

## Rotary

From page 1A

discuss the partnership between the FCCLA and Claire Estill McHugh, and to explain what the students are doing to combat these issues.

"Our students are going to challenge you today to join their fight and join in with them to be a little bit more informed and be a change in our community," stated Roberts.

Students in attendance included Jayden Hesler, Ta'Kiyah Evans, Arian Orme, Kayleona Bush, Maddy Stanfield and Victoria Flowers. Each student took turns speaking at the podium.

The first student expressed their concern about the rapid growth of human trafficking in Kentucky, as well as the exploitation of children, which has been aided by technological development.

Other students explained that sextortion occurs when an individual threatens to share another individual's "personal" photos.

"We conducted interviews with professionals within our community to learn more information and to gather data from representatives from the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, Maysville Police Department, CrossPoint Community Church and the Buffalo Trace Children's Advocacy Center to conduct research," stated one student.

"Some of the data that we've gathered is, in 2024, there were almost 12,000 cases of sextortion reports. There was also about 17 percent of victims who were aged 12 and under when they experienced sextortion," another student stated. "In 2024, the National Cen-

ter for Exploited and Missing Children had received 456,000 reports of sextortion in a year."

The students noted that adolescent boys aged 14 through 17 are the primary targets of sextortion.

A student then told Rotarians that the FCCLA's goal is to visit 11 local hotels, as well as restaurants, police stations and gas stations, in order to advocate for their campaign and educate community members on how to spot signs of human trafficking and sextortion.

The students reported that they have already partnered with CrossPoint Community Church's Saving Our Adolescents from Prostitution (SOAP) project in an effort to help trafficked victims. As part of this project, the National Human Trafficking hotline is printed on hotel soaps and makeup wipes and distributed to local hotels for place in rooms.

Roberts stated that when the group visits hotels to distribute these products, they bring missing children posters with them. She further expressed that it is "eye-opening" to see the hotel employees recognize the faces on the posters.

FCCLA students have also created awareness stickers to place in public locations.

They then described the case of 17-year-old Gavin Guffey, who was a victim of sextortion.

According to Roberts, Guffey was an adolescent whose father was running for office. He was sent a suggestive photo online by someone he thought was a teenage girl who lived nearby. The sender then asked Guffey to send a picture of himself. After doing so, the sender revealed himself to be a 24-year-old Nigerian man, who then told Guffey

that he would send the photo to Guffey's family and friends if he did not send money.

Roberts stated that Guffey died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound after sending the man \$500. After Guffey's death, the man continued to attempt to extort money from Guffey's family. Guffey's father has since begun developing legislation titled Gavin's Law, which would make sextortion a felony offense in the state of South Carolina, which is where the incident occurred.

Roberts told Rotarians that this story helps represent why the FCCLA is raising awareness about this crime.

McHugh then stood to inform Rotarians of her experiences as an attorney dealing with children and sextortion.

"I think, primarily, the issue that we have across the entire United States, really, is children are handed smart phones when they are six, seven, eight years old and the parents have no idea, absolutely no idea what these kids have access to," expressed McHugh.

She noted that she has personally worked on several cases where crimes have been committed through Discord, a website and app where individuals can access a chat feature to speak to others.

McHugh then shared some statistics that were made available by Attorney General Russell Coleman.

"Nearly two thirds of children, ages nine to 12, play games on Roblox. Age six can create an account without the consent of a parent," she expressed.

She noted that Roblox also includes a chat feature, which predators could use to contact children.

McHugh explained that trafficking cases often begin with grooming. A predator may contact a child and offer

to be their friend. Once they feel they have made a connection with the child, they attempt to isolate them. Once isolation occurs, predators often escalate conversations by discussing sexual topics and attempting to coerce them into sending inappropriate photos.

McHugh noted that there is a grooming law currently being proposed and urged Rotarians to contact their legislators to express their support.

"Here's the takeaway," she stated. "Your kids, your grand kids, whomever you know under the age of 18, they're being exposed to violence, profanity, adult content, drugs, alcohol. They're being exposed to predatory adults and even older teens. There's issue with them not knowing and parents not knowing about location data being public information and privacy concerns about information being shared.

"There's addiction and mental health issues that are starting way earlier than we've ever seen, and there's also exposure to abusive behavior or bullying amongst themselves. This is a lot of what we're seeing. It's real, it happens here and it happens everywhere. If you are a parent or a grandparent, it's still appropriate to have these conversations."

