



The Sequoyah SCRIBE

A student publication of John Sevier Middle School, Kingsport, Tennessee

IN THIS ISSUE



Sevier fields a female football player. **PAGE 11**



Tennessee steps up death penalty enforcement. **PAGE 8**

Get more news:



@sequoyahscribe



@thesequoyahscribe



user/sequoyahscribe



sequoyahscribe.com

Vol. 12, Issue 2

January 2020



Scribe Photo/COURTESY OF KCS

NEW KIDS ON THE BOARD. Julie Byers, left, and Jim Welsch were recently elected as new members of the Kingsport City Schools Board of Education.

New members elected to KCS board

BY CHLOE MCCONNELL

Jim Welsch and Julie Byers were elected earlier this year to serve a four-year term on Kingsport's Board of Education. They are both first-time members and join returning members Carrie Upshaw, Eric Hyche and Todd Golden on the board.

The Kingsport Board of Education makes many decisions that affect the school system and John Sevier Middle School, specifically.

"I have 3 kids; two at Dobyns-Bennett and one at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville," Byers said. "I am an Ohio State University alumnus with a bachelors in chemistry and a minor in English. My husband of 20 years works at Eastman Chemical."

Since she has kids in the school system, Byers is personally invested in the choices the Board of Education makes.

Jim Welsch was a teacher for 30 years, so he has a good understanding of students and of how schools operate. He also understands what students need to have the best learning environment.

"I taught U.S. History at Robinson Middle," he said. "I was the head of the 8th grade Washington trip for about 20 years. I was thinking about being a lawyer, but I had always wanted to teach."

Byers does not have a background as a teacher, but has been deeply involved with her children's education

"I have been a mentor to elementary school kids to help with

reading and math and social skills," she said. "I do science demonstrations in classrooms, career fairs and for STEM nights."

The process of campaigning for the school board pushed both Welsch and Byers out of their comfort zone.

"I have always been in the business of promoting others, not me," Welsch said. "That was difficult. That was one of the [reasons] why I never really pursued politics, because you have to want to do that. You have to want to promote yourself."

Byers had been asked for several years to run, but the timing was never right, until now.

See **BOARD** page 5

Student hairstyles cause controversies across nation

BY AUBREE PUCKETT

In New Jersey, a referee forced a high school wrestler to cut his dreadlocks before he could participate in a match. In Texas, a 4-year-old named Michael Scott had to cut his long hair before he could go to school. These cases are part of a national trend; students' hair choices are increasingly criticized in schools around the nation.

Paige Baker is an 8th grade student. Like many middle school students, she is unsure if there are any specific hair rules at her school.

"I don't know of any haircut or hair color rules," she said.

John Mallick, an 8th grade teacher, agrees.

"I have not seen any specific rules," he said.

In the 2016 Kingsport City

Schools Student Handbook, there is only mention of hair.

"No unnatural hair coloring, i.e., pink, orange, purple, etc., is permitted," the handbook states.

The current handbook, however, does not specifically mention hair at all. Instead, it states that a distracting appearance is unacceptable, although it mostly focuses on clothes.

"If a student's dress or appearance is such that it constitutes a threat to the health or safety of others, distracts the attention of other students or staff from their work, or otherwise violates this dress code, the principal or designee may require the student to change his appearance and/or be sent home according to the handbook," it states.

See **HAIR** page 4



Scribe Photo/AUBREE PUCKETT

CONTROVERSIAL HAIR? My'yon Lanier wears her hair in a natural style while waiting for school to start.



Sarah Arreola reports on the Americanization of Mexican food.

Read at sequoyahscribe.com



Talon Huff goes behind the scenes of Sevier on Stage's production of "Shrek".

View at sequoyahscribe.com



Talon Huff takes a look back at the scholastic book fair at Sevier Middle.

View at sequoyahscribe.com

First African American Miss Tennessee visits Sevier

BY ASIAH BELL

A teacher from Nashville, Brianna Mason, has become the first African American "Miss Tennessee". While preparing for her time in the "Miss America" pageant, she visited Sevier Middle School to speak with students about her journey.

Mason was born in Nashville. She attended the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and became a teacher. She now teaches first grade in Murfreesboro, where she lives with her cat, named Knight.

"I grew up in Nashville, the big city," she said.

Mason had a good childhood; her mom kept her busy.

"I did theater at my school, I acted in musicals and plays," she said. "I just did a lot of activities, a lot of extracurricular activ-

ities. I was the oldest of five, so we were always very busy when I was a kid."

When she went to college, she was inspired to become a teacher. She has a long history of teaching in her family, including her grandmother, who was a teacher.

"My father was a teacher and is now a principal, and so education has always been in my blood," Mason said. "I always loved kids, and one day I came to the realization: what better way to work with kids than to teach them?"

Mason did her first pageant when she was a freshman in college and she fell in love with it.

"I did the 'Mr. and Ms. Freshman Pageant' at UT and I just thought it was a lot of fun," she said.

See **TENNESSEE** page 4



Scribe Photo/SHAYLEIGH HONAKER

A TENNESSEE PIONEER. Brianna Mason, the first African American Miss Tennessee pageant winner, addresses a group of middle school students.

THE SEQUOYAH SCRIBE
JOHN SEVIER MIDDLE
1200 WATEREE ST.
KINGSPORT, TN 37660

Editor in Chief
Merdith Mooney

Student Life Editor
Charles Deng

Investigations Editor
Chloe McConnell

Opinion Editor
Anna Harrington

Entertainment Editor
Samson Ogbazghi

Sports Editor
Michael Fanning

Yearbook Editors
Audrey Edwards
Kylie Moore
Aubree Puckett
Rayna Welsch
Karmela Whiteside

Media Editors
Gabriel Bates
Abe Hatfield
Talon Huff
Emma Kimbler
Lily Powell

Reporters
Sarah Arreola
Madison Ball
Asiah Bell
Aly Bogni
Kaitlyn Burke
Katelyn Burrell
Katie Carmon
Camille Carter
Jakyla Chambers
Amber Cowden
Carlee Cradic
Dominic Harbin
Alyssa Headrick
Karla Hernandez
Shayleigh Honaker
Ellie Jackson
Emily Killen
Dylan Klepper
Caroline Miller
Cassie Probst
Cameron Roberts
Aubrie Simpson
Adyn Smith
Aeri Tucker
Callie Venzon
Sophie Williams
Samaya Wolfe

Adviser
David Flanary

The Sequoyah Scribe is published four times per academic year by the students in the Sequoyah Scribe journalism program at Sevier Middle in Kingsport, Tennessee.

Content is determined by the staff and does not necessarily reflect the opinions and policies of John Sevier Middle School's faculty, administration, adviser or student body.

Students are protected in their exercise of press freedom by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Signed editorials and columns reflect the views of the writer. Unsigned editorials reflect the opinion of the editorial board.

Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged and must be signed. The editorial board reviews letters to the editor, advertising and guest commentaries and reserves the right to edit and refuse material. Reasons can include length, clarity, libel, obscenity, material disruption to the educational process or violation of copyright law.

Send corrections to sequoyahscribe@k12k.com.

Additional Fonts
Nate Piekos/Blambot.com

Printed by
School Paper Express

STAFF EDITORIAL

The death penalty is doing more harm than good

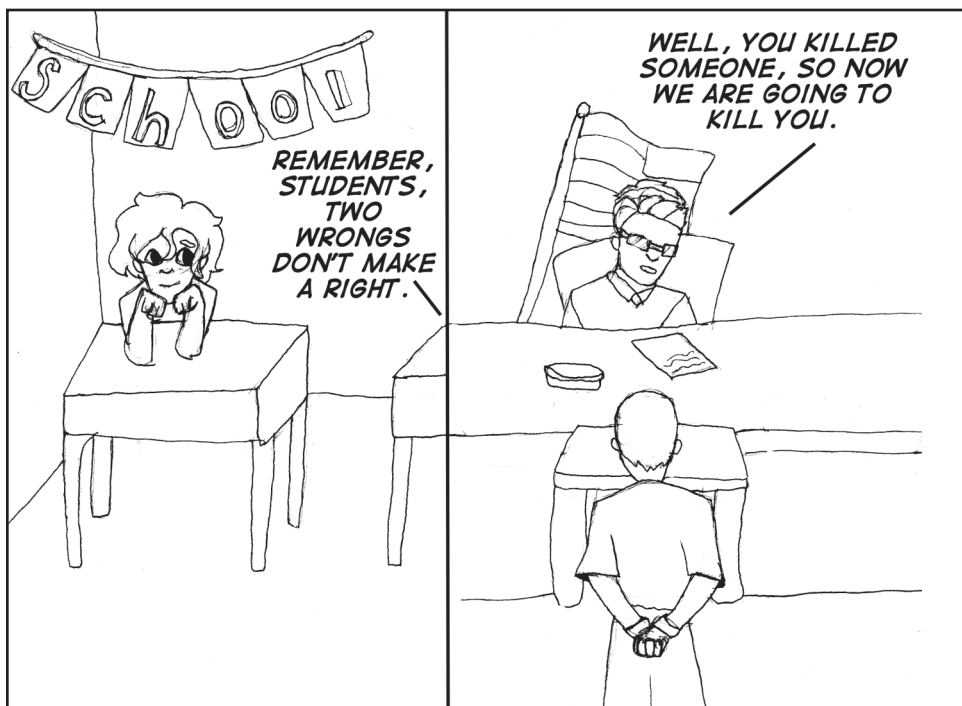
The death penalty has been around for thousands of years, but it is not the most effective way to deliver justice. Today, the justice system is different and it is time to reconsider Tennessee's support of the death penalty.

The death penalty costs countless dollars. According to "Tennesseans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty", taxpayers paid \$253 million more for the death penalty than they would have for life in prison without parole. This means that the taxes the people of Tennessee paid went to murder criminals instead of bettering society and helping to improve the criminal justice system.

The death penalty is also often unfair. Studies have found that since 1990, no person condemned to death row could afford their own lawyer. This means that the person could only provide their own defense or use a court-appointed attorney while going up against a trained prosecutor. People with the money to hire a better lawyer might have received a lesser punishment, even if they committed the same crime.

Another way the current system is unfair is that it is racially biased. People of color have a higher chance of being sentenced to death compared to white people. According to the Tennessee Department of Corrections, the state of Tennessee has executed 86 African Americans and only 50 whites. This means that people of color could have been executed while others might be sentenced to a lesser punishment just because of how that person looked.

The death penalty has gone through many methods of execution, including firing squad, hanging, electrocution and now lethal injection. These injections, however, are not a humane way to execute criminals. According to the "Tennessean", lethal in-



Scribe Cartoon/ANNA HARRINGTON

jections have caused victims to endure pain and a sense of drowning.

This is essentially torturing the criminal, which is against the 8th Amendment of the Constitution. It states that cruel punishments are unlawful. It is also morally wrong, plain and simple.

Mental illness is another reason why the death penalty should be reformed. According to "Tennesseans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty", mental illness can directly influence someone's actions and cause people to commit a crime, as well as affect how reliable their statements are. This means that a convicted person might literally have not been able to keep themselves from committing the crime. Instead of just executing them, it would be better to help

someone with mental illnesses.

Finally, sometimes the jury can get it wrong. One hundred and sixty four people on death row across the United States have been released due to new evidence proving their innocence. This proves that the death penalty might not be the best solution, because it also executes innocent people who didn't actually commit a crime.

Essentially, the Tennessee death penalty system should be reformed. Not only are innocent people executed, hundreds of thousands of dollars are wasted on these executions. Our society needs to be better than that. The government should not kill people in order to avenge murder. It is time for Tennessee to change its methods of justice.



BY KYLIE MOORE

COMMENTARY

Tennessee needs to get rid of prior review

In 2005, Oak Ridge High School principal Becky Ervin took all 1,800 copies of the school's student newspaper before they could be handed out to students. According to the Student Press Law Center, she was not happy about several articles, including one about body art and piercings.

So far, this has been the most extreme example in Tennessee of a major problem across many states: prior review and prior restraint.

According to the Journalism Education Association, prior review is when anyone not on a publication's staff requires that they be allowed to read, view or approve student material before publication. Prior restraint is when a school principal, a member of the school board, or a superintendent of schools changes or removes content.

Prior review needs to be banned from Tennessee. Students cannot become well-informed and educated citizens without their First Amendment

rights. Many states have already passed laws protecting student journalists, but Tennessee is not one of them.

Schools and colleges all around the country have student newspapers. They provide students with a chance to express themselves, to explore problems and suggest solutions. These newspapers are an important part of any student's First Amendment rights.

Often, students will call attention to problems that adults ignore or never even noticed. One example is a group of high school journalists who investigated a new principal's credentials and found that she had lied on her resume. Days later, she resigned from her job as principal of Pittsburg High School in Kansas. If prior review had been enforced, no one would ever have known that the principal was not qualified.

When President Trump's special envoy to Ukraine resigned, a student newspaper beat everyone to the story. The jury is quite literally still out on the president's dealings with Ukraine, but clearly, students

can and should be able to explore big, important stories.

There is even an interesting case from Sevier. Several years ago, the "Scribe" called attention to the fact that many bathroom stall locks were broken. Thanks to the article, the KCS maintenance department became aware of this problem and installed new locks.

When principals use prior review, students lose the opportunity to develop skills they need, including the ability to recognize real journalism and fake news. Students should not have to choose the content of their newspapers to make their principal happy.

According to the Journalism Education Association, students who are in charge of their own publication have to consider their audience's right to know and people's right to privacy. They have to judge sources and learn to be fair and accurate. When they make mistakes, they have to admit to them and deal with the consequences. They learn important lessons about responsibility.

