

# From horse power to rocket power

Hardin man publishes memoir of 'Kentucky's last barefoot generation'

BY TRIBUNE-COURIER STAFF

A former Hardin, Kentucky, man is now offering a firsthand account of many true-life events he experienced while growing up on a small subsistence farm during the 1940s and 1950s.

The new memoir by Paul McCarty is titled "Kentucky's Last Barefoot Generation: Living off the Grid for Real." The book aims to take readers to a time before electricity and modern conveniences reached many farm homes. Children worked alongside their parents from an early age, Burley tobacco was the primary cash crop, and local stores extended credit on trust until the tobacco was sold.

Through the eyes of a boy, McCarty uses a series of short stories to recount daily farm life — tending tobacco, caring for livestock, mak-

ing toys from whatever was available, being rolled downhill inside an old tire, and swimming in shallow, muddy creeks.

His story aims to echo the experiences of a generation whose way of life has largely disappeared but remains a part of the commonwealth's heritage.

After leaving the farm, McCarty earned an engineering degree from the University of Kentucky and went on to a lifelong career at Arnold Engineering Development Complex in Tennessee, supporting NASA and military air and space programs. His work took him from tobacco fields to rocket launch pads, nuclear submarines and military bombers. He began his career supporting development of the moon landing ascent and descent rocket motors.

In recognition of his contributions, McCarty was named a fellow of AEDC and selected as an Outstanding Alumnus of Hardin County, Kentucky.

He has authored, presented and published technical papers, served on National Standards Committees, and been a repeat keynote speaker at international technical societies.

Now 86, McCarty's book also reflects on wartime rationing and how deeply it affected everyday life across rural Kentucky.

McCarty is the brother of Juanita Sells, who with her husband Dr. Jerry Sells, operated the dental clinic Gentle Dental Care in Benton for many years. He and his wife, Faye, now live in Beechgrove, Tennessee.

"Kentucky's Last Barefoot Generation: Living off the Grid for Real," is available in hardback and paperback versions on Amazon.



Contributed Photo

Paul McCarty, a Hardin native, has published a memoir recounting his early years.

# CLASSIFIEDS

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In accordance with KRS 75.031(2) a property owner trustee election will be held on June 27, 2026 between the hours of 11AM and 2PM at the Palma Fire Station. The sole nominee received by the fire protection district's nominating committee in accordance with the by-laws is as follows:  
Willard Mitchell Hendrickson  
845 Fairview Street  
Benton, KY 42025  
Property owners the age of majority and subject to the fire protection tax are eligible to vote in this trustee election.

**INVITATION TO BID**  
The Marshall County Board of Education will receive sealed bids for the following:  
• Carpet/Vinyl Floor Covering  
• Ceiling Tile  
• Paving  
• DOT Random Drug & Alcohol Testing Services  
• Fire & Safety Equipment Inspection and Services  
• Fencing  
• Gas and Diesel Fuel  
Specifications may be obtained from the office of the Superintendent, during the hours of 7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. The office is located at 1531 US Hwy 641 N, Benton, KY.  
Contract(s) may be awarded to the lowest and/or best-evaluated bidders meeting all specifications and conditions, and subject to all other provisions of this invitation to bid.  
Conflict of interest, gratuities, and kickbacks as defined in KRS 45A.445 and provided for in KRS 45A.455 are absolutely prohibited.  
Darla Doss, Chairman  
Bill Thorpe, Superintendent

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