

HOWELL COUNTY NEWS

Vol. 26

25th Anniversary

August 19, 2026

Howell County News' first
4th of July
2002



 **250th Anniversary** 
4th of July
2026

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American flag has own history, etiquette

2002

The flag of the United States of America is one of the oldest of the national standards of the world; older than the Union Jack of Great Britain or the Tricolor of France.

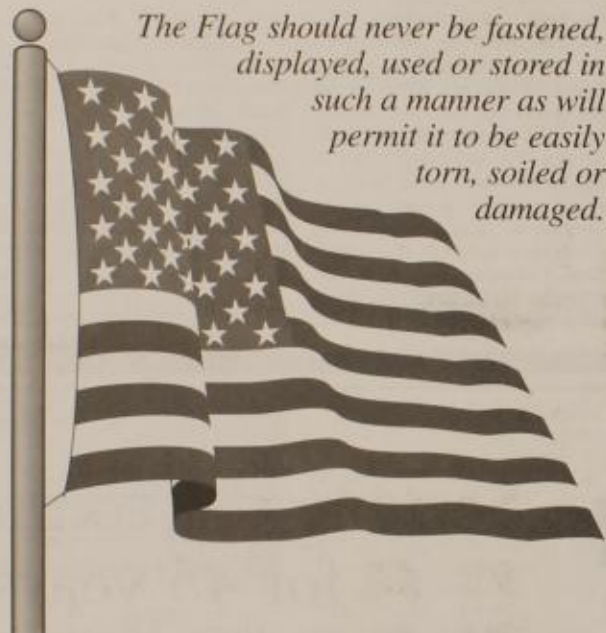
During the early days of the Revolutionary War a variety of flags were used by the different colonies and military commands. Prominent among these were the "Pine Tree" and "Rattlesnake" flags with various arrangements and mottoes.

Late in 1775 a committee of Congress with Benjamin Franklin at the head, after consulting with Washington, then in command of the army at Cambridge, decided upon the form for a new flag. This flag consisted of thirteen stripes, red and white, with the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew on a blue field in the canton or union. This preceded the Declaration of Independence and indicated that the colonies had not wholly broken from the mother country. This flag was first unfurled by Washington, January 2, 1776. It was probably this flag which was raised by Paul Jones on his vessel and carried by the American fleet which sailed out of Philadelphia in February, 1776.

During 1776 and 1777 a number of flags with thirteen stripes came into use and the need of a definite national emblem was realized. On June 14, 1777, Congress passed an act stating "That the Flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation." This was the birthday of the Flag as we now know it and June 14 is now celebrated as "Flag Day." This new flag was probably first displayed on land during the battle at Fort Stanwix, New York, although there are a number of authorities who claim that the first Stars and Stripes displayed in battle was at the Battle of Bennington, Vermont, August 16th, 1777. At any rate, this flag, as displayed, remained the national standard until 1795. The first display of the Star and Stripes by the Continental Army was when the Flag was hoisted over Fort Stanwix, New York, on August 3, 1777.

In the meantime Vermont and Kentucky had become states, and on January 13, 1794, Congress voted that the Flag should have fifteen stripes and fifteen stars. This Flag remained in use for twenty-three years, and it was "The Star-Spangled Banner" of which Francis Scott Key wrote in 1814.

In April, 1818, Congress passed an act providing that the Flag should have the thirteen horizontal stripes, alternate red and white, and that the union should display twenty stars, representing the number of states then in the Union. It also provided that on the admission of every new state to the Union a star should be added on the following July 4th and this has been the regulation every since, accounting for the number of stars now shown.



The Flag should never be fastened, displayed, used or stored in such a manner as will permit it to be easily torn, soiled or damaged.

Proper flag display

Federal Flag Code that is applicable to individuals or businesses wishing to display the flag:

- The Flag should not be displayed on days when the weather is inclement, except when an all weather flag is displayed.

- When the Flag is displayed from a staff projecting from a window sill, balcony or building front the union of the Flag should always be at the peak of the staff unless the Flag is at half-staff. When suspended over a sidewalk from a rope between a building and a pole at the edge of the sidewalk, the Flag should be hoisted over from the building, union first.

- The Flag should not be draped over the hood, top, sides, or back of a vehicle or of a railroad train or a boat. When the Flag is displayed on a motor car, the staff should be fixed firmly to the chassis, or clamped to the right fender.

- Do not let the Flag of the United States touch anything beneath it, such as the ground,

floor, water or merchandise.

- When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union should be uppermost and to the Flag's own right, that is, to the observer's left. When displayed in a window, the Flag should be displayed in the same way, with the union or blue field to the left of the observer in the street.

- The U.S. Flag should never be used as drapery, never festooned, drawn back, nor up, in folds. It should always be allowed to fall free. Bunting should be used for

decoration.

- When bunting is displaced vertically, the blue will be to the observer's left, white in the center and red on the right.

- The Flag should never be fastened, displayed, used or stored in such a manner as will permit it to be easily torn, soiled or damaged.

- When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, the Flag of the United States of America should hold the position of superior prominence, in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor at the clergyman's or speaker's right as he faces the audience. Any other flag so displayed should be placed on the left of the clergyman or speaker or to the right of the audience.

- The U.S. Flag should never have placed upon any part of it, nor attached to it, any mark, insignia, letter, word, figure, design, picture or drawing of any nature.

- When the Flag is so badly torn, soiled, or faded that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display the Flag should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning. Note: The VFW believes that the Flag should be destroyed in private, preferably by burning and without ceremony. A torn Flag may be mended, or if soiled may be washed or dry cleaned.

Etiquette of the Stars and Stripes booklet is available at the Howell County News for anyone wishing to receive further information regarding the United States Flag.

Why did the chicken ...

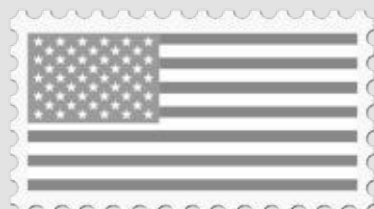


A feathered friend made her way down Main Street in Willow Spring Thursday afternoon. It was unclear where the lone chicken came from, or where the hen was headed. Willow Springs police were called for animal control, but the chicken's fate was unknown at press time.

April 11, 2002

September 19, 2001

2001



TRIPPING DOWN MEMORY LANE

Fourth of July brings fond childhood memories

By Freda DePriest
Correspondent

June 27, 2002

Have you noticed the colorful firework stands set up in the area? The patriotic colors of red, white, and blue surrounding the delightfully different fireworks cause our anticipation for the Fourth of July celebration of our nation's independence to soar.

As a child, sparklers were one of my favorite fireworks — colored sparklers came a few years later. Each of us would stand in line with our sparkler waiting for Dad to light them.

It was quite a sight to see four or more (often we had company to help us celebrate) of these swirling and twirling around the yard in the dark. We would swing our arm in a wide circle as we ran around in such a flurry that we would nearly collide with one another. Actually, we were trying to keep the sparks from burning us.

We, as well as Mother, loved to watch the "Roman Candle" display that started each new color with a bang. Dad always held this in his hand and held his hand up high to make it go higher in the dark nighttime sky. This probably was not the

proper way to set off this firework but Dad made it so very exciting to see. He would always say, "Here comes another one."

It seems to me that we always had at least a small package of Black Cat firecrackers, which Mother strongly disliked, but Dad enjoyed. I also remember those smelly smoking "snakes" they had just for us to be able to light when we were small — we always ran around the yard shrieking, pretending they were monsters.

Homemade ice cream — MMM! — made with a hand-crank ice cream freezer was always a delicious way to start the evening. Each of us took a turn at turning the crank; it would get harder and harder to turn the handle the longer you cranked. Sometimes the adults would have one of us children to sit on a towel on top of the freezer to help keep it steady. When you could no longer turn the crank, it was a sign that it was frozen. Mom then would bring the quilts to cover it and let it season for a while.

We would spend time in the evening sitting on quilts spread on the lawn or just on the grass itself. While sitting and talking with friends we would make necklaces

by knotting clover blossoms together — our own hillbilly lei. What fun! Have any of you children made necklaces like this?

At times, the little ones would chase one another and tumble down on the grass laughing. Sometimes we would all play "Hide and Go Seek" as part of the evenings activities.

After eating ice cream and while we waited for it to get dark enough to light the fireworks, we would lay back on our quilts and try to count the stars or see who could find the Big Dipper and Small Dipper first.

We never had a lot of fireworks, but we sure enjoyed what we had and it was always so special to be able to celebrate our country's freedom.

Freedom comes with a price. May we never forget that wars have been fought and lives lost to gain it and retain it, and may we never take it for granted or lose it in a state of apathy. Our freedom is worth fighting for and worth standing up for! We are proud to be Americans!

Our prayers are with our president, our leaders, and all who are in our armed services wherever they may be stationed. God Bless America, the land of the free.

Willow nation goes from farm boy to fighter pilot

By Barbara Madden
Staff writer

November 6, 2003

For a small child growing up on a farm in Howell County, Willow Springs resident Wayne Spence had big dreams.

He recalls telling a family member who questioned Spence's aspirations, "There's something on the other side of that hill, and I want to see what it is."

While a young farm boy working hard plowing his daddy's cornfields, Spence wanted nothing more than to become a military pilot. He would watch with wonder when a plane flew overhead, praying that one day his dreams would be fulfilled.

"I can remember being sweaty and covered in dirt and praying that God would take me out of the cornfield and let me be a pilot," said Spence. "I told Him that if he would take me out and let my fly, I would never come back."

While a freshman in college, Spence received a life-changing letter from his brother, who had joined the Army to work as a plane mechanic. In addition to his mechanic duties, he found himself the company bugler. The letter strongly encouraged Spence to join the military with this warning, "Anything but the Army."

"Somehow they found out my brother could play the trumpet, so they made him the company bugler," laughed Spence. "No one likes the bugler."

Spence, who was only days from turning 18 and qualifying for the draft, decided to follow his brother's advice and enlist before his birthday. In doing so, he would have a choice of which branch of the service to join. Otherwise, the decision would have been out of his hands and up to Uncle Sam.

On Friday, Sept. 11, 1942, just three days shy of his 18th birthday, the farm boy from Willow Springs joined the United States Navy with hopes of one day becoming a pilot and flying the Corsair-F4U, the fastest fighter jet of the day.

But those dreams would have to wait because at that time the Naval Aviation Department was filled. As a result, Spence had to settle for the pre-med program and spent the duration of his time during his initial stint in the service being trained and patrolling the waters out from Corpus Christi, Texas, for enemy submarines.

At the end of World War II, Spence married a childhood friend, Sybil Lovan, who was also from Willow Springs. He also

resumed his college career.

After graduation, he taught school for a while, but soon learned he would not be able to take care of a wife and raise a family on what the job paid.

"We were given a choice of being paid \$200 a month for six months or \$263 a month for 18 months," explained Spence.

But one day Spence received an offer he couldn't refuse.

The Navy was offering almost \$570 a month with full medical benefits and a retirement plan.

"I wanted to fly military," said Spence, who would eventually retire with a total of 30 years, 20 active and 10 reserve, in the military. "I went back to the Navy for a career. They needed pilots again."

The decision was an easy one for someone with the dream of becoming a Naval aviator.

"We didn't really discuss it," said Sybil, Spence's wife of almost 58 years. "He'd made up his mind and that was it."

At the time, Spence had a signed contract to teach school in Willow Springs, but with a clause that if the Navy called him, he would be released from his obligation to the district.

Two weeks before the start of school, the married father of two children and one on the way received the call to active duty.

Well known for his poetry, Spence's writings are filled with imagery about his experiences during any one of the 72 missions he flew during the Korean War. His eyes fill with tears as he recalls the horror of war as viewed from the pilot's seat.

To the listener, Spence's first-hand accounts are made painfully real by his brutal honesty.

One poem in particular has been a work in progress for almost three decades. "Wings of Death" tells of the killing during Spence's 72 missions over North Korea.

To this day, the image of bloody death lying far below the aircraft in the pristine white snow haunts Spence.

"The Korean War was as horrible a war as there has ever been," said Spence.

Back home, Sybil was busy single-handedly raising the couple's three children.

"From four o'clock on was the hardest part of the day, because everyone else's husbands were coming home," said Sybil. "I learned to do things I didn't know I could do. I fixed a dryer by taking out the element and going to

2003



the hardware store for another one."

"She even fixed a stove once," added Spence proudly.

Because phone calls were expensive, letters were priceless.

"We would write at least every two or three days," said Spence.

"People just don't realize what the women go through," said Sybil. "Whenever I hear of a death (in Iraq), I think of the wife and children left behind."

Even though Sybil always felt her husband would come home safely, she never knew if a crash on a carrier would bring her bad news. "I never felt he wouldn't come home," said Sybil.

"I loved it because I was doing what I wanted," said Spence about his military career. "The military has to come first in every decision

made and in everything you do."

After realizing his dream of becoming a pilot, Spence was back home in Willow Springs visiting with his father when the elder Spence asked his son if he would take the tractor and plow a cornfield. Without explanation, his son refused.

Many years later while hunting with his father, Spence reminded his father of the plowing incident and told him about his prayer as a young boy and the reason he refused his request to plow the field.

"My father was a deeply religious man and his eyes filled with tears," recalled Spence.

A few days later, Wayne Spence's father died, but not before learning the truth about the young farm boy and his big dreams.

Self-described 'crazy old fool' celebrates a century of living

2004



During a Ladies Aid Society meeting Tuesday, Mrs. Jessie Brown celebrated her centennial birthday with a birthday cake covered in pink and blue hearts. An active member of the Pomona Christian Church, Brown cites John 3:16 as her favorite Bible verse. (Photo by Barbara Madden)

September 16, 2004

By Barbara Madden
Contributing writer

When 100-year-old Jessie Brown of West Plains needs a little inspiration, she just tells herself, "Jessie, you can do it if you want to." Sometimes she even throws in a "crazy old fool" just for good measure.

"You assume you can do what you've always done, but you can't," said Brown who celebrated her centennial birthday on Aug. 28.

A member of the Pomona Christian Church in Pomona, Brown cites John 3:16 as her favorite Bible verse and rarely misses church. She is also an active member of the Ladies Aid Society, which meets every Tuesday. The society makes quilts and remembers friends with cards as well as prepares care packages for college students. This week, they remembered Brown with a birthday cake decorated with pink and blue hearts.

Joyce Nielsen, a long-time member of the Ladies Aid Society, thanks of Brown as her mother. "She is my dearest friend," said Nielsen. "We started doing dishes at Ladies Aid together. She is my confidant. She's kept me in line, and since my mother died I have adopted her."

As a child, Brown recalls children accusing one another of "acting like you're 40," said Brown with a laugh. "That was old then."

A life-long optimist, Jessie is convinced that her genetic make-up

is the chief contributing factor to her longevity. Both her mother and father lived to be at least 90 years of age, she said.

She also follows a strict dietary regimen of a bowl of oatmeal for breakfast, lunch courtesy of "Meals on Wheels" and bread, preferably wheat, with milk for supper. If she's feeling especially feisty, she toasts the bread, said Brown. Other than a multi-vitamin, Brown, said she is free of any signs of arthritis or other similar aches and pains, and she doesn't take any other medication.

But not only is she careful with her diet, Brown keeps up her physical strength by using a treadmill for a daily 30-minute walk. She also is diligent about her skin care. "Wrinkles are caused by dry skin," advised the amazingly youthful-looking Brown, who is an avid user of Olap products. "I say moisturize, moisturize, moisturize."

Educated at Des Moines Iowa University in Des Moines with a degree in education, Brown attended elementary school in Kellogg, Iowa, where she was born, but finished high school three miles away in Newton, Iowa.

After graduating from college, she applied for a teaching position with Rock Creek Township No. Three.

"I was afraid they wouldn't hire me," she said. "I'll never forget it. And it is unlikely they ever forgot her."

It was a cold winter morning and the novice teacher was busy prepar-

ing for her students' arrival when suddenly the gas stove used to heat the room blew up.

"I didn't know to let air in it," explained Brown.

After that, her director was a bit skeptical about his new teacher. Brown recalled he scolded her calling her "little lady" and suggesting "she had a lot to learn about gas stoves."

Two years later, Brown married her high school sweetheart, who was a cattle buyer. During their first year of marriage, Brown said they lived in three different houses.

"I didn't unpack," recalled Brown.

After another year of teaching, they welcomed a son into the family.

Unfortunately a few years later, the couple divorced, leaving Brown a single mother, a rarity in those days.

Eventually, Brown met and married a carpenter by the name of Earl R. Brown and in 1972, the couple relocated to West Plains, where Brown's husband built homes. Before her husband's death at 95 years of age, the couple celebrated 50 years of marital bliss.

Brown is thankful for everything in her life, but especially her three grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren.

"I live from day to day," said Brown. "Each day before I get out of bed, I say, 'Thank you, Lord, for one more day.'"

A history lesson: Looking back at the Star Theater's restoration

By Bud Marvin

January 9, 2003

When I first moved back to Willow, I got involved with the Willow Springs Theater Guild through a play called "Don't Get Sassy" that they were putting on at the "Old Star Theater" on the main drag of Willow Springs.

I had attended many movies at the old theater when I was growing up here. My father had gone to silent movies in the old theater, and it was just part of my heritage.

Shortly after "Don't Get Sassy," the foundation that owned the building decided to redo the inside of the old building, and I paid my \$52 to be a member.

Then, Hubert Reaves, Ralph Oliver and I laid out a plan and with a volunteer crew started ripping out the old.

Richard Greene and his son were hired to do the serious work, with our bunch doing what we could. Ralph and his crew cut hundreds of little two-by-two blocks to attach the curtain walls to and attached those blocks to long two-by-two boards that Hubert and Ralph then attached to the walls for us. Hubert and I tore out everything Richard wanted torn out and then started doing little things as we could.

After the ceiling was done (over 70 stamped tiles were replaced), Richard started on the floor. Hubert and I started on the men's bathroom. (It was exactly like it had been in the old days.) Ralph had the local welding shop build a light bar for the ceiling and Richard and Michael hung it for us.