There is a campaign called

"New Voices" that is trying to get state laws passed that protect student journalists from prior review and prior restraint. There are "New Voices" laws in 14 states: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington.

It is time that Tennessee passes a "New Voices" law. Students at Sevier Middle are lucky that they have the freedom to explore problems and offer solutions in their newspaper. Other schools are not as lucky.

Schools cannot teach students how to be responsible and express themselves without letting them use their First Amendment rights. Prior review and prior restraint are ridiculous.

Prior review and restraint need to be banned from Tennessee. There is no evidence that prior review from principals improves learning in any way. It is time for Tennessee's state government to protect the voices of their students.

POINT/COUNTERPOINT

SHOULD MUSIC BE ALLOWED IN CLASS?

Teachers should be more open to letting students listen to music in class

YES Listening to music is a desired activity in class. It helps some students study and improves their focus. Many teachers dislike this activity and will not allow students to listen to music in their classes. Music, however, can be helpful in many ways.

According to neurosciencenews.com, students who listen to music learn to distinguish sensory information from noise. Music can also help students with learning, language and memory.

So, it is no surprise that students may find it more effective to study and do individual work while listening to music. Listening to music can also help motivate a student to work in class and bring positivity to their state of mind. Music can put a student in a brighter mood.

Some teachers believe that only certain genres of music could affect the way a student learns in a positive way, such as classical music. That is wrong. All genres of music are helpful and have a positive effect on the way students work.

According to PBS, music stimulates parts of the brain. That is why music can help bring back memories to people who have Alzheimer's disease, dementia or other memory-loss illnesses.

So, while students are listening to music in class, the lyrics and melodies can enhance the memory of what students are studying.

Listening to music in class also helps students get work done quicker and helps them concentrate more than talking to classmates. Listening to music creates a more peaceful environment in classrooms and creates a more studious solitude for students.

According to a Colorado State University, music can even help people control their emotions. Students who don't "feel" like learning can change their

minds thanks to music. The right song or type of music can create more attention and focus and draw students away from boredom. Music creates more positivity, motivation and energy for students to work.

Music can also help with stress. According to the University of Maryland Medical Center, music can reduce stress for people with health problems and ordinarily healthy people.

Research proves that soothing music can decrease blood pressure, heart rate and anxiety levels. Since school can be very stressful, students need music to help relieve this stress.

Considering these facts, teachers should be more open to letting students listen to music in their classes. Music has clear health and learning benefits. It is not a distraction, it is a benefit.



BY SOPHIE WILLIAMS

Focusing on classwork is too difficult while listening to music in class

NO Students come to school to learn and prepare to get a good job. In order to get a good job, students need to get good grades, and to get good grades, they need to listen and learn at school.

Music, however, can make it more difficult to study. Although students are always looking for an excuse to listen to music at school, it is a bad idea.

People singing in your ear is a lot like reading a book while somebody is trying to talk to you; you can't focus on your work. It is true that some music can help calm students down and relax them. In middle school, however, students will take advantage of the privilege and avoid learning.

Another problem in middle school is that students often try to listen to inappropriate music. Inappropriate lyrics can distract students from what they need to do to be successful in school.



BY SAMAYAH WOLFE

Some students believe that music helps them study and learn. New research from the University of Wales Institute in Cardiff, however, states that listening to music can damage your performance on certain study tasks.

A lot of people like music and like to listen to their favorite songs while they work or drive in a car. People who listen to their favorite songs sometimes can get carried away and sing or hum the lyrics. This is a big problem in class, where students don't just focus on the lyrics of the songs instead of the work, but can also become a distraction for other students' learning.

Also, some students like to tap their foot or tap the desk or make other sounds while listening to music. Some try to make sounds to follow the beat with their hands, feet or mouth. This is also a serious distraction to others around them.

Music in class can be a huge distraction for other students. According to a small study from Taiwan, 133 students performed reading comprehension tasks while listening to either light classical music, hip hop, or no music at all. Students who did not listen to music while reading had the highest scores.

Focusing on classwork is hard to do while listening to music. Music can make students too comfortable and doze off. Listening to music while working isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it is a distraction for students who are trying to learn.

Music with lyrics is more distracting than lyrics without music, according to studies. Loud music is an even bigger distraction. Listening to loud music with lyrics makes it almost impossible to learn anything.

Based on research, it is best to try to focus without listening to music in class in order to grow students' learning ability.

HEARD IN THE HALLWAY

Should students be allowed to listen to music in class?

Daimiyan Menya
6th Grade



"Yes, kids should be allowed, because it helps not get distracted by other things going on in the room."

Cooper Barnett
7th Grade



"Yes. With some kids, it helps them focus."

Taylor Huffman
8th Grade



"Yes, because it helps some people focus better and concentrate on their work."

Abbie Kilgore
Teacher



"No, because students do not listen to appropriate music and get distracted looking up songs to play."

CORRECTIONS

Accuracy is one of the most important fundamental principles of journalism. "The Sequoyah Scribe" strives to correct all factual errors in a timely manner.

If you notice any inaccuracies in this or a past issue, please contact the editor-in-chief at sequoyah-scribe@k12k.com.

DOMTAR
The
Sustainable
Paper
Company

NEWS BRIEFS

BY AMBER COWDEN

House votes to impeach President Trump

The Democrats in the House of Representatives have wrapped up an impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump because they believe that he pressured the Ukrainian president to help him in the 2020 election. President Trump has called the impeachment an “illegitimate process”. Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House, has said that Congress is well within its power to conduct oversight of the executive branch. Trump will now be put on trial in the Senate, which is controlled by the Republicans.

Kingsport installs controversial blocks on city benches

The city of Kingsport recently installed controversial blocks on benches because of a decision made through the office of the City Manager, Chris McCartt. Many in the public have criticized these blocks because they feel that they were installed to make it harder for homeless people to sleep on the benches. McCartt has said that the city noticed trends of crime near the Kingsport Public Library that sparked their decision to install the blocks in the location. He has also said that the city is working to bring multiple resources and organizations together to see how they can help the homeless.

Group protests KCS partnership with local church

A group from Wisconsin called the “Freedom from Religion Foundation” has claimed that the Christ Fellowship Church’s mentoring program at Adams Elementary School is unconstitutional. The group reported that it has ‘warned’ Kingsport City Schools that the partnership with the local church violates the separation of church and state. According to the school system, this is not a situation where religion is being brought into the school. Kingsport superintendent Jeff Moorehouse has stated that the program is about “having more hands grabbing an oar” to help students move forward.

TENNESSEE: pageant winner prepares for Miss America contest

continued from page 1

“I did some research and found the ‘Miss Tennessee’ organization, and I found out how I could be a part of it and found out how I could get on that stage and compete for the title of Miss Tennessee.”

Her favorite things about pageants are all the skills she has developed through competing.

“There are a lot of interviews involved with winning titles,” Mason said. “You have to talk to the judges about why you are the best person to win. So, those skills I’ve gained from training for interviews have helped me with every job I’ve ever interviewed for.”

She did her “Miss Tennessee” pageant at the same place she had graduated from college.

“This year, the Miss Tennessee pageant was in Knoxville,” she said. “I was crowned at Thompson Boling Arena, the same place where I graduated from college. That was pretty cool.”

Mason had to compete with 26 other contestants.

“There was an interview portion, and then there’s an on-stage interview, a talent portion, and evening wear portion,” she said. “You have to wear a gown and walk up to a microphone and you give a social impact statement. It’s basically what we are passionate about. You have about 10 seconds to do a quick commercial about what you

stand for and why.”

The moment Mason won was the time of her life.

“I don’t remember a lot of it because it was such a whirlwind,” she said. “I do remember crying my eyelashes off. It was amazing to finally achieve a goal I’ve worked so hard for.”

Becoming the first African American Miss Tennessee was extremely special to Mason.

“Especially looking at the history of ‘Miss Tennessee’, knowing there are girls who have never seen themselves represented in this role, it’s very important to me,” she said. “I take it as a huge responsibility.”

She has a clear message for African American girls.

“You can do anything you set your mind to, even if you don’t see yourself represented in your goal, whether that is a title you want to achieve or a team you want to be on or a job you want,” she said. “If you don’t see yourself represented, that’s okay. You can make your own history.”

She took one year off from teaching to be Miss Tennessee. She does a lot of speaking events, such as community events. She has spoken at churches. She also participates in a lot of fundraising events and other events that raise awareness for community service.

“I work closely with the Tennessee Department of Education; I serve as their spokesperson for literacy and the ‘Whole Child’



Scribe Photo/SHAYLEIGH HONAKER

WORKING ON BEHALF OF CHILDREN. Teacher Brianna Mason is using her position as Miss Tennessee to advocate for literacy in Tennessee.

initiative,” Mason said. “I also work very closely with a lot of organizations that have something to do with autism. My social impact initiative is autism awareness. I work closely, for example, with ‘Autism Tennessee’ in Nashville.”

The big day of her competition in the Miss America pageant is just around the corner, and Mason is preparing for the competition.

“I’m practicing my talent; I play piano and I practice as often as I can,” she said. “I also go over interview questions. That’s the main goal of the competition: the girls showcasing their talents, but also how well-spoken they can be on lots of different

issues.”

Want to become a pageant star? Mason knows how to get started.

“Definitely find a mentor, find someone who has been around the system or who has done it before,” she said. “It took awhile for me to find that for myself. You can’t do it on your own. If you have a title you have set your mind on, you can do it. You just have to work hard. Don’t be afraid of not winning. You can always learn from each time you don’t win.”

She also has some advice for middle school students.

“Never give up, no matter the circumstances,” she said.

HAIR: KCS has no specific rules about student hairstyles

continued from page 1

Teachers generally feel that anything that distracts students from learning is a bad thing. Kristen Duncan is a 6th grade Language Arts teacher and assistant dance coach.

“Haircuts and color should not be distracting to learning,” she said. “Some styles that are outrageous can be distracting. If it is so over the top that other students stare and become off-task, it is too much. Also, if it causes a student to keep messing with their hair, it is distracting.”

Kyleigh Hardie, a 7th grade student, disagrees.

“No one really cares,” Hardie said.

According to Hardie, students’ hairstyles at Sevier Middle “are cool and unique”.

Baker feels that hairstyles really do not create much of a distraction at school.

“If a person in front of you in class has tall hair, it could be distracting, but you just would ask to move and not let it become a problem,” she said.

Mallick has not seen any distracting hairstyles. Duncan agrees.

“[I’ve not seen a distracting] haircut, but I have had students who are consumed with touching or combing their hair,” she said.

Although hair policies seem

relaxed at Sevier Middle, not all students are so lucky. Paragon Charter Academy in Michigan recently did not allow an 8-year-old girl named Marion Scott to take a yearbook photo because she had red hair extensions. The school’s student handbook only allows “conservative” hairstyles and states that shaved heads, Mohawks and mullets are not allowed. Even the hair color of students is supposed to be “natural”.

“I think as long as her parents are okay with it, she should be allowed to have hair as she likes,” Baker said.

Duncan believes that the best policy for students is simply to follow the rules.

“If it does not violate school rules, she should be able to take the photo,” Duncan said. “If it is in violation of school rules, then she should have followed the rules.”

A four-year-old African American boy, Michael Trimble was told he had to cut his long hair off when he started primary school in Texas in August. Trimble’s grandmother and other community members are now challenging the school’s dress code.

“If the hair was not a distraction, the 4 year old should keep his long hair,” Mallik said

Duncan called the decision

made in Texas “ridiculous”.

Hairstyles have also been getting in the way of sports. In December 2018, a New Jersey high school student had to cut off his dreadlocks before he could compete in a wrestling match. The referee who demanded the haircut was suspended for two years because the student’s civil rights were violated.

“They should not have cut his dreadlocks,” Mallick said. “There should be a way to cover his hair.”

Duncan can think of few reasons why such a haircut would be inappropriate.

“If it is a safety concern, or if it gives the athlete an advantage,” she said.

This focus on hair has happened mostly with African American students and even some adults at work. African Americans often are told that their hair needs to be “neat, clean, conservative, and conventional”.

Narvie Harris Elementary School in Atlanta, for example, put up a poster earlier this school year focused on African American hairstyles. The poster showed braids, fro hawks, and twists as inappropriate hairstyles for African American students. This poster caused a major controversy in the community.

“That is ridiculous,” Duncan

said. “All of those styles are appropriate and acceptable.”

Baker agrees.

“I think that is just wrong to do because that’s just a hair style,” she said. “I don’t see how that could be inappropriate.”

According to the Washington Post, some states have started passing laws to stop discrimination against African American hairstyles in the workplace and in public schools. These are called CROWN Acts, which stands for “Create a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural Hair”. New York and California both have CROWN Acts on the books.

“I think the school can tell you restrictions on some things that could be important, but not about hair,” Baker said.

She does not believe these kind of incidents could happen at Sevier Middle.

“They let students have their hair as they want,” she said.

In the end, there is a fine line between helping students learn and unfairly restricting their rights.

“Schools have a right to set an expectation that ensures all students to have the opportunity to get an education free from distraction,” Duncan said. “However, I don’t feel that this should include the school’s opinion on styles.”

Adopted RNR student and parents explore China's culture

BY KAITLYN BURKE

Emma Baker is a student at Robinson Middle School and the daughter of Sevier teacher Stephen Baker. She was adopted from China as a small child. This summer, she and her family went back to China to discover her heritage.

