

LEAGENDS CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

on the musical map.

On The Overtime Show with Wendall and Misty, we love to have listeners call-in and a call came in from Joe Hudson to discuss the weekend’s highlights, the championship competition and the musicians who traveled to make their mark on history.

Joe stated that the event continued to attract new visitors. This year’s attendees included people from Georgia, a young musician from Texas and a contestant from North Carolina, along with returning guests who have made the event an annual tradition.

Friday night featured the National Thumbpickers Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. Saturday brought the annual Thumbpicking Championship, where contestants performed three songs each before a panel of judges using a blind judging system.

The competition included two categories: traditional thumbpicking and contemporary thumbpicking.

Traditional thumbpicking reflects the style associated with legendary Kentucky musicians such as Merle Travis, as well as Chet Atkins, and features the distinctive alternating bass pattern that gives the music its recognizable “boom-chick” sound.

The contemporary category showcases how the style has

evolved through musicians such as Jerry Reed and Tommy Emmanuel, incorporating newer approaches while maintaining the foundation of thumbpicking.

A young musician from Texas won one category of the championship, while a contestant from North Carolina won the other. Category winners received guitars, while other contestants who placed received cash prizes.

The championship winners also performed during Saturday evening’s program before the main concert.

The weekend featured performances from well-known musicians and local favorites. John Knowles was among the featured performers. Knowles is one of four guitarists originally awarded the Certified Guitar Player (CGP) designation by Chet Atkins, along with Jerry Reed, Steve Wariner and Tommy Emmanuel.

Knowles has also helped preserve the music of Chet Atkins by transcribing much of Atkins’ music and publishing arrangements for other musicians to study and play.

Local musicians shared the stage with visiting performers, giving audiences an opportunity to hear musicians from the area alongside players who traveled long distances to attend.

One of the performers

discussed during the radio interview was Teresa Waddell of Shepherdsville, Kentucky. Waddell, a returning participant, performed Saturday evening. Many of the women connected to the event spend much of the weekend working behind the scenes, but also bring considerable musical talent of their own to the stage.

The weekend is about more than competition. It is a celebration of Kentucky music, history and musicianship, while providing an opportunity for new generations to experience a style that grew from the musical traditions of western Kentucky.

Merle Travis, whose name is forever connected to the center and the thumbpicking tradition, was born in western Kentucky and became one of the most influential guitarists and songwriters to emerge from the region. The Country Music Hall of Fame notes that Travis developed his distinctive style from the guitar traditions of Muhlenberg County. (Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum)

Travis once explained the inspiration behind one of his best-known songs, “Dark as a Dungeon,” with a line that has become one of his most remembered observations about songwriting:

> **“The saddest songs are written when a person is happy.”**
> — **Merle Travis**



▲ PHOTO | MISTY HUTCHINSON/LEADER-NEWS
Theresa Waddell from Shepherdsville, KY after an amazing performance.

Travis said the song was inspired by his upbringing around Kentucky coal mines, where his father and brothers worked as



▲ PHOTO | MISTY HUTCHINSON/LEADER-NEWS
That ole’ Kentucky sound filled the room as Thumbpickers showed off their talent.

miners. (Cloudfront)

The weekend once again brought together musicians, families and music lovers

from all around, sharing a love for the unique Kentucky sound and tradition of thumbpicking.

OPPORTUNITY CONTINUED FROM PAGE A2

clients opportunities to earn money through tasks such as making rugs, preparing labels, shredding paper and helping load goods.

The center’s thrift store provides another way for the community to support its programs. Donated clothing, household goods, toys and other items are sorted and sold, offering affordable shopping while generating proceeds for the center.

Throughout the interview, the guests emphasized the importance of belonging. The center serves people with autism, Down syndrome and other intellectual and developmental disabilities, providing a welcoming environment where clients can learn and participate without fear of judgment.

With roots dating to the 1960s, the Opportunity Center serves Muhlenberg County and welcomes individuals from surrounding areas. Victoria Hinson serves



▲ PHOTO | MISTY HUTCHINSON/LEADER-NEWS
Neesha and Nick discussing the upcoming car show at the Muhlenberg Opportunity Center.

as director.

Community donations and fundraisers help sustain its work. The center will host a car show Oct. 24 at the Muhlenberg County Ag Center, the county fair location.

Car enthusiasts are encouraged to bring classic, vintage or favorite vehicles. Those interested in entering should contact the Opportunity Center

for registration instructions.

For Nick, a highlight would be seeing a 1970 Dodge Charger, a favorite inspired in part by the “Fast & Furious” movies.

The event will give visitors a chance to enjoy the cars while supporting opportunities for people to learn, work and belong.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

1. Publication Title Leader-News	2. Publication Number <table><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>9</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>6</td><td>0</td></tr></table>	2	2	9	-	2	6	0	3. Filing Date October 1, 2026
2	2	9	-	2	6	0			
4. Issue Frequency Weekly	5. Number of Issues Published Annually 52	6. Annual Subscription Price 27.50;29.70;32.00							
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®) PO Box 471 Central City, KY Muhlenberg County									
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer) PO Box 471 Central City, KY 42330									
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank) <i>Publisher (Name and complete mailing address)</i> Jeff Jobe 101 N Public Square Glasgow KY 42141									
<i>Editor (Name and complete mailing address)</i> Lisa Sullivan PO Box 471 Central City KY 42330									
<i>Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address)</i> N/A									
10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)									
Full Name Complete Mailing Address									
Jobe Publishing Inc PO Box 340 Horse Cave KY 42749									
Jeffrey S Jobe 101 N Public Square Glasnow KY 42141									
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box ☒ None									
Full Name Complete Mailing Address									
-0-									
12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one) The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: ☐ Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months ☐ Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)									

13. Publication Title Leader News		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below September 15, 2026	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation .0.		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		5000	5000
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	240	230
	(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	636	607
	(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®	3201	3274
	(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	-0-	-0-
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))		4077	4111
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	-0-	-0-
	(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	50	50
	(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)	-0-	-0-
	(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	100	100
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4))		150	150
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)		4227	4261
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))		773	739
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)		5000	5000
i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)		96	96

* If you are claiming electronic copies, go to line 16 on page 3. If you are not claiming electronic copies, skip to line 17 on page 3.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

15. Electronic Copy Circulation Leader News	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Paid Electronic Copies	811	811
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	4888	4922
c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	5038	5072
d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16c divided by 16c i 100)	97	97

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17. Publication of Statement of Ownership

☒ If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed ☐ Publication not required.

in the **10-06-26** issue of this publication.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner

Jeffrey S Jobe

Date **09-21-26**

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LEADER-NEWS

Serving Muhlenberg County Since 1912

1730 W. Everly Brothers Blvd. - P.O. Box 471
Central City, KY 42330
270-754-3000

Hours: Monday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

VISIT US ONLINE
www.ky-leadernews.com

PUBLISHER - Jeff Jobe
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Advertising, Legal Notices, Obituaries and Classifieds should be sent by 12 PM Fridays.

Published every Tuesday by the
Jobe Publishing, Inc.

Periodical Postage Paid at
Greenville, KY 42345
USPS 229-260

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
Leader-News,
P.O. Box 471, Central City, KY 42330

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES
In Muhlenberg County - \$27.50 (tax included)
Elsewhere in Kentucky - \$29.70 (tax included)
Outside Kentucky - \$32

We accept MasterCard, Visa and Discover MEMBER

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