Next, we hired a flooring company from Cabool to come in on a weekend and sand the floor and resal it. It took a second coat on Sunday to finish the job.

I had been wiring the control booth and I then focused on wiring in the lights on the walls before Ralph and his crew hung the curtain material. Ralph and Sharon Oliver, Sharon Dumivin, Hubert and Beverly Reaves and Christy Jordan were most of the crew that hung the curtains. I just barely stayed ahead of them, but we both got done on schedule.

Hubert and I then installed the lights on the new bar. Karen Owens and her girls were called in to paint the trim along the ceiling of the main room and then the area around the bathrooms and the balconies. Then a crew moved all of the seats over to the Star and Hubert, Jack Lyon and myself laid out and screwed them to the floor with special screws we had gotten from Ronnie White's. Marcella Cutler then hand spot-painted every seat in the house. In six weeks, we completed the room as you see it today with a large volunteer crew and three specialized crews. A few modifications were made, but most of it is just like it was in 1924 when Mr. Haas built the building.

The seats are old seats that had been purchased by a church in Springfield and resold and then sold to the theater guild and donated to the project. The balcony is an addition but made a good access to the control booth. The control booth is the old

projection room with a new roof on it and a modified window cut into the front. The light bar was modified later by Jack Lyon, Hubert and me. The stage curtain was done two years ago, by Marcella Cutler, Hilda Hickman, my wife, Claudia, and me. Hubert, Claudia and I hung the new curtain rod and then the new curtain.

From there, we moved on the annex door and with another crew which included Faye Wiersma, Hubert Reaves, Marcella Cutler, Fran Preston, Christy Jordan, Claudia Marvin and me, Barry Stevenson laid the carpet. We cleaned and built a new wall in the back of the room and replaced all of the ceiling tiles, installed new lights and painted the walls. Voila, we had a place for the artists of the area to display their work and have meetings as well as simply having a great multi-purpose room.

This year, the foundation had installed a heating and air-conditioning unit and in the last few weeks, we drummed up \$6,800 and started on two new bathrooms and a food service area behind that new back wall, one of the hallrooms to be accessed from the back room that is controlled by the theater guild.

A new hole was cut through the concrete wall by the back door to the stage and now you can go from one building to the other without getting in the weather. Next! We had run into problems on the project - a busted water line under the concrete that took two days to cut out along with other things that were not anticipated in the beginning.

The bathrooms are not quite done ... no water ... no ceiling ... but we are close.

But the project has run into a problem that I should have foreseen, but thought had been buried - what is the completed project going to be used for and who is going to have control of the building. I would hate to think that any one group would maintain complete control of a project that is without a doubt a public building. Although, the theater guild people were the largest one contributor of money and manpower in what and how much got done on the project. Most of those people who donated their time and effort have now left that group for one reason or another.

Thousands of dollars were raised by the theater guild and arts council, asking for donations or sponsorship for whatever event was going on at the time. The hundreds of people who donated their time and their talents or their children's talents to each show were the people who earned that money and any money from ticket sales.

A large amount of that money was eventually donated to the project. If you could place a dollar amount on each performer who has contributed, it would really raise people's eyebrows.

The bottom line is this is a public building, bought and paid for by public money. The people who operate this building need to be made clearly aware of this and act accordingly. They have a public trust, and to break that trust in this day and age would not be a very smart thing to do.

Barbecue is America's quintessential food

Barbecue is arguably our nation's most potent culinary symbol. It is as varied as our regions, as fiery as our spirit, as sweet as our promise and as popular as our shores.

Most important, according to Mike Mills, the only three-time barbecue grand champion of Memphis, is to realize that true barbecue is a sociable dish, to be cooked in large quantities and shared with company. "You can't make good barbecue if you don't enjoy people," he insists. Consequently, the following recipes are all intended to feed a crowd.

Magic Dust (dry rub)

In an aluminum bowl, mix together:

- 1/2 cup paprika
- 1/4 cup kosher salt, finely ground
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons mustard powder
- 1/4 cup chili powder
- 1/4 cup ground cumin
- 2 tablespoons ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup granulated garlic
- 2 tablespoons cayenne

Store in a tightly covered container. Makes 2 1/2 cups. This sauce is smooth and on the thin side, and it seeps down into the meat.

Apple City Barbecue Sauce

- 1 cup ketchup
- 2/3 cup seasoned rice vinegar
- 1/2 cup apple juice or cider
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup soy sauce or Worcestershire sauce (or a combination of the two)

- 2 tablespoons prepared yellow mustard
- 3/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ground white pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne
- 1/3 cup bacon bits, ground in a spice grinder
- 1/3 cup peeled and grated apple
- 1/3 cup grated onion
- 2 teaspoon grated green bell pepper

Combine all the ingredients except apple, onion and bell pepper in a saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Stir in the remaining three ingredients, reduce heat and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring often, until sauce starts to thicken. Cool, and store in sterilized glass bottles or jars. Makes 3 cups.

Apple City Barbecue Grand World Champion Ribs

- 4 racks of baby back ribs (about 2 pounds each)
- Magic Dust, to taste
- 4 cups apple juice in a spray bottle
- 3 cups Apple City Barbecue Sauce
- 1 chimney starter
- 5-pound bag of natural lump charcoal (for heat)
- 4 cups apple-wood chips (for smoke)

July 7, 2005

Trim any excess fat from the ribs and remove the skinlike membrane from the back of the ribs by starting in the middle of each rack and working a table knife or screwdriver underneath the skin, going all the way across and tearing it up.

Place the ribs on cookie sheets, season the racks on both sides with Magic Dust. Cover with clear plastic wrap, place in refrigerator and let marinate for anywhere from 4 to 24 hours.

Soak the apple-wood chips in water for half an hour. Drain.

Start your fire. Fill the chimney with charcoal, wad up a piece of newspaper or paper towel, stuff it underneath the chimney and ignite it with a match (never use lighter fluid). Your charcoal will be ready in about 15 minutes - or, as Mills says, "about the time it takes to drink one beer."

Remove the grate and arrange the medium-hot coals in a smoker or a grill with a lid, leaving two lumps in the bottom of the chimney. Set an aluminum pan next to the coals in the grill as a drip pan. Spread out the wet

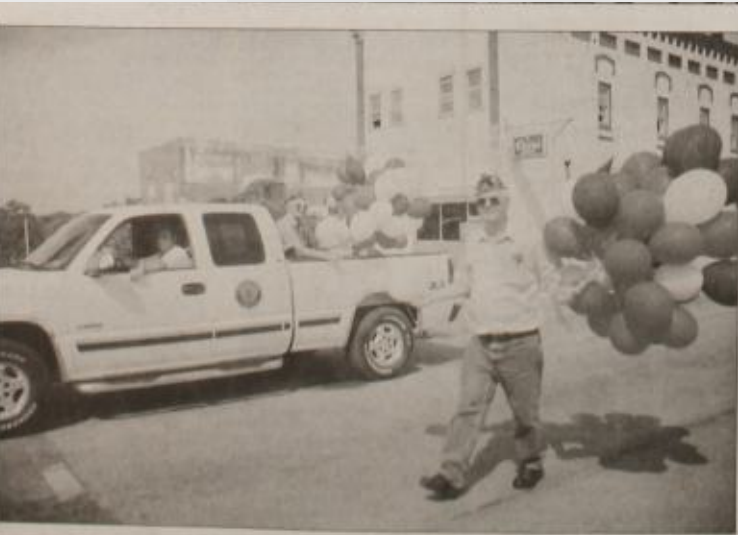
wood chips over the coals. Replace the rack, close the grill and check the temperature. It should be between 200 and 210 F. If the temperature is too high, open the lid to allow some heat to escape.

Pour another load of charcoal on top of the two smoking coals in the chimney. You won't need to add more paper. Once the temperature of the grill is steady, open the grill and place the ribs on the rack, bone side down. Do not turn, as this will result in dry meat. Cover and smoke for about 6 hours, or until the ribs are done and tender, basting them every 20 minutes with apple juice sprayed from a bottle. Opening the lid will lower the heat, so add more coals and wood chips as needed to maintain the proper temperature.

About 10 minutes before you remove the ribs from the pit, mop them with the sauce. When you take them off the pit, mop again with sauce. If you wish, you may also sprinkle lightly with Magic Dust. Serve immediately.

Makes 4 servings.

2005



Fourth of July parade

Area horse lovers showed their patriotism as they brought up the rear of the annual Fourth of July parade in downtown Willow Springs Monday. At right, veterans like Gerald Freeman from Willow Springs' Smith-Holloway post of the American Legion handed out red, white and blue balloons to children along the parade route. For more photos, please see page 10.

July 7, 2005

Willow bank celebrates 100 years



The bank's original location.

Back then, the City Barber Shop, located in the Commercial Hotel, advertised, the sharpest razors and cleanest towels.

McCall Patterns were advertised for 10 to 15 cents and "house higher."

The Frisco railroad was advertised as the "Wise Man's Way" to travel, with departure times from Willow Springs listed throughout the day and night.

Wallpaper was 4 cents per roll, and it was announced that the 1906 Hicks Almanac would not be published, but instead would be printed as a magazine.

And the State Bank of Willow Springs advertised that it had capital of \$10,000 and would "do a conservative banking business," with "money to loan on gilt edge security" and with safety deposit boxes for rent.

At that time, Frank Saas was the president and Warren Allen was the cashier.

When the State Bank of Willow Springs opened its doors in the Star Opera House Building March 5, 1906, it made the front page of the Willow Springs Republican. Listed was an official statement of financial condition for the bank, which

showed resources and liabilities each equaling \$16,535.01.

How time changes things. Today, customers of U.S. Bank can access their accounts over the internet, and can pay their personal or business bills online with the click of a computer mouse.

But things haven't always been so simple.

Prior to 1906, several banks had been established and had either closed their doors or merged with the State Bank of Willow Springs. The first bank, called Willow Springs Bank, began in 1891, located at the corner of Second and Center streets. Capital stock was \$15,000 and officers were James A. Ferguson, president; James M. McGhee, vice president; and W.E. Cook, cashier.

In 1892, the Citizens Bank, with capital of \$10,000 and deposits of \$40,000 began. Also in the 1890's, Loy Brothers and Preston Bank was established on Center Street.

The Bank of Willow Springs was established in March 1903, and was merged with the State Bank of Willow Springs in 1929.

The State Bank of Willow Springs first was housed in the old Opera House building, which still



Pictured are, back row from left, Angie Plybon, Linda Turner, Tina Roberts, Debbie Wake, Peggy Harris, Ruth Anne Mathews, Cindy Hinds and Carrie McNew. Pictured on the front row are, from left, Jamie Ogden, Jeanne Traw, Gail Townsend and Timothy James.

2006



Above, a bank teller in the early days.

March 30, 2006

stands at the corner of Harris and Main streets - across from Pitts Computer Radio Shack - and now houses Masterpiece Cabinets in the lower level.

According to bank history, the bank remained there for several years, and later was sold to Judge Wright from Richland, Mo., who was the principal stock holder and cashier, along with Mart Rollins as president.

Later, Mr. Wright sold his interest to C.H. Burchard of Waynesville, and Mr. Rollins sold his interest to T.R. Burns. Warren Allen, as treasurer of First Baptist church, opened an account which remained the oldest account at the bank for years.

Over its years in operation, the State Bank of Willow Springs had three locations. After its original location in the Opera House, the bank moved in 1917 to a newly constructed building located at 123 E. Second St., which now is 123 E. Main St. and home to Willow Springs City Hall.

The present bank building was constructed and occupied by 1975. In March 1975, the State Bank of Willow Springs was purchased by Mercantile Bancorporation Inc. of St. Louis, a multi-bank holding company that held 31 banks statewide with assets of \$4.65 billion.

Holding stock at the time of the sale were Howard L. Burchard, E.E. Ogden, T.R. Burns, J.C. Burns, K.A. Lasley, Rena Green, James E. Ogden and Coralee Ogden.

When the bank celebrated its 75th year in business, it had increased its total resources from just more than \$16,000 to \$19,387,202.59.

Current bank president Jamie Ogden was among employees listed at the 75th anniversary, along with current employee Ruth Anne Mathews and Beverly Daniels, who recently retired.

The Mercantile Bank later became First Bank, then U.S. Bank in 2001, according to Ogden.

He emphasizes that although the bank today is owned by a large corporation, "We still believe we're the hometown bank."

It employs local residents, many of whom have worked at the bank for years. Current employees, in addition to Ogden, are Gail Townsend, Tina James, Cindy Hinds, Jeanne Traw, Debbie Wake, Ruth Anne Mathews, Angie Plybon, Carrie McNew, Peggy Harris, Tina Roberts and Linda Turner.

A 1924 newspaper article provided by Jay Waggoner Sr. tells of the importance of a quality bank to a community - something that still holds true today.

"As a rule, the important part played by a bank is not fully appreciated by the public," the article reads.

"A majority look upon it as simply a place of safe keeping for money, and have no adequate conception of the fact that banks constitute an important factor in the success of all legitimate enterprises and the feeling afforded a business community by the possession of one or more responsible banks whose methods are founded upon broad experience and whose financial status is beyond question, may not be overestimated."

"There are many features about this time-tried institution that should be considered by any one who intends to open a bank account. Here is employed every safeguard for the protection of patrons and all whose funds are entrusted to its care. The bank is conducted on sound and conservative principles and its management is characterized by sagacity, energy and ability, coupled with liberality and honorable methods, closely identifying itself with many improvements that have helped in the onward march of progress of the county and contributing liberally to its prosperity."

For more information about what U.S. Bank has to offer, check out the company's web site www.usbank.com.

July 19, 2006

Ozarks' summer heat makes all of us exaggerate

Several years ago, I listened to a self-important college professor at Southwest Missouri State University describing what he called Ozarkian dialectal exaggeration.

He had done years of research on the phenomenon, and had written pages and pages of titillating material on its cultural mystery.

In short, he spent several years researching how a lot of us in this part of the country talk.

Example?

If someone asks you how

My Point of View

By Publisher Kim Wehmer



you're doing, what do you say? Finer than a frog's hair. Happy as a

clam. Happy as a pig in ... well, its wallow.

This cultural phenomenon becomes even more prevalent with extremes of weather.

Translated? It's hotter'n Hades. Hot enough to fry eggs on the sidewalk.

You're sweating like a person of ill repute in church.

You're sweating your gluteus maximus off.

Or, one of my favorites, the heat makes you "thirstier than a big dog."

The funny thing is some situations call for exaggeration to make it into an even taller tale. And everybody who's anybody knows where and when to apply these rules of grammar.

I've heard and even laughed as elderly people lose their inherent ability to exaggerate. "Well, Hon, she's as smart as a tack. Sharp as a whip."

It sounds almost as ridiculous to try to "modernize" our favorite speech phrases by bringing our comparisons into this century -

especially when you're talking about our recent weather.

It's hotter than rumors about Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie.

It's hotter'n Osama Bin Laden's panic button.

It's hotter'n a fish out of water. Just ask the makers of "Finding Nemo."

It's so hot that rap stars decided to go ahead and pull their pants the rest of the way off.

It's hotter'n Monica Lewinsky in church.

It's hotter than the race between

Judge Rich Moore and Judge David Evans for circuit judge.

It's hotter'n a farmers' market potato on a July morning.

Well, however you want to say it, it's hotter'n just about anything out there. From us to you, drink plenty of water and try not to work outdoors during the hottest part of the day.

And if that doesn't help, remember it'll be colder than the romance between Bill and Hillary before long, and you'll be freezing your tail off.

2007



Ralph Perkins carved an old elm tree at the Jack and Donna Lyon residence. (Photo by Jack Lyon)

July 25, 2007

From elm tree to artwork

Local couple create site to see

The tree was becoming a nuisance, but now it's a piece of art.

At the home of Jack and Donna Lyon, located at 204 Pine Grove Road in Willow Springs, an aging elm tree has been turned into a work of art by local artist Ralph Perkins.

Jack Lyon said the elm tree was old and brittle, with limbs falling out.

"When people would come to visit, I had to tell them not to park under that tree in case a limb fell out," he said.

Recently, Jack trimmed the tree back by cutting the largest branches off. But then he ran into a problem. The tree was 13 feet and 2 inches around, said Donna Lyon.

"We didn't have a saw that was big enough to cut it down," said Jack.

So his wife talked to Perkins, who is well known throughout the area for his intricate wood carvings. Perkins soon set to work, spending about 15 hours total carving the three large tree branches with a chisel and a maul.

Jack said Perkins explained to him the story of the three faces carved on the tree branches.

Starting at the left, Jack said the face represents an aging tree troll who's 100 years old.

"He's just thrilled to be where he can see out," said Jack.

The middle face represents a man who's "just awed by what's going on, looking out at the world," he said.

The gentleman on the right, he said, is a bit mischievous. "He says, 'I ain't telling you nothin'," said Jack.



Jack and Donna Lyon.

After Perkins finished carving the tree, Jack said he applied an outdoor finish typically used to keep sailboats from peeling. The finish was recommended to him by his son who has worked with several sailboats.

The couple said the tree is still

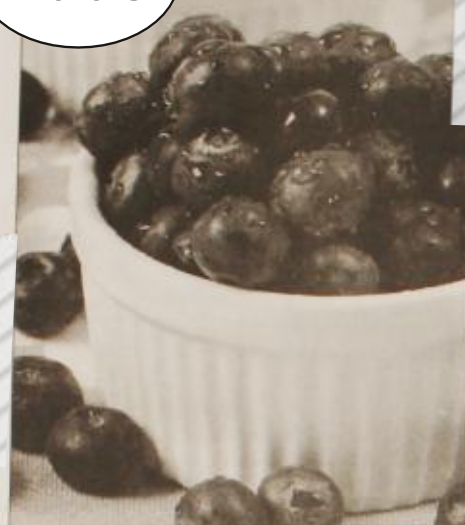
alive, evidenced by its green leaves. They're planning to landscape around the tree, and may place a copper covering at the top of the tree to protect the living statues.

They said all are welcome to enter their driveway to look at the tree.

