

# Batting cages, Oak Hill swimming pool requests

By GAYE BENCINI

Hickman County Fiscal Court met in regular session Monday, March 23 in the Hickman County Judge/Executive's Office. Present were Hickman County Judge/Executive Kenny Wilson; Magistrates Henry Cole and Kory Naranjo; Administrative Assistant Hillary Webb; County Treasurer Amy Leslie; Dept. Judge/Executive Dawn Allen; County Attorney Jason Batts; and visitors Michael Williford, Curtis Weatherford, Craig Glasco, Sheriff Ben Natividad, Justin D. Jackson, Bobby Gifford, and Gaye Bencini.

Michael Williford and Craig Glasco attended the Hickman County Fiscal Court meeting Monday to request the county's assistance in a project in which the two are involved- seeing to the construction of Little League batting cages for the younger kids.

Williford said last summer, younger youth could use the batting cages at the softball field, but the school district has since had them closed in with doors and locks. "The little kids don't have anywhere to go," he said.

Judge Wilson explained the school's decision to do that, saying that anytime children are in an enclosed area like that, the adult with them must have undergone a background check first so that they can legally be with children in that situation. "It was a liability issue for the school," Judge Wilson explained.

Williford said he and Glasco have talked with the Little League Board about the possibility of batting cages for younger children and locations to have it built.

"The consensus was to have it right there at the Little League fields," Williford said. He said he approached the board of education about it, and they did not agree to pay for the construction but would allow it to be built on

school property. He said School Superintendent Heather Spillman said because it was being built on school property, it would have to be constructed using the contractors selected by the school. Williford said he was told construction cost was going to be \$15,000 for the post, roof, and \$8,000 for the concrete pad for a total of \$23,000.

The Little League board has agreed to maintain it once it is built.

Williford asked if the fiscal court could help in any way toward the cost of the project and signage designating that those batting cages are for the younger kids.

County Attorney Jason Batts said legally the county cannot pay for the signage because it is on school grounds.

Magistrate Kory Naranjo asked if the batting cages would be open for anyone in the community who wants to bring their child up there to use, without approaching the Little League Board for permission and to get a key. Williford said it would.

Judge Wilson said if the fiscal court agrees to provide money toward the construction, the check would be written to the school, governmental body to governmental body. It legally could not be written to the Little League Board.

After further discussion, the fiscal court voted unanimously to approve \$23,000 to the school for the batting cage for younger kids.

## Oak Hill Country Club Swimming Pool

Bobby Gifford attended the fiscal court meeting with a request concerning the Oak Hill Country Club swimming pool, which is used by those with paid memberships.

Gifford said the pool has been losing money, \$4,000 - \$5,000 a year, for the last several years.

Gifford said, "We realize everybody

in the county does not utilize this, but there were 12 churches in the county that had pool parties."

"It's a mainstay of the county," he said. Gifford requested, on behalf of Oak Hill, \$2,500 to buy paint. "Would it close if you don't? Absolutely not," Gifford said. "We're just looking for a little help." Gifford said he was requesting \$2,500 to offset the golf course financial loss and to try to keep the pool open.

He said ARPA funds the county provided in the past "saved our golf course." He said there's a new pool revitalization effort by different individuals who have come on board to keep it going.

Magistrate Naranjo said he talked to the individual this past weekend who was going to paint it, and the individual said he was volunteering his labor for the cause. Naranjo made a motion to approve the \$2,500 for the paint.

Magistrate Henry Cole asked if anyone using the pool had to be a member. Gifford said that was correct.

Cole said, "I cannot be for spending taxpayers' dollars on membership. I'm sorry, I'm not against the Country Club, but that is the reason for it."

Judge Wilson seconded the motion, saying he understood Magistrate Cole's concern, but that there is a difference in local money and the fund from where this money would come.

"This money was actually Feeding America money from tornado relief that we recouped from the PADD (Purchase Area Development District) last week," Judge Wilson said. That account is being closed out.

