson Dyer/LEWIS COUNTY HERALD**  
**ON FROZEN RIVER . . . A juvenile bald eagle appears to attempt capturing a fish from the Ohio River during a cold snap that left a layer of ice on the water's surface. Warmer weather and low humidity is in store for this week with a potential for increased wildfire activity.**

## Council amends ethics ordinance, OKs property buy

**By Dennis K. Brown**  
Vanceburg City Council met in regular session last week with members approving a modification to the city's Board of Ethics regulations that members reside in the county for at least one year prior to their appointment and remain a resident throughout their term on the board.

Members of the board were previously required to be residents of the City of Vanceburg.

The board consists of three members appointed by the mayor with approval of council and serve three year terms.

(See Ordinance on Page 4)

Members approved the reappointment of Whitney Willis to serve as the city's representative on

the Recreation Board for a three year term.

Approval was also given to apply for a grant to purchase benches to be located in city park areas.

Members went into closed session for the discussion of the possible purchase of property.

On returning to open session, Council Member Angie Patton made a motion to "give the mayor permission to purchase property that was agreed on in closed session."

All members voted in favor of the motion with the exception of Council Member Richard Walje who abstained.

The property was not identified in the meeting.

In Kentucky, a public agency can hold an executive session to discuss the future acquisition or

sale of real property if publicity would likely affect the value of the property, as outlined in KRS 61.810(1)(b).

Council Member John Grabill asked about the possibility of making copies of the city's ordinances available online.

Mayor Dane Blankenship said he would look into the feasibility of taking that step.

Grabill also asked about the city making videos of council meetings available online and improving the sound/acoustics in the meeting room to make it easier for attendees and viewers to hear discussions during meetings.

Grabill additionally suggested making some improvements to railings and ramps at the city building to help access for

those with handicaps and mobility issues.

Council Member Patton provided an update on the Electric Plant Board of the City of Vanceburg to those in attendance.

Patton serves as the city's representative on the city owned utility company.

## My Latest Adventure; It's our month (Part III)

**By Dennis K. Brown**

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and I've been given the opportunity to share my experiences with more people to help spread awareness about the second leading cause of cancer deaths (following lung and bronchus cancer).

Along with pancreatic and breast cancer, they are responsible for nearly 50 percent of all cancer deaths in the US.

In the past couple of years, we've been on an adventure together that's seemed like a fast ride on a fierce roller-coaster.

Three years ago I didn't know many statistics about colorectal cancers. I know a lot of those numbers now and they're eye-opening.

I've shared some of those numbers with those who have taken this journey with me through

## Phishing scam targets locals

**By Dennis K. Brown**

Vanceburg Police Chief Joe Paul Gilbert is investigating a local phishing scam after someone hacked into an email account for an attorney's office in Vanceburg.

Gilbert said email addresses were copied from the account and the scammer is sending out emails with the subject line stating "Catching Up..."

The body of the email is short and simple . . .

"Hi  
"How are you, sorry to bother you do you shop on amazon?"

Those who reply are asked to purchase gift cards and transfer them to a third party.

Gilbert said the scammer has had some success and adds he isn't sure of the extent of the scam, although most of the email addresses reported are in the Lewis County area.

He urges recipients of those emails to report them but not to reply to the sender or to follow any link associated with the scam.

Gilbert said the email

provider for the business has been notified and is conducting their own investigation while the Cyber Crimes Unit of the Kentucky State Police is also investigating the matter. The business has also tightened security.

Some scammers hack accounts and gather personal details on victims to launch highly targeted attacks, a practice called spear-phishing.

You can report phishing attempts to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

- Forward phishing emails to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at reportphishing@apwg.org and phishing text messages to the FTC at SPAM (7726), as well as to the business or organization the sender claims to represent.

- Many companies have dedicated email addresses to report phishing, which you can find online.

- You can also report phishing attempts to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov.

## Sunshine Week: Support your local journalists

**By Gene Policinski**

Sunshine Week is March 16-22, and this year, there's an even greater need for you to get involved.

Sunshine Week annually celebrates freedom of information laws in every state. It also salutes efforts by good government advocates and journalists to use and ensure the effectiveness of those laws to get the information we need as self-governing citizens.

The name is a play on the commonsense words spoken more than a century ago by US Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, that "Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants."

Brandeis' remark was not made in a court opinion. It was in a 1913 article published in the news magazine *Harper's Weekly*. Along with its observations on American culture and events, Harper's was part of the "muckraking" news era, with journalists holding business and government accountable for corruption, waste and illegal activity.

As a special treat of each Sunshine Week, we get to see current examples of

news reporting on behalf of the public, the type of journalism that the nation's founders had in mind when they adopted strong First Amendment protection for a free press.

Each year, we celebrate the thousands of local, state and national print, TV, radio and online reports that tell us what the government or others are doing and how they are doing it; reports that explore and expose otherwise-unseen information we need to know to make good decisions at the ballot box, when petitioning for change or simply things we should know about our communities.

The number of journalists continues to plummet, from more than 75,000 newsroom jobs in 2005 to 31,860 in 2022, according to the Medill Local News Initiative. Far too many of us now live in "news deserts," areas across the nation where not a single news outlet exists.

Medill reported that in 2023, that out of 3,143 counties nationwide, 204 counties had no newspapers, local digital sites, public radio newsrooms or ethnic publications, and

another 228 counties were at substantial risk of losing all local news media.

Even where there are established news media outlets, economic pressures have resulted in staff cuts that mean there is less coverage of local government institutions like the city council, school board and local courts.

We need to face the fact that there just aren't enough journalists to do the job of monitoring and reporting on government, business and others.

Whether you are red or blue, progressive or conservative, Democrat, Republican or independent, you need to support those who do that investigative work on a daily basis.

Get behind and get engaged with those who use FOI laws and shoe-leather journalism to bring you the facts required for real self-governance. Take that information and make up your own minds about the concerns of the day where you live – and perhaps give the national pundit class a rest.

Open your eyes, your minds – and, yes, perhaps your wallets too – and **Please see page 8**



these columns in THE HERALD and my blog (denniskbrown.com). I've met many folks along the way because we share having had a diagnosis of colorectal cancer.

If you've traveled along on this journey, you've already experienced many peaks and valleys with Tammy and me.

I'm going to review some of the highlights. And I'm going to tell you about the importance of early screening, even if you are symptom-free and have no family history of cancer.

As my 60th birthday was approaching, Tammy scheduled an appointment for me to meet with Dr. Ramon Barcelona at PrimaryPlus. He and I usually talk about photography and we show each other some of the landscapes we've captured.

During this appointment we also talked about getting me up-to-date on vaccinations and immunizations, and having screenings appropriate for my age and medical history.

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**Tammy Brown/LEWIS COUNTY HERALD**  
**A LITTLE BIT OF TEXAS . . . Several people reported muddy and dirty rain falling Friday across the area. Meteorologists explain that areas across Texas, New Mexico and Arizona are currently experiencing "extreme" and "exceptional" drought, according to the US Drought Monitor. Numerous news outlets on Thursday reported dust storms shutting down highways across El Paso and Las Cruces. The dust is lifted into the atmosphere where it mixes with moisture and falls as muddy rain.**

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