When they got to China, Emma was happy to be back where she was born since she was away for so long. When she was a small child, Emma lived in an adoption center. There, she met her Chinese sisters, which are not her biological sisters.

"We adopted Emma from the country of China in February of 2007," Emma's father, Stephen Baker, said. "We have remained close with her 'China sisters' and their families that we originally adopted with in 2007. Every other year, we have had a reunion of most every child that was in our travel group."

Emma's parents made some lifelong friendships with the parents of the other children who were adopted at the same time as Emma. They were all in the room together when their new children were placed in their arms.

"We have kept in touch with those families, and have often talked about taking the girls back to China for a heritage trip when they turned 13," Michelle Baker, Emma's mother, said. "All but two of the families were able to go, and we scheduled the trip using the same company."

They had to make a lot of preparations for this trip, including making sure that their passports were up to date, packing American money, and booking and planning the flights.

The longest flight was 13 hours from Detroit to Beijing.

"At first, the voyage to China sounded unbearable because of its length," Emma Baker said. "That flight was the worst part of the trip for me because of the

lack of movement. The time difference was also a difficult part of the trip because China is 12 hours ahead of us."

The Baker family stayed in China for 12 days and visited 7 cities. The majority of the trip was spent going to more touristy locations and hearing about the history of each location. They visited the Great Wall of China, the Xi'an Old City Wall, a Panda Reserve, took a river boat cruise, went to a few different shows and had the opportunity to shop at most places.

"We did the tourist thing and hit most every hot spot in China," Michelle Baker said. "We hiked The Great Wall, walked through The Forbidden City, rode on the Old City Wall in Xi'an, saw the Terra Cotta Soldiers, fed pandas, ate authentic Sichuan food, cruised the Li River and saw the amazing karst formations."

Emma Baker fell in love with the history of China.

"[The historical places] were surreal because they are thousands of years old and I had learned about them in world history this past school year," said said.

Michelle Baker agreed.

"I have a deep and abiding love for China and its people," she said. "If not for China, I wouldn't have a daughter. I would say that the history is amazing to consider. In America, we have a history of less than 300 years, but China has a history of more than 2,000 years."

The Chinese villagers treated the Bakers with respect and like one of their own.

"The villagers wanted to take pictures with us and shake hands even though none could speak English," Stephen Baker said. "We were the first Americans they had ever seen and one of the first visitors they've had in over 50 years. They came out by the bunches and were as excited to see us as anyone I've ever

been around. Each one of our guides were so helpful and excited to show their cities."

Emma loved the trip and the chance to explore her heritage. She even had the opportunity to hand-feed a panda.

"It was a once in a lifetime experience that I'll never forget," she said. "The panda was so cute and it was super fluffy, even though we didn't get pet it. We also saw a panda roll over and stand up on its hind legs against the wall."

Visiting the orphanage where Emma grew up was especially emotional for the Bakers. Many kids still live there today.

"I tried to remember what each of their little faces looked like that day," Stephen Baker said. "This place took hold of a piece of my heart and it remains there today. We are so blessed to have our health and families in our lives. Some on Earth will never get to experience some of the small joys we have every day. I can hug my daughter, I can watch her run a cross country event, I can pick her up from school, I can watch a movie with her. There are so many simple things that some kids will never experience."

When they were going to adopt Emma, the director there was a man and he went to get a female staff member the day after they got the kids to answer questions the parents might have had. That female staff member is now the secretary at the orphanage. She was the one who had named most of the babies there, including Emma.

"Emma's Chinese name was Lian Bao Zhen, which means 'slim baby from Lianjiang'," Michelle Baker said. "How precious that is to me, to know why she had that name and who gave it to her."

Emma understood the importance of this location but she had no memory of being there. It was hard for her to connect her



Scribe Photo/COURTESY OF STEPHEN BAKER

ON CHINESE SOIL. Emma Baker, center, a student at Robinson Middle School, traveled with her parents to China to learn about her heritage this past summer.

present life to the orphanage.

"The orphanage was not exactly how I pictured, but it was the only time I really got emotional on the trip, because when we got to see the children in the rooms, all of them were special needs, unlike when I was adopted," she said.

They did get to visit the place where Emma was found, too, and got a review to the entire police report of how and who she was found by. The place that she was found was a place called Xinhua market.

"I kept wondering if we would find it, and if we did find it, would someone know something about her being found, who or what might pop up from her history, and how would she react," Michelle Baker said.

It was also emotional for Stephen Baker to see the spot where she was found.

"We all have a path that God has put us on and every one has a different path," he said. "Some start in Kingsport while others start in China in a very small market. That doesn't determine if we are successful or not, but how we use our start can."

Emma tried to picture herself in the market as a baby during

their visit.

"As we approached the spot, I began to imagine myself as a little baby in a box sitting there and that was when it hit me, that 12 years ago, I was right in that same spot that I was standing in," she said.

Stephen and Michelle Baker wanted their daughter to understand where she came from, her history, and also to see the differences between China and the U.S.

"I think the older Emma becomes the more she will appreciate the experience and seeing her history," Stephen Baker said. "I also hope that she takes pride in her Chinese culture."

The family learned not to judge someone based on where they are from during this trip.

"I highly encourage everyone to not judge someone because of their beliefs or nationality," he said. "There are good people everywhere on this planet and we get into trouble when we think that we are better than other people. Our democracy is what separates us and the privileges we have because of it."

Emma took another important lesson from her return to China.

"I learned that I don't like tofu," she said.

BOARD: Byers and Welsch have big plans for the future of KCS

continued from page 1

"I did not want to run when my kids were younger, since I wanted to be a parent when I visited schools rather than people viewing me as a school board member," she said. "With my kids being in high school now, I decided this was an opportune time."

Campaigning was fun for Byers, but she did not believe in spending thousands of dollars.

"I would rather put the dollars toward charitable causes," she said. "I did take out billboard ads on the Blip billboard. I also purchased some yard signs and participated in every forum."

For Welsch, the key to success was getting someone knowledgeable involved.

"One of my former students is a marketing expert, her mother owned a communications

firm," he said. "I know a lot about communications, but it is how like a physician or a lawyer should never be their own physician or lawyer."

The school board is the boss of the superintendent. It approves policies that are either new or altered and are responsible for approving the school calendar.

"We approve the budget and any major expenditures for the school system," Byers said. "Believe it or not, the board is asked to sit on about 20 committees, which are divided amongst the members. We are the last resort if a parent has an issue and has exhausted the chain of command."

Making these decisions involves many meetings.

"It is not just the meetings that are on the calendar," Welsch said. "There are a whole lot of meetings that take place

before the meeting, so you're prepared for whatever comes up at the meetings that are on the calendar. For me, being new, there is a lot of pressure."

Some big plans started long before Welsch and Byers were elected, like Sevier Middle moving to the Sullivan North building in 2022.

"That's one of those things I walked into," Welsch said. "That's one of those challenges; there's a long term plan in place that has Sevier moving to the North campus. I do not know how carved in stone that particular plan is. I do know that the North Campus is probably overall more suited for a middle school because of the athletic fields."

Both new board members are looking to improve Kingsport's school system.

"I am not comfortable with 'we are good enough', since I

believe we have challenges ahead and we can be even better," Byers said. "I want us to continue to improve our schools and continue to be ranked among the state's best."

Welsch believes that there are still big challenges ahead.

"The biggest challenge that public schools face is that there is a rather concerted effort to demonize public schools," he said. "That we are somehow turning you into socialist robots or something."

Byers and Welsch also have some specific changes they would like to see happen.

"I want students who have brought their own devices to be able to have the same Wi-Fi speed as those students who have school issued computers," Byers said. "Those that have personal devices are not able to do timed tests or even other activities due to Wi-Fi speed be-

ing too slow."

Welsch would like to get middle and high schools in Kingsport to start later in the day.

"Studies show that post-pubescent students do better if school starts later in the day," he said. "So, we put our elementary school schedule, time wise, where probably the middle school and high school schedule ought to be. Instead of you all starting first, it should be them starting first."

In the end, the new board members try never to lose sight of what is most important: student learning.

"To me, the most important thing about education is that we teach children to keep learning," Welsch said. "If you learn how to learn, you can learn anything. If you can demonstrate to people that you can learn anything, you can do anything."

Robinson Middle tests "Harry Potter" inspired house system

BY ADYN SMITH

In the "Harry Potter" stories, the school of Hogwarts is divided into houses. Students are sorted into these houses based on their traits and their own wishes. In the House Cup challenge, houses face off against each other for the most points at the end of the year. Now, a school in Kingsport has created a similar system.

As of this school year, Ross N. Robinson Middle School has created a house system. The goal is to improve the school's atmosphere by giving points for good behavior, kind deeds and being a good student.

The Robinson houses are Rêvenur, Altruismo, Amistad and Isibindi. They were inspired by the Ron Clark Academy. This academy is a private middle school in Atlanta that uses its own type of house system to motivate students.

Cameron Buck is a math teacher at Robinson Middle and part of the House of Amistad.

"Students are randomly sorted throughout the houses and students can earn points by being nice and doing hard work, but these are not always rewarded because this is what we want them to do," he said. "Robinson put this in place to encourage our students to be generally good people and to work hard in their classes."

Points are awarded to the four

different houses as rewards and it is very much a competition. Students have to work together.

"Points are given by doing things that are expected of you and they can't be taken away," Evie Bennett, a 7th grade student at Robinson Middle, said. "I believe that other schools should have it, but not the high school, because there are too many people."

The house system is very popular with students because it opens them up to meet a lot of new people that are in other grades. It also poses a challenge for them because they get points for being a generally good student.

"I like being grouped into a house because you get to meet other students," Gracie Skelton, a 6th grade student, said. "We have a set of rules about it and they are called the RNR 44."

There is no reward for being in the lead other than recognition.

"The goal is to have the points themselves be the reward, so there is no need to pay for a party or reward for 250 students," Buck said. "We have seen success, but it requires a lot

of planning if another school would want to do something similar."

Cooper Height, an 8th grade student at Sevier Middle, does

enjoy. If there is a good prize for winning, like something you can't easily buy, people will be motivated to win that prize, but if it's something that is easily accessible, or people don't like it, they won't be as motivated to get the prize."

Kiera Welsh, a 7th grade student, disagrees. She thinks a similar system could work at Sevier Middle.

"Some JSMS teachers are already doing something like it, so it wouldn't be too bad," she said. "If there is a prize, students will be motivated because they could get

something good out of it.

Since it doesn't go by grade level, it means

that if one teacher stops, it won't ruin the experience."

Holly Flora, Sevier's principal, is very supportive of Robinson's experiment.

"I support RNR doing anything that they feel is best for

their school," Flora said. "RNR had a drastic increase in referrals, including ISS and OSS, so as a staff, they chose a house system to help fix it."

However, Flora does not necessarily believe the same system should be used at her school.

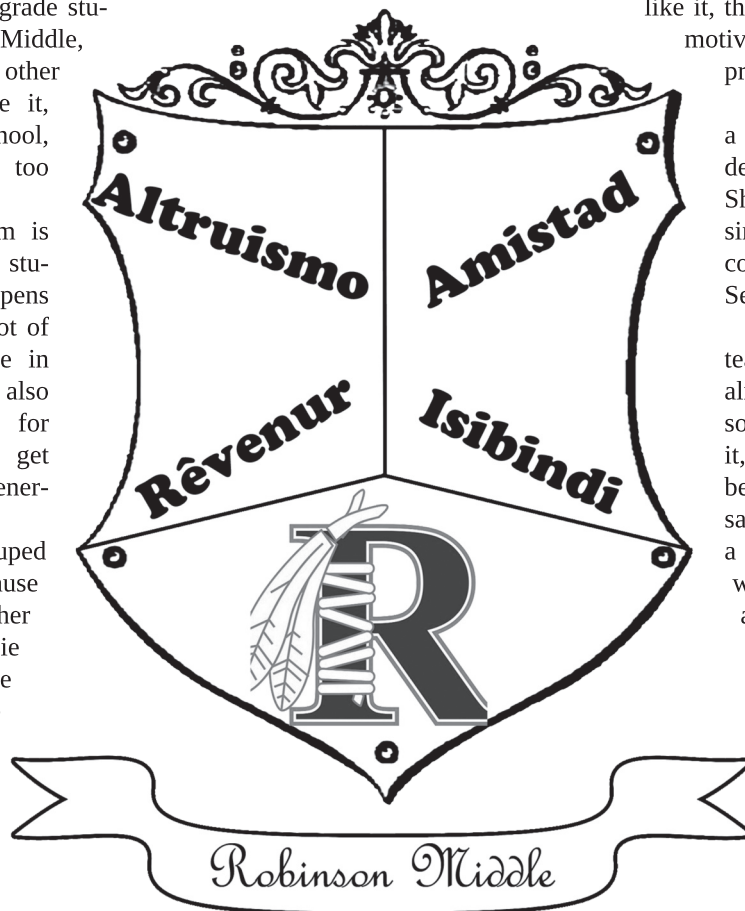
"Sevier has cut referrals in half, that is from help with our 'Way of the Warrior' action team, which put systems in place to support positive student behavior," she said.

Norie-Anne Young, an 8th grade Language Arts teacher at Sevier, would like to see her school try a house system.

"I think it is a neat idea to promote unity and a positive school culture," she said. "A prize system could help motivate students depending on the type of prize. I believe that Sevier already has a positive culture, but it could help with behavior with our students."

Buck believes that dividing students into houses has already had a positive impact.

"In our first house rally, we saw some students who normally stick to the back of crowds become leaders and be cheered on by their peers," he said. "Those kinds of interactions don't always happen, and the students were extremely excited to get to have friends to cheer them on for once."