To encourage safer online engagement, McHugh suggested turning off chat and location features, which will limit sharing of personal information. She emphasized the importance of enabling parental controls whenever they are available. Issuing time limits can also be helpful, as well as supervising usage of apps and websites.

"Talk about how to handle the red flags or suspicious behavior," McHugh concluded.

## DATEBOOK

**FRIDAY, FEB. 27**  
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FISH FRY — 5-7 p.m., 210 East Third Street. Open to everyone.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 3**  
OWL MEETING — 5:30 p.m., Pasquales.  
MASON COUNTY CAIP/YAIP INFORMATIONAL MEETING — Noon and 6 p.m. Mason County Extension Office.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4**  
READ ACROSS AMERICA PARENT'S NIGHT — 5:30 p.m., at the Flemingsburg Elementary School, in collaboration with FRYSC.  
FLEMINGSBURG-FLEMING COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING — 8:30 a.m., Fleming-Mason Energy Meeting Room.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 5**  
TRI-COUNTY DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB MEETING — 5:30 p.m. at the Mason County Public Library.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 6**  
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FISH FRY — 5-7 p.m., 210 East Third Street. Open to everyone.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 7**  
LEWISBURG VOL. FIRE DEPARTMENT FISH FRY — 4-7 p.m., dine-in and takeout, \$20, meal to include eight oz. cod fish sandwich, fried shrimp, hush puppies, french fries, onion rings, green beans, mac and cheese, baked beans, corn

salad, potato salad, coleslaw, choice of dessert and choice of drink, extra sandwich is \$10, cash, cards and checks accepted, and donations appreciated, 6045 KY Highway #3170, Maysville, KY 41056.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 10**  
MEET AND GREET WITH JUDGE-EXECUTIVE CANDIDATE PEGGY FRAME — 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Kenton Stories with Spirit located at 11 W 2nd Street.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11**  
M A N C H E S T E R LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING — 6:30 p.m., Manchester High School.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 13**  
MAY'S LICK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT FISH FRY — 4 to 7 p.m.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 15**  
ST. AUGUSTINE CHURCH BINGO SOCIAL — 1 to 5 p.m., on the church grounds at the new parish hall, bingo, pull tabs, split the pot raffle, snacks and drinks provided, entry fee \$10, additional bingo cards optional, must be 18 and over to participate, meal provided after bingo social for players, proceeds to benefit the St. Augustine Church benevolent fund and weather permitting.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 17**  
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS ANNUAL ST. PATRICK'S DAY

CASH RAFFLE — For tickets or more details, contact Victor McKay at 606-584-0449.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 20**  
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FISH FRY — 5-7 p.m., 210 East Third Street. Open to everyone.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 27**  
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FISH FRY — 5-7 p.m., 210 East Third Street. Open to everyone.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 28**  
LEWISBURG VOL. FIRE DEPARTMENT PANCAKE BREAKFAST — all you can eat, 6:30 a.m. to 10 a.m., dine-in or takeout, pancakes, biscuits and gravy, scrambled eggs, bacon, fried bologna, sausage patties, sausage links, hash-browns, coffee, juice, milk and more, \$15 each, cash, cards and check accepted and donations appreciated, 6045 KY Highway #3170 Maysville, KY 41056.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 2**  
TRI-COUNTY DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB MEETING — 5:30 p.m. at the Mason County Public Library.

**THURSDAY, MAY 7**  
TRI-COUNTY DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB MEETING — 5:30 p.m. at the Mason County Public Library.

**THURSDAY, JUNE 4**  
TRI-COUNTY DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB MEETING — 5:30 p.m. at the Mason County Public Library.

## Washington Missionary Baptist Church host benefit concert

Submitted by K. D. Barbour

Pastor K. D. Barbour and the Washington Missionary Baptist Church welcomes the community to attend their Rev. C.H. and Fannie Williams Scholarship Benefit concert.

The concert will take place on Saturday, March 14 at 3 p.m., at Washington Missionary Baptist Church located at 504 Clark St. in Maysville.

This concert, featuring Mario Webb and the New

Covenant Choir from Lexington, Ky., is free to the public and all are welcome.