LOOK WHAT'S COOKIN'

July 9, 2008

2008



By Diane Jeffery
Contributing writer

ful on pancakes and will keep for several weeks if refrigerated. — Recipe from Jean Klappmeyer

National Blueberry Muffin Day falls on July 11, but July was proclaimed as National Blueberry Month by the United States Department of Agriculture on May 8, 1999. Blueberries are grown in 35 states in the United States, and the country produces more than 90 percent of all of the blueberries in the world. They have been used in soups, stews and more, for centuries.

The Native Americans believed that these little blue berries were good for your health. Blueberry tea was used to ease childbirth pain and the leaves of the blueberry bush were used to make a blood purifier that was good for the kidneys.

Modern medicine also praises the benefits of blueberries. It is thought that blueberries work much the same way as cranberries to prevent urinary tract infections. According to Ronald L. Prior, Ph. D., director of the USDA, they may also help in the prevention of macular degeneration.

One thing to always remember about blueberries is that you should not wash them before freezing them. You may want to freeze them on cookie sheets and then put them in freezer containers. Keep them frozen until ready for use. The thing to remember when adding blueberries to batter is to toss them with flour from your recipe first, and they will stay suspended in the batter.

Last year, the early freeze got the crops, but this year, local blueberry producer Jean Klappmeyer has been quite busy. According to Klappmeyer, the blueberries start producing in June and produce for most of the month of July. The Klappmeyers Berries & More is located 13 miles southwest of Willow Springs on Highway 181 or 7 miles north of Twin Bridges on Highway 181. There is one of 18 blueberry farms located on the Agri-Missouri Blueberry Trail put out by the Blueberry Council of Missouri.

Blueberry Ice Cream Sauce

3 cups blueberries
1/2 cup white sugar
1/4 cup frozen orange juice concentrate

Mix all ingredients in saucepan and bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring frequently. Boil 1 minute or to desired thickness. Cool and ladle over mounds of vanilla ice cream. According to Jean Klappmeyer, this is wonder-

To Die For Blueberry Muffins

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 cup white sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/3 cup vegetable oil
1 egg
Approximately 1/3 cup milk
1 cup fresh blueberries
1/2 cup white sugar
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1/3 cup butter, cubed
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Grease muffin cups or line with muffin liners.

Combine 1/2 cups flour, 3/4 cup sugar, salt and baking powder. Place vegetable oil in a 1 cup measuring cup; add the egg and enough milk to fill the cup. Mix this with flour mixture. Fold in blueberries (remember to toss them with a little flour first). Fill muffin cups right to the top and sprinkle with crumb topping mixture.

To make crumb topping, mix together 1/2 cup sugar, 1/3 cup flour, 1/4 cup butter, and 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon. Mix with fork and sprinkle over muffins before baking.

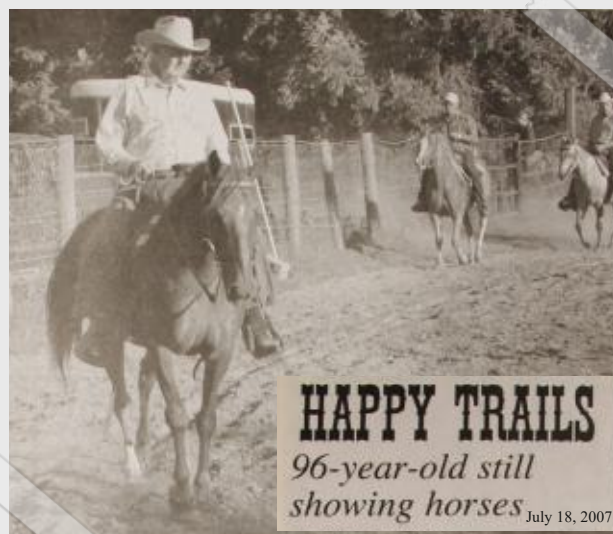
Bake for 20-25 minutes in the preheated oven, or until done. — Recipe from www.allrecipes.com

Individual Blueberry Cheesecakes

14 vanilla wafers
1 package (8 ounces) regular cream cheese or Neutuchel (1/3 less fat), softened
1 can (14 ounces) regular or fat-free sweetened condensed milk
1/2 cup lemon juice
1-1/4 cups fresh blueberries

Place cupcake liners in 12 (3-inch) muffin pan cups; place 1 vanilla wafer in each cup. Into a small bowl, crumble the remaining 2 wafers; set aside. In a mixing bowl, with an electric mixer, beat cream cheese until smooth. Gradually beat in condensed milk. Add lemon juice, stirring until mixture starts to thicken. Set aside 12 large blueberries; fold the remaining berries into cream cheese mixture. Spoon mixture into cupcake liners. Top each with some of the reserved crumbs and a large blueberry. Cover loosely with waxed paper; refrigerate in the muffin pan until firm 1 to 2 hours, before serving. Recipe from www.blueberrycouncil.com

— Please send all comments or recipes to jeff@howell.com



HAPPY TRAILS

96-year-old still showing horses

July 18, 2007

Summertime fun: Take a few minutes to wade in creek

I stopped the minivan and shut the engine off. Shutting the DVD player and the girls' late-afternoon matinee, "Moppets in Space."

"What are we stopping for?" asked the eldest.

"We're getting out," I said.

The girls were amazed that we were stopping to get into the water. After all, they were familiar with their grandparents' driveway, but we never had stopped to play in the creek.

I suppose we were too busy. My husband and I all for it and stopped his shoes off.

"OK, girls, time to get out."

The water was warm and thanks to the recent rain, was running and clear — opposite of how it looks sometimes in

My Point of View
Publisher
Kim Wehner



July 22, 2009

The girls — ages 2 and a half and 4 — didn't quite know what to think. They're normal, average girls who live in town. They've been "swimming" before, but only in a swimming pool.

On this day, they learned something different. I had the youngest and held

her by both hands. "I don't like it," Heidi said — her standard answer for something new. She wanted back in the car.

"Let's walk around some more," I urged.

On the other side of the car, I heard a splash and realized I forgot my standard warning.

"The rocks in the water get slick," I said, with my words drowned out by the laughter of our oldest daughter, Holly.

And there was lesson No. 1 — algae growing on creek rock makes the rocks very slick.

In my mind, I roared back 30-plus years. In the same creek, on the same rock, my brother, sister and I used to try to stand up on the same rocks. Oh, what great fun we had "skating" around on the flat rock that

covers the bottom of that stretch of creek. Back then, we weren't too upset when we wound up on our rear end in the water on a hot summer's day.

Holly didn't seem to mind either.

Heidi still didn't "like" it and wanted back in the car.

But then I pointed out the "little fishes" — schools and schools of minnows swimming in the cool, clear, shallow water.

"Stand still and watch them," I said.

The minnows came closer to Heidi's feet and she laughed. "I wanna see! I wanna see!" said an enthusiastic Holly.

Standing in the water — only a little above ankle-deep on me — the girls got another science lesson.

We learned about fish and minnows, snails, crawdads and rocks. I told them about how my grandma used to take me fishing in the same creek, just up and around the bend. I also told them where our "swimming hole" had been as kids. In five minutes' time, our girls had learned a lot.

When we served it my parents' house a few months later, Heidi told her grandma that she got to go in "the water," while Holly said she got to "walk in the lake."

Several hours later, driving home in the dark, Holly was nearly asleep when we passed the same spot again.

Raising her sleepy head, she asked a simple question: "Can we go in the lake again next time we come here?"

I promised we would try. I was reminded again how a few minutes can make a big difference. And a few minutes can make wonderful childhood memories like I have.

I also was reminded how important it is to get kids outside.

For children to appreciate the beauty and bounty we have here in the Ozarks, they have to get outside to see it. There's a lot to learn in your yard, in the park or just by taking a long walk in your neighborhood.

There are still a few weeks left of summer before kids go back to school. I'd challenge each of you this week to make sure you spend a little time outside — and just watch what your kids will learn.

2009



The three faces of the tree, as they appear from left to right.

Honey production sees sweet success

By Renee DePriest
Contributing writer

When sugar has not been readily available in the past, folks in the Ozarks have relied on honey as sweetener. Local beekeeper Dale Watson shared how to get started raising bees and harvesting honey.

Beekeeping is not as easy as it seems.

"I thought you could put bees in a hive and harvest honey," Watson said. "It's not that simple. I've been killing bees for about seven years now. I lost several of the first hives I got through pure ignorance."

He recommends seeking advice from local beekeepers and reading up about bees.

"Get together with someone who has bees and learn from them," said Watson. "There are a lot of books and different publications available that will inform you about bees. There's been a lot of publicity about bees in the past few years, so a lot more people are becoming interested in bees."

"Do all the research you can but, as one guy told me, 'remember those bees haven't read those books,'" added Watson.

Watson said beekeeping is a hobby for him.

"I don't do it for the money, but because I enjoy it," said Watson.

Watson bought his first bees for use in pollinating his orchard.

"We put some fruit trees out and weren't seeing many bees," said Watson. "I originally started out with one package of bees. I've been lucky. I was able to buy some hives from a widow whose husband had worked with bees."

Bees are ordered by the pound.

"A three-pound package is usually what's ordered. It will cost approximately \$100 for the bees alone. They are shipped by mail," said Watson.

"There is a basic starter kit

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that will have everything you need to get started beekeeping," added Watson. "It will be enough to start from scratch with the exception of the bees. It runs around \$350 to \$400 for a starter kit."

Watson said there are several beekeeping supply companies, including Kelly, Dadant, Brushy Mountain and Man Lake Ltd.

"You can order your hives and all kinds of beekeeping supplies," Watson stated. "You can start as simple as you want or as detailed as you want."

Make sure your hives will arrive before your bees.

"It might be a good idea to have the hives in hand before ordering bees," advised Watson.

When the bees arrive, you need to have an appropriate place to set the hives.

"You need to set them where you will have shade in the hottest part of the day," said Watson. "There are some beekeepers who set their hives in the sun."

In addition, Watson said the front of the hive should face east or south.

Consider wearing protective gear when working with bees.

"One thing people think is that bees are aggressive, but they aren't. If you work with

bees, you are going to get stung," said Watson. "You can protect yourself with protective gear."

"You can get as elaborate with your outfit as you want. They have full body suits and half body suits," Watson continued. "You will find that some of your more experienced beekeepers will not even wear gloves. It depends on the individual."

Bees make honey through a process that starts with them visiting plants or trees for nectar.

"They visit flowering fruit trees, including green flowering trees that you wouldn't typically think of," said Watson.

"A bee brings the nectar from the flower and regurgitates it to a worker bee inside the hive. The worker bee then digests it and either produces wax or honey," Watson explained. "The larva or brood comb is where the new workers are produced. The storage comb is where the honey is stored."

The amount harvested varies from year to year.

"Sometimes, you can harvest honey the first year, but it's generally the second year before you can harvest off of a new hive," said Watson.



The bees come and go all day, bringing nectar to the bees working within the hive.

There are many different variables that determine when you can harvest honey.

"Weather, the variety of bee, the amount of nectar flow from flowers and the location of flowers affect what you can do," said Watson. "This summer, my bees quit making honey because it had been so dry and hot."

To harvest the honey, remove frames from the hive, uncup the comb and place it over a collection container.

"You don't want to get into the brood comb and destroy your next generation of workers, so you only want to rob the honey combs. I usually pull a few frames at the time," said Watson. "If you want to spend a lot of money, you can get mechanical separators. I use the old time method of uncupping the comb, turning the frame upside down and allowing the honey to drip out."

Watson then filters his honey.

"I strain it through a thin-membrane cloth, such as cheesecloth," said Watson.

Watson said there is a difference between raw honey and honey purchased at the store.

"If you buy honey from a store, it has been pasteurized," said Watson. "Pasteurizing honey means you bring it to a certain temperature. I think it's 150 degrees. It should be cooled quickly, so you don't kill the good enzymes."

Honey has a long shelf life.



Beekeeper Dale Watson has placed one of his hives in the woods behind his house. The hive faces east as is recommended. (Photos by Renee DePriest)

"The only time honey will go bad is if it has too high moisture content. It will ferment and turn into mead," said Watson. "Honey will go to sugar, but it is still good. Put it in warm water and allow it to reconstitute slowly, so you don't lose the good enzymes."

"I've read where they've taken honey out of the Egyptian pyramids, reconstituted it and it was just fine," added Watson.

Watson discussed honey's color and flavor.

"The lighter the flowers, the lighter the honey. Spring flowers are lighter and will result in a lighter honey," said Watson.

"Flowers that bloom in August are darker and will produce a darker honey. Personally, I prefer a darker honey."

"Commercial honey producers will ship hives to the orange groves in Florida and to the cranberry bogs in Maine. Whatever the bees feed on will affect the flavor," said Watson.

Watson's honey, beekeeping tidbits

"Honey has a natural antibiotic. In Biblical times, they used it to dress wounds."

"Many people say that if you use local honey it will help with allergies."

"For diabetics, there is a little more proof that it helps. I am a diabetic and I use honey as a sweetener."

My wife cooks with honey. We even can peaches with honey."

"I know one thing - there are no chemicals in honey."

"It adds an extra flavor to coffee and smooth out the bitterness."

"Periodically, you need to clean the comb out. The comb was can be melted down, filtered and used in various ways."

For those interested in beekeeping, Watson suggested attending the monthly meetings of South Central Beekeepers Association. The group meets 7 p.m. the first Friday of every month at the Howell-Oregon Electric Community Room.

2010

October
20,
2010

December 29, 2010

Celebrating 150 years



The community of Mountain View celebrated 150 years over Fourth of July weekend. In the parade, driven by Mary West, were grand marshals Norman and Faye Eidson who were instrumental in organizing Mountain View's centennial festivities in 1960. Please see more photos from 2010 on page 11.



Civil War began 150 years ago this week

2011

War exceptionally hard for women left behind

By Lou Wehmer
Contributing writer

We cannot proceed with our series on the Civil War without stopping for a moment and making note of the fact that 150 years ago, the event regarded as the start of the war occurred this week. April 12, 1861, saw the firing on the federal fort in Charleston Harbor, S.C., by forces of the newly formed Confederate States of America.

Additional southern states immediately left the Union for the Confederacy, but Missouri was still reticent. A recent referendum of the people supported the preservation of the Union, and the Missouri Legislature refused to accommodate the secession governor with a vote to secede. Less than a week later, President Abraham Lincoln issued a call for Missouri to furnish troops to help put down the rebellion, and our Governor Jackson refused.

His language got Lincoln's immediate attention, amongst all the problems of the week. Jackson replied: "Your requisition, in my judgment, is illegal, unconstitutional, and revolutionary in its objects, inhuman and diabolical, and cannot be complied with. Not one man will the state of Missouri furnish to carry on such an unholy crusade." Thus, Missouri was to vex the president for the remainder of the war. The men of the state on both sides wrestled and wrangled politically throughout the conflict, when they weren't shooting at each other. But this isn't a story about them. It is a story of the women living here during the war.

The arrival of spring 1861 was followed by the usual rhythms of a family farm, the main occupation here. Women worked alongside their men helping with handling the oxen or horses with the spring plowing and planting. Corn was the main crop, with an occasional patch of wheat where the ground had been adequately cleared. The family vegetable garden was usually the woman's duty, with a high rail fence around it to keep the free-range livestock out, not in. Cooking was over the fire-place - there were no cook stoves yet. Washing, weaving, work in general was done in the old style and you made due with what was available locally. Spring was a busy time, but getting the crops in and having a little rain offered a hope for success in the coming year.

In 1861, the war fever warmed with the weather. By June and July, men were voluntarily leaving their farms to join one side or the other, or were being forced away because of their political choices, or lack of any. It quickly became untenable staying at home. Neighbors knew you were there, even if you hid out in the woods during the day and farmed at night. The evidence was in the fields being worked. Now the full burden of keeping up the farm was on the womenfolk and the small children. But many were up to the task. They were a strong lot, used to hard work and most would have survived if left alone.

As mentioned in earlier articles, some families were forced from their homes and out of the area because of the choices the men had made. Those who stayed were not necessarily privileged; they faced hard times ahead. Living along a roadway was often a curse. The soldiers on both sides preyed upon homesteads along a road. For the troops taking, things as you passed by a place was a matter of routine, but sometimes the soldiers met their match.

By spring of 1862, Melvina Alsop was alone with her children on a farm southeast of Willow Springs. Her husband had been kidnapped from his home a few weeks earlier and taken south to prison. According to a descendant, in a story told in later years, "a group of soldiers was marching by the home when they noticed a saddle on the porch. One of the soldiers went for it. Melvina sat down on the saddle, and the soldier dragged saddle and rider out to the road, but Melvin stayed on the saddle. The captain of the group told the soldier to drop it, fall in line, and march on, and Melvina saved the saddle."

Historian Ella Horak related an incident occurring on a neighboring farm to the east:

"A group of soldiers passing by stopped at a well by the roadside and asked for a drink. They were refused by the woman of the home. One of the soldiers began to lower the big wooden bucket attached to a windlass by a rope. As the windlass was turning to lower the bucket the woman ran out with an axe and cut the rope letting the bucket fall into the well. Just at that time, the family hound dog came by. One of the soldiers picked him up and tossed him into the well. The dog went down with a big mournful bowl

AMERICAN *CIVIL* *WAR* 1861-1865

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and the soldiers marched on."

Another story told by Horak relates an event in the same neighborhood of the south junction of Willow Springs: "Sis Smith was staying in the house today known to many as 'the late Elmo Baldrige home.' During the night a group of men came to the farm and proceeded to take her horses from the barn and were passing by her home. Sis took a gun, placed the barrel over a fence post and called out to the men, telling them to put the horses back, or one of them wasn't leaving there. After failing to weaken her resolve, they put the horses back and left."

Horak, speaking of the intersection of the north-south, east-west roads running in the vicinity of what is today Hutton Valley and Willow Springs wrote, "soldiers, both north and south were constantly passing through on this main road. Bushwhackers were terrible. The settlers (men) just had to go into service or move back into the hills to hide. The late Reverend Judge G. M. Gulley once told this writer they could not keep anything to eat. The bushwhackers, or southern guerrillas were always ravaging, stealing, and often murdering. The Gulleys were on the farm east of Hutton Valley. His father, Pleasant N. Gulley took his family and what belongings they could, and went down into the hills near Eleven Point (River) and stayed until the war was ended."