New coach takes over girls varsity basketball team



Scribe Photo/MEREDITH MOONEY

BUILDING A STRONGER TEAM. Stephen Williams, center, oversees girls basketball team tryouts. Williams took over coaching the varsity team this school year.

BY JAKYLA CHAMBERS

The basketball team is in the middle of a match, playing hard for a win. As they make another shot, they look to the sidelines and realize that there is a new coach cheering them on.

Stephen Williams was a Sevier teacher several years ago before he decided to move to another school system and become an administrator. Last year, he returned to Sevier as a sev-

enth grade science teacher.

During his first turn at Sevier, Williams coached the boys' junior varsity basketball team and the junior varsity baseball team.

"I loved it," Williams said. "The interaction is fun with the student athletes."

Williams enjoys basketball and was excited for the opportunity of becoming the girls' varsity basketball coach.

"This seemed like a very good opportunity," he said. "It's

fun forming new relationships with our student athletes," Williams said.

As the new coach, Williams had to go through the try-out process and choose his players. This can be a difficult process.

"I look for good attitude and being a good teammate," Williams said. "I also look for hustle and good fundamental skills. Traits of a good middle school athlete are a willingness to have a good attitude and to work out-

side of practice to get better."

Growing up, Williams played both basketball and football. He loved being in these sports because it gave him a chance to be a part of something outside of the classroom.

He learned a lot from his time as a student athlete, and hopes his players will, too.

"I hope my athletes will learn what good character is more than anything, and to work hard for each other," he said. "I have been trying to teach unselfishness, morality and integrity as much as I have been trying to teach basketball."

Williams believes that basketball is a lot of fun because it is very fast paced.

"So many things are happening at once," he said. "It makes things fun to watch and to try to make adjustments during those games."

For Williams, it can be difficult to juggle coaching and teaching. The demands for teaching are very high, and it can be hard to manage both. Still, he believes coaching is worth the extra effort.

"My best experience this year has been just getting to know the girls and watch how they react to certain challenges and overcoming those challenges," Williams said. "Watching them grow over the course of the season mentally is great, as well."

Communication is a huge part of building a strong team.

"We split time each practice working with position players and JV and Varsity," Williams said. "We run the same plays and our communication is great. That is the key to building successful programs."

His hope for the basketball team this year is for the ladies to continually grow and get better each day.

"My hope is that they work for each other and are unselfish in everything they do," he said. "If all those things fall into place, we will win games. We have started strong. I hope we can keep that up."

As a coach, Williams likes to pay attention to details.

"I feel like that is the only way players get better," he said. "We teach fundamentals mostly in practice and spend very little time scrimmaging. We try to break as many things as possible and work on that."

Williams has some advice for girls who hope to join his team in the future.

"Have a good attitude and [remember] that school comes first," he said. "You must succeed in the classroom to play sports. Also, be unselfish and work for each other. Practicing throughout the year also lets me know what kind of dedication you have to the sport."

ALWAYS THERE, ALL THE TIME

*Wherever life takes you,
ECU is already there.*

To learn how to manage your
money like a pro and play
games like Visa's Financial
Football, visit **www.ecu.org**.

www.ecu.org

Your savings federally insured to at least \$250,000 and backed by the full faith and credit of the National Credit Union Administration, a U.S. Government Agency.

ECU BESIDE YOU

Be part of the extraordinary difference.



**EASTMAN
CREDIT
UNION®**

SOUND OFF

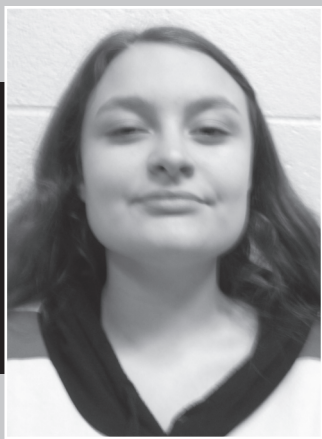


Taylor Gordon

"No, it is too harsh. What they do is just bad."

Akeelah Osborne

"No, there is no reason to kill someone."

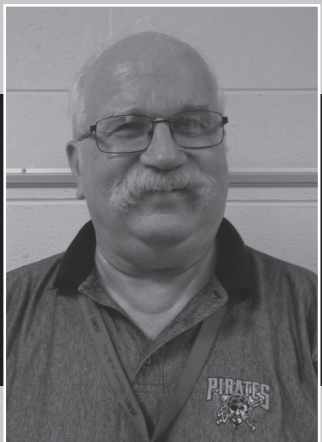


Elizabeth Gilliam

"Yes, because they deserve it. What goes around comes around."

John Mallick

"I disagree, because I feel that life in prison without parole is worse than a lethal injection."



Scribe Survey/RAYNA WELSCH

A divided nation continues to grapple

BY MICHAEL FANNING

Michael McCormick was sentenced to death for murder in Chattanooga in 1985. He was convicted due to a strand of hair found at the crime scene. After twenty years awaiting his execution, however, the DNA of the hair turned out to belong to another person.

In 2018 alone, 25 people have been executed in the United States. Since the 1970s, over 1500 people have been executed across the country.

Twenty-one states and the District of Columbia have outlawed the death penalty. Instead of decreasing the number of executions, Tennessee has recently decided to increase the number. There are over fifty inmates currently waiting for their execution at Riverbend Maximum Security Institution.

The death penalty has recently become a major controversy in Tennessee and the nation because of the drugs used in lethal injections. Scientists now believe that these drugs cause pain and suffering.

Robert Reburn is the Public Information Officer for the Tennessee Department of Correction. Reburn has been with the TODC for 12 years. He attended Northeast State Technical Community College, where he earned his Associate's degree in Mass Communications and completed

his Bachelor's degree in Broadcast Journalism at East Tennessee State University.

"While TDOC carries out the sentence," Reburn said, "we do not play any role in the decision to pursue capital punishment during the trial process, nor do we play any role in the sentencing."

Offenders on Tennessee's death row, depending on their rank, can get special privileges from the guards. Every offender starts at level C, but after a year and a half, they can move up and get more privileges. Offenders are given three meals every weekday, with two meals on holidays. They are woken at 5:30 am and are in their cells at 9:00 pm.

Still, death row can be a tough place for inmates. Conditions in prison are sometimes not up to par and medical care has been reported to be inadequate in several prisons nationally.

Jonathan Russell, a 7th grade student, is for the death penalty.

"I think that a person will only be sentenced to death if they have committed horrific crimes and are a danger to other inmates," Russell said.

Eric Thomas, another 7th grade student, agreed.

"If they commit murder or manslaughter, then the electric chair or any form of execution is reasonable," he said.

Not everybody believes the death penalty is the best way to punish criminals.

"I personally think that in some cases it is necessary, but we overuse it," Loraine Carter, a 6th grade student, said.

Katrina Musick, a 7th grade science teacher, also disagrees with the death penalty.

"I do believe the victims' opinions should determine its use," Musick said. "I would not want it to happen for a crime against me, even murder."

Those who are for the death penalty feel that certain crimes should be punishable by death.

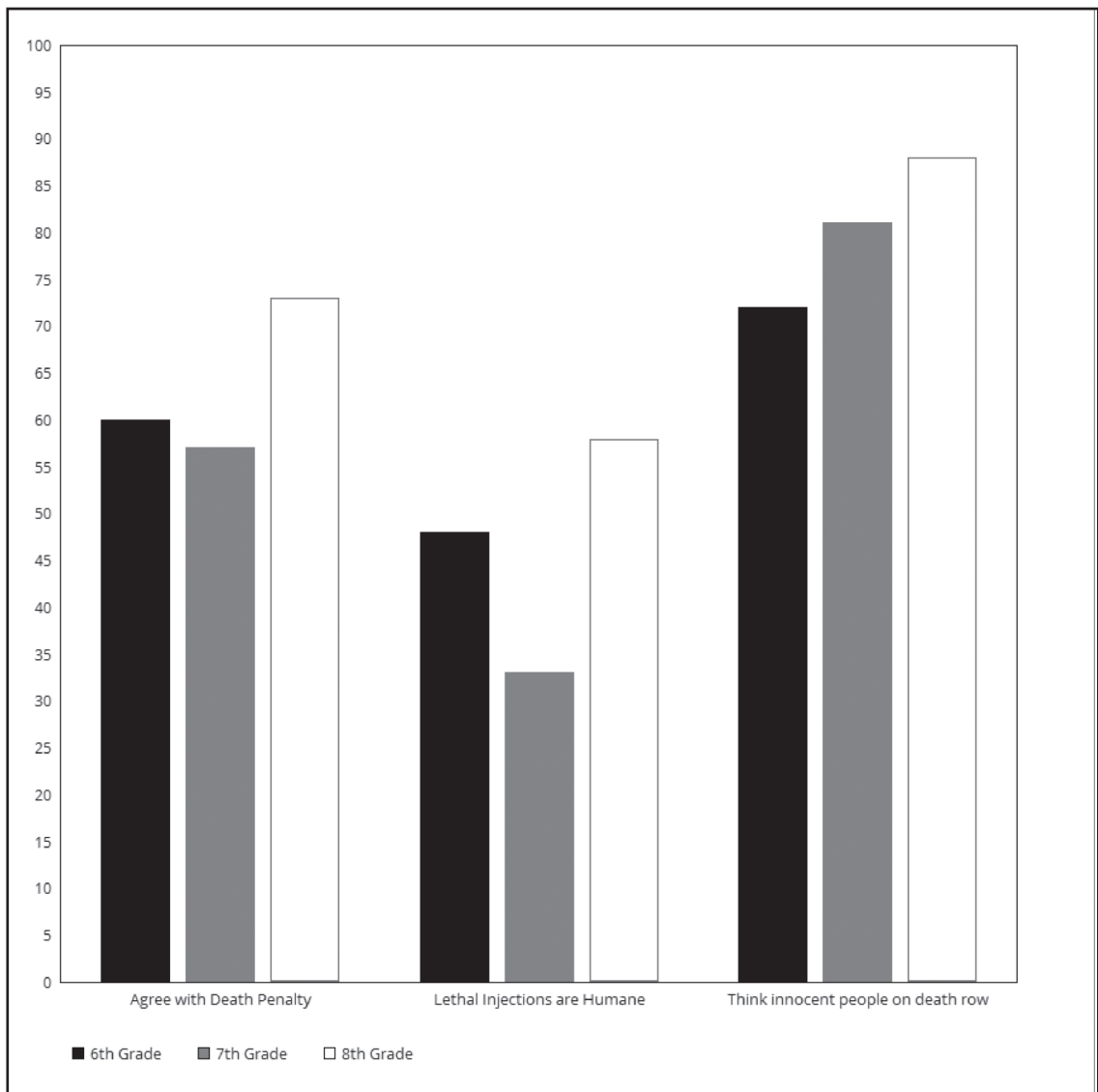
"Murder, acts against your country or military should be punished by death," Russell said. "Terrorism and child abuse, too."

Mercy Adedokun, a 7th grade student, agrees.

"Killing should be punished with the death penalty," Adedokun said, "Only lots of it, though."

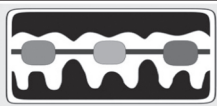
"I personally think that in some cases it is necessary, but we overuse it."

Loraine Carter



Scribe Survey/CHLOE MCCONNELL

PRO DEATH PENALTY. A large percentage of students surveyed support the death penalty, despite the fact that they also believe innocent people have been sentenced to death.



Cureton Orthodontics

Steven L. Cureton, DMD, MS
Scott M. Cureton, DDS

Come see a practice with personality! :)

We offer traditional braces as well as Invisalign with affordable payment plans.

Call us for your free consultation TODAY!



2753 East Center St.
Kingsport
(423)246-7121



Like Find us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/curetonortho

with the morality of the death penalty

Stacy Rector, a reverend from Nashville, is against the death penalty. She is part of an organization called “Tennesseans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty”. Rector attended Rhodes College in Memphis and Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. She graduated with a Masters of Divinity degree.

“During my time in both college and seminary, I became more aware of the connections between poverty, race and the criminal justice system, as well as how my faith informed my understanding of the system, including the death penalty,” Rector said. “Faced with the overwhelming problems that I saw, I also became increasingly aware of my responsibility to act for change.”

Rector believes that the death penalty is an inefficient, arbitrary and expensive way to have people executed.

“The death penalty is way more expensive than life without parole,” she said. “These cases tend to be more expensive at the trial level, they take longer to be sorted and appealed. So, the dollars add up.”

The cost of a normal death penalty case is \$46,791, but life in prison without parole costs \$31,494 and life in prison with the possibility of parole costs \$31,622.

“Those are taxpayer dollars that we’re not spending on preventing crime, like access to drug treatment programs, no healthcare, or helping at-risk kids and kids that have been abused or traumatized get help,” Rector said.

“Tennesseans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty” is a major organization trying to stop the death penalty. This organization tries to achieve their goal by educating people. For example, it takes an average of 28 years for death row inmates to be executed.

“I think it is a little outrageous,” Carter said. “For some people who are older or have serious health problems, they would have already been dead before their death penalty.”

Musick agrees.

“That sounds more like life in prison than the death penalty,” she said. “Why so long?”

Thomas also believes it should be quicker.

“You wait 28 years; they could break out of their cell and kill people,” he said.

Reburn thinks it’s good that executions take a long time.

“All offenders, regardless of their crime and sentence, are entitled to appeal their conviction,” Reburn said. “The appeals process can take quite some time as the state meticulously pours over each case to evaluate if there is sufficient reason or evidence to overturn a conviction.”

