

LARUE COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

JUDGE CHARLES C. SIMMS III FEB. 27

Matthew Atherton, DOB 1987. Second-degree assault – domestic violence, drug paraphernalia – buy/possess, possession of marijuana, public intoxication – controlled substance (excludes alcohol) and second-degree persistent felony offender. Defendant entered a guilty plea to charge one (recommended five years), charge two (rec. six months), charge three (rec. 45 days), charge four (rec. \$100 fine) with all time to run concurrently for five years. Commonwealth's Attorney recommends probation. Charge five was dismissed. Final sentencing April 6. Remand from trial docket. (2025)

James Buckles, DOB 1979. Flagrant nonsupport. Defendant entered a guilty plea to the charge of FNS (recommended five years) to be pre-trial diverted. Final sentencing conducted. Pretrial diversion order signed. (2026)

Chasetin Bunnell, DOB 2002. Second-degree unlawful transaction with a minor, possession of marijuana, failure to produce insurance card, license to be in possession and one headlight. Charge one amended to third-degree unlawful transaction with a minor. Defendant entered a guilty plea to amended charge one (recommended 12 months), charge two (rec. 45 days), charge three (rec. \$100 fine) and charges four and five (rec. \$50 fine) with all time to run concurrently for 12 months. Commonwealth's Attorney recommends conditional discharge. Final sentencing conducted. Judgment and order of conditional discharge signed. Remand from trial docket of 3/9/2026. (2025)

John Hammond, DOB 2001. Third-degree burglary, theft by unlawful taking or disposition all others valued more than \$500 but less than \$1,000 and first-degree persistent felony offender. Defendant entered a guilty plea to charge one (recommended three years) and charge two (rec. six months) with all time to run concurrently for three years. Charge three was dismissed. Commonwealth's Attorney opposed probation. Defendant waived PST. Final sentencing conducted. Judgment signed. Probation denied. Remand from trial docket of 3/9/2026. (2025)

Jimmy Jenkins, DOB 2003. Third-degree assault – police/probation officer. Defendant requested a continuance. Order signed to reassign case for pretrial conference. Remand from trial docket of 3/9/2026. (2025)

Karen LaFollette, DOB 1972. First-degree possession of a controlled substance (third or more offense; methamphetamine) and drug para-



phernalia – buy/possess. Charge one amended to second-degree possession of a controlled substance. Defendant entered a guilty plea to amended charge one (recommended 12 months) and charge two (rec. six months) with all time to run concurrently 12 months. Commonwealth's Attorney recommends conditional discharge. Final sentencing conducted. Judgment and order of conditional discharge signed. Remand from trial docket of 3/9/2026. (2025)

Jonathan Rawlins, DOB 1986. Second-degree escape and first-degree persistent felony offender. Defendant entered a guilty plea to charge one (recommended two years) to run consecutively with all other time. Charge two was dismissed. Final sentencing conducted. Defendant waived PSI. Judgment signed. Probation denied. Remand from trial docket of 3/9/2026. (2025)

Keith Riggs, DOB 1977. Convicted felon in possession of a handgun, first-degree possession of a controlled substance (second offense; methamphetamine), drug paraphernalia – buy/possess, possession of marijuana, controlled substance prescription not in original container (first offense) and first-degree persistent felony offender. Defendant entered guilty pleas to charge one (recommended five years), charge two (rec. three years), charge three (rec. six months), charge four (rec. 45 days) and charge five (rec. 30 days) with all time to run concurrently for five years and concurrently with his Hart County case. Charge six was dismissed. Commonwealth's Attorney opposes probation. Defendant waived PSI. Final sentencing conducted. Judgment signed. Probation denied. Remand from trial docket of 3/9/2026. (2025)

Larry Smith, DOB 1954. Failure to comply with sex offender registration (first offense) and registered sex offender school restrictions. Defendant entered a guilty plea to charge

one (recommended three years) and charge two (rec. 12 months) with all time to run concurrently for three years. Commonwealth's Attorney recommends probation. Final sentencing April 6. Remand from trial docket of 3/9/2026. (2025)

MAR. 2

Joseph L. Brown, DOB 1981. Probation violation (for felony offense). Hearing conducted. Testimony taken. Defendant has failed to report to probation and parole on a number of occasions (Feb. 5, 2025, Feb. 19, 2025, March 10, 2025, March 11, 2025, March 17, 2025, October 22, 2025, Oct. 30, 2025, January 7, 2026, and Jan. 29, 2026). Defendant was sent to inpatient treatment, but he continues to use drugs and alcohol. He denied using opiates, but lab confirmed usage. He also tested positive for benzoids. Later admitted to it. Home visit was conducted, with probation and parole suspecting defendant was under the influence of alcohol on January 30, 2026. Defendant cannot be managed in the community with his refusal to report. Defendant is a significant risk to community with him using drugs and alcohol. Revocation order signed. (2023)

Amos G. Clover, DOB 2001. Financial obligations. All costs and fees are waived. (2022)