George M., more commonly known as G.M. Gulley was six years old when the war started. His father Pleasant Nathaniel Gulley was 37 and his mother Martha Jane was 32. They came to the area from Tennessee in 1856. Also in the family, sister Martha was 11, a brother Robert 9 and infant John had just had his third birthday. One can only imagine the rigors of packing up a household of children and starting over, hidden deep in the

hills of the upper Eleven Point River. But all escaped the war with their lives and returned to Hutton Valley to start over after war's end. Additional children came after the war and the extended family flourished in the Hutton Valley community in coming years.

The pluckiness observed in the women of this area is a common theme in accounts during and after the war. It is often a humorous thing to read the letters of out-of-state Union soldiers stationed in this region. They often speak of the hostile treatment they are receiving from the women they encounter, and universally relate to their wives and girlfriends back home how homely and plain these ladies are.

On the other hand, an equivalent number of letters written to their male friends back home tell of dances attended and a level of flirting with the opposite sex comparable to home, so things were likely not that bad here, and the soldiers were retaliating against the unfriendly women they encountered and easing the concerns back home about those that were friendly.

In a rare federal after-action report, Captain Robert McElroy of the Union Missouri State Militia Cavalry, a notorious guerilla fighting unit, reported in fall of 1863 of participating in a raid into Oregon County that killed eight men and captured five guerrillas. As a side-note he also said, "I am of the opinion that the women in the region are even more daring than the men, as we found in their possession a number of newly made rebel uniforms."

Historian Lewis Simpson recorded a Civil War tale told to him by a relative, Mary Jane Bailey of Oregon County. At the age of 17, Bailey was living with her parents near Alton, when a federal scout appeared at their farm. "A large number of Union troops moved into the area and proceeded to make camp near the cornfield. The soldiers went to the cornfield and started gathering the corn. All the women-folks took baskets and other containers and started husking corn too. The faster the soldiers snapped the corn, the harder we worked and heaped what we gathered near the house and guarded it. That was all we had for our daily bread until harvest time the following year."

Another incident told by Simpson involved Sarah Barton, living on the Simpson family farm in 1863, at the age of six. She recounted, "the Union soldiers stopped at the farm, went to the barn lot and killed a steer and proceeded to cook the beef a short distance from the barn while myself and



Pleasant N. Gulley escaped the war by taking his wife and children deep into the hills of the 11 Point River.

others watched. One soldier came into the house, set down before the fire and removed his shoes and wet socks, taking a pair of new knit wool ones from the mantel that had been dyed with walnut hulls and were drying, preparing to exchange his wet ones for the nice new pair. At this point Grandmother Simpson entered the house, observed the procedure, grabbed the new pair from his hands, threw his wet socks in his face and ordered him from the house. He and a group of his men returned to the house, took the feather and straw beds from the home, slit the container and searched the contents for anything that might have been concealed therein, leaving the feathers and straw scattered over the hillside west of the house."

This tug of war between women often on their own trying to protect their families and property was random and continuous throughout the war. Often, women knew their attackers, but seldom are specific names mentioned in later years in these accounts. At war's end, the fear remained or there was no sense in opening old wounds. Neighbors had to be lived with - forgiveness might be given, but the events never really forgotten. Of the scars of war, the deepest were often borne by the women living here. Very little of the actions

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September 21, 2011



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In search of Ozarks elderberries: Family fun

Uplander Adventures

Mini-Vacations in a Mini-Van

Written by Kim Wehmer, publisher

DESTINATION

Back roads in Missouri Ozarks

THE ADVENTURE

Take a drive this week or next in the Missouri Ozarks and you're likely to find ripe elderberries. My husband and I like to think we've become accomplished at finding elderberries – and it's usually by accident.

Last year, we took one of our adventure trips and took a wrong turn somewhere near Rymer's. We had turned around and were trying to find our way back. And there, in the bend of the road, was one of the biggest

elderberry patches we'd seen.

This year, we've kept a journal of sorts to track of places as we saw them earlier in the summer, plus the places we picked last year. When elderberries bloom in June, they're much easier to see. The shrubs are tall, beautiful green and the clusters of white flowers about head height or above stand out.

Some of those locations we saw earlier have done well, some have been hurt by the excessive heat and lack of rainfall; others still became a bird buffet with nothing left for me.

You will find elderberries along ditches, at the edge of old fields or forests. Elderberries grow in full sun, so you won't find the berries along your favorite shaded country road – until you reach a spot of sunshine. The berries that seem to have done the best this year are near drainage ditches or culverts that have amplified what little moisture we've had.

If you didn't get to do any scouting this summer, you're looking for clusters of deep purple to black berries. When ripe, the heads turn from facing up to hanging down. The foliage around the head also will die back.

County roads are my favorite places for elderberries, though I've found many along state highways. I've seen a lot along major highways, but I'm not too enthused about parking alongside a four-lane highway and getting out to climb through ditches.

It seems the love of fruit and fruit gathering is genetic – and our daughters get it from both sides. So far, though, we haven't let our kids into the elderberry patches as we've found them. Ordinarily, my husband and I take turns getting out of the car and into the thick of things, while the other stays in the car with the kids.

The girls are, however, becoming very accomplished at picking the small berries off by hand. Our oldest child is a good hand and

also was excellent when we picked grapes. She's decided that next summer, at the ripe old age of 8, she wants to see if she can get a job at one of the local vineyards picking grapes off the stem. Almost every day, she asks if I've called anyone to get her a job yet. We'll see if she still has that passion for work next year.

And our dear youngest is a very creative individual. As she picks off fruit, she likes to make up names for each one. With grapes, she was able to keep up. Due to the size of elderberries, it's more of a challenge for her.

And for me, I've decided I'm becoming my grandmother. When my grandma was alive, you couldn't get her to leave a peach or apple orchard, blackberry patch or any fruit until she had every bucket, every bag, every box full – plus her sun bonnet and her apron. Last week, my husband was trying to beckon me out of a very, very profitable elderberry patch. "It's getting dark," he said. (He suspiciously wore shorts, though he knew we were elderberry hunting.) "You need to get out of there."

My scratches already were done bleeding. I was in the middle of the patch. I still had room in my bucket and there were still berries left. I already had made it past the poison ivy and past the sticker bushes. Why would I leave until I was good and ready?

At that moment, I knew exactly how grandma felt all



When elderberries are ripe, the fruit will turn deep purple to black and the clusters will hang down.

those years.

Happy hunting.

IF YOU GO

Do not set out to find elderberries if you are allergic to poison ivy, bee stings or chiggers, or if you are afraid of snakes. I keep lye soap at home with a poison ivy formula that's used after I've found an elderberry patch. It helps me avoid poison ivy, and helps minimize chigger bites. Blackberries and multiflora rose also tend to be prevalent in elderberry patches, but your clippers can provide a little help there too. And if you're wanting a little extra protection in case of snakes, I've found the 22-caliber variety works nicely.

During elderberry season, I carry good, sturdy shoes and socks in the car, and switch from capri pants to long, heavy pants – jeans

or heavy cotton.

Also, I carry in my car a few extra boxes or bags and a pair of clippers. Heads of elderberries will break off if you don't have clippers, but clippers make the job easier.

Do not confuse elderberries with poke berries – also ripe now – but poisonous. Driving along the roadway, sumac and elderberries may look similar, but aren't at a second look. Sumac looks more like a paintbrush or plume standing straight up. Elderberries are in clusters.

HOW TO GET THERE

Wherever you're going, take the long way. Drive through the country and you'll probably find some berries somewhere. Best yet, pack a picnic and head out for somewhere, in no particular hurry. And don't forget: The journey there usually is most of the fun.

August 22, 2012



Copperheads: Their role in the Civil War in Missouri

By Lou Wehmer
Contributing writer

The third year of the war 150 years ago was particularly difficult for Missouri. Our part of the state was especially troubled with a surge in fighting, guerrilla activity and political turmoil on the home front.

Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation took effect on the first day of the year 1863, freeing only those slaves held in states legally in rebellion. The 500,000 blacks in the slave-holding border states of Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland and Delaware, which were also Union states were still enslaved. It would be another two years before emancipation came to Missouri's slaves. The situation was a bone of contention for the remainder of the war and, combined with general weariness with the war, caused a great amount of strife even between the political parties and the Union-controlled government of Missouri.

In the Union Army, reaction to Lincoln's proclamation was varied, with desertions on occasion or open mutiny by soldiers willing to fight for preservation of the union, but unwilling to fight to end slavery. In the civilian population in 1863, discontent with the progress of the war led to the formation of societies openly hostile to Lincoln and his war policies. Factions in the Democratic party, known as Peace Democrats, were active in opposition against the Republican party, and the Lincoln administration. They opposed them in the press, in political conventions and the legislature. Those individuals seeking to end the war before total victory were derisively called "Copperheads," likening them to the snake that hid and struck its victim without warning. In the north, citizens were generally expected to support the war and the way it was being conducted. Republican offi-

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR 1861-1865

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cials in much of the Union considered Copperhead actions treasonous. But many Peace Democrats or Copperheads embraced the label, and cut the likeness of liberty from copper pennies and wore it as a badge.

But, there was not full unity on the other side. The Republican party in Missouri was in its own disarray with a moderate faction of state government in control which wished to see the war conducted with as little damage as possible to the people and property in Missouri (property including slaves) of those who were in rebellion. A radical arm of the party – appropriately known as Radical Republicans – wanted to see the war prosecuted to its fullest extent, rebels treated as traitors, and believed that Lincoln had not gone far enough in his prosecution of the war and the freeing of slaves here. Any attempt at explaining the full complexities of the situation here on the border between Union and Confederate, free and slave states will fail in a single article, but suffice it to say the confused political condition of the nation added greatly to the chaos here.

"Copperhead-ism" was a grassroots movement

strongest in areas north of the Ohio River. It also found strength in urban ethnic areas in cities like St. Louis, where draft riots occurred and wholesale efforts to discourage recruitment and encourage Union troop desertion happened in response to Lincoln's emancipation order. The most famous Copperhead leader was Democratic Congressman Clement L. Vallandigham of Ohio, who eventually was charged with treason because of his anti-war efforts. Vallandigham was also a staunch supporter of constitutional states rights, including the choice of slavery and the decision to secede the Union. His outspoken views in congress and the press were to his detriment. On May 1, 1863,

Vallandigham charged in a speech that, "the war was being fought not to save the Union but to free slaves by sacrificing the liberty of all Americans to 'King Lincoln'." The speech was poorly timed as month's earlier President Lincoln had suspended habeas corpus and in a presidential order decreed that discouraging enlistments in the Union Army, drafts or any other disloyal practices were subject to martial law and trial by a military commission.

Thus on May 5, 1863, Vallandigham was arrested and tried by a military court two days later, and sentenced to confinement in a military prison during the war. The Chicago Times was suppressed for supporting his views in print, and in retaliation his enraged supporters burned the offices of the Dayton Journal, a Republican newspaper. The lines were drawn and a national debate raged over the rights of American civilians to express their views legally in wartime.

A great amount of legal wrangling followed, but Lincoln tried to stop-gap some of the protest by ordering Vallandigham deported and sent to the Confederacy. Behind

2013



Congressman Clement Vallandigham, Civil War Copperhead leader

Confederate lines Vallandigham continued his protest declaring, "I am a citizen of Ohio, and of the United States. I am here within your (Confederate) lines by force, and against my will. I therefore surrender myself to you as a prisoner of war." For the remainder of the war he continued to try to influence the country to put an end to the war by supporting General George McClellan running against President Lincoln in the 1864 election.

As the war progressed, a number of groups opposed to the federal government and Union policies arose in the country. Locally, at least one found a foothold in the Ozarks. The "Knights of the Golden Circle," a Copperhead organization actually formed in the 1850s evolved into the "Order of American Knights in 1863," and reorganized in 1864 as the "Sons of Liberty," a secret society opposing the federal government during and after the war.

In 1864, a leader of the Sons of Liberty, Harrison H. Dodd, advocated the violent overthrow of the government of Missouri. His plans were halted by Democratic leaders and a federal investigation. For years after the war, the Sons of Liberty met and on occasion implemented plans to oppose their archenemy the Radical Republicans who eventually emerged in power, victorious in war and in control of Missouri. One Sons of Liberty group in Oregon County opposed the enrollment of state militia after the war and, according to Union Colonel William Monks, carried their



Missouri's Slaves were not freed by the Emancipation Proclamation.

designs further in forming local chapters of the Ku Klux Klan. Monks, with the approval of the governor of Missouri, took up arms and sought to suppress these groups in Missouri and Arkansas. The conflict continued here in the Ozarks for years after the war, with killings and reprisals and continual charges flying between the groups carried out in the press for decades.

On January 11, 1865, the delegates of the Missouri state convention, led by Charles Drake, passed resolutions calling for the immediate emancipation of all enslaved persons in Missouri, followed by an executive order from the governor abolishing slavery. The resolutions and order however stopped short of giving blacks the right to vote. Though Missouri's slaves were finally free, true equality was a long way off. On the other hand, former Confederates and those who had supported the Confederate cause were themselves unable to vote as the result of laws enacted by the Missouri legislature following the war. They would remain disenfranchised until the early 1870s.

On January 31, 1865, the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution passed the House of Representatives and outlawed slavery. The amendment and its slow ratification by the states

(Mississippi was the last state in 1995) was the subject of the recent movie "Lincoln."

A new movie tentatively scheduled for release in June of this year will explore the other side of the war within our Civil War. Titled "Copperhead, the War at Home," it will no doubt spark renewed debate over the constitutional issues raised 150 years ago, issues of great importance to Missouri and our part of the Ozarks then and now.

For more information see www.copperheadthemovie.com.



May 8, 2013

Suggestions given for making your own bug repellent

By Renee DePriest
Contributing writer

Bugs are plentiful in the summer and there are some of them that are not welcome, whether it's the bugs that bite or the bugs that eat garden goodies. For those of us who like to avoid chemicals, natural repellents may be a decent alternative.

With summertime, most folks want to spend more time outdoors. However, there is a greater risk of ticks, chiggers and mosquito bites.

Earlene Granier of Birch Tree repels ticks and chiggers in her yard with cotton seed meal.

"I go to Richards Feed Store and I pick up ground cotton seed meal," said Granier. "I use a seed spreader to spread it all around the house, starting close to the house and going outward. It runs the ticks and the chiggers off and it helps your grass."

For mosquitoes, Granier said one thing she has learned is to avoid eating bananas before you want to spend time outside.

"You do not want to eat bananas. The oil from the banana comes through the skin and attracts mosquitoes," explained Granier. "They can smell it through the spores of your skin."

Some other measures that might help repel mosquitos and other biting pests include taking two tablespoons of apple cider vinegar and vitamin B1 daily and eating lots of garlic.

Granier uses a natural citronella-based spray she buys from Becky Conklin at the Mountain View Farmer's Market to repel mosquitoes.

Personally, I have made

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some homemade repellents over the years and have found there's more than one that will work.

My first attempt at natural mosquito repellent was approximately 18 years ago when I knew I was going to visit a church that was located next to a rice or soybean field, where mosquitos loved to dwell.

I picked up some citronella oil and mixed it with a little vegetable oil, dabbed it on my legs and arms and off I went to church. It worked well. I was not bitten by mosquitos. However, the problem was the smell. Citronella has a strong odor that most people, including the church folks and myself, found overpowering when indoors.

Next I tried lavender oil. It certainly smelled pleasant but I received a bite or two.

Today, I blend tea tree oil, eucalyptus oil, clove oil or lavender oil with citronella oil and water for a better smelling repellent. Typically, I put approximately 10 drops of citronella and 15-20 drops of one of the other oils.

Other oils you could add

include pennyroyal (has a minty scent), rose geranium, peppermint or other mint oils.

You could also infuse some liquid castile soap with 10-15 drops of lemon balm (citronella), pennyroyal, rose geranium and lavender for a repellent soap.

If essential oils are out of your price range, try the recipe below, using dried herbs.

Since I do not have any pets, I went to the internet to see if there was anything natural to use for cats and dogs. Numerous websites recommend rose geranium essential oil. You can put a few drops (1-5) of rose geranium on their collar or a drop between their shoulder blades and a drop at the top of the tail before going outside. The number of drops should depend on the size of the animal and what they can tolerate.

The best overall bug repellent for gardens starts with Dawn dish soap. Granier tried it for the first time this year with success.

"It has to be the original Dawn dish soap," stated



July 9, 2014

Making your own bug repellent can keep you away from harmful chemicals while keeping away harmful pests.

Granier. "Put 2 tablespoons the original Dawn dish detergent in a gallon of water and spray on the plants. With the rain, we have to spray quite often."

"You can put a half of teaspoon of coconut oil or 1 teaspoon of castor oil or Murphy oil to help it cling to the leaves and not run off to fast," added Granier. "It has been working so far. It ran the worms out of our broccoli."

Garden enthusiast Debi Larson said the Dawn mixture is especially good at keeping squash bugs out when nothing else will.

Homemade dried herb repellent spray - Take 2 tablespoons each of dried lavender, thyme, mint, sage and rosemary and put them in a quart-size canning jar. Fill with apple cider vinegar.

Close it up tightly. Place it in a location where you will be reminded to shake the jar every day for about three weeks.

After three weeks, open the jar, strain out the herbs

and rinse out the jar. Pour the strained liquid back into the jar and refrigerate. To use, dilute to half with water, pour in a spray bottle and apply.

As with anything that could affect your health, please use caution if you try any of the recipes, essential

oils or other ingredients mentioned in this article.

It is always best to do a spot test to test for allergies or other reactions when trying something new.

Non-diluted essential oils applied directly to the skin have been known to cause skin irritation.