Many people believe that the death penalty actually helps prevent crime. Research, however, doesn’t have a lot of evidence to show that this is true.

“Basically, researchers just simply can’t determine any effect either way,” Rector said.

Russell disagrees.

“[The death penalty is about] justice,” he said. “If a person is just going to go around murdering people, they shouldn’t deserve to live.”

The Attorney General of Tennessee, Herbert Slatery III, is working on setting 9 new execution dates. This would seriously speed up the rate of executions in Tennessee.

“He is also seeking to appeal a local district attorney’s decision to reduce Abu Ali Abdur’ Rahman’s

Russell disagreed with Rector. He believes that lethal injections are a good method of execution.

“Death is supposed to be painful,” Russell said. “If someone has done something really bad, then they deserve pain.”

Carter disagreed.

“Lethal injections are probably one of the worst ways to die,” Carter said. “That is horrible and probably does hurt to get drugs put into your body for you to die.”

The state of Tennessee is convinced that the drugs in lethal injections are humane.

“We feel confident in the studies we’ve been presented showing that the specific drugs used in executions here in Tennessee that the condemned do not feel pain and therefore do not suffer,” Reburn said. “There have been no complications with any of our most recent executions.”

According to Rector, the death penalty should be replaced with life in prison.

“We have life without the possibility of parole in Tennessee, which means exactly what it says,” Rector said. “You will, in effect, die in prison. The other sentence is life with the possibility of parole, in Tennessee, which is one of the harshest life sentences in the country.”

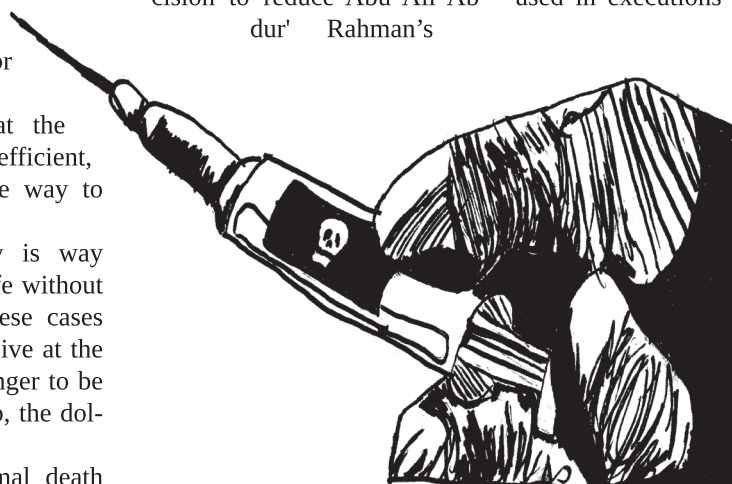
Many states have sent people to death row that were later found to be innocent. According to the Death Penalty Information Center, there are over a dozen cases of people who were executed that could have been innocent.

Some people with mental illness can’t help themselves when it comes to crime. Many people believe that they shouldn’t be sentenced to death, but instead need treatment. Even international law states they should not be sentenced to death. Still, people with mental illnesses have been sentenced to die.

Despite all the controversy surrounding the death penalty, the goal for each side of the debate is to keep people safe.

“Our unwavering mission is to enhance public safety in Tennessee,” Reburn said. “We strive to achieve this mission by operating safe and secure prisons, providing effective community supervision, and providing offenders with the necessary tools and resources they need to address the criminogenic factors that led them to commit their crimes.”

The second drug makes the offender’s lungs fill with fluid. The third drug, Potassium Chloride, makes the offender feel excruciating pain, like being set on fire.



Scribe Illustration/ANNA HARRINGTON

death sentence to life,” Rector said. “In August, Davidson County District Attorney General Glenn Funk agreed to the sentence reduction because of the overt racial bias and prosecutorial misconduct at Abu’s trial. I find it very troubling that the Attorney General has decided to interfere in what I believe should be a local decision made by the prosecutor.”

Some people also believe that there is racial bias in the death penalty system. Racial bias is when a judge or prosecutor stacks a jury against someone due to their race.

According to the official website of the Tennessee Department of Corrections, the state has executed 86 African Americans and 50 whites. Of the people currently on death row in Tennessee, 28 are people of color, while 26 are white.

Lethal injection is the most common way to execute prisoners in the United States, but it has caused a lot of controversy recently.

“The state of Tennessee and many other states rely on three different drugs,” Rector said. “One of those drugs is called midazolam. It’s been particularly problematic in executions because it was never really intended to actually harm the person. You can still feel pain.”

The second drug makes the offender’s lungs fill with fluid. The third drug, Potassium Chloride, makes the offender feel excruciating pain, like being set on fire.

SOUND OFF

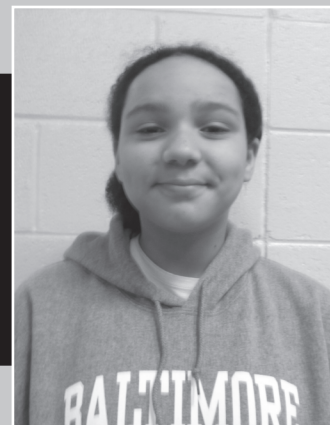


Maheley Franklin

“Yes, if they do something bad, they should be punished.”

Zara Phillips

“Yes, but only if they did something really bad.”



Latiana Vaughn

“Yes, because an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.”

Karen Bear

“I do agree with the death penalty because some crimes do not have another punishment that would be severe enough to pay for what they did.”



Scribe Survey/RAYNA WELSCH

254 WEST NEW STREET • DOWNTOWN KINGSPORT, TN
(CORNER OF CLAY STREET AND NEW STREET)



KCS sports mascots are part of a national controversy

BY MEREDITH MOONEY

The football players walk onto the field, the wet grass on their cleats. Sweat trickles down their backs as the crowd erupts in cheers. Their cries echo across the stadium: “Red-skins! Red-skins!” The lights flash. The horns blare. Their team spirit is crushing millions of spirits across the country.

The Washington Redskins are a professional football team from Washington, DC. Their mascot, the Redskins, has been a very controversial topic. Many Native Americans across the country consider the term “red-skin” a racial slur.

Both of Kingsport City Schools’ middle schools, and its high school, have a Native American theme. Robinson Middle’s teams are known as the “Redskins”, Sevier Middle’s teams are known as the “Warriors,” and Dobyns-Bennett High School athletes are referred to as the “Indians”.

The term “Indians”, however, is a fallacy.

“[Christopher Columbus] thought he was in India,” Jim Welsh, the newest member of the KCS Board of Education, said. “He thought he was on islands off the shore of India. He thought that, because Indians had darker skin, that these people, too, must be Indians. We call them Indians, but they’re not close to India. They’re 13 thousand miles away.”

Many people have made an effort to find a better way to describe Native Americans. Canadians, for example, call Native Americans “First Nations.”

Some feel it is appropriate to use Native Americans as school mascots.

“I feel like we are honoring [Native Americans] and using the words to strike fear into our opponents,” student council president Charles Wissert said.

Amanda Cox, an eighth-grade math teacher, agreed.

“When I think of a ‘warrior’, I think of someone who is brave and who fights for what they believe in,” she said.

Jasmine May, an eighth-grade student, feels like the mascots are a small way to make up for the past.

“We are representing the natives that lived here in the past before we took their land,” she said.

Jenny McKlveen, a STEM



Scribe Photo/AUDREY EDWARDS

INAPPROPRIATE SPIRIT? *The Sevier Middle School “Warrior” prepares to cheer on the school’s sports teams. Many Native Americans feel that using their heritage as sports mascots helps spread negative stereotypes.*

teacher, disagrees.

“I think that rather than honoring Native Americans, the caricature is stereotypical and not honoring Native Americans,” she said.

Michael Friedman, a clinical psychologist, wrote a research report on behalf of the Oneida Nation titled “The Harmful Psychological Effects of the Washington Football Mascot”.

“Tests have shown that the presence of Native American mascots results directly in lower self-esteem and lower mood among both Native American adolescents and young adults, as well as increased negative attitudes towards Native Americans among non-Native Americans,” the report said. “Importantly, these effects occur regardless of whether the Native American mascot is considered ‘offensive’.”

In addition to causing harm to Native Americans, the image that Kingsport City Schools is helping pass on to future generations may be inaccurate and stereotypical.

“It is wholly inaccurate for Native American tribes of our region,” band director Hunter Mullins said. “My understanding it those headdresses are worn by very few tribes and nearly all of those tribes are west of the Mississippi.”

The Native American mask used at pep rallies is of particu-

lar concern to many students and teachers.

“A lot of the concern or disrespect comes from the actual visual of the mascots that are used,” Jesse McCormick, an eighth-grade teacher and coach, said. “Some mascots have been made to look like cartoon characters and that image could be disrespectful.”

Children introduced to this depiction of Native Americans will understand it as the social norm, furthering problems among Native Americans.

“Native American people exhibit the highest level of psychological distress of any other group in the nation, including among the highest levels of depression, substance abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder,” Friedman said in his report.

This year, KCS opened a new science and technology center. In the near future, Sevier Middle will also move to a new building, the former Sullivan North High School. These new changes in the school system may provide an opportunity to change the mascot.

“The new construction at DB and our eventual transition to the Sullivan North campus is the perfect window of opportunity for such progress,” Mullins said.

Making such a change, however, requires a willingness in the community, and that is not necessarily present in Kingsport.

In 2018, a KCS committee looked into the possibility of changing mascots and school colors once Sevier moves to its new home in 2022. Part of that effort included a survey.

Of the 262 student survey responses at Sevier, 82.10 percent wanted to keep the school name and 80.5 percent wanted to keep the warrior mascot. Of 654 student responses at Robinson, 77.8 percent wanted to keep the school name and 63.4 percent wanted to keep the Redskins mascot. Even among adults surveyed, support for Native American mascots never dropped below 60%.

Additionally, there is an exceptional paradox in the Native American mascot of Sevier Middle.

“[John Sevier] was obviously fiercely independent and became Tennessee’s first governor, but he also owned slaves and fought the Cherokee his whole life,” Luke Holt, an eighth-grade history teacher, said. “It’s a little ironic to me that a school named after someone who fought Native Americans as much as Sevier did has a mascot that represents the people he fought.”

According to the National Congress of Native Americans and the 2010 Census, there are 2.9 million Native Americans living in the United States today.

“Native Americans are often perceived as a people of history

who are not here or relevant today,” Holt said. “The truth is that Native Americans exist today, and they represent one of, if not the, poorest subsets of American society.”

The United States government forced Natives onto Indian Reservations years ago and dehumanized them. President Andrew Jackson, who was from Tennessee, actually ordered the removal of the Cherokee from Tennessee. Because of this, there is not a strong willingness to change the mascots in Tennessee.

Multiple dictionaries have begun to identify the word “red-skin” as an offensive racial slur.

“Change the Mascot,” is an international effort to stop the use of Native American mascots.

“The United Nations’ independent expert, whose job is to defend the rights of indigenous people, called on the NFL to stop using the R-word because, as the UN said, it is a ‘hurtful reminder of the long history of mistreatment of Native American people in the United States’,” according to the organization’s website.

Recently, Maine banned the use of Native American mascots.


According to the New York Times, “The National Congress of American Indians, a public education and advocacy group, said it applauded Maine for its new law and hoped other states would follow ‘on the right side of history’.”

They were in America hundreds of years before white settlers, and yet people make fun of them and stereotype them. They led successful nations, and today are mocked. They fought for their beliefs and for each other, and now they encounter racism.

Schools and professional sports teams call themselves “Indians” or “Warriors” or “Redskins” without knowing what those powerful words truly mean and how they impact the Native Americans still alive today.

“Given the significant challenges already faced by the Native American community related to their mental and physical health, the Washington team should cease using the ‘R-word’, which constitutes a racial slur, and change the name of their mascot,” Friedman said in his report.

Maybe that is not the only team that should reconsider its mascot.



Keep your Sevier memories forever!

ybpay.lifetouch.com
Code: 13619720



Carter-Trent

SCOTT COUNTY FUNERAL HOMES

Kingsport, Tennessee
423-245-4101
Dean Trent
Brent Warner - General Manager
Jacob Gasperson - Manager

Weber City, Virginia
276-386-7021
423-247-4811

Church Hill, Tennessee
423-357-0808

www.cartertrent.com

www.scottcountyfuneralhome.com

Female athlete Katie Hartsook tackles football



Scribe Photo/SAMAYAH WOLFE

READY TO TAKE THE FIELD. *Katie Hartsook stands on the sidelines during a Sevier football game. Hartsook was the only girl on Sevier's football team this school year.*

BY ANNA HARRINGTON

Football is a physically demanding sport that is most often played by boys. It's fairly rare for a girl to join a football team, but not completely unheard of. In the past, there have been girls that occasionally tried out for the football team at Sevier Middle. This year, Katie Hartsook did, too.

Hartsook is an eighth-grade student and was the only female on the football team this season.

"The most challenging thing for me was people doubting me and saying I wasn't as good as the boys," Hartsook said. "It was

tough, but you gotta be tough to play football."

She was treated differently by some members of the team, as well.

"Most of the boys on the team acted like I wasn't as good as them," she said, "Most of them were nice to me and some of them acted like I wasn't good enough for the team."

Her friends, however, were all for her football ambitions.

"They were excited for me and they were very supportive," she said.

Her parents were also very supportive of her pursuits.

"I was doing something that made me happy, so they were

supportive," Hartsook said.

