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Remembering dad

Family honors late father's passion for pickleball with tournament

BY ANN CARTER
CORRESPONDENT

When Chayce Merchant decided to organize a pickleball tournament in honor of his late father, Paresh, it was not just about the sport itself; it was about honoring a man whose actions spoke of resilience and determination.

Committed to celebrating his father in a meaningful way, Chayce knew that bringing his father's pickleball community together was the perfect tribute.

"It was clear that a lot of people enjoyed playing with my dad, and I wanted a way for him to be remembered by a part of the pickleball community," said Chayce. The tournament was held at the Five Seasons Family Sports Club in Crestview Hills.

Paresh was diagnosed with glioblastoma brain tumors in



Photo by Ann Carter

The 32 pickleball players who attended the tournament in honor of their fellow player and friend, Paresh Merchant, pose for a group photo.

October 2023 after experiencing headaches. A commercial pilot of 30 years, Paresh shared his love of tennis with his wife, Carol, and two children, Malyn and Chayce.

His love of tennis was so great that he constructed a tennis court

at his home and named it in honor of his father, Danny. Over the years, as pickleball emerged as the new tennis, Paresh and his friends, many of whom he'd known for over 40 years, transitioned to playing this beloved sport.

The last game of pickleball that

Paresh was able to enjoy with his family, including his brother Ketan, was played on the court nestled behind the family's home, where many fond memories were made over the years.

Pickleball was more than a recreational activity for

Paresh; it was a shared pastime that fostered friendships throughout the country.

What started out as a class project for Chayce, who attends Western Kentucky University, turned into a passion to raise funds for the Glioblastoma Foundation and bring awareness to a cure.

Perish's wife Carol said the response to the tournament was overwhelming and spots filled up quickly. Carol shared that local Owen Countians Travis Hunter and his son Noah, who played pickleball with Paresh at the Life Center, attended. "Noah placed fourth in the tournament," said Carol.

Carol went on to say that the local pickleball group came together anytime Paresh wanted to play and that he was the first member admitted into the "Owen County Pickleball Hall of Fame."

The tournament not only brought those who loved Paresh together, but it also succeeded in raising over \$12,000 for brain cancer research. Given the event's success, the Merchant family has decided

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Celebrating 100 years of beef research at Princeton center

BY JORDAN STRICKLER
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

In the mid-1920s, a determined group of Caldwell County residents took a bold leap to reshape agriculture in Western Kentucky. Pooling their resources, they purchased 400 acres of farmland near Princeton and invited the University of Kentucky to establish a forward-thinking experiment substation dedicated to crop and livestock research.

Although tobacco and soil fertility captured headlines at first, the community had something else squarely in its sight: beef cattle. From the very beginning, the promise of bigger, healthier herds fueled a pioneering spirit that would go on to transform the region's farming landscape.

When the West Kentucky Sub-Experiment Station opened in 1925, the very first facilities included a dairy barn and modest paddocks. While dairying dominated the early livestock projects, extension agents and local producers began pushing for more research on beef cattle management, health and feeding strategies.

In 1928, the station launched its first beef-centered trial by introducing small groups of yearling steers onto improved pastures. Researchers tracked weight gains and profitability, using fields that were carefully limed and reseeded with



Photo furnished

In 1928, the station launched its first beef-centered trial by introducing small groups of yearling steers onto improved pastures.

clover. The results were dramatic: Cattle on these improved plots gained far more than those on unimproved, weedy pastures. Those findings demonstrated how better grazing practices could bolster beef production in an era when local pastures were often nutrient-poor.

By the early 1930s and '40s, Princeton had expanded its beef work to include many studies such as feedlot-style "fattening" trials and more partnerships with surrounding producers. Fattening

improvements involved better pastures.

Samual Lowry, the facility's first superintendent, stated that "It is my belief that our brightest ray of hope for any marked increase in the agricultural wealth of Kentucky will be found in further development of our livestock industry, following the development of better pastures, and that the average farmer will of necessity be led to produce better

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Per-student spending now available

BY STAFF REPORTS

Residents can now access updated financial data on public school districts, including per-student spending, with the latest release of the Kentucky Department of Education's School Report Card, state officials have announced.

The financial transparency section of the School Report Card, released June 5, includes information from the 2023-2024 school year and provides detailed data on school funding, grants, spending and taxes across each district. School-level per-student spending is also

included.

According to a news release from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), the financial data is published later than other sections of the report card to ensure accuracy by incorporating audited figures.

"This approach promotes greater accuracy of the district financial data," the department said in the release.

District staff are responsible for calculating the school-level per-student spending data, and the KDE advised that specific

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Sheriff receives clean audit

BY STAFF REPORTS

The Owen County Sheriff's Office received a clean financial audit, state Auditor Allison Ball's office announced Monday.

"The sheriff's financial statement fairly presents the taxes charged, credited, and paid for the period Sept. 1, 2023 through Aug. 31, 2024 in conformity with the regulatory basis of accounting," Ball's office said in a news release.

"The auditor noted no instances of noncompliance. The auditor also noted no matters involving internal control over financial reporting and its operation that were considered material weaknesses."

The sheriff's office is funded through statutory commissions and fees collected in conjunction with these duties.

The office collected about \$8.5 million which includes real estate, tangible and

fire taxes, and charged about \$310,000 in commissions for the service.

Of the \$8.5 million in taxes collected, the Owen County School District received about \$4.9 million, and the Owen County Fiscal Court received about \$788,000. Other taxing districts received about \$1.8 million.

The sheriff's settlement is prepared on the regulatory basis, which is described in the auditor's opinion letter. Regulatory basis reporting for the sheriff's settlement is an acceptable reporting

methodology, and this reporting methodology is followed for all 120 sheriff settlements in Kentucky.

The sheriff's responsibilities include collecting property taxes, providing law enforcement, and performing services for the county fiscal court and courts of justice.

Let's go to the hop!

Poodle skirts, saddle shoes order of day for Summer Sock Hop

BY ANN CARTER
CORRESPONDENT

Get ready to rock around the clock as the Owen County Senior Center invites all those age 60 and above to a fun-filled Summer Sock Hop at the Owen County Extension office.

Pull out your poodle skirts, your saddle shoes and prepare for a day of dancing, games, raffles, and delicious

food provided by the Senior Center.

The sock hop promises to take you on a journey back to the golden era of 50s and 60s rock 'n' roll. Whether you're a seasoned dancer or a lover of music, this event offers something for everyone. Additionally, the event will host raffles, giving attendees a chance to take home some delightful gifts.

Participants are advised to dress in 1950s-inspired clothing to truly experience the sock hop's ambiance. Bright colors, polka dots, leather jackets, and poodle skirts are just a few of the fashions that will liven up the occasion. Allow your attire to set the tone for

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Photo furnished

Margina King, Brooke Chapman and Mary Long are all smiles during last year's Senior Center Sock Hop

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CONTACT US

PHONE: 502-446-2537

CLASSIFIED READER ADS: 502-732-4261

EMAIL: EDITOR@OWENTONNEWSHERALD.COM



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