2015

Gardeners can work to help Monarch butterflies survive



The Garden Spot

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The Monarch butterfly with its orange and black wings has been a familiar site in Missouri but is at risk due to loss of habitat. (Photo by Noppadol Paotthong of Missouri Department of Conservation)



The Monarch caterpillar requires native milkweed plants, like the butterfly milkweed plant, above, to survive. (Photo by Missouri Prairie Foundation Vice-President of Science and Management Bruce Schutte at MPF's Stark Prairie in Hickory County, Mo.)

For many, happy childhood memories include the fascination with butterflies and caterpillars. The most well-known is probably the Monarch butterfly, a species that has suffered as landscaping and cleaner agriculture have become widespread practices.

According to the Missouri Prairie Foundation (MPF) fact sheet, Monarch butterfly populations in eastern North America have declined 90 percent.

"Monarch butterflies are like the canary in the coal mine," said Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) Natural History Biologist and MPF member Susan Farrington. "It's a flagship species."

Monarch butterflies are easily identified by their orange and black 9 to 10-centimeter wings. They migrate through Missouri.

"The butterflies don't fly straight from Mexico in the spring to the northern United States and Canada, or in the fall, straight from the northern United States and Canada to Mexico; instead, their migration is more like a conveyor belt—they are stopping along the way to lay eggs and feed on nectar from flowers," explained MPF Executive Director Carol Davis. "By the time the butterflies fly south, they are actually several generations younger than their 'ancestors' who migrated north just a few months before."

"Monarchs are important for many reasons: They are a beautiful, amazing life form that delight us with their beauty, awe-inspiring migration, and their fascinating metamorphosis from egg to caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly," Davis continued. "Also, when they are abundant, this is a sign that they, and humans, and thousands of other creatures who share this planet, are living in a healthy environment. When they are in decline, as they are now, that is a sign that there are aspects of land management that should be carefully assessed, and perhaps corrected, for the good of all the plants and animals, and other natural resources on which we depend."

Loss of habitat along their migratory path and degradation of their overwintering habitat in Mexico have been identified as causes of the population decline.

"We've gone to more and more cleaner agriculture," said Farrington. "There are no more rows with milk-

weed."

Hopefully, the situation can be reversed.

"Like many, many insects native to North America, monarch caterpillars feed on the foliage of specific plants," said Davis. "For example, pipevine swallowtail caterpillars feed on the pipevine plant, and spicebush swallowtail caterpillars feed on spicebush leaves. In the case of monarchs, the adult butterflies lay eggs on milkweed plants, and the caterpillars feed on the leaves, and also stems and flowers of milkweeds."

What can people do to help Monarch butterflies?

"First and most important is supporting our at-large organizations that help to preserve our large open native areas," said Farrington.

"People can also take action to help monarchs by planting milkweed plants around in their yards, or, if you don't have a yard, in containers on a porch or balcony, and on their property," Davis said. "Among the habitats that are important for monarchs are Missouri's remaining, original, tall grass prairies. People can also help by planting a variety of other native wildflowers, such as coneflowers, blazing star, goldenrods and asters, which provide nectar that is needed as food by adult butterflies."

Davis pointed out that Missouri has 18 different species of milkweed, including butterfly milkweed, common milkweed and marsh or swamp milkweed.

"The most common in landscape is the butterfly milkweed," said Farrington. "Purple milkweed is gorgeous."

The marsh or swamp milkweed requires plenty of moisture and needs to be planted in an area that remains wet or swampy.

"People need to be warned that common milkweed is a bigger plant and needs more space," advised Farrington.

"These milkweed plants are critically important for monarchs because it is the only kind of plant the caterpillars will eat," Davis reiterated.

"People who have acreage, a farm or any wooded areas can check into conservation practices to determine what they can on their land," Farrington noted.

of creatures, not just Monarchs.

"It is all connected. The homeowner who has a tiny backyard or front yard can help too by trying to eliminate the invasive and exotic plants," said Farrington. "When we save the insects, we save the birds and so forth."

A critical aspect is avoiding the use of pesticides and herbicides, like Round Up.

"People don't realize what they are doing when they spray pesticides or herbicides," said Federated Garden Clubs of Missouri Roadside and Wildflower chairman Alice Hand. "They are killing the food for 10 or more species. They are really bad for bugs, bees and butterflies."

Farrington explained that many people have created sterile landscapes around their homes.

"If we can reduce the amount of lawn we have and increase the native plants, grasses and shrubs, we can help," stated Farrington. "Get rid of some of your yard and replace it with native plants. Planting milkweed is great but so is planting other native plants."

"Marty and I go regularly to classes by college professors. We are learning so much more than we knew before. The more you learn, the more you want to do. We encourage anyone who is wanting to plant or landscape to do research or contact one of us for advice and additional information," said Hand. "If you do your research, you can find the plants you would like, whether it is a certain height, certain color blooms, and the like. It is easy to find the information online. You can find a native plant to fit your desires."

Hand is willing to help individuals find native plants to fit their garden and landscape plans. She may be contacted by calling (417) 934-6639.

Native plants, including milkweed, can be purchased locally through Hamilton's Native Outpost in Elk Creek, E-Z Wild Flowers in Willow Springs and Missouri Wildflower. A list of native plant and seed suppliers can be found at www.grownative.org.

Farrington suggested taking the opportunity to heighten awareness of the need for native plants whenever you regularly buy your plants.

"I think people should walk into wherever they

normally buy plants and ask them, 'Where are your native plants?'" said Farrington. "Eventually, they will get the message."

Most native plants need sun and good drainage.

"Plants and seeds can be planted in your yard or acreage," said Davis. "They should be watered as needed until they are established; other than that, they are relatively carefree. If you see holes in the plants—success! Look for the monarch caterpillars on the plants, eating away!"

"Milkweed is slow to come up in the spring," warned Farrington. "They come up two to three weeks after other native plants, so be patient."

She also warned against transplanting any current milkweed.

"It is better to leave it where it is happy," stated Farrington. "If you have to move it, do it when it is dormant. Remember, it is illegal to dig it on public land."

Locally, the Mountain View Garden Club continues to support Monarch butterflies and many other insects.

"The garden club has three flower beds devoted to native wildflowers. Two are along the path in the Jam Up riparian area that leads to the athletic field," said club member and Master Gardener Mary Toll, who noted there is some invasive sweet pea thistle that has been nearly impossible to eliminate. "The third bed is in the riparian area along Elm Street. All of these native plants attract some type of butterflies. Specifically, there is the orange butterfly milkweed to attract monarchs in each of these three beds." "We also have natives, including the butterfly milkweed, planted in the islands at Fifth and Elm Street," Toll added. "There are plantings in front of the library parking area that have a variety of species attractive to butterflies. Some of the non-native butterfly bushes are there. If we were to do things over, we would have used natives instead."

Hand, who is also the Mountain View Park,

Recreation and Tree board president, said a lot of time researching native plants for the Rotary Nature Park and Outdoor Classroom.

"Jack Toll (Marty's husband) did a lot of research for the Rotary Park to make sure the plants and trees are native to this area," said Hand.

"The garden club is working on the two butterfly beds there, again with plant species that provide nectar for the butterflies and also some of the plants that the larvae of different species need to survive," said Toll. "This park will be open to the public either this year or next."

In addition, several garden club members are taking action on their own property.

"This spring, members planted 32 of the orange butterfly milkweeds in their own gardens, with another several dozen plants ordered for fall. One member has

six different types of milkweeds she has raised from seed," said Toll.

One of their upcoming Monarch butterfly projects is part of a statewide effort. "Our new state Federated Garden Clubs of Missouri President Nancy Bahr has made one of her presidential projects roadside waystations, in which clubs are encouraged to select areas along highways and plant butterfly-friendly plants," explained Toll. "Our club is talking about adding milkweeds to the curve bed downtown and in the elementary school beds, which are back on State Route 17."

"Monarch butterflies need larval plants and nectar plants," stated Hand, who will oversee the FGC-MO state funding. "We are going to offer money to clubs who actually buy plants and nurture them until they are growing."

■ Please see MONARCH, Page 13

July 15,
2015

Howell County: Land of the Big Red Tomato

August 3, 2016

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Coleman Cannery Tomato Label



Canning entrepreneur William S. Coleman of Burnham circa 1915

BY LOU WEHMER, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

By Lou Wehmer
Contributing writer

While many are familiar with Howell County's history of fruit production in the late 1800s, into the first couple of decades of the 20th century, you might not be aware of the role tomatoes played in our economy for nearly 50 years.

The arrival of the railroad in 1882 provided an opportunity for larger scale farming operations in our county. Where orchards required a large investment in land and labor with years of waiting before a profit or small return could be expected, tomatoes could put cash in a farmer's pocket the same year they were planted.

Howell County from the turn of the century until World War II is regarded by many historians as a cashless economy. There wasn't a lot of hard money in circulation. Most farmers bartered farm goods with neighborhood stores for the things they could not produce themselves or traded with their neighbors. Country store ledgers I have viewed from the Gully Store in Hutton Valley show farmers trading their eggs and butter for things like coffee and milled flour. No money changed hands. Any crop that put cash in a small farmer's pocket in a single season of work was attractive.

Apples and tomatoes share a desirable trait for the Ozark farmer. They both grow well in our rocky soil and hillsides.

The railroad was necessary to export farm products produced in volume to metropolitan markets, once a glut was created locally. The apple orchards that gave Howell County the moniker "The Land of the Big Red Apple" could quickly ship their products to market without sacrificing quality. Tomatoes don't keep like that. In an era before refrigeration, they could not be vine ripened to their best flavor without spoilage before they reached a distant market. Canning was the solution, and in Howell County, a cottage industry was born that helped the local economy at many levels.

Canning as we know it was invented in France in

1804, but caught on in the United States during the American Civil War. There wasn't that much interest in canned goods in an agrarian society when fresh foods were commonly available from your neighbors at a lower price. The market for canned foods mostly consisted of specialty and luxury items. The war changed that, making canned foods attractive to soldiers sick of their restricted diets in the field. The nutrients supplied by foods not available in rations often literally cured illness caused by deficient diets. Many men had their first experience with canned food as soldiers. The war drove development in canning technology and improved products.

In the years following the war, the popularity of canned goods increased, and with industrialization and population movement into larger and larger cities, preserved foods became a necessity. The development of the railroad provided the connection between this market and Howell County farms, and promotion of tomato farming and canning of the product began about the same time. Our local newspapers began carrying articles in the mid-1880s describing the mechanics of setting up a cannery of various sizes from a small farm operation to a factory, with estimates of cost in each case and the profits that could be expected.

Canning operations in Howell County seem to have started small, with individual farmers utilizing their crops and perhaps that of neighbors in a brief run of unlabeled cans that were sold locally and to brokers who labeled them with their brand. In 1913, the Mountain View Standard reported plans to escalate production to a much greater level. In April, the paper identified the main problem in creating a tomato canning factory - getting a reliable supply of the stuff to can.

It wrote, "Messrs. Buffkin, the gentlemen who are planning on operating a canning factory at Mountain View this season, are becoming anxious in regard to whether or not they are going to get enough contracts signed up

to warrant them coming here. They are ready, the businessmen of Mountain View have pledged a building, but the farmers have failed so far to come across and do their portion by signing up the contracts for enough acreage to run the plant at about its full capacity. Saturday a week ago Mr. Buffkin and his wife came down here at his own expense, bought 20 pounds of tomato seed which means about \$30 or \$35 cash outlay, had contracts printed and it was publicly announced the contracts were ready to be signed. During the day only about 30 acres were pledged, about than many men signing. Some say they will wait and see if the thing is coming before they promise anything. If all of the farmers do that it is a certain fact that it will not come. These gentlemen cannot afford to bring this plant here unless they know you are going to raise tomatoes."

It is easy to understand the reticence on the part of the farmers here if you have perhaps had experience in growing a long single row of tomatoes, let alone an acre or several acres of the things. In this period, a lot of time wasn't spent in preparing the soil. A piece of new ground was selected, preferably on a north or east facing hillside. Any trees on the lot were deadened and brush cleared and piled. That brush was burned and the ashes left made a perfect seed bed. Seedlings started earlier inside were transplanted outside when the ground warmed up.

The work comes in the hot summer months in pruning, staking, watering and harvesting. But there were many willing to do the growing, and tomato canning factories sprung up in nearly every community in Howell County, located near enough to the railroad to make shipping the output feasible.

In 1917, West Plains created a Commercial Club of prominent businessmen and community leaders to promote the growing of tomatoes and establishment of a cannery. Entrepreneur F.M. Thompson proposed a cannery if a commitment of 300 acres could be secured. A series of meetings were held in schoolhouses in the

small communities surrounding West Plains. As an enticement for attendance, a "singing" was held, and a humorous reading given. Local businessman C.T. Aid passed around a basket of candy. The object of getting signed contracts was realized eventually, and a cannery was built by Thompson who was already operating canneries in Webster County. The West Plains Journal reported in January 1917 that, "It was shown that in a fair season with good cultivation, growers can average ten tons per acre. If some of our young men who go away to seek work would put a few acres of dad's land into tomatoes they could make more money. Tomatoes are so much benefit to the land that in some places land owners are giving their land rent free."

A few individuals were successful on their own. William Sidney Coleman was born in Burnham in 1892 to Frederick and Permelia Coleman. His father was an immigrant from England, and his mother was born in Michigan. "Willie" Coleman was in his mid-20s when he went into the canning business. He was a talented promoter and ran ads for contests in the local newspapers offering, "\$10 in cash prizes for a trade name for the fine brand of Howell Co. Products. We are putting out one of the finest brands of canned corn, tomatoes, beans and other Ozark grown products and we are looking for a trade name that is attractive and one that is appropriate to or suggestive of the Ozarks or the quality of our goods, or both."

In a stroke of genius, Coleman required contestants to accompany each entry in the naming contest with a "label from one of our cans of high quality canned goods. Try them and their superior quality may suggest to you the prize winning name." Coleman's product line was further extended to include sauerkraut and canned blackberries. In the late 1970s, one of the Coleman Cannery buildings still stood near the croquet grounds at Burnham.

Beyond the work of growing tomatoes, the canning process was labor

intensive. As late as 1931, the Willow Springs News reported the operation of the Willow Springs plant, "A visit to the canning factory last Friday, which is located across the tracks and is owned by Judge Bever of Willow Springs, revealed many interesting and surprising facts."

"Mr. Frank Bever, a son, is managing the plant, and in a hurried interview, we learned that the plant is now producing a large quantity of canned tomatoes, which are contracted for by a company in Mountain Grove. Previous shipments by truck within the last few days to a St. Louis firm amounted to about sixteen tons of the finished product."

"A visit though the plant showed the tomatoes being unloaded, put into wire baskets and weighed, passed through a scalding process and on into a long shallow trough, on each side of which rows of girls peel the tomatoes by hand, after which they are ready to be packed into cans. They are then put on a carrier and run through steam where they are slightly pre-heated, passed on where the tops are dropped from a revolving machine on the filled cans, and sealed at the rate of about three thousand an hour when they are running full capacity. The cans then fall into iron baskets and put into iron vats where they are cooked for thirty minutes. On removal, and when

cooled, they are packed into pasteboard containers and made ready for the consumer, each holding twenty-four cans."

"The present contract does not call for labels, although Mr. Bever stated they were prepared to label should a customer desire it."

"This canning plant is now operating with 25 to 30 girls employed, and during the past week they have been receiving large quantities of tomatoes from the surrounding country. This has grown to be quite an industry and many additional acres are planted each year as one of the acknowledged paying resources of the Ozarks."

Alas, the canning industry in Howell County did not last. World War II impacted canning here due to a labor shortage with so many men who grew the tomatoes away from their farms in the service.

By this time too, the trend in canning was away from small canning operations to much larger operations in the Southern states and West Coast agricultural areas. Canning remains an important industry in parts of the Arkansas Ozarks but is gone from Howell County.

Likely, the memory of large scale tomato production lingers in families here who were involved in the growing or canning industry. It was once a pretty big thing, here in the Land of the Big Red Tomato.

2016





COMMUNITY BANKING

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VP/SENIOR LOAN OFFICER
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ERIC WELLS
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MOUNTAIN VIEW

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Willow Springs arrest of Rose Pastor Stokes

By Lou Wehmer
Contributing writer

March 15, 2017

Pages of History

Story series on
Howell County history



BY LOU WEHMER,
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

*Submit story ideas via email to wehmer@rocket.net,
in writing to 504 CR 266, Willow Springs MO 65758
or call (417) 432-0295*

Next month marks the 100th anniversary of America's entry into the First World War, on April 6, 1917. Though the world had been at war since 1914, much effort had been expended to keep America out of the conflict. President Woodrow Wilson advocated neutrality from the beginning and in 1916 ran for re-election on the slogan, "He Kept Us Out of War." Some prominent Americans campaigned to restrict our involvement in the fight, including Henry Ford and Helen Keller. United States ties to Great Britain, a German attempt to get Mexico to declare war against America, and Germany's unrestricted ship sinking by U-boats eventually made our involvement inevitable.

Still, some Americans continued to resist our entry into the war openly, and in June 1917, the United States Congress passed the Espionage Act of 1917. The law was initially intended to prohibit interference with military recruitment or hindering the draft, and a set of amendments commonly referred to as the Sedition Act of 1918 expanded the law making free speech in wartime a risky business. The controversy continues to this day with a recent use of the act against NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden.

During World War I, the FBI actively pursued war protestors and those suspected of being German sympathizers. In February 1918, the Springfield Republican reported under the headline, "Alleged Spy is Accused by Wife," the arrest of one Hans Deinert of West Plains on espionage charges. It seems during a divorce trial Deinert's wife Vida accused her husband of, "having a large picture of the Kaiser in his room," and, "every morning would offer homage to the German ruler." Her petition also charged that Deinert had, "refused to take out naturalization papers as she often begged him to, saying that he had been a German and would always be." Deinert was housed in the Howell County Jail and turned over to federal authorities. No evidence of any "spying" was substantiated, and Deinert was eventually released.

The FBI case files in this period are now online and reveal the FBI conducted routine investigations on Howell County German-American citizens during the war without finding anything. Speaking German or corresponding with relatives in Germany made you the object of suspicion.