She also participates in some other sports so that she can stay in shape for football.

"I wrestle for my uncle at his shows," Hartsook said. "He works with 'Pro Wrestling South' out of Bristol."

She believes that her biggest success was that she got healthier and stronger. Hartsook also has goals for the future.

"I wanna play football at Dobyys-Bennett High School," she said. "I love everything about football, but my favorite thing is becoming stronger and making new friends."

Just like any other player, she had to go through tryouts to join

the middle school football team.

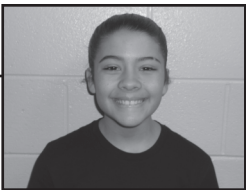
"It was tough, but I stayed strong and pushed myself through it," Hartsook said.

Her inspiration to join the team came from a long history of loving football.

"I've always liked sports, and growing up, my brothers always played football," she said. "They inspired me to play."

Hartsook believes that more girls should join the football team because girls can play just as well as boys can.

"The boys need some girls to show them they're not better than everyone," she said. "Girls are strong too. Any girl that wants to play should try out."



SPORTS COMMENTARY

Students should stay involved in sports

BY MADDISON BALL

The participation rate of kids ages 6 through 12 playing sports has decreased by over 8% in the past decade.

According to the Washington Post, almost 45 percent of children ages 6 to 12 played a team sport in 2008. Now, only about 37 percent of children participate in a team sport.

High Schools are also affected. According to the Annual High School Athletics Participation Survey, participation in high school sports declined in the 2018 to 2019 school year for the first time in 30 years.

There has been a decrease of over 40,000 students joining sports. That is very bad news. There are multiple reasons kids should stay involved in sports.

It is important for children to stay involved in sports to promote physical fitness. Sports can improve endurance, breath-

ing and strengthen muscles.

According to The British Journal of Medicine, exercise is one of the least expensive ways to stay healthy. Some examples of inexpensive exercises include running, stretching and dancing. All of these activities happen in some form or another in school sports activities.

Playing sports can improve things such as joints and bone strength, and it can also help control weight. Having healthier bones can reduce the amount of fractures and protect the brain and other organs. One way to strengthen your bones is to exercise and eat healthy foods.

Sports can improve mental health, just like physical health. Sports can boost self confidence since the team encourages each member. Winning a game also boosts confidence. Sports also help with stress.

Sports can even improve the

mind because athletes have to think and come up with a strategy.

Children who play sports and exercise are more engaged in learning, according to a study that tracked kids from kindergarten through fourth grade. Physical activity in general leads to improved academic achievement. Participating in physical activities for at least 30 minutes a week can provide mental benefits such as critical thinking, better concentration and better judgment.

Sports can also teach life skills such as teamwork. Athletes learn to work together as a team to reach a goal together.

Another life skill sports can teach young athletes is leadership and perseverance. Even in the face of obstacles, athletes have to find a way to get through or find a way around a problem. This is an important skill for every adult.

The children that have never had the opportunity and the children who have decided to quit playing sports are not benefiting from the multiple advantages that may be offered to them in the future. These same children may not have the same work ethic as those children who participate in sports.

College students who play sports are likely to be more successful. According to the Women's Sports Foundation, high school athletes are more likely to graduate from a four-year college compared to non-athletes. Children who played sports are more likely to have a better paying job in the future.

Although children should stay involved in sports, their sports involvement will not be the final factor for their success in life. However, sports can enhance their chances at future success. Students should keep getting the benefits from sports.

AT A GLANCE

GIRLS BASKETBALL

- Grizzly Invitational V-3rd place
- Church Hill JV- Won V- Won
- Vance JV- Won V- Won
- Liberty Bell JV- Loss V- Loss
- Robinson JV- Loss V- Loss
- Greenville- JV- Loss V- Won
- TA Dugger JV- Loss V- Loss
- Sullivan East JV- Won V- Won
- Hampton JV- Win V- Win
- Vance JV- Win V- Win
- Church Hill JV- Win V- Win
- Robinson JV- Loss
- Tribe Classic V- Loss

BOYS BASKETBALL

- Grizzly Invitational V- 2nd
- Church Hill JV- Won V- Won
- Vance JV- Loss V- Loss
- Liberty Bell JV- Won V- Loss
- Robinson JV- Loss V- Won
- Surgoinville JV-Won
- Greenville JV- Won V- Won
- TA Dugger JV- Won V- Won
- Sullivan East JV- Won V- Won
- Vance- JV- Won V- Loss
- Church Hill JV-Win V- Won
- Robinson JV- Won
- Tribe Classic V- Won

WRESTLING

- David Crockett Loss
- Robinson Loss
- Boone Won
- TA Dugger Won
- Greeneville Won
- Liberty Bell Loss
- David Crockett Loss
- Sullivan East Won
- Virginia Middle Won
- Vance Loss

McMurray named 'Event Chair of the Year' for volunteer work

BY AUDREY EDWARDS

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is an organization whose mission is to find cures for childhood cancers. It is located in Memphis, Tennessee. Their slogan is "Finding cures. Saving children". They have helped many children overcome their illness as they work to cure cancer.

Sevier teacher Tina McMurray has devoted a lot of time to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. She has helped organize events like a run in Bristol to raise money and awareness for the hospital.

"The St. Jude run is a 5K run or walk held every year in Bristol," McMurray said. "Individuals can sign up to form teams and raise funds for St. Jude. On event day, participants walk or run 3.1 miles to show support for St. Jude. This past year, we had over 1,000 participants."

People that get involved with St. Jude often do so for personal reasons. McMurray got involved for a deeper reason than just wanting to help others.

"One of my daughter's friends is a cancer survivor and patient at St. Jude," she said. "While she was in treatment at the hospital in Memphis, we found out that there was a half marathon in Memphis and the money raised went back to the hospital. I signed up to run in the race."

What she did not know was that the Memphis marathon would go on to change her life.

"It was my first half marathon and I was very scared," she said. "On the morning of the race, I looked up and saw my daughter's friend's picture on the start line and immediately started to cry. I decided that if she could endure what she endured fighting cancer, then I could run 13.1 miles. After the race, I knew I wanted to get more involved somehow."

McMurray started volunteering because of friends but kept volunteering so she could help others.

"I served on the planning committee for the St. Jude Run in Bristol, Tennessee," she said. "I served for one year as a member of the committee, then three years as the event chair. Some of my duties included meeting with local businesses about sponsoring the event, attending community events to promote the run and to get people to sign up, and appearing on local TV news and radio stations promoting the event."

How did someone with such a busy schedule have a full-time job and volunteer this much?

"I don't know that I have figured that out yet," she said. "I am a list maker. I have lists on post-it notes on my iPhone and in my planner. I look at those lists and then prioritize what needs to get done in order of what is most important or pressing at the time."

While she hasn't been able to work with kids directly, she met many patients, survivors and families of patients at St. Jude's through her volunteer work.

"I have formed friendships with many of these folks that I will cherish for a long time," McMurray said. "I communicate with many of them regularly."

All the work and volunteer hours that she put in and all the

money she raised helped St. Jude quite a bit. This led to the award of "Event Chair of the Year".

"I was caught completely off guard when my name was called," McMurray said. "I had been invited to an awards dinner at St. Jude as part of a Volunteer Leadership Conference I was attending."

Although she had been told that she had been nominated for the award, she knew she was up against tough competition from other event chairs from larger cities like Boston, Chicago, St. Louis and Miami.

"As I walked up to the stage to receive the award, with tears in my eyes, I heard the announcer say that I was a servant's leader," McMurray said. "I took those words to heart because that is my life mantra; to serve and serve well. I have been gifted two healthy children, a healthy body of my own, and the ability to use my voice to speak out and raise funds for a place that is near and dear to my heart. I don't ever take that for granted."

Many people would like to get involved like McMurray, but don't know where to start.

"My advice is to just do it," McMurray said. "If you have an organization that you would like to get involved with in mind, I would ask people you know and trust if they can help put you in contact with someone from that organization."

Whether donating time or money, most organizations will accept any help they can get from the community.

"Giving back to my community has always been important to me," McMurray said. "I feel that volunteering with St.



Scribe Photo/COURTESY OF TINA MCMURRAY

WORLD-CLASS VOLUNTEER. Tina McMurray was recently named "Event Chair of the Year" for her work assisting St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Jude has allowed me to use my gifts and talents in a tangible and meaningful way. I want to help those who are facing difficult circumstances, like cancer. Families at St. Jude basically have to drop everything and move to Memphis for a long period of time."

McMurray has always wanted to give back to the community and working as an event chair provided her with that chance.

"During my tenure as event chair, I led the efforts for our Tri-Cities region to raise almost \$500,000 for St. Jude's," McMurray said.

McMurray recently decided to step down from her role as event chair.

"I stepped away from the role as event chair this past September due to my commitment to

my teaching responsibilities here at Sevier," she said. "I was fortunate to be able to donate my time to the organization before I was hired at Sevier. Even though I am not event chair, I will continue to financially support St. Jude as well as help out with the event behind the scenes."

McMurray believes that kindness is one of the most important aspects of life.

"Every person has the ability to make this world a better place," she said. "Doing one thing for someone else can lead to that person doing something else, and it begins to spread. I encourage readers to say hi to someone in the hall you don't know, hold a door open, or do something nice in the community. You will be happy you did."

Former Sevier student, football star returns as a teacher

BY ELLIE JACKSON

It's May of 2008. Students are walking onto the Sevier auditorium stage to receive their middle school diplomas. In just a few hours, all of the eighth grade students would be free from the grasp of middle school. One former student in particular would never have imagined that Sevier Middle would one day reentered his life.

After fifteen years, former Sevier student Ty Hayworth is now a teacher at his old school. Hayworth attended Sevier for the entirety of his middle school career.

"I don't have a clear memory of middle school, but I do remember that I had a lot of fun with my friends and I really enjoyed learning from some great teachers while I was here," Hayworth said.

Several Sevier customs from Hayworth's time are still in place.

"One of my most memorable

events from middle school was the Washington DC trip," he said. "I had so much fun with my friends and getting to experience all that DC and Williamsburg had to offer was a blast."

Hayworth has a great deal of history beyond Sevier, as well. He played football at Dobyns-Bennett High School and even got to play in the NFL with the Jacksonville Jaguars.

To his disappointment, he was cut from the team three days after joining, so he had no choice but to move back home unemployed.

Hayworth's passion for football remained prominent in his career choices. A spot for an assistant football coach at Dobyns-Bennett opened up, and he was quick to accept the offer.

"From there, I realized that I found something I was passionate about," Hayworth said. "I went back to school and obtained my teaching certification."

Quickly after he furthered his education to learn more

about teaching, Hayworth began searching for his first official teaching job. When he saw an opening for a job accommodating his field of work here at Sevier, he was quick to sign up.

"My job here at Sevier is hard to describe, because I do a lot of different things," Hayworth said. "As the Behavior Mod teacher, I am in charge of teaching positive behaviors and Social Emotional Learning to my students, but at the same time I teach them Math and Reading during academic periods as well," Hayworth said.

Returning to Sevier Middle has been a pleasure for Hayworth.

"It is great to be back in a familiar place, but in a new position," he said.

Despite the fact that he now teaches at Sevier, Hayworth still helps coach football at Dobyns-Bennett. Being a football coach, he has high opinions on extra-curricular participation.

"If there is an activity that

you are passionate about, you should absolutely do it, but if you are unsure about what you like, give sports a try," he said. "I'm biased to football, but any sport is great for teaching life skills, leadership and teamwork."

Although there are many qualities that Sevier has maintained since Hayworth's time, things have changed, as well. The teachers have probably changed the most.

"There are just a few teachers that I had in class that still work here," Hayworth said. "Other than the doors into the front office lobby being put in right after I left, a lot of the school is about the same from when I was a student."

Even though most teachers from Hayworth's time are gone, some have remained.

"I had Mr. Baker coach me in football and basketball, Mrs. Watkins and Mrs. Tipton for 7th grade, and I had Mr. Mallick for 8th grade," Hayworth said. "Mr. Fissel was my tech teacher and

I had Mrs. McQueen, coach Earles, and Mrs. Potts for gym class. Mr. Moore even coached me in baseball."

Working alongside the people that once taught him is not that strange to Hayworth.

"It is cool working with them, because I tend to find myself reminiscing on old times in their classes with them," he said.

Hayworth has many positive thoughts about his position at Sevier.

"Teaching is everything I thought it would be and more," he said. "I have such a good time just interacting and getting to know my students everyday. Some days are harder than others, but it is a fun work environment."

Since working for and inspiring students is his passion, he has some advice for students.

"Give your best effort every day and work to be the best you that you can be," he said.

Local student becomes a champion in new sport Disc Golf

BY CAMILLE CARTER

If travel, playing your favorite game and winning sound like fun, then take a look at the life of Dakota Benton, a disc golf champion.

Benton is 14 years old and attends the 8th grade at Sevier Middle. He has also been playing disc golf for six years.

Disc golf is an unknown sport and not many people play it. It combines golf and frisbee. Players toss discs into metal baskets throughout a course.

For six years, his dad has been practicing with him and has helped him to become successful.

"My dad got me started with disc golf," Benton said. "He always took me out to play."

It takes a lot of hard work and a variety of skills to become a successful disc golf player.

"You need a lot of practice and to play in lots of events," Benton said. "It takes arm speed, working well with distance, and knowing your angles."

His practice has made a champion out of him, with Benton winning five straight "Fun Fest" events.

But the game is not without setbacks, even for a champion. Sometimes, even Benton gets frustrated playing the game.

When is it most frustrating?