According to Barbour, scholarship applications are currently available at the Mason County High School and the Maysville Community and Technical College.

"The Rev. C.H. and Fannie Williams Scholarship is open to high school seniors, non-traditional students, and individuals seeking to return to school to further their education," said Barbo-

ur. "Our goal is to support those who desire to advance academically and professionally, regardless of their stage in life."

Barbour stated that last semester the church congregation was blessed to award two scholarships.

"We are now actively working toward awarding scholarships for the upcoming fall school year and look forward to continuing this important investment in our community's future," concluded Barbour.

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7 p.m., Manchester, Ohio, Pike and Fifth Street, Community Building.

— West Union, Sundays, 10 a.m., The Counseling Center Group Room, Adams Lake, 829 E. Walnut Street.

— Ripley's Miracles, Thursdays, 7 p.m., Beebe Chapel, 438 Main Street, Ripley, Ohio. limited seating.

AAUW (AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN) — Fourth Tuesday at 6 p.m., locations announced monthly.

BRACKEN COUNTY FISCAL COURT — 10 a.m., second and fourth Wednesday every month.

BROWN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT — HIV/Hep. C test, second Thursday each month, appointment needed; Diabetes support group, 6:30 p.m., second Thursday of each month, Georgetown Church of Christ.

CANCER CARE CLUB BINGO — Every Friday night, doors open at 5 p.m., and play begins at 7 p.m., Double S Entertainment Center, Flemingsburg.

CANCER FIGHTERS UNITED — First Thursday, 5:30 p.m., resource room open, 6:30 p.m., meeting. For families, friends and cancer survivors, support group, at Highland Christian Church. Call 606-564-0577 or 606-375-2511 for information.

CONCERNED CITIZENS' COALITION — Fourth Tuesday each

month, 6:30 p.m., Hunter Hall, 31 Third Street.

CONVERSATIONAL SPANISH AND ENGLISH AS A 2ND LANGUAGE — Every Thursday, 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., all ages welcome, free, Fleming County Public Library.

DAV — For transportation to Veterans Administration Medical Center in Lexington, call local 859-285-8355 or the DAV in Lexington, Bob Arrowood at 859-227-3844, you must give Lexington 48 hour notice.

DEKALB LODGE INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS — Every Tuesday, 7 p.m. at the lodge on Tucker Drive. FLEMING COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY — Lego Club, first Wednesday of each month, 4 p.m. All ages. No Lego Club in January.

FLEMING COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY — Get Hooked on Crochet, every Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. All ages welcome. Free class taught by Debbie Edmond. Learn and relearn the basics of crochet. Bring own hook and yarn.

FLEMING COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY — Science in play2go, June 14 through Sept. 13.

FLEMING COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY — Dulcimer lessons, every Tuesday from noon to 5 p.m. and Thursdays from 2-7 p.m. Free 30-minute lessons taught by Mary M. Open to all ages. Call 606-845-7851 to get started.

## THE LEDGER INDEPENDENT

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Story ideas, news tips, etc., should be called in to the newsroom between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Call 564-9091.

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Circulation Customer Service:  
Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Comments, Letters**  
The Ledger Independent welcomes and encourages comments from its readers on a wide variety of local, regional, state, national and international issues. Letters to the editor should be typed, double-spaced and mailed to the Editor, The Ledger Independent, 120 Limestone St., Maysville, KY 41056. We welcome comments 24/7 at 606-564-9091 x 1251. Please speak slowly and clearly when leaving a comment.

The newspaper reserves the right to edit all letters and comments for libelous, obscene or other inappropriate material.

**Corrections**  
The Ledger Independent seeks to correct all significant errors brought to the editor's attention. If you have a question or correction on news coverage, contact Peyton Dunaway, editor.

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**Advertising**  
To purchase display or classified advertising in the The Ledger Independent, call one of the numbers listed above and an advertising representative will be happy to serve you.

**Advertising Deadlines**  
Placement and cancellation deadlines for classified in-column line ads for Tuesday-Thursday are accepted until 2 p.m. the day before publication. Classified in-column ads for Saturday are accepted until 11 a.m. the day before publication. Ads for Monday are accepted until 2 p.m. the Friday before publication. Display advertising is accepted until 2 p.m. daily, 48 hours before publication date. Ads that require color, proofs or special camera work require an additional 24 hours added to the above deadline.