Benjamin B. Jarboe, DOB 1964. Financial obligations. Bond to be applied to financial obligations. (2023)

Bradley A. McManus, DOB 1990. Probation violation (for felony offense). First call conducted. Hearing April 20. (2023)

Phillip Sallee, DOB 1962. Probation violation (for felony offense). First call conducted. Hearing March 16. (2025)

Caylee Shofner, DOB 2000. Show cause hearing. First call conducted. Hearing March 16. (2025)

Jason McCormick, DOB 2000. Attempt murder and second-degree criminal mischief. Motion to reduce

bond. Hearing conducted. File taken under submission. (2026)

JUDGE JOE BALLARD MAR. 2

Gregory Barth, DOB 1998. First-degree criminal mischief. Plea of guilty entered. Sentencing conducted. Judgment and order of probation signed. Pay \$100/ month. Review June 15. (2025)

Kentucky R. Bell, DOB 1985. Probation violation (for felony offense). First call conducted. Second call hearing April 6. (2022)

Jessie Brown, DOB 1994. Financial obligations. Defendant is in custody on separate matter. Show costs are waived/satisfied with his pay on stay. Case dismissed/diverted. (2022)

Kaylea Cooper, DOB 1993. First-degree possession of a controlled substance (second offense; methamphetamine), tampering with physical evidence, drug paraphernalia – buy/possess and first-degree persistent felony offender. Arraignment conducted. (2026)

James Galloway, DOB 1982. Second-degree assault, first-degree unlawful imprisonment, violation of Kentucky EPO/DVO and first-degree persistent felony offender. Arraignment conducted. Bond to remain the same. Defendant is currently a state inmate. (2026)

Raymundo Robledo Gonzalez, DOB 1994. Probation violation (for felony offense). First call continued. Review March 16. (2024)

Jody Ireland, DOB 1969. Probation violation (for felony offense). Hearing conducted. Alternate sentence for defendant to enter and complete treat. Last chance. To be held until bed is available. Review March 16 to ensure defendant has been sent to treatment. (2023)

Angela Kays, DOB 1989. Financial obligations. Failure to appear. No payments. Issue bench warrant for amount owed. Place in NCIC. (2021)

Thomas Key, DOB 1992. Two counts of complicity to first-degree criminal abuse – child 12 or under and three counts of complicity to endangering the welfare of a minor. Case continued to give defense counsel an opportunity to consider co-defendant statements. Pretrial conference March 18. Case will be set for trial at that time. (2025)

Shawn LaFollette, DOB 1975. Complicity to theft by unlawful taking or disposition all others valued more than \$10,000 but less than \$10,000,000, second-degree criminal trespass and first-degree persistent felony offender. Arraignment conducted. Bond to remain the same at present time. Defendant has two other pending felony cases. (2025)

Zachary Loyall, DOB 1982. Probation violation (for felony offense). Hearing conducted. Court found defendant violated terms of his probation by failing to complete treatment. Was discharged for using meth in treatment. Could not be appropriately managed and is a danger based on continued drug use. Order revoking probation signed. Review financials upon release. (2025)

Zachary S. Loyall, DOB 1982. Probation violation (for felony offense). Hearing conducted. Court found defendant had violated probation, could not be managed and was a danger. Probation revoked. Order signed. Review upon release for financials. (2024)

Buddy Paul Puzio, DOB 1983. Theft by unlawful taking or disposition all others valued more than \$1,000 but less than \$10,000 and third-degree criminal trespass. Count one dismissed without prejudice based on motion of the Commonwealth. Misdemeanor still pending. Case transferred to LaRue District Court. Clerk to create M case. Review in LaRue District March 4. (2025)

Richard Sanders, DOB 1971. First-degree trafficking in a controlled substance (second or more offense; more than or equal to four grams of cocaine). Arraignment conducted. Bond to remain same based on nature of charge and amount of time defendant is facing. (2026)

Wesley Sigurbjartsson, DOB 1991. First-degree possession of a controlled substance (second offense; methamphetamine), operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol (second offense) and drug paraphernalia – buy/possess. Sentencing conducted. Judgment and order of probation signed. Pay \$50/month. Review June 1. (2025)

Joseph Wooldridge, DOB 1987. Probation violation (for felony offense). Hearing conducted. Court found defendant violated probation, was a danger based upon drug use and could not be appropriately managed. Court will consider defendant for shock if underlying cases are resolved. (2024)

Joseph Wooldridge, DOB 1987. First-degree possession of a controlled substance (first offense; methamphetamine) and drug paraphernalia – buy/possess. Fast track review April 20. (2026)

Note: The above information includes a listing of cases heard by the LaRue County Circuit Court, which meets on the first and third Monday of each month. Individuals are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

COOKING CORNER



CANDY VINCENT

JEAN'S SUPREME CAKE

1 (18 1/4 oz) box lemon Supreme cake mix
3 eggs
1 stick butter, softened
1/2 (8 oz) carton frozen whipped topping, thawed
1/2 cup oil
Preheat oven to 350°. In a large mixer bowl, beat ingredients until smooth. Bake in greased and floured Bundt pan for 45 minutes.