"It has to be when you have a bad shot, but you can always bounce back on the next play," he said.

Still, Benton enjoys disc golf a great deal.

"The most rewarding part of being a disc golf player is when you win Pro Worlds," Benton said.

Pro Worlds is an international disc golf championship that is a big deal to disc golf players and fans.

At this stage in his disc golf career, Dakota is still pretty independent.

"I'm not part of a team as of right now," he said. "The closest thing I have to a coach is my dad. He is always there when I tour."

In 2019, Benton, who participates in the Professional Disc Golf Association at the intermediate level, competed in 7 tournaments in the Tri-Cities area. He placed first in the Return to Whitetail Ridge Tournament, and second in both the Discmania Game of Throws: Battle at Warriors Path and The Appalachian Amateur Championship.

Disc courses are on the grass, in the woods, even beaches. As Benton travels to different places he plays a variety of courses.



Scribe Photo/MICHAEL FANNING

A RISING STAR ATHLETE. Eighth grade student Dakota Benton has become a champion in a new sport, disc golf. He has won several events and is event ranked by the official disc golf association.

Different settings affect the players' performance, creating different levels of challenge.

"Wooded courses are really the most challenging," he said.

This challenge makes wooded courses his favorite type of course. He enjoys a challenge.

An important factor of disc golf is what disc you are using.

Different parts of a course require different discs. The differences between the discs is just the size and weight.

"They have different weights," Benton said. "Either way, you really have to know your angles."

Disc golf is not a school sport and there is not a league in

Kingsport. Benton believes that should change.

"It should become popular around the world," he said.

Benton also has some advice for students who are interested in playing disc golf.

"Start out with the right disc and start at a bigger course," he said.

5 Questions

For Beth Cohen

BY SHAYLEIGH HONAKER

Beth Cohen has recently stepped in as the interim principal at Robinson Middle School.

Brian Partin was the previous principal at Robinson Middle. Partin decided to leave Robinson Middle in September for a new job at University School in Johnson City. After Partin left, Cohen stepped in as the new principal.

Cohen has a lot of experience that prepared her for this job. She has also worked in the Kingsport City district before.

"I was an assistant principal at Dobyns-Bennett High School for a little over 8 years," Cohen said. "I was responsible for discipline, attendance and academic progress for students. In addition, I have served as a leader on multiple committees in our district."

The students at Robinson welcomed their new principal warmly on her first day.

"I have been overwhelmed by how welcoming the students and staff are here," she said. "On my first day, many students greeted me with a handshake and introduced themselves. It was a fantastic reception for my first day with our students and staff."



Scribe Photo/COURTESY OF KCS

Since every principal has their own leadership style, there might be changes coming to Robinson Middle soon.

"I am currently meeting with all faculty and staff members to discuss the strengths of our school and the areas to strengthen this year," Cohen said. "We are working together to stay solutions-focused and ultimately make the best decisions to benefit our students."

While she is excited about becoming the new principal, there are multiple challenges that Cohen has to face.

"The most challenging aspect of stepping into the role of interim principal has been the timing of the job transition," Cohen said. "It is always ideal to begin a new role in the summer, when you have more time to plan for the coming school year."

Overall, Cohen is excited about her new job as principal at Robinson Middle.

"I have been so pleased with the positive culture and family environment that is evident here at Robinson Middle," she said. "The wonderful faculty, staff and students have really made me feel welcome and appreciated during this transition."

Sevier student fondly looks back on his time living in Japan

BY CARLEE CRADIC

Chay Stansberry is an 8th grade student who spent many years living in Japan before he moved to Kingsport, Tennessee. Living on the small Asian island was a very different experience for Stansberry.

Stansberry's connection to Japan was actually related to the military.

"My dad was in the military and stationed in Japan," he said. "We lived there for 6 years"

The move to Kingsport was difficult for Stansberry.

"Moving to Kingsport was not that fun because I wasn't used to it," he said. "Somewhere around June we moved because it was cheap and had good schools."

Stansberry's first impression of Kingsport was not that great, but over time, he got used to living in a different culture.

Still, he had to adjust to some big differences between Japan and Tennessee.

"It is colder in Japan than Kingsport," Stansberry said. "Also, there is a lot more stuff to do there in Japan."

Once he came to Sevier Middle, Stansberry decided to try out for the cross country team. As a runner, he finished in the top 10 on the boys team. He is even doing some off-season running to stay in shape.

The weather differences between Japan and Tennessee meant that Stansberry now spends more time outside than before.

"It was too cold to play outside in Japan," he said.

Stansberry has adjusted to school in Tennessee, but he did not have to adjust much. Even in Japan, he attended an American school.

"I went to a school on base where I lived," he said. "The school was not Japanese."

Although he has adjusted to his new life, Stansberry still misses a lot about his old life in Japan. Most of all, he misses the friends he had to leave behind.

"I miss the beach, the mall and my friends," he said.

Stansberry hopes to return to Japan.

"My parents love Japan because they grew up there," he said. "I hope eventu-

ally we will go back to Japan, because it was way more fun."

Stansberry has some advice for any others who are considering moving to Japan and starting a new life there.

"Enjoy living there and have fun," he said. "Don't just go to the big places like Tokyo. Go to other places, too, and explore."

“My dad was in the military and stationed in Japan. We lived there for 6 years.”

Chay Stansberry



Review by Calli Venzon



PASS THE POPCORN



Review by Samson Ogbazghi



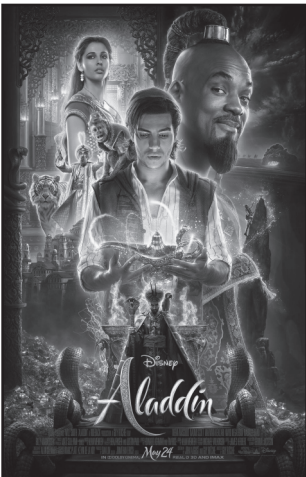
THE SOUND OF MUSIC



Review by Caroline Miller



HOOKED ON BOOKS



Aladdin (2019)

DIRECTED BY:
GUY RITCHIE

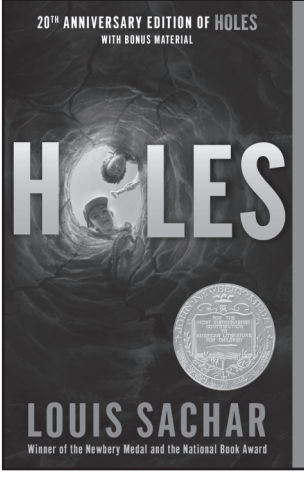
Rating: 8 out of 10



Back in Black

PERFORMED BY:
AC/DC

Rating: 8.5 out of 10



Holes

WRITTEN BY:
LOUIS SACHAR

Rating: 7 out of 10

THE STORY

“Aladdin” is a live-action remake of the original Disney cartoon “Aladdin”. The movie came to theaters on May 24, 2019 and was recently released on DVD and Blu-Ray. This movie was made based on a story from “One Thousand and One Nights”, a collection of Middle Eastern folk tales.

The movie begins with Aladdin, a poor “street rat” in the Arabian city Agrabah, stealing bread. He meets Princess Jasmine at the market, and assumes that she is a handmaid. They quickly fall in love.

Aladdin gets recruited by Jafar, an evil vizier to the sultan of Agrabah, to find a treasure in the Cave of Wonders. There, Aladdin meets a genie who grants him three wishes. Will the genie be set free? Will Aladdin use his wishes to be reunited with Jasmine? Will he defeat Jafar?

THE GOOD

This movie is full of laughs, and almost anyone could watch it. “Aladdin” is a wonderful movie and is perfect for the whole family.

Special effects artists must have had a tough time making all the special effects for the genie. Thanks to these effects, the genie’s character is incredibly believable, even when he is a bright shade of blue.

Every actor’s costume made them look so much more like their character. The clothes that Jasmine wore, for example, were perfect to represent a princess.

Jasmine also has a more independent female role. For example, in the original movie, the sultan has to change the rules for Aladdin to marry her. In this new version, Jasmine becomes sultan and makes her own rules.

THE BAD

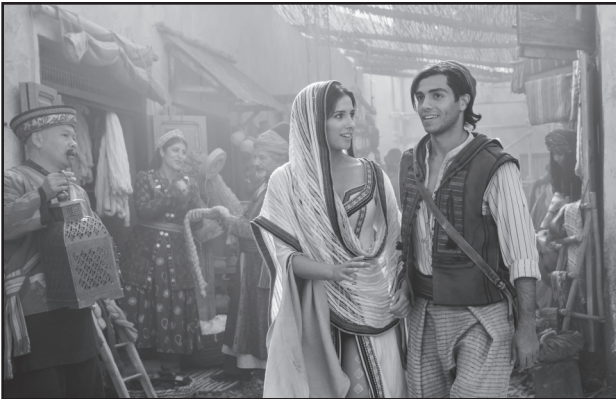
There are a lot of big differences in scenes between the original movie and the remake. Jasmine’s character, for example, was a little flat. She didn’t express as much emotion as the original Jasmine.

The actor playing Jafar, on the other hand, almost expressed too much emotion. He didn’t really seem a lot like the smooth liar of the cartoon.

Many “Aladdin” fans thought that the movie would be more grown-up, since all the characters are actually played by real actors. In this regard, the movie was a big disappointment.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Despite some problems, “Aladdin” is a great movie for anybody who has never heard the story before. I would not, however, recommend this movie to people that grew up watching the original movie.



Photo/DISNEY

A WHOLE NEW WORLD. *Aladdin* (Mena Massoud) and Jasmine (Naomi Scott) make the leap from cartoon characters to live-action with at least some changes that might surprise long-time fans.

THE STORY

“Back In Black” was released by the Australian metal band AC/DC on July 25, 1980. Nowadays, heavy metal has significantly decreased in popularity, but in the 1980s, metal was one of the most popular music genres.

The album was a tribute to former lead singer Bon Scott, who passed away 5 months before the album’s release. Brian Johnson is the singer on the “Back In Black” album, replacing Scott. Johnson has been the lead singer of AC/DC ever since.

The songs of “Back in Black” are still popular to this day. It is the second-highest best-selling record of all time. Some of the songs are still used in commercials and movies, such as in Marvel’s “Iron Man” movies.

THE GOOD

One of the best songs on the album is the title track, “Back In Black”. “Back in Black” is one of AC/DC’s most popular songs. The main guitar riff, played by lead guitarist Angus Young, is the best part of the song and is iconic. The lyrics, “Forget the hearse ‘cause I never die” references how Bon Scott will be remembered for his music, even after his death.

“Hells Bells” is another iconic song, from its introduction of ringing church bells to the driving beat. Angus Young once again propels the song forward with his guitar skills.

Another iconic song on “Back In Black” is “Shoot To Thrill”. The song is also fairly popular to this day, although not as famous as “Back in Black”. The guitar, played by Young, is very upbeat, especially towards the end. Johnson’s singing is also very upbeat and energetic. The song is quiet at the beginning, then builds up and becomes louder and more powerful.

THE BAD

Like many metal music from the 1980s, the lyrics in the songs in “Back In Black” are very hard to understand. Most of the time, the singing sounds just like screaming. Johnson was trying to imitate Scott and would continue to do so for later songs. It is a pretty distinctive way of singing, but for some music fans, it may be an acquired taste.

“Shoot To Thrill”, despite being a catchy song from an instrumental standpoint, is actually about drugs. “Shoot” refers to injection, and “thrill” means to get high. This is a good example of much of the album; the music is catchy and fun, but the lyrics can be pretty inappropriate for younger fans.

THE BOTTOM LINE

“Back In Black” is a good album. It’s fairly energetic and upbeat, even though it can be hard to understand the singing. It is an iconic album for good reason, and deserves an 8.5/10.



Photo/ATLANTIC RECORDS

LOSS OF A SINGER. The band “AC/DC” prior to the death of lead singer Bon Scott.

THE STORY

The novel “Holes” by Louis Sachar takes readers on an exciting journey into the life of Stanley Yelnats. In the book, Stanley’s family was supposedly cursed with bad luck. One day, Stanley is accused of stealing and is sent to Camp Green Lake in Texas as punishment.

The camp was once a lake, but it had dried up years ago. All the campers are forced to dig holes five feet deep and five feet wide. There are also many dangers in Camp Green Lake, including the venomous, yellow-spotted lizard. Will Stanley be able to unravel the mystery of why he has to dig these holes while avoiding the yellow-spotted lizard?

THE GOOD

The book “Holes” is very intriguing. It has a lot of cliffhangers at the end of chapters, which leads to the readers wanting to know what happens next. This makes the book feel fast-paced and exciting.

The story is funny, mysterious and even slightly dark. For example, in the book, Stanley is forced to dig holes because of crimes he didn’t even commit. Still, the author finds a lot of humor in Stanley’s situation.

The author also describes the characters’ feelings and thoughts well. “Holes” provides details about the setting, including the history of the setting. For example, the novel explains the history of the lake and the people who lived there at the time.

Some of the characters include the protagonist, Stanley, the warden, who is the leader of the camp, and Zero, who is one of Stanley’s friends but doesn’t talk very much. Most of the characters feel realistic, but some are a little one-dimensional.

THE BAD

The novel contains some dark subjects, like racism. For example, when the novel takes the readers back in time, it does show a time when the color of your skin reflected how people treated you. There was a rule where “white” people and “black” people couldn’t interact in the town where the story takes place. The story does a good job reflecting that part of history, but it feels a little out of place from the rest of the story.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The novel “Holes” by Louis Sachar is a great novel for kids. It may contain some dark subjects, but it deals with this darkness well. That may be a reason why so many people adore this novel. This book deserves a 7 out of 10.