Judge Wilson said, "Oakhill Association has been there since 1965, so you're looking at 61 years. It's important that it stays viable and open because it's an economic development aspect for our county. People coming here to work, they look at those things."

Judge Wilson and Magistrate Naranjo voted in favor; Magistrate Cole voted

against; motion carried two to one.

## Jail Budget

The fiscal court approved the 2026-27 Jail Budget, the same as last year. Hickman County inmates are taken to the Ballard County Detention Center.

Judge Wilson said, "We have had an excellent relationship with them for seven or eight years." Bobby Hopkins is the transportation officer.

"You can tell by looking at that budget, we're a whole lot better off than having a jail," Judge Wilson said.

The budget is exactly like last year. Judge Wilson said the regular budget will be presented to the fiscal court next month, and it will be exactly the same as last year as well. "We're not going to put anything new on the new fiscal court and judge," he said.

The fiscal court approved a request for Chicken Festival Sponsorship- Petting Zoo and Stage award (\$1,676.00). This will be paid for with Kentucky Mississippi River Parkway Commission funds, through the Purchase Area Development District. The county will receive back all but about \$50 of the sponsorship cost.

## Other:

The fiscal court approved cash transfers:

General to Road - WEX \$834.57 (gas card)

Jail to Road- WEX \$72.63 (gas card)

Road to General- Dawn- \$1,304.10

General to Ambulance- \$873.71

line items.

The next meeting of the Hickman County Fiscal Court is Monday, April 27 at 8 a.m.

## Tiny sandwich shop continued from front page

more.

Batts, who drove a truck for Harry Poe Trucking, said there was an area along that lot where they would wash their tractor trailer trucks.

But inside the Sandwich Shop was where the action was.

"You would go in the front door, and there were 4-5 booths on the left, and the counter was on the right," Batts recalls. It also had a juke box for music with all the latest hits to fill the shop, which was quite the gathering place in its time.

Batts said he lived on Angular Street at one time and would stop in for a sandwich on his way to the movie theatre in town.

It was often crowded and pay phone calls could be made for a dime.

He recalls Homer Harpole housing the 1948 fire truck in the garage part on the end of the True Value building. Har-

pole, a firefighter, would lock up the True Value business and get the truck out when the whistle sounded for everyone to come help. That old fire truck is housed across the street today in the Clinton Fire Department building.

In 1954, Batts went into the Army. Life would later take him to Pennsylvania to drive a truck before coming back to Clinton, Ky., to work and where he resides today.

It was a Letter to the Editor by Jack Calbert submitted for this week's edition that spurred my interest in the business. Calbert wrote:

"Recently the Times published a photo of the old Harpole building on North Washington Street. Attached to this structure is a small ruin which I believe to be the remains of the old Clinton Sandwich Shop, an important social venue of the 1940s and

50s, and maybe the 60s. I remember being taken there in the 40s by Trula Humphreys Calbert, along with my cousin Janet Calbert, for nickel Cokes. In the 50s I went there for the popular "slaw-burger" high-schooler lunches. If someone reading this has memories of this eatery please send your recollections to the Times."

Calbert and I have since realized that the shop wasn't in the little building still on the end of the vacant buildings that stand today. As Batts mentioned earlier, that was Homer's fire truck garage.

I dug into the book by LaDonna Latham and the Hickman County Historical & Genealogical Society's "The Golden Age of Hickman County" and found it was started in 1929 by Cecil "Peggy" Young and Clyde Young. I knew Peggy Young's involvement with the Dime Store

in Clinton, Ky., but did not realize he had other business ventures. The list of owners in the book article showed:

- Cecil & Clyde Young started it in 1929
- Harvey Hurd- 1932
- Harry B. "Stumpy" and Johnnie Jordan- 1934
- A. Edwin Stein - 1937
- Barney Wooten- 1937
- Hazelwood and Roberts- 1938
- WF Ward and son, McMurray Ward- 1938
- Arnett Berry (stock); Harry "Stumpy" Jordan- lot and building- 1938
- Mary Vivrette Vaden and Fannie Green- 1938
- Ruby Bugg- 1947 (Bugg renamed it The Green Lantern)
- Arnell Clapp- 1948
- Carl Drysdale- 1949
- Mose & Allie Mae McClure- 1957

A Facebook discussion led to the addition of Leamon and

Beulah Jackson in the early 1950s as owners.