CLOSER

FROM PAGE A1

family endeavor. Now, her husband and their two sons, Titus and Winston, help design the men's apparel. By giving their opinions and offering ideas to create, Beth said the clothing is more likely to appeal to the intended audience. This, in turn, means more people will be wearing Christian-based apparel, allowing conversations about faith to spark naturally.

Three years after launching the online store, the family decided to expand the business and open a storefront at 111 N. Lincoln Blvd. in Hodgenville. Although this was a big leap, Beth said, doing so allowed Closer Purpose to branch out and carry a wider range of products to attract a larger market; this primarily meant adding apparel and other goods that aren't religion-based.

Inside the store, you can find an assortment of options. This includes clothing for men, women and children; devotion books; bibles and bible covers; jewelry; home décor; hats; cups; tumblers; and more. Overall, there is something for



Photo by Victoria Cox

A ribbon-cutting to welcome Closer Purpose as a member of the LaRue County Chamber of Commerce was held on Thursday, Mar. 5. The business is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and be found online on social media or at closerpurpose.com.

everyone, and Beth encourages all – even those who are not seeking religious materials – to visit.

“Don't not come in because it's Christian-based, we also have a broad

range of trendy clothing for men, women and children that aren't Christian apparel,” she said.

Closer Purpose is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Friday

and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. The business has an online presence on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Etsy, and can also be found at closerpurpose.com.

SCHOOL

FROM PAGE A1

• Numerous signatures were misrepresented as qualified voters or their identifying information was added to or altered after signature.

“The recall petition process was so permeated with irregularities, falsifications, and procedural defects that its overall integrity is destroyed,” the document states.

The cross-claim against Metcalf alleges that she accepted signatures she knew were circulated in violation, erroneously verified invalid signatures, failed to comply with mandatory duties and accepted a defective affidavit and notice. The document states it “recognizes and sincerely respects” Metcalf's good faith effort to conduct her duties,

but that “the recall statute demands a level of uniformity and precision that even a conscientious review can miss when applied inconsistently.”

The first claim cites documentation obtained by the Board through an Open Records Request which found that Metcalf was contacted four days before the petition was submitted and made aware that petition pages were being circulated and solicited by individuals who were not members of the petition committee; however, despite this knowledge, she “took no action to halt circulation or disqualify the petition” and instead accepted the petition that she knew or should have known included unlawfully obtained signatures.

The second allegation also utilizes documentation obtained in the Open Records Request. Reviewing an Excel spreadsheet created by Metcalf in October 2025 that is titled “2025 VER-

IFIED SCHOOL TAX PETITION SIGNATURES,” the Board contends that the purported verification “included a substantial number of entries with errors or defects apparent on the face of the petition.” These errors and defects include the verification of:

- Individuals whose name and/or addresses did not exactly match their voter registration records.
- Individuals who failed to include required birth date information or who listed incorrect birth dates.
- Individuals whose identifying information was wholly illegible.
- Entries which listed the date of signing as the individuals' date of birth, noting that “if [the entry] was treated as a birth date, would render the signer only days old.”
- Duplicate signatures attributed to the same named

individual.

• An individual who was listed as verified more than once, despite having only signed a single time.

• Signatures which appeared on non-uniform or photocopied petition pages, with at least one of those pages appearing to be traced over in blue ink “to simulate original wet-ink signatures.”

• Entries that appeared to be forged, altered or executed by persons other than the named signer.

The cross-claim also alleges that Metcalf failed to comply with her duties by accepting the petition committee's affidavit – although it failed to identify the rate adopted by the Board or the portion of the tax increase subject to recall, which are both required by law – and subsequently publishing said affidavit as a public notice even though it was “facially defective and

omitted required statutory certifications.”

The Board also argued against the report Metcalf submitted in February stating that the petition had an adequate number of verifiable signatures both with and without the two pages. Although she was ordered to conduct the count by Judge Simms, the Board asserts that the verification occurred outside of the statutory 30-day determination period and therefore exceeds Metcalf's legal authority. The cross-claim also states that the number of verified signatures Metcalf reported in February was different from the number of verified signatures they received from her via the Open Records Request and that the report did not include a final verification list or identify which signatures were counted or excluded.

Concluding the arguments against the initial complaint, the

counterclaim against the petition committee and the cross-claim against Metcalf, the Board requested the court ultimately dismiss the complaint with prejudice for failing to state a claim; declare the recall petition insufficient and therefore void and of no legal force or effect; and deny all declaratory and equitable relief requested by the petition committee as improper, unauthorized and contrary to state law. It also asked for the Board to be awarded costs and attorney's fees incurred and granted any other or further relief deemed just by the court.

No response has been filed by the petition committee or Metcalf as of press time. The matter will return before Judge Simms at 1 p.m. on Monday, March 16. *The LaRue County Herald News* will continue to follow the case and provide updates as they are made available.