A particular "sedition" case in Howell County put us in the national spotlight, with the arrest of Rose Pastor Stokes at the Horton Hotel in Willow Springs, on March 23, 1918, who was charged with violating the Espionage Act. Stokes had been on a speaking tour through Missouri, and the charges against her were primarily based on a letter to the editor of a Kansas City newspaper contesting their coverage of her speech made there. She wrote, "I am quoted as having said, 'I believe the Government of the United States should have the unqualified

support of every citizen in its war aims! I made no such statement, and I believe no such thing. No government which is for the profiteers can also be for the people, and I am for the people.'" It was quite a stretch to make this statement into a charge of espionage or spying, but the government wanted to silence Stokes.

FBI agents had been tracking Stokes as she traveled through Missouri via the Frisco Railroad with stops in Sedalia and Springfield. In Springfield, she was detained by the police department and not allowed to speak publicly. In Willow Springs, two prominent citizens, City Attorney Norris B. Wilkinson and Doctor Stephen E. Haycraft, made arrangements for Stokes to speak at the Opera House. Approximately 100 people showed up to hear her, including an FBI agent and stenographer. The following day, Stokes was in FBI custody on a train bound back to Kansas City for arraignment.

Rose Pastor Stokes was a self-proclaimed Socialist, as were Willow Springs citizens Wilkinson and Haycraft.

Wilkinson had run for political office since 1907 on the Socialist Ticket for State Representative, State Senator and Judge on the Missouri Supreme Court without success. He was a prominent attorney and well-known and admired veteran of the Spanish-American War, serving as a lieutenant in the Sixth Missouri Infantry. Haycraft was a respected physician, and though Howell was a staunchly Republican county at the time, there was no particular stigma attached to being a member of the Socialist Party. They got very few votes here, and were never considered a threat.

In 1917, there was a split in the American Socialist Party over support of America's involvement in the war. The faction Stokes sided with was decidedly anti-war, though her Socialist husband was a supporter of our involvement in the conflict, and volunteered for service.

There was local opposition to Stokes' appearance in Howell County. Will Zorn, the editor of the Howell County Gazette in West Plains, a member of the Howell County Council of Defense, had called Willow Springs Mayor Frank Sass the night before urging him not to allow Stokes to speak at his Opera House. However, the FBI agent and an agent of the U.S. Department of Justice persuaded Sass to allow the speech to



Rose Pastor Stokes 1918

happen as part of their efforts to build a case against Stokes.

Born Rose Wieslander in 1879, to Jewish parents in Russia, she was brought to London, England, as a small child by her mother after her marriage failed. When her mother remarried a man named Pastor, Rose received his last name. In 1891, the family emigrated to Cleveland, Ohio, where Rose found work in a cigar sweatshop employing Jewish workers. After her second father abandoned the family, Rose was the sole breadwinner for her family of six. Her experience at hard labor for long hours rolling cigars formed a life-long sympathy for labor.

Rose Pastor began sending letters to the Jewish Daily News, and in 1902, an editor impressed with her writing hired her as a salaried employee in New York City. There while working as a reporter, she interviewed New York City millionaire Graham Stokes. They were married in 1905 and moved to Greenwich, Connecticut. That year they joined the Socialist Party of America. Now extremely wealthy, Rose's circle of friends included elites like Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, and Jack London, along with prominent Socialist Eugene Debs.

When the war brought on a split in the Socialist Party, it also began a rift between Rose and her husband, a supporter of the war. Graham Stokes stood by his wife after her arrest in Willow Springs, posting a \$10,000 bond and footing continual legal bills as a result of her activities. She was convicted of espionage in federal court in Kansas City, May 1918 and sentenced to 10 years in prison. Her case was appealed, and in 1920, with war fervor over, the case was reversed citing bias on the part of both the judge and all-male jury of farmers.

During this time, the rift in the Socialist Party widened, and Rose Pastor Stokes left and helped found the Communist Party of



Willow Springs city attorney and Spanish American War veteran Norris B. Wilkinson, a member of the American Socialist Party.

the United States. Graham Stokes did not share his wife's increasingly radical beliefs, and in 1925, divorced her. In 1927, Stokes re-married, though in much poorer circumstances. In 1929, she was clubbed and seriously injured during a demonstration demanding the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Haiti. She continued protesting on behalf of labor and women's rights causes in the United States and worldwide. She was arrested several additional times but not convicted.

In 1930, Rose Pastor Stokes was diagnosed with malignant breast cancer, which she attributed to the blow she received from a policeman's club. She moved to Germany to have radiation therapy but died in Frankfurt in 1933.

Stokes was and remains a controversial figure. However you view her, it is evident a turning point in her life occurred at the Horton Hotel in Willow Springs in 1918. Most recently, Rose Pastor Stokes was included in a list of women proposed to replace President Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill. Her most famous quote was, "Fill the cup of happiness for others, and there will be enough overflowing to fill yours to the brim."

My thanks to Jill Bailey who has researched this story for years and knows it far better than I can present in a limited article of this size.

THE OZARKS APPRENTICE

April 18, 2018

BIGFOOT RESEARCHERS CONVERGE AT TWIN BRIDGES

Just over the county line in Douglas County, Twin Bridges Canoe Rental and Resort hosted a meeting and expedition of the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization on Saturday, October 19. According to the group's leader, Ron Boles, members of BFRO gathered to search for signs of the "Blue Man of the Ozarks" in the surrounding wilderness.

October 23, 2019

A tribute to the stewing hen

By Amanda Mendez
Contributing writer

Modern poultry production methods raise massive numbers of chickens that can be in the supermarket just eight weeks after hatching. This way of doing things provides consumers with chicken that can be cooked any way imaginable all year round, but the yearly routine of the small-scale home flock is responsible for chicken dishes we still associate with certain flavors today, and attaining these certain flavors require what has become a rare find these days – a stewing hen.

Life in the Ozarks is about using what is at hand and what is in season, and so raising chicken used to go like this: each hen can set a clutch of about 12 eggs. About half those chicks will be male and should be harvested young before they are old enough to challenge the rooster. The other chicks will be females and will take several months to grow to egg laying maturity. Chicks hatched in late spring will generally start laying in the fall just about the same time the older birds of the previous generations will taper off or stop laying altogether. Unless the hens are reliable, you'll have to raise new ones.

This year's harvest was a success. The young males harvested in the spring to keep peace in the flock were called spring chickens and could be prepared in any manner because the meat would be tender and juicy. This is why fried chicken is a staple at summer picnics.

Summertime is when chicken meat has traditionally been abundant.

The cooler weather of fall meant one thing to chicken-lovers: soups, Chicken and dumplings, chicken noodle soup, chicken and rice soup; the tantalizing list goes on. The old stewing hens harvested in the fall provided a rich and flavorful stock, as well as the meat for these beloved homegrown dishes. It's unusual to find a stewing hen for sale these days, and that is truly a shame. The roasters available today are much younger and make much less flavorful stocks. Older hens have older bones, and older bones have more collagen which contributes to the final flavor of a dish.

For a traditional country broth, start collecting chicken bones in the freezer now. When you have at least a pound, dress the oldest hen you can find – more on that later.

Then, put the dressed hen in a large slow cooker and nest all the saved bones around it, sprinkle a couple tablespoons of vinegar of your choice over the whole, and then just barely cover it with water. Let it sit about an hour before turning the slow cooker to high and leave it overnight. In the morning, turn off the heat and skim off any scum that has risen. Bone the chicken, extremely carefully to get all small bones from the meat.

The meat can be saved for sandwiches, or used as tamale filling. It will be tender although surely in need of some seasoning. While you bone the chicken, let the broth cool to room temperature. Leave the bones in the stock to allow the maximum amount of collagen and minerals to release into the liquid. After removing the bones, bring the stock back to a gentle simmer for at

least an hour. The stock can be kept in the refrigerator for a month or frozen.

This stock's only ingredient is chicken or chicken bones, so it will not turn out well with a younger bird from the supermarket. An old stewing hen is absolutely necessary, so here are some suggestions for where to find one if you don't raise chickens yourself.

If you buy eggs from someone, you know someone who has a stewing hen running around. Most egg sellers are not licensed to sell dressed meat, so you can ask to buy the live hen and dress it yourself. If you buy live birds in groups of 10 or more, you can probably find



Birch Tree man catches state-record fish



Rick Sartin of Birch Tree recently broke the state record by catching this 10-pound, 6-ounce silver redhorse on the Current River.

The Missouri Department of Conservation reports that Rick Sartin of Birch Tree became the most recent record-breaking angler in Missouri when he hooked a silver redhorse on the Current River using a rod and reel.

The new "pole and line" record silver redhorse caught by Sartin on June 14 weighed 10-pounds, 6-ounces. The new record

a commercial processor to dress them for you. If you know anyone who raises poultry, volunteer to help with the fall harvest and request that you be paid in stewing hens.

A soup made with a stewing hen harkens back to era long gone, but preserving the old ways is inherently valuable, especially when doing so results in a flavorful and nutritious meal that connects you to your memories.

2019



Plaster casts of what the group believes are Bigfoot footprints. (photo by Amanda Mendez)

Boles says his team will be searching for footprints, scat, hair, or even the beast in the flesh. Their goal is to record any forensic evidence of Bigfoot, including any audio or video recordings. According to Boles, he is the senior investigator in the Ozarks and his own eyewitness of footprints, sightings from afar, and other forensic evidence have made him a believer and a die-hard researcher of the mysterious legend. He said, "When all things possible have been ruled out, then it's time to look to the impossible."

The group's website says, a body of evidence "...suggests[s] the presence of an animal, probably a primate, that exists today in very low population densities. If true, this species, having likely evolved alongside humans, became astonishingly adept at avoiding human contact through a process of natural selection."

Boles' partner in research, Larry Newman, a retired Sheriff's deputy from Jasper County, says there have been Bigfoot sightings in the Ozarks since the 1850s. He teaches casting methods to enable Bigfoot researchers to preserve footprints and other impressions that point to the existence of the mythic creature. There were several footprint castings on display in Twin Bridges on Saturday which Boles said were collected in the local area and in other localities as well.

The Ozarks has the perfect conditions to host a thriving, "albeit small," Bigfoot population, Boles said, with clean water, abundant protein sources, and navigable terrain. Whether the expedition produces any forensic evidence remains to be seen.



Ron Boles, right, and Larry Newman are on the hunt for Bigfoot in the Ozarks. (photo by Amanda Mendez)

July 25, 2018

Fish

■ From Page 1

dorsal fin containing 12 or 13 rays. These fish can be found mostly throughout the Ozarks.

"Larger silver redhorses are usually caught while gigging," MDC Fisheries Programs Specialist Andrew Branson said. "This record is unique because it was taken by pole and line, and is larger than our alternative methods state record for this species. Missouri is a great place to fish and a great place to catch redhorse suck-

ers. Missouri currently holds the world record for the river redhorse, and this silver redhorse caught by Sartin was less than one pound from the existing world record."

Missouri state-record fish are recognized in two categories: pole-and-line and alternative methods. Alternative methods include: throwlines, trotlines, limb lines, bank lines, jug lines, spearfishing, snagging, snaring, gigging, grabbing, archery, and atlatl.

For more information on state-record fish, visit the MDC website at <http://bit.ly/2efq1vl>.

■ Please see FISH, Page 2

Willow Woman Tells a Story of Quarantine and Hope

"Seventy-five years ago, my family was quarantined," began Joanie Pierce. The head of Pierce's family was a single mother; there was no father in the house, but there were three small children. Pierce's mother, Natella Taylor, supported the family working for \$0.20 an hour.

"I was school age," Pierce recalled, "and one day my brother, Jimmy, said 'my throat feels funny.' Not hurt, but 'feels funny.' Mom looked in and knew it was diphtheria."

Even under the best of circumstances, news of a serious illness like diphtheria is unwelcome. In the Taylor family's case, it was essentially a death sentence for all four of them, Pierce said.

In those days, antitoxins and vaccines against the disease were unreliable and not widely available. Because diphtheria is highly infectious, and epidemics were common, Taylor's family was placed under a strict 30-day quarantine. In 1946, there were no food stamps, food pantries, or other community welfare programs. Even if such resources existed, the Taylors would not have been able to use them because of the strict rules of the quarantine.

Peirce explained, "The chief of police put a sign on the door, and we were officially quarantined. No one in or out. [We had] no telephone, no TV, no radio. No contact with the outside world, except with a nurse who came by once a day to check."

The mother was not allowed to pick Joanie up from school that day. To prevent possible contagion, the doctor who confirmed the diphtheria diagnosis picked the girl up and brought her to the house where the mother, Jimmy, Joanie, and two-year-old Jerry were to stay in their home for 30 days.

"During that time, my baby brother had double pneumonia. Mother and I had strep throat. My older brother had diphtheria, a death sentence."

Pierce teared up as she remembered, "Mother was a new Christian. She walked through the house and prayed 'Lord, if you want me and the children to starve during this time, you know what you're doing.'"

Soon after, the quarantined family was surprised by a knock at the door after dark. It was a mother and daughter from a church the Taylor family did not attend. Though Mrs. Taylor could not let them in, they had a brief conversation in which the visitors assured her the family would be taken care of in their isolation.

QUARANTINE and HOPE Continued

The visitors left a box of groceries on the doorstep that night, and every evening after, they would leave something more after dark when no one could see their life-sustaining deliveries.

Meanwhile, in the house plagued with illness, Mrs. Taylor sat over Jimmy for 18 days and nights with no break while also caring for the baby with double pneumonia. The two boys were not really expected to survive. One evening, the nurse came by a little later than usual, but returned before daybreak the next day because the baby was so ill, she believed he would be dead before she came back. But in the end, no tragedy befell them.

"We came out of quarantine, everyone safe and sound. God had provided miraculously," Pierce said. No one knew their mysterious benefactors had been there. Terrified of contagion, near neighbors and members of their own church had not visited.

Now, more than seventy years later, Peirce sees parallels between her family's time of hardship and the COVID-19 scare.

"To the people that are so fearful, God takes care of His own. Fear is probably the worst thing we have to deal with," Pierce offered. "We had a 30-day quarantine, and then we were all okay. It might be comforting to know that you do live through times like this."

Howell County News Resumes Publication



Ron and Amanda Mendez have purchased the Howell County News.

In June, the Howell County News ceased publication after 18 years in the community. Now, it's back under new ownership. Ron and Amanda Mendez purchased the paper from former publisher, Kim Rich.

Originally from St. Louis, Ron and Amanda relocated to the Ozarks in April of 2016. Amanda has been writing the monthly feature "The Ozarks Apprentice" in the Howell County News since January of 2018. The couple have two children: Bonnie, 4, and Leo, 2.

After the sudden closing of the paper, local paragon Wendell Bailey approached Amanda about restarting the paper. She said, "Wendell did everything he could to support the continuation of the Howell County News, and he has been an essential resource and bulwark of support. The community has come out in force to show support for our endeavor, and we have had no shortage of volunteers."

Ron and Amanda are working closely with Kim Rich, the former publisher, to resurrect the publication in the same tone and spirit. Kim said, "I'm excited for this next chapter for the Howell County News. Amanda and Ron have some great ideas to continue improvement and I'm happy they plan to continue the same conservative, faith-based, family-focused business model we've held dear."

The paper will continue to publish weekly on Wednesdays, and many of the same newsstand locations will have the paper again. For now, office hours are Tuesday from 8 to 2, and Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 to 2. If you have questions about your subscription, please call the news office at the same number.

"We are so grateful to have this opportunity to keep the local paper alive. Please stop by or call to introduce yourself—we can't wait to become more deeply involved in the community," said Amanda.



Kim and Amanda work together towards a smooth transition.

July 24, 2019

2021

MISSOURI GIRL EATS WEEDS:

Black Walnut

October 6, 2021

by Ann J. Hines PhD

An avid student of natural health since 1987, Ann is a Missouri native, health coach, triathlete, and collector of rocks and children. ann.hines@gmail.com

Black walnut is one of the most treasured flavors of my Missouri childhood, right up there with other regional favorites like poke, persimmons, and morels. The flavor is associated with my grandma's cakes and cookies, homemade ice cream, and my grandpa's "date candy." Have you ever had a root beer float made with black walnut ice cream? Divine! Why have plain English walnuts when you can have black walnuts? Okay, okay, full disclosure, they may be something of an acquired taste, but I'm too biased to imagine they are anything other than delicious.



The gift of black walnut: beautiful, edible, medicinal, useful.

If you've spent any time at all in this part of the state, you have certainly seen these tall, stately trees. In the late summer breezes, their small, yellow leaves

fluttering to the ground is one of the earliest signs of autumn. We are blessed with dozens of large, beautiful trees on our property. My children have already begun collecting the nuts to sell—they are going for \$20/100# this year. (That's hulled weight, remember. But if those were pennies lying all over the ground, would you pick them up? That's easy money for an enterprising youth. If you want to try collecting them to use or sell, I recommend wearing gloves; their green hulls turn black when exposed to the air or bruised from falling to the ground, and they will also stain your fingers black!

But there is more to this tree than its beauty and unique taste. While it's commonly known that walnuts are good for cardiovascular health, the black walnut offers much more in medicinal uses and nutritional qualities than its English cousin. The leaves and particularly the thick, green hulls have many notable medicinal uses; perhaps most well-known is its use as a laxative and anti-parasitic. And while it has a laxative effect, it can also help with diarrhea and other digestive complaints like colic, flatulence and heartburn. This is likely due to its ability to stimulate bile flow. It may also help with lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Its juglone content makes it a powerful antifungal, antibacterial and antiviral. Interestingly, the tannins are thought to help shrink the sweat glands and reduce excessive sweating. It's being studied for a wide range of ailments such as cancer, HIV, malaria and syphilis.

Are you already a fan of black walnut? What are your favorite ways to use it? Share your questions, comments, and recipes in our recently formed Facebook group, Missouri Girl Eats Weeds. Not a Facebook user? Email me at ann.hines@gmail.com.