While the Sandwich Shop had an extensive life span, its ownership was anything but. Talk about a tremendous turnover! I couldn't help but wonder if the youth of Clinton were little terrors, even if they were older youth.

For instance, Tom Turner recalls, "One Halloween, probably late fifty's, my brother and a few other guys put a wagon top of the store."

The shop may have gone on into the early 1960s. Turner recalls going after school with some other kids and getting left over burgers for a dime!

Donna Vick remembers it as a "tiny place with great hamburgers."

Bettie Brazzell recalls it was "everybody's after school stop."

What a cool place it must have been!

## SPELUNKING Part Two

By DANNY WHITLOCK

To catch my readers up, my college friends and I had traveled to Hopkins County to explore a local cave. We arrived, set up camp, and settled in for the night. Rain followed by water running into the cave entrance has woken our group rudely. We decided that as long as we were up our cave exploration should begin. Someone had the bright idea to bring a roll of bailer twine to carry into the cave to insure we could find our way out. This lasted about one hour into the trek inside and was thrown aside because the roll was heavy and bulky and the cave was well marked with all forms of graffiti including arrows pointing the way in and back out.

We struggled up and over fallen rocks, and walked along a stream that was coated with mud washed in from the entrance. We slipped, fell, cursed, and moaned for several hours until we found ourselves in a large chamber. The floor had collapsed and took a funnel shape. At the center of the funnel was a hole about six feet in diameter. To get across the chamber and into the passage on the opposite wall, we had to

cling to the sides and skirt the top edge of the funnel. I watched as two of my companions almost fell and slid into the center hole. I'm thinking, "I don't know what's at the bottom of that hole, and I don't want to find out. They are both stronger and more fit than me. I'm not taking that chance. I'll wait here for them to come back."

As I sat alone in that chamber, all types of thoughts went through my mind. I had a two cell flashlight and a short candle. I didn't want to use them in case I had to make my own way back to the entrance. So I sat.....in total darkness and listened to all the sounds that were echoing about. Finally after about an hour, I heard some chatter and knew my companions had returned. They reported that the cave had gotten too small and tight to continue in search of an exit.

We made our way back to the entrance only to find that the family beagle had gotten into our groceries and shredded or scattered everything that wasn't in a can. Our evening meal was very meager. We were all exhausted and turned in early. I slept well in spite of the slab of rock that was my bed.

The next morning Jerry Stout and I decided to explore the other channel of the cave. Its ceiling was low at about three feet. We had to crawl to make any progress. Stout was in front with me following close behind. All of a sudden, Stout stopped and I butted him with my head before I realized he was stationary. "Come up here," said Jerry. I crawled around to see why we were stopped. He pointed to some excrement lying on the sandy floor. It was two inches in diameter and close to a foot long. Jerry commented, "I don't know what kind of critter left this here, and I sure don't want to run into it on my knees." We made a hasty retreat.

We loaded the truck and headed back to the Powell farm. Mrs. Powell fixed us a hearty breakfast after we had rinsed off the cave mud and changed into dry



The Hughes Avenue Spelunkers: Front row - Jerry Stout and Danny Whitlock Back row - Mike Jankowski, Charlie Powell, Davy Quillette and the Beagle.

clothes. On the ride back to Murray, I made a silent pledge to end my spelunking days for good. I have kept that pledge except for Mammoth Cave and others with established pathways and lights.