

News Journal
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Mark White

THE WAY I SEE IT

Welcome back Old Fashioned Trading Days

The 43rd Annual Old Fashioned Trading Days festival is almost upon us. It takes place Thursday through Saturday in downtown Williamsburg.

Back when we had an office in Williamsburg, for me, one of the best parts of Old Fashioned Trading Day was being able to step out of my office, walk a few feet and have lots of choices in terms of places to eat for lunch. Back then the options in Williamsburg were much more limited.

The Whitley County Cattleman's Association is always one of my "go to" places to eat at these local festivals. They have an efficient set up where the food basically goes from the freezer to the grill to the plate in many cases. It is fresh. It is good. In addition to the ribeye sandwiches they also have pretty good burgers. A barbecue sandwich and soup beans is one of my favorite combinations at these festivals, if I can find it. The barbeque is usually easy to find, but the soup beans can be a little harder to come by. I am usually not successful finding this food combinations at NIBROC, but it is usually gettable at Old Fashioned Trading Days. Usually, I can find at least one church selling soup beans and corn bread.

The professional food vendors, which travel around setting up at most of these festivals all over the state, are alright, but I typically try to find food vendors with local connections, such as churches and school groups. This way the money they raise usually goes a good cause, and I like to try and keep those funds local, if possible.

Williamsburg Tourism Director Alvin Sharpe tells me all the vendor spots are sold out for this year's festival so there should be plenty of things to check out ranging from jewelry and crafts to floral wreaths and clothing. It looks like they have some good music lined up each evening.

While I am not typically big on bluegrass music, I do like three of the four acts slated to perform Friday on Stage One at Bill Woods Park. Straight Creek, Virgil Bowlin and Tidal Wave Road all have a good sound. I am unfamiliar with the fourth band, Michael Prewitt and Crunchgrass Supreme.

Organizers have booked two really good bands to headline Stage Two at the Green Space on Main for Friday and Saturday evening.

County Wide is very popular regional band, which always draws a crowd. I personally enjoy hearing them play. I suspect many people around here are familiar with hearing them play. They are slated to perform at approximately 8 p.m. on Friday.

Paint Creek headlines Stage Two at approximately 8 p.m. Saturday. This band is fronted by brothers Eric and Alex Poore, who you might have guessed are from Paint Creek in Whitley County. I think they are based out of Lexington these days. Singing is in their blood. Their uncle is Gerald Mullins, who is a well-known minister and singer in Whitley County.

If you get the chance, you might want to head down to Williamsburg over the next few days and eat a ribeye steak sandwich, have a funnel cake for dessert, check out some crafts and listen to some good music.

Now to touch upon a topic brought up at a special called Corbin Independent Board of Education meeting Thursday. A couple of people in the audience criticized the board for not doing more to notify people about its meetings, and particularly special called meetings beside doing the minimum required by law. Among the things suggested was putting notices about meetings, especially special called meetings, on the district Facebook page, and using the district's parental notification app, ParentSquare, to send out notices about meetings

Board Chairwoman Carcille Burchette and Board Member Kim Croley thanked the audience members for bringing this to the board's attention. Croley the district is also working to update its website so notices about meetings and other events can be posted there.

Improving public notices about governmental meetings is actually a very good idea, which all our local governmental entities should think about doing. They typically do a good job of following the letter of the law and notify media outlets 24 hours before a meeting and usually post a notice about the meeting on the front door of the building where the meeting will be held or someplace like this. Most of our major governmental agencies have official Facebook pages and alert systems, which can be used to send out notifications by text or e-mail about things, such as waterline breaks for instance.

It would be good to see these governmental entities start sending out notices about their planned meetings on these communications platforms, if they are not already doing so. The notices won't get to everyone, who might be interested in attending, but the notices would reach a lot of people and, perhaps, even most people. Would this result in more people attending governmental meetings? Maybe.

Truth be told, a few more people would probably show up to complain about this or that, but I would not expect to see more than a handful do so at most meetings. Most people have never been to a governmental meeting in their lives, unless maybe their kid was being honored by the school board for something. Nearly all of them take off as soon as their kid gets their recognition. Sending out more governmental notices about meetings and broadcasting those meetings, either live or via a video recording over the Internet, would be excellent steps towards improved governmental transparency and accountability. I can think of only a handful doing so locally.

Opinion

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

Letters to the editor are welcomed. We invite you to express your opinion on local, state and national issues. All letters must be signed by the author with a phone number for verification purposes. Please contain letters to 500 words or less. We reserve the right to edit or reject any and all letters for any reason. All letters are the opinion of the writers and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the News Journal. No more than (2) letters per month will be published by the same writer. Deadline for letters is Monday at 5 p.m. Letters may be sent to the News Journal, P.O. Box 418, Williamsburg, KY 40769 or P.O. Box 1524, Corbin KY 40702; delivered to our office at 215 North Main Street, Corbin, or e-mailed to news@corbinnewsjournal.com.

WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor,

Twenty-Three Years Later, the Voice Still Carries: Rev. Junior Kersey Memorial Scholarship Honors a Life of Service

A Williamsburg family created a scholarship to ensure the legacy of a longtime minister, disabled American veteran, community servant and "Voice of the Jackets" continues through another generation.

Rev. Junior Kersey died in August 2003, but in Williamsburg, there are still people who remember his voice.

For approximately 14 years, that voice came through the public-address system at Williamsburg basketball games, introducing players, following the action on the floor and adding a little more excitement to nights inside the Williamsburg gymnasium, but the voice of Junior Kersey reached far beyond a microphone.

It could be heard from a pulpit. It could be heard singing while he played his guitar. It could be heard reassuring a veteran sitting at his kitchen table trying to complete disability paperwork. It could be heard comforting a family preparing to bury someone they loved. And occasionally, it could even be heard in the Kersey living room pronouncing a couple husband and wife.

Today, his family hopes his voice will continue speaking in a new way through the Rev. Junior Kersey Memorial Scholarship.

The Voice of the Jackets

To generations of Williamsburg sports fans, however, Junior Kersey may be best remembered from another kind of pulpit:

A microphone inside the Williamsburg gym.

For approximately 14 years, Kersey volunteered as a public-address announcer for Williamsburg basketball.

He announced both the Jackets and Lady Jackets, including during the years his own children competed, but his service didn't end when his children stopped playing.

The family jokes that Junior Kersey loved a microphone—and no one had to ask him twice to use his voice.

Underneath the humor was something deeper.

He loved the school, basketball, and young people.

He loved watching students succeed.

That sentiment is now incorporated into the memorial scholarship's identity:

"His voice filled the gym. His faith touched a community. His greatest pride was watching others succeed."

The scholarship artwork also describes Kersey through six qualities his family believes represent the man behind the name:

Faith. Family. Service. Athletics. Encouragement. Excellence.

Faith because he led with it and lived it.

Family because he was a devoted husband and proud father.

Service because he gave his time to his church, community, veterans and individuals who needed help.

Athletics because of his long connection to Williamsburg basketball.

Encouragement because he had a way of lifting people up.

And excellence because he valued hard work, accomplishment and using the abilities a person had been given.

The Scholarship

The fund was established to benefit a Williamsburg student pursuing the next chapter of his or her education and life.

For his youngest daughter, Carla Kersey, the scholarship is about much more than remembering her father. It is about continuing the way he lived.

"The scholarship is his story," Kersey said. "Dad spent his life helping other people move forward. This gives us a way to continue doing that in his name."

BY CARLA KERSEY

Letters to the Editor appearing in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of staff members, management or ownership.

Baptist Health Corbin awards 18 scholarships to future healthcare professionals



Baptist Health Corbin and its medical staff have awarded \$29,000 in scholarships to students from the Tri-County area who are pursuing careers in a variety of healthcare professions.

The annual scholarship program recognizes outstanding students who have demonstrated academic excellence and a passion for serving others through healthcare.

"These scholarships represent more than financial assistance – they are an investment in the future of healthcare in our region," said Angela Foster, president of Baptist Health Corbin. "We are proud to support these exceptional students as they pursue careers dedicated to caring for others, and we hope many of them will one day return to serve the communities where they grew up."

This year, Baptist Health Corbin awarded four \$2,000 memorial scholarships to medical students:

- Truman Perry Memorial Scholarship: Hannah Baker McVey
- Danny Strunk Memorial Scholarship: Hollie Clifton Bishop
- Rod Weisert Memorial Scholarship: Sarah Gibbs
- Mohammad Jawed Memorial Scholarship: Madeline Lewis

In addition, the hospital's medical staff awarded fourteen \$1,500 Medical Staff Scholarships to students pursuing degrees in medicine, nursing, pharmacy, physical therapy, speech therapy, certified registered nurse anesthesia (CRNA), and licensed clinical social work (LCSW).

The 2026 Medical Staff Scholarship recipients are: Patton Chandler, Karalee Hale, Sarah Hedayati, Clarissa Helton, Savannah Hoffman, Holly Huff, Emma Jarboe, Lauren McDonald, Josie McHargue, Matthew Sanders, Chloe Siler, Carey Beth Smith, Mary Chasity Snyder and Jayme Swafford.

Scholarship recipients represent a wide range of healthcare disciplines, including six medical students, three nursing students, two pharmacy students, two physical therapy students, two speech therapy students, two licensed clinical social work students, and one certified registered nurse anesthetist student.

Baptist Health Corbin congratulates each of the 2026 scholarship recipients and wishes them continued success as they pursue their healthcare careers, the hospital wrote in a release.