The Election of 1972: A Running Start for Wendell Bailey

The Way We Were

Personal reflections on life in the Ozarks

BY LONNIE WHITAKER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Read more at www.LonnieWhitaker.com

Say it ain't so—this year, the August primary election in Howell County marks the fiftieth anniversary of Wendell Bailey's initial campaign for the Missouri House of Representatives from District 163. To put the time in perspective, Don McClean's "American Pie" was the No. 1 song on the Billboard chart when Wendell announced his candidacy in January 1972.

They're called primary elections because they are the first in order of time or sequence. The definition is spot-on with respect to Wendell, because 1972 was the beginning of his storied political career beyond the city limits of Willow Springs.

The credentials Wendell brought to that first race provided a springboard. A 1962 graduate of Southwest Missouri State, with a degree in business administration, he returned home to run the family Pontiac dealership. After being elected to the board of aldermen in 1969 and 1970, the Willow Springs Chamber of Commerce named him "Man of the Year" in 1970 for his significant civic contributions. He served as mayor in 1971.

Underscoring it all, he was a product of WSHS, Class of 1958, where he was active in athletics (4 years in basketball and 3 in track) and speech classes. I don't know how fast he ran in track, but I have played pickup basketball with him, and he was pretty good. Athletic participation is said to teach teamwork and develop leadership skills, but I suspect three years of speech classes boosted his political skill set. He credits venerable teacher Jessie Munford with teaching him the fundamentals of public speaking.

At the beginning of 1972, District 163 included Howell County and part of Ozark County. Wendell would be running against two candidates from West Plains, well-known basketball coach Jim Peters and Fred Zaier, for the position held for five terms by Granvil B. Vaughn of West Plains, who was running for the state senate.

As a result of redistricting after the 1970 census, contemporary newspaper accounts reflect that District 163 became District 152, and by August voting time, would have no territory in Ozark County. The Springfield Leader and Press, on July 19, 1972, reported District 152 would include "Howell County, the three eastern-most townships in Douglas County and the three southwestern townships of Oregon County." Of course, those wouldn't be the last changes. In the 1980s, the Missouri Official Manual showed Howell County in District 147. With the legislative redistricting approved earlier this year, Howell County is now in District 154, and includes Mountain View for the August election.

I started reflecting about the 1972 election last Thursday, about dusk, when the dogs barked in response to a knock at our front door. It takes some effort to reach our house at the back of a rural, wooded subdivision. By the time I got to the door, I saw a man walking back up the lane and a political flyer hanging on the door handle. He saw me and trotted back across the yard to introduce himself.

He was a young, businessman, maybe early thirties, run-



Wendell Bailey, as a senior at WSHS.

(Photo from the 1958 Williamizou yearbook.)

August 3, 2022

ning for state representative for the first time. [Wendell was 31-years-old when he ran the first time.] He seemed grateful that I allowed him to give his spiel. Frankly, I was having a flashback, and shared my experience working on Bailey campaigns.

Although too young to remember, the candidate seemed interested (or had honed his political skills), when I told him about the 1980 Republican primary for the U.S. Congress in Missouri's 8th District. At the time, Missouri's 8th District covered a large portion of central Missouri, from the Arkansas border, around the Lake of the Ozarks to Columbia, eastward



A Bailey railroad cap from the 1992 campaign for governor.

along the Interstate 70 corridor to West St. Louis County, and southward through Dent, Shannon, and Oregon Counties.

In that primary, Wendell bested 12 opponents running for the seat Richard Ichord (D-Houston) had held for 19 years. In the general election, he beat Steve Gardiner (D-Ballwin), and distinguished himself as a freshman U.S. Congressman by actually passing legislation.

As we chatted, he asked if there was always this much heat. At first, I thought he was referring to door-to-door campaigning in 100-degree weather. Another flashback. But then I realized he meant the current state of acrimony that exists between opposing political camps. I thought for a moment and told him I didn't think so—at least, not in local elections.

Of course, mean-spirited and salacious campaigns at the national level are nothing new. In Lowell McMurtrey's history class at WSHS in the 1960s, he told us about the U.S. presidential election of 1884 and described it as one of the dirtiest in history. Because Democratic candidate Grover Cleveland had fathered an illegitimate child, the Republican battle cry became "Ma, Ma, where's my pa? He's in the White House, ha, ha, ha." Not to be out done, the Democrats disparaged the Republican candidate, because of his questionable business practices, with: "James G. Blaine, continental liar from the state of Maine."

In my experience with Bailey campaigns, the public rhetoric did not rise to the viciousness of 1884. But in the 1982 congressional race, an Ike Skelton group paid for a tacky advertisement in the Miller County Autogram-Sentinel: "Wendell Bailey has slung enough mud to make Mt. St. Helen's pale in comparison. Bailey has more mud to sling—be sure and duck."

I don't remember any mudslinging from the Bailey camp, but I do recall Bailey volunteers complaining about shenanigans from the other side, namely, pilfering our yard signs. Wendell had a motto for such instances: "Grudges and hard feelings are for losers." In other words, just keep doing your job.

In 1972, I came home from Columbia before going on active duty in the army that fall. It seemed the whole town was involved in the Bailey election efforts—Willow was plastered with election signs for Wendell—so I jumped aboard the Bailey train.

Wendell told the volunteers, "If it isn't fun, don't do it." His enthusiasm and optimism carried over to the volunteers. On election day, I remember Scott Corn and I driving the streets of Mountain View in a loudspeaker truck urging citizens to vote for Bailey. We were fortunate not to have been cited for disturbing the peace.

By that evening, with the polls closed, Wendell played on his softball team and was still in his uniform that night at the victory party in campaign headquarters when Kit Bond, the republican nominee for governor, called to congratulate him.

A hallmark of all Bailey campaigns was Wendell's tireless energy as a campaigner. Another hallmark was his wife, Jane Bailey. Whether she was keeping the household together in Willow, on the campaign trail, or a calm presence behind the scene, her contribution was invaluable. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention the strategic input of Duane Benton as a campaign manager before he became a judge.

Some politicians are one-hit wonders, so to hold elected office at the local, state, and national level for twenty years, including four terms as a state representative, a term in the U.S. Congress, two terms (8 years) as the Missouri treasurer, and winning the Republican nomination for Missouri Lieutenant Governor, is remarkable. And like Don McClean's "American Pie," after fifty years, we still are still taking about Wendell.

Valedictorian, Mizzou Golden Girl, and Professor

The Way We Were

Personal reflections on life in the Ozarks

BY LONNIE WHITAKER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Read more at www.LonnieWhitaker.com

2023

I am fascinated by people who can do things that I haven't done or probably couldn't do. Esoteric subjects interest me, but I can't imagine getting a master's degree and a Ph.D. in philosophy, and after those accomplishments, changing course and going to law school. Then, becoming a Curators' Distinguished Teaching Professor at the University of Missouri School of Journalism—only a small percentage of professors achieve this distinction—and from 1987 to 2013, as an adjunct professor, also teaching at Missouri University Law School. Well, that's what WSHS alum Sandra Davidson did.

How did Sandra (still, Sandy to friends), the recipient of two prestigious Missouri University Curator's Scholarships and the UMC Association of Women Students Centennial Scholarship, decide to pursue this course of study? Unlike my spur-of-the-moment decisions in college—I decided to scrap the Marine Corps, go to Europe, and then law school, while drinking coffee in the student union—Sandy's curriculum vitae appears to have been planned with military precision.

But even the best laid plans often get altered. Sandy says, "I started as a music major but had an oboe teacher who wanted me to spend too much time making reeds and not enough time making music. I transferred to political science, something I was interested in from high school speech and debate. From there I transferred to philosophy, which answered deeper questions concerning political matters and morality."

A Mizzou professor in the education department told me the best indicator of success in college was grades in high school. So, it isn't surprising that the valedictorian of the Class of 1964 excelled in college. But with Sandy, it wasn't just about grades at WSHS.

I recall her as an engaging personality, who participated in speech and debate, concert band, and had featured roles in school musicals "Oklahoma" and "South Pacific." Moreover, the Bruin Marching Band showcased her as a baton twirler starting in the eighth grade.

As a senior, after winning and competing in numerous speech and debate tournaments, she was named WSHS Speaker of the Year. In concert band and ensembles, she played the oboe, which is generally considered to be one of the most



Caption for 1959 Willamizzou Photo: Sandra Davidson (L) and Deanna Collins Corn (R) performing at the 1958 Fall Fiesta. In their twirling exhibition, they managed to twirl batons and manipulate their Hula Hoops simultaneously. (photo from the 1959 Willamizzou)

difficult instruments to master. Nevertheless, she scored top ratings at the State Music Festival her junior and senior years. Playing the oboe is another thing I can't imagine doing. My attempt would, at best, sound like a duck call.

Remarkably, Sandy's talent at baton twirling, which began as a little girl, paid dividends in college. Anyone who has ever been to a college football game in Columbia, or seen Marching Mizzou on TV (as in last year's Macy's Day Parade) is familiar with its dance team, the Golden Girls. From an article in Vox Magazine published in 2015, I learned that in an interesting turn of events, Sandy became one of the original Golden Girls.

In 1964, the summer before her freshman year at Mizzou, Sandy auditioned and won a spot on the twirling team, which had been added to Marching Mizzou in 1957. In her tryout, she wore a silver-sequined leotard she had worn at WSHS. Incidentally, because she had a flaming baton routine in her repertoire, she originally got the outfit because it was fire retardant. Impressed with her tryout costume, the band director ordered gold-sequined versions for the entire squad, which soon became known as the Golden Girls. And Sandy's flame-retardant outfit was the prototype for the Golden Girl uniforms.

Another thing a lot of folks don't know is Sandy advanced beyond local competition in the Miss Missouri Pageant. My mother served as her hairdresser/chaperone and was quite impressed with her, including her ability to eat a fairly rare steak.

I asked Sandy how WSHS prepared her for college, and if any teachers influenced her. She said, "I always say my hardest teacher was Mrs. Munford. She graded me on what she thought I could do, not on a set scale. I loved it! I loved her. She prepared me for college."

After obtaining her B.A. in philosophy, with honors, including Phi Beta Kappa, she continued her studies at Mizzou and received an M.A. in philosophy in 1973. As the recipient of a 3-year NDEA graduate fellowship, she earned a Ph.D. in philosophy at Connecticut University—Storrs (the main campus) in 1977. That's a

top-ranking graduate school, which today, only admits about 7 Ph.D. students annually in the philosophy graduate program.

Of course, advanced degrees require dedication and effort, but right after her first semester in graduate school, she had her first baby. Her second baby was born while she was doing her doctoral course work. And her third child was born after Sandy completed her comprehensive exams, but before she started her dissertation on the political philosophy of Immanuel Kant and John Rawls.

As to philosophy, after Locke and Hume, my knowledge tapers quickly, but I do know something about law school. And after teaching an undergraduate course in philosophy, that's where Sandy headed—to law school, at the University of Missouri-Columbia. There, she distinguished herself as a member of the law review, graduating with honors and tapped into the Order of the Coif (top 10%) in 1982. Even for the brightest students, law school is no mean feat, particularly, when her youngest child started school the same year Sandy started law school.

I was curious and asked Sandy about the apparent change of direction—from an academic pursuit of philosophy to a traditional, professional school and admission to the Bar. Her answer surprised me. She says, "I always wanted a Ph.D. and a law degree. In philosophy I learned about natural law, and in law I learned about positive law." The combination has served her well, as a multiple award-winning professor who taught media and communications law at both Mizzou's journalism school and law school.

A prolific author, Sandy has written well over a hundred professional publications, including law review and other scholarly articles. As an educator, she has traveled to international forums, including China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Mongolia, Prague (Czech Republic), Bratislava (Slovakia), and Exeter College of the University of Oxford in England. Moreover, she spent a semester teaching in London for the University of Missouri J-School program there.

In spite of the multitude of accolades and awards, she still retains values learned in Willow Springs. Last year, in response to a question posed to her in the Journal of the Missouri Bar, about the best advice someone gave her, she responded, "Don't be vulgar. That was the advice from my grandmother, who helped raise me. It was her universal rule for appropriate behavior, whether the subject was table manners, dress, how to treat others, or almost anything else. It is a good piece of advice for lawyers on how to treat each other, I believe."

Today, as a professor emeritus, she spends time with her husband, four grandchildren, and writing, including a book dealing with an Ozark murder trial that is all-too-familiar to some older Willow Springs folks.

A regular reader of this column from St. Louis, who is not from Willow Springs, recently said, "There were a lot of bright kids in that little country school." Obviously, Sandra Davidson was one of them.



Sandra Davidson, professor emeritus at the University of Missouri. Prior to her retirement, she was a Curators' Distinguished Teaching Professor at the Missouri School of Journalism.

February 1, 2023

Curiouser and curiouser

May 22, 2024

In a short period of time, Howell County has had a front-row seat to a startling number of extremely rare or once-in-a-lifetime occurrences. From the total solar eclipse on April 8 to the ongoing double-emergence of cicadas, this photo story is a record of these extraordinary times.

Northern Lights in Missouri



The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) observed a series of solar flares and coronal mass ejections (CMEs) that began on May 8 and issued a severe geomagnetic storm watch for May 10. The storm was indeed severe enough for the Northern Lights, or aurora borealis, to be plainly visible throughout most of the county. This image was captured in Mountain View.



May 10 Northern Lights captured near Willow Springs.

May 8 Severe Weather Event

A severe weather event that unleashed F1 tornadoes to the north of our readership dropped tennis ball-sized hail here. The past two months have brought abundant rainfall to most of Missouri. After back-to-back drought years in 2022 and 2023, drought concerns were high in early 2024," said University of Missouri Extension State Climatologist Zack Leasor.

Conditions took a turn for the better in April, he said. Statewide precipitation was 6.01 inches, 2.04 inches above the monthly average, making

April 2024 the Missouri's 15th-wettest April back to 1895, based on preliminary data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Several locations in western Missouri received just over 10 inches of rainfall during April. At the end of April, year-to-date precipitation in Missouri was 12.87 inches, 1.58 inches above average. The wet and warm pattern has continued into the first half of May.

The May 14 update from the United States Drought Monitor shows that only 17.98% of



Missouri is currently classified as either abnormally dry or in moderate drought; these locations are in southern and southeastern Missouri.

"This is a large improvement from just six weeks ago, when 66.55% of the state was classified as abnormally dry or drought on April 2," said Leasor.



Courtesy of Horace Farmer

April 8 Total Eclipse of the Sun & Devil's Comet



Most of the county had the good fortune to be in the path of totality for the April 8 total solar eclipse. The next total solar eclipse that will be visible in Missouri will occur in 2045.



The solar storm that prompted the conditions for visible aurora borealis in Missouri.



During the eclipse, Robby Rakestraw, of Willow Springs captured what TIME magazine called, "one of cosmic history's greatest acts of photo-bombing." The so-called "devil's comet," was visible during the eclipse. Comet 12P/Pons-Brooks is one of the brightest observable comets. It comes around every 71 years, according to NASA. Its nickname comes from a 2023 photo of an outburst that caused the comet to have an asymmetrical appearance, appearing to have horns.

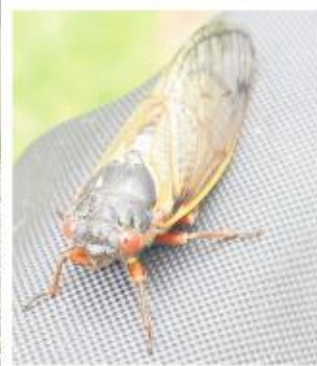
Double emergence of cicadas



The double brood emergence of cicadas that is grabbing national headlines is the cause of swarms of insects crawling all over every outdoor surface. "Periodical cicadas in Brood XIII, on a 17-year-cycle, and Brood XIX, on a 13-year-cycle, will emerge in 2024 in the same year for the first time since 1803. Their ranges...do not overlap," said Entomology Today. Illinois is at the center of the dual emergence. Brood XIX are the visitors burrowing skyward, molting, and screaming in the trees here in Howell County.



A Brood XIX cicada hatches.



The distinctive, red-eyed insects can be expected to swirl from the trees for several weeks.

60-year love story inspires AED donation

by Amanda Mendez, publisher
editor@howellcountynews.com

February 19, 2025

George Myers, of Willow Springs, honored his late wife Wanda with a donation to Willow Care Nursing Home last week. On Monday, Feb. 10, Myers presented an automatic external defibrillator (AED) to the facility.

"In a way, it was a continuation of my love story with Wanda," Myers told Howell County News. "It was getting close to Valentine's and thinking of her, and I wanted to do something in her memory."

George and Wanda were married for 58 years. She passed away at the age of 80 in July 2023.

"There was a number of reasons that came together," he said.

Wanda volunteered at Willow Care for many years, according to her husband. He estimates she made between 8,000 and 9,000 rosaries for residents. Wanda was a resident herself on and off during her final year of life.

"She always liked the residents there, and I thought it might help somebody. I knew they didn't have an AED," George said.

The use of AEDs can be the difference in resuscitation before permanent brain damage occurs, commented Willow Care Administrator Stacey Smith.

MYERS
continues on page 3



submitted photo

George Myers with the AED he donated to Willow Care Nursing Home in memory of his late wife, Wanda.

MYERS
continued from page 1

"In settings that serve individuals over the age of 80, there is a greater likelihood of sudden cardiac arrest. And automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) can save lives no matter the age of the recipient," Smith said.

As Myers pointed out, February is American Heart Month, and the week of Valentine's Day seemed like the perfect time to honor his wife, who died of heart failure.

"She was my life. We were crazy about each other," Myers said.



HCN file photo

Wanda Myers, 1942 - 2023.



Welcome home, Hannah!

Hometown American Idol finalist gives concert

by Shelby Atkinson, guest reporter

May 13, 2026

2026

Willow Springs didn't show up to the hometown Hannah Harper concert quietly. Though the energy of the daytime festivities felt like a buzz in town, nothing matched the energy of the free concert on the football field that ended the evening.

City officials estimate more than 2,500 gathered to welcome Hannah Harper back to the town that helped shape her, cheer for her and vote her into the Top 3 on this season of American Idol. And they were met with a huge surprise at the end of the night...