Chris Mullins
Company, LLC

200 Lynn Garden Dr.
Kingsport, TN 37660
(423) 378-3737

Serving all of
East Tennessee
and
Southwest Virginia

Shrek hits Sevier on Stage

BY KARMELA WHITESIDE

Over the last two years, the theater program “Sevier on Stage” produced “Aladdin Jr.” and “Annie Jr.” This year, the group of students produced “Shrek: The Musical Jr.”. What does it take to get ready for these performances? What happens behind the scenes to create these successful productions?

Gabrial Bates is an 8th grade student and starred in Sevier’s production of Shrek.

“I played the green ogre Shrek,” Bates said. “He is a grumpy person that just wants to live alone in his swamp and will stop at nothing to make it happen.”

Emma Kimbler is an 8th grade student, plays clarinet in band, and has a strong passion for performing on stage.

“I played donkey,” she said. “He is fun, really annoying, and hilarious. He’s a matchmaker and probably the best friend you could ever have. He’s really clingy, but you’ve got to love him.”

Both Bates and Kimbler auditioned because they have a passion for theater.

“I enjoy entertaining people,” Bates said. “Also, I couldn’t pass up the opportunity to be Shrek.”

The reason Kimbler auditioned was because acting is fun.

“Right when I step on that stage, I shine,” she said. “I’ve been in plays since before I can remember. Singing, acting and dancing are what I am best at.”

This year’s play was directed by Angela Miller, a veteran of past productions, and new director Amanda Greer.

“Sevier on Stage is a great tradition here at Sevier,” Miller said. “I knew from my experience directing Aladdin Jr. last fall that there were many talented students ready to perform in another show. The whole reason to direct the show is to give stu-

dents an opportunity to sing, act and be involved in an excellent production.”

Although he enjoys acting and singing, there is one part of performing on stage Bates dislikes.

“My favorite part was the acting,” he said. “I enjoy singing, but the acting is more fun. However, I do not enjoy choreography. It feels like my entire body is being micromanaged.”

Choreography is the sequence of steps and movements in dance, especially in ballet or other staged dance. Since “Shrek Jr.” is a musical, all of the actors had to dance, as well.

Up there in front of the whole school, singing and dancing, all sorts of stuff can go wrong. A voice could crack. A wrong step could lead to a fall while dancing. There are many challenges as part of a play.

“I would probably say memorizing all of the lines is the most difficult part of the production,” Kimbler said. “If you are one of the main characters, it is especially difficult, because you have so much to memorize and do.”

Bates agreed. “Remembering all of my lines was the hardest,” he said. “I was the lead character, so I had the most lines by far, and remembering all of them is very difficult.”

Even the directors faced some challenges.

“The most challenging thing is that there is so much to do,” Miller said. “After students leave rehearsal, the directors are still working very hard. Creating light cues, sound cues, ordering and creating costumes, working on set, and planning rehearsals are just a few of the things directors do outside of rehearsals.”

Stage fright is nervousness before or during an appearance before an audience. It can be a



Scribe Photo/CASSIE PROBST

A CLASSIC TEAM. *Gabriel Bates, left, performs as Shrek alongside Emma Kimbler's Donkey. Countless hours of rehearsals prepared the two actors for their performances.*

serious problem for actors.

“Yes, I get stage fright,” Kimbler said. “The way I overcome stage fright is by making either myself or other people laugh, or just get used to the adrenaline of theatre.”

There are around 30 practices before the first performance, ranging from 30 minutes to three and a half hours after school.

“After school, the rest of the cast and I went to the auditorium to practice lines, songs and choreography for an hour or two,” Bates said. “When we go home, we’re supposed to work on memorizing those things for a few minutes.”

The starting point for all rehearsals is learning music and choreography for big ensemble numbers.

“These are parts of the show that involve almost the whole cast,” Miller said. “Then we add in blocking, directions for the characters on stage, and work on scenes and musical numbers with fewer characters. Students also have to practice their music at home, especially students with big solo roles.”

Singing and dancing with your fellow classmates can lead to funny, embarrassing and memorable moments during re-

hearsal and even performances.

“At a weekend rehearsal, my friend and I were sent up to Mrs. Greer’s room to get a sharpie and a pack of people followed us,” Kimbler said. “I didn’t think anything of it, though. They were going up the elevator and I thought ‘I need the exercise’. I get up to the top of the stairs and I’m waiting for them, they come up the elevator and scream in surprise that I am already there.”

Singing, dancing and acting at the same time can be a serious challenge.

“For me, it is very difficult,” Bates said. “If I have to dance in a song, I’m focused on the dancing, but then I realized I’m not singing. If I start singing, I start to forget certain dance moves. So, basically, I have to switch between focusing on dancing and focusing on singing constantly.”

In the end, all of the work behind the scenes was worth it.

“This year’s cast did a fantastic job,” Miller said. “Many students, even first-time students to the program, showed a huge amount of dedication and commitment to their role. This is what makes a show really fantastic.”



BY DYLAN KLEPPER

My Way

A law passed that if you are on the phone while driving, you can get a very expensive ticket. This should make the roads safer.

The crime rates have gone down a lot since 2018, too.

Brand new phones have come out with better cameras for better picture quality.

Brand new airpods came out with noise cancellation in-ear design, silicone tips and water and sweat resistance.

The Highway

All of the new technology is extremely expensive and not affordable.

Some people still talk on the phone while driving, and although they sometimes use the speaker, it is still bad.

The pollution level has increased a lot over the years.

UPCOMING RELEASES

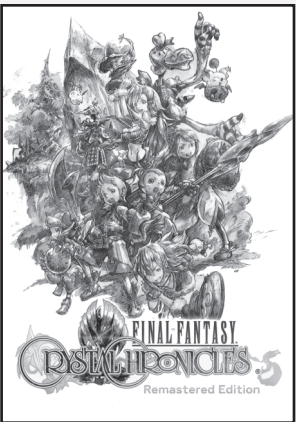


DOLITTLE
By: Universal

"Iron Man" himself, Robert Downey Jr., stars as Doctor Dolittle, a vet who can speak to animals, in this upcoming movie release. The movie will hit theaters on January 17.

**FINAL FANTASY
CRYSTAL
CHRONICLES**
By: Square-Enix

The classic role-playing game from the GameCube era returns in a new, remastered version on January 23.



SONIC
By: Paramount

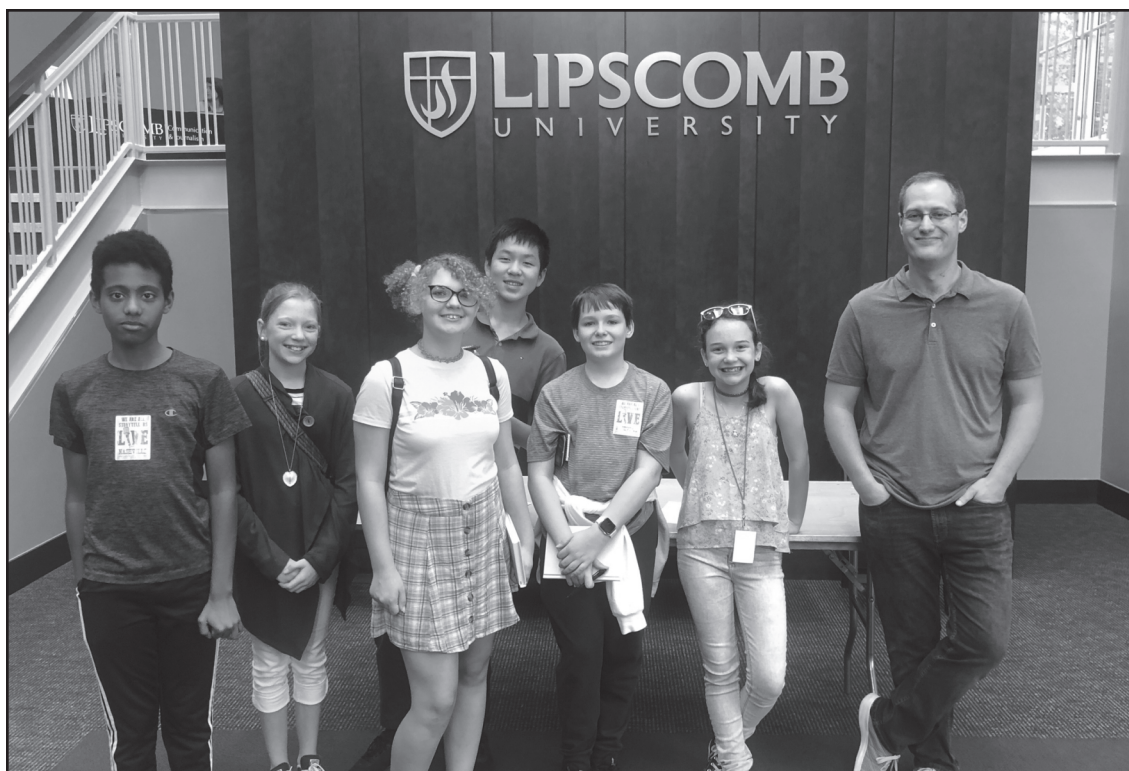
"Sonic The Hedgehog" is a live action film that will be released on February 14, 2020 by Paramount Pictures. In the movie, Tom, a cop, helps Sonic, who is being hunted by the military.

Sudoku

7				5	8	4		3
8	9						6	
				9	4		8	
	7					2		
			1		6			
		5					3	
	5		4	6				
	1						4	7
6		3	8	7				1

Fill all the blank squares with the correct numbers. In a 9 by 9 square Sudoku game:

- * Every row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order
- * Every column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order
- * Every 3 by 3 subsection of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9



Scribe Photo/COURTESY OF CHRIS CARR

LEARNING HOW TO BE BETTER JOURNALISTS. Samson Ogbazghi, Meredith Mooney, Anna Harrington, Charles Deng, Michael Fanning, and Chloe McConnell pose with adviser David Flanary on the campus of Lipscomb University.

Scribe editorial team travels to Nashville

Lipscomb conference provides training, inspiration

BY ALY BOGNI

The Sequoyah Scribe's editorial team recently had the chance to take a trip to Nashville to learn more about journalism.

Meredith Mooney has been a member of the Scribe staff for three years. This year, she serves as the newspaper's Editor-in-Chief.

"All the newspaper editors took a trip to Lipscomb University in Nashville to learn about ways to better our work," Mooney said. "We all spent time getting to know our fellow editors, all the while learning about journalism."

In order to get to Lipscomb University, they drove a van from Kingsport to Nashville.

"We all piled into an 8-passenger van and drove to and from Nashville, stopping at bookstores and restaurants along the way," Mooney said.

Chloe McConnell is the Scribe's investigations editor.

"During the ride, we played games and came up with new ideas for the newspaper," she said.

Then, after their long trip, they finally arrived at Lipscomb University.

"Being at Lipscomb University was very humbling," Mooney said. "It was very interesting to learn about other journalists and some careers in which journalism can be helpful."

Charles Deng, the student life editor of the Scribe, enjoyed the conference.

"We had lessons about writing and taking photos," he said. "We came up with ideas for the newspaper."

Deng's favorite part of the trip was the conference itself.

"We learned a lot of new things and got to see how the campus looked," he said.

The editors learned how to do

many things, such as taking better pictures and creating good leads. Leads are what hooks the readers in; without a strong lead, not as many people may want to finish reading the article.

"The editors split up," Mooney said. "We took different courses, which included how to take good pictures, how to write good leads, feature pieces and sports pieces."

The Scribe's entertainment editor, Samson Ogbazghi, learned some important lessons on this trip.

"I learned that you should be comforting to people you're interviewing," he said.

Ogbazghi enjoyed a stop at "McKay's" bookstore the most.

"It has a lot more than books," he said. "It has everything."

Although the trip was a great experience, Ogbazghi felt odd being around older and more mature kids.

Michael Fanning, the Scribe's sports editor, learned more about photography at Lipscomb University. He learned that in order to take a good picture, a photographer has to put himself or herself out there.

"My favorite part was going to the restaurant Buca Di Beppo, because I got to be myself and the food was excellent," he said.

Mooney, among other editors, also made some new friends on the way.

"I truly enjoyed getting to know the editors," she said. "Before we went on this trip, the other editors were acquaintances, but we came home friends."

The Sequoyah Scribe was the only middle school journalism program that attended the conference held at Lipscomb University.

"I felt very proud to be representing John Sevier as the only

middle school at the conference," Mooney said. "The editors and staff on the newspaper are extraordinary writers under an amazing supervisor, and this conference showed just that."

Fanning believes that these trips are important because they, "...can make our newspaper better and [can help us] win many awards."

McConnell's opinion about the trip is a bit different.

"It wasn't what I had expected," she said. "We knew just as much, if not more, about journalism as the high school kids did."

McConnell believes that the Scribe is ready for the annual THSPA competition, which began in December.

"We have learned so much about journalism since last year, and have got so many talented 6th graders," she said.

Mooney's view on journalism is that it is an important skill in multiple professions.

"You should totally try journalism," she said. "It makes all the difference in school, home and even in your future. You can't go wrong."

Working as a newspaper editor in middle school is hard work, but experiences like the THSPA conference make it a fun experience.

"It takes time and effort, but it is worth it," McConnell said.

Mooney agreed.

"The Sequoyah Scribe is the only middle school in the THSPA conference and the only newspaper representing Tennessee in the Pacemaker competition," she said. "The Sequoyah Scribe