Hannah Harper Day May 6, 2026, was officially declared Hannah Harper Day in Willow Springs, but the celebration was much more than the reading of a proclamation. The day was filled with activities downtown Willow Springs and offered a parade where Harper, along with her husband and children, rode through town in a horse-drawn carriage. The carriage let her off at the football field for a seven-song performance as part of the hometown sendoff.

Harper, a Willow Springs resident, wife and mother of three, has drawn national attention this season for her powerful vocals, her original song "String Cheese," and her willingness to speak openly about faith, motherhood, postpartum depression and the pressure of taking a national stage.

Standing before her hometown crowd, Harper said the support from Willow Springs has carried her through the rough patches of the competition.

"I don't know how many people are here. It feels like a million," Harper told the crowd. "This is the most insane thing I have ever seen in my entire life."

Her smile beamed from the stage as she reminded everyone she is still the same person who shops at G&W



SEES THE MOMENT PHOTOGRAPHY FOR HOWELL COUNTY NEWS

Hannah Harper greets the crowd on Palenske Field ahead of her hometown concert in Willow Springs on May 6.

and will likely be back there in the next couple of weeks, restocking her fridge and buying milk.

"It's because of you that I'm here," Harper added. "I just want to say thank you to all of you."

The evening included a prayer, local and state proclamations, gifts from the community and performances from Harper on the Willow Springs High School football field. The event was supported

by Willow Springs Schools, the city, the Chamber of Commerce, FFA students, volunteers, vendors and many local sponsors.

Before Harper took the stage, Willow Springs City Administrator Beverly Hicks presented the city proclamation on behalf of the mayor. The proclamation recognized Harper's national success, her Ozarks roots, her bluegrass and gospel background with the Harper

family, and the way she has used her platform to speak about personal struggles while staying grounded in faith and family.

"Today, May 6, 2026, we declare this Hannah Harper Day," Hicks said as the crowd erupted.

State Rep. Lisa Durnell presented Harper with a resolution from the Missouri House of Representatives, along with a sign signed by members of the House and a

Missouri flag. Durnell said Harper's name has been mentioned on the House floor several times during her run on national television.

"Who would have thought that the little gal who moved in down the road from me would cause such a stir in Willow Springs?" Durnell smiled.

U.S. Rep. Jason Smith also took to the stage to recognize Harper, calling her "the daughter of the Ozarks" and

saying her story has inspired people far beyond Missouri.

While Harper's made waves throughout the nation, for Willow Springs, Wednesday was very personal. Rather than it feeling like just another celebrity passing through, it felt like a neighbor returning home.

During a media interview before the performance, Harper said the day had already been emotional leading up to the concert.

Celebrating 250 years of freedom



SEES THE MOMENT PHOTOGRAPHY FOR HOWELL COUNTY NEWS

Hannah Harper opens the show with a rendition of Maverick City's 'I Thank God,' as dad Gaylon Harper plays banjo in the background.

HANNAH continued from page 1

"I've cried all day long," she said.

When asked what she hopes people remember years from now when they talk about Hannah Harper Day, Harper said she hopes they remember happiness, joy and the kindness of the community that shaped her.

"Willow is a community that loves deeply," Harper added. "I hope that anyone who comes in, even to the city limits, feels that."

Harper said the hometown visit came at just the right time, giving her the push she needed before heading into the final stretch of the competition.

"[Hannah Harper Day] reminds me why I'm here, why I'm doing this," Harper said. "It gives me the push to get through this next week."

She spoke openly about the pressure of performing on a national stage, noting that growing up singing in church prepared her to sing with purpose, but American Idol placed her in front of millions of people who could judge her, misunderstand her or criticize her without knowing her.

"I have allowed myself to be vulnerable to the world," Harper explained. "It's hurt at times, because people will make assumptions of who they think I am as a person."

Still, she said the platform has been life-changing, especially as her music has connected with women who have walked through difficult seasons of motherhood and mental health.

"I never knew that I could share a song that I wrote in a trench with millions of women and for them to be connecting with it on a deep level," Harper said.

The surprises kept coming...

Just when Hannah Harper thought the surprises were over for the day, she closed the show singing "Heads Carolina, Tails California," and she was joined onstage by Jo Dee Messina around the first chorus.

The look on Harper's face said it all — shock, joy and genuine awe as she finished the song alongside Messina as a duet.

"OH MY GOSH!" Harper screamed as she realized which famous voice that had joined her onstage.

"Jo Dee Messina everybody," she added. "Welcome to Willow Springs, Jo Dee! Oh my gosh!"

By the second verse, the realization had begun to set in.

"I can't sing this in front of you, are you kidding me?"

But sing it, she did. With everyone in her hometown echoing the excitement of the Idol finalist.

"Jo Dee, take the chorus... I'm going to go cry over here!"

Footage from the hometown show aired Monday, May 11 as part of the Season 24 finale festivities.



SEES THE MOMENT PHOTOGRAPHY FOR HOWELL COUNTY NEWS

Cloggers from Cornerstone Dance Studio perform on a moving trailer in the parade. Facing left, from left to right: Sadie Parsons, Anna Leichter, Olivia Blanchette, Kaylee Banchette, Acalita Agnew, Maggie Agnew, Izzy Chaney. Facing right, from left: Keziah Mossman, Ayla Kangel, Gracie Kangel, Willow White, and Emily Blanchette. Obscured from view: Lori Leichter.



SEES THE MOMENT PHOTOGRAPHY FOR HOWELL COUNTY NEWS

This year's parade Grand Marshal is American Legion Post 384, based in Willow Springs. From left to right: Larry Nolle, George Myers, Glenn Davis, Ralph Miller, Ron Veal, Russ Jackson, and Terry Jackson. Partially obscured is Tom Siegrist.



HOWELL COUNTY NEWS/KACEY BLUNK

Hannah Harper waves to the crowd in a horse-drawn carriage donated by Pine Meadows Venue with her husband at her side and one of her sons on her lap.



HOWELL COUNTY NEWS/KACEY BLUNK

Surprise! Jo Dee Messina appears on stage during Harper's cover of 'Heads Carolina, Tails California.'

2026

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From founder to fond memory

by Kim Rich
Howell County News founder

Once upon a time, our story started like most good stories. At its simplest, a young woman with oversized dreams and an undersized budget set out to meet a community need for a newspaper. The fact the business survived is a testament to community support and personal faith, especially when put into a big-picture context. Anyone who remembers the high-pitched squeal of dial-up internet also remembers how much technology has changed our world in the past 25 years. The newspaper business is no different.

On the heels of a community newspaper boom in the late 1980s and 1990s, the coming tech age signaled changes within the country, industry, and local businesses. When the Howell County News began in 2001, we were the first newspaper in our area to do no "paste-up"; others were still printing newspaper pages out in bits and pieces (called tiles) and gluing or taping together to send to their printer.

So from our first issue on Aug. 19, 2001, we determined we would take our newspaper pages to our printer in an electronic format. As laughable as it sounds, that high-tech version was on a Zip drive, something that no longer exists. We created a website at startup, also well outside the norm for newspapers in this area.

But three weeks after our beginning, the world stopped.

For moments frozen in time on Sept. 11, we all watched planes strike the towers of the World Trade Center in New York City – a repeating news reel over the coming weeks and years. We were suddenly at war and the economy seized. Our promising new business, which was dependent on other businesses, had to practice patience and graciousness. Many businesses still wanted and needed to advertise, but dragged their feet when it came time to pay their bills.

As this wore on for a few months, I feared we wouldn't make it past the end of the year. I examined job options that could repay the SBA loan I'd just taken out to start the newspaper – even looking heavily at rejoining the Army like many of my fellow patriots did in the wake of 9-11.

But the stories and the photos turned into weeks, months, and years. We slowly gained advertisers and subscribers. Two daughters were welcomed into the world, and grew up in the newspaper office. The pack-and-play and bouncy seats turned to books and crayons and school backpacks on the floor. The Zip drives that carried our newspaper to the printing press turned into CDs, and eventually high-speed internet replaced both. The design station and various equipment that took up an entire office slowly downsized to a single computer. DOS-based business systems found their way to Windows, and then to online portals. We endured economic and political downturns and upswings at a local, state, and federal level. One of the most substantial was the recession of 2008, which caused us to shed our shopper product that had gone to every mailbox within several zip codes (circulation of about 10,000) and our women's news magazine.

Seismic shifts in technology brought online shopping, which hurt mom-and-pop shops and advertising revenue. Only about 20 percent of individuals shopped online in 2001; that stands at 80 percent today. Higher speed connections gave way to social media, which sometimes diminished credible news sources for readers who wanted quicker "news." Studies report the average time spent online at less than an hour a day in 2001, compared to close to seven hours now. Smart phones made their debut in 2007, which caused an increase in time spent on the phone from less than 10 minutes per day to about four to five hours a day. In other words, to survive, businesses needed to learn new media – and quickly.

Through the tech changes, however, the news kept going. The communities we cover saw storms of all sorts. Tornadoes, hail, wind, and water damaged homes, businesses, and infrastructure too many times to count. And the historic 2017 flood topped them all. Political scandals and criminal stories left their mark – like the shooting death of Trooper Dewayne Graham in 2005, followed by the arrest, trial, and ultimate execution of Lance Shockley for that crime.

Those close to us came and went – businesses, advertisers, public servants, employees, and friends. One of the most notable longtime supporters of the newspaper was Steve Norman, owner and pharmacist at Ferguson Drug. He never missed an opportunity to support the newspaper on a regular basis and never said no for any special project we undertook. My uncle and first delivery driver was another loss when he was no longer able to drive and ultimately passed from cancer. He also never missed an opportunity to make us better, reaching out to new stores for additional newsstand locations whenever he had a chance.

Despite all the years and all the changes, a few things remained. The commitment to faith and family were the bedrock of the business. These were followed by dedication to providing accurate, honest, straight-arrow news. Serving the community also was a cornerstone, maintaining positive relationships whenever possible. These things were not – and cannot be – diminished by whatever technology brings.

So as our collective story continues, we honor the passing chapters and look forward to what's yet to come. Good Lord willing, we'll all still be here in another 25 years – recording local history, telling stories that need told, and living those dreams that started it all.

— Sources include the U.S. Census Bureau, Centers for Disease Control, Pew Research Center, Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Institutes of Health, and Gallup.



A Newspaper in the Digital Age

by Amanda Mendez, publisher
editor@howellcountynews.com

Buying a newspaper in 2019 remains, hands down, the craziest thing we've ever done. When Ron and I had the opportunity to take over the Howell County News, we had no media experience and precious little to recommend us—except that we loved this newspaper, loved this town, and needed a reason to stay.

Before we talked business, we prayed with founder Kim Rich. Then we took a leap of faith.

At the time, it felt like a win-win. Either we would give a beloved local institution a little more time, or we would operate a thriving newspaper.

Eight months later, a global pandemic became the defining economic event of the decade. Many advertisers disappeared. An essential few stayed. Federal funding flooded into every level of local government, creating many good news stories and contributing to at least one very difficult one. Social media only grew louder and prominent after the COVID era. To an industry that exists largely offline, at first, that seemed like a threat. But over time, we learned that online noise is no substitute for hometown journalism. There is no digital replacement for a trusted local source of news.

There are better people to tell you what's happening in Jefferson City, Washington D.C., and around the country, but I like to think there's no one better to keep you informed about Howell County. We took off running in 2019 towards that goal because of the firm foundation laid by founder Kim Rich. Every door was open to us. We inherited a reputation for integrity. With the courage to tell the truth, and the discipline not to favor, we hope to keep earning that reputation every week.

Now, seven years later, we are stewarding this title into its 25th anniversary. For more than 350 issues, week after week, we have been raising babies and writing the news. Our family has doubled since 2019. We went from two to four children, and as I type, another one is on the way. Like the last generation of newspaper kids, our children are growing up with ink on their jammies and a respect for deadlines.

On the other end of every newspaper has been you. Readership is at an all-time high, ever-increasing. Even our harshest critics are still reading, and we are grateful for you all. God willing, let's do this again in another 25 years.



Celebrate 25 Years of being Informed & Educated on local issues



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Community paper needs your input, support

When I woke up Monday morning, I braced myself for what I knew would be a long day. And I did my best to squelch the butterflies in my stomach.

Though our office for the Howell County News had been open since the week before, this Monday was the day we would "put to bed" our first issue of the newspaper.

Today, our way of speaking, all the business planning and building renovations have been important, but those aren't things our readers are getting in the mailbox every week.

If in reading this week's issue you find that it falls short of your expectations, please keep in mind that we're still under construction - literally and figuratively.

As an introduction to myself and to this newspaper, there are several things our readers can - and should - expect.

First, you may not like everything we print. Not all the news that happens in a community is good, nor is it all bad. What we will promise is that we'll always be honest and we'll do our best to be fair in reporting of all the news - the good, bad and ugly.

We also don't play favorites - especially when it comes to things like public record, court news, arrests and the like. If you don't want your name in the paper for drinking and driving, I'd suggest you remedy the situation on your end. And once you get caught, yes, your name will be in the paper. There are no exceptions, so there's no need to ask.

I am a die-hard supporter of the First Amendment and have made it one of my many missions in life to make sure that the public's business is conducted in the public light. I hope there won't be too many cross words printed on this editorial page on that topic, but I've already heard rumors of allegedly public meetings where officials mumble among themselves out of earshot of those in attendance instead of trying to conduct things they should. Time will tell if these rumors will be proven true.

A good newspaper plays an incredible role in the community it serves. I've always said that a newspaper, if it's conducting itself properly, should be a community's harshest critic, yet staunchest supporter. Expect to see members of our staff at community functions in both Mountain View and Willow Springs. Expect us to be involved, whether we're offering extra publicity for worthwhile events or making

My Point of View

By Publisher
Kim Rich



need to thank here for their contributions toward the product you're now holding in your hands.

- My parents. From listening to the countless variations on the business theme when we were still in the concept phase, to the hours they have spent helping me renovate our current office space, they've been here for me. I couldn't have done it without them.

- My other family members, including mother and my friends. All whatever way has been from next door or via e-mail and long-distance calls.

- My immediate and church family. Thank you for supporting me and the business with your thoughts and prayers. Please don't stop any time soon!

- I can't say enough about the two wonderful women who joined me on staff - Stacy Caden of Houston and Renee Depriest. They've both jumped in with both feet, working harder and better than anyone could have hoped for. What you see here is largely due to their efforts.

- Words can't express the gratitude I have toward the advertisers who have boarded wholeheartedly in our new venture. I hope we're building relationships that will blossom for years to come.

- The communities of Willow Springs and Mountain View. The support of our newspaper thus far has been overwhelming. From the area business to the teen-agers on the street who have offered words

The phrase is often repeated that the same can be said for a community newspaper.

If you have story ideas, birth announcements, wedding plans, an anniversary, or an accomplishment of which you're particularly proud, please let us know.

Contact us by using the information at the right.

SPEAKING PERSONALLY

Five years of this whirlwind

A column by publisher Amanda Mendez
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Amanda Mendez is the publisher and owner of Howell County News. She is the winner of the 2023 Golden Quill, awarded by the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors and the 2023 Tighman Cloud Memorial Editorial Award from Missouri Press Association. Mendez serves as the President of the Ozarks Press Association and serves on the Missouri Bar-Press Commission. Along with her husband Ron, Mendez has owned and operated Howell County News since July 2019. She is an enthusiast of all things Ozarks and old-fashioned.

CONGRATULATIONS ON 25 YEARS

INTEGRITY GRIT TRUTH AND LOVE

to me as we looked toward the future and discussed a crazy, out-of-the-blue opportunity. Five years ago, we had a chance to buy a local newspaper, this local newspaper. Ron's words--inspiring, irreverent, and fittingly chaotic - somehow perfectly sum up this adventure. It was also a more relevant pop culture reference then.

The issue in your hands is our 250th edition. Ron and I have been publishing the Howell County News today.

Using, round number another word, I must first pay tribute to the eighteen years of hard work that made this possible. Our owner and publisher Kim Rich started Howell County News from scratch in 2001 and ran this publication with such class and integrity that her reputation opened doors for me from day one. Thank you, for trusting us with the paper you built.

Back to the Sharknado.

The chaos has been relentless. In the beginning, I would stay up all night typing court news and other public records. For the first two weeks, we didn't even have a delivery person. Ron and I, with our two young boys, delivered all the rack papers ourselves.

Now, we have office staff, reporters covering both Mountain View and West Plains, sports stringers, haulers, and columnists. We have twice as many children than when we began.

Somehow, I went from someone who had never even used the word "byline" to an award-winning journalist.

national society. It's amazing what success we have found.

Newspapering can be a tough business, but people are craving authenticity. For us, authenticity has meant the use of this opinion page. When you first read about the news, you'll get the facts as straight as we can

and it on this page. In the beginning, I shied away from giving opinions, but I soon discovered that when news stories tell the truth one hundred percent of the time, I will make enemies.

I'll never forget the time I asked some routine questions about the proceeds of a successful football fundraiser, and the coach's wife called me, unsolicited, to tell me it was "none of my business." Later, that coach stalked into my office. He threw the requested records on my desk and scolded me for investigating. "This more than the Kennedy assassination."

Just as I suspected, there was nothing amiss. But the harpooner is seldom cherished by the whales (sharks?), and nothing will make me work harder than telling me something is none of my business. It's literally the business I operate in this town.

Back then, I only reported the news of that interaction. I didn't give my opinion, and I have always regretted it. When I pursue the stories that everyone is talking about in the grocery store line and at feed store counters, those folks have already formed an opinion. I like to think my opinion adds value to the conversation.

I have published many a news story that felt like unleashing a tornado full of sharks, but even my spiciest opinions seem to nestle into the heart of this community. I hope that is because they are so authentically and fervently spoken.

Every person I've met in the past five years has given me something to help me along the way. For better or over with interest in this county, its politics.

for reading. Thank you for your support and your trust. It means everything to me.

If there's ever anything I can do for you, you know where to find me. Stop by our office, call 417-252-2525, or email editor@howellcountynews.com.



For the foundation laid by founder Kim Rich and the ongoing work of the Mendez family, we are truly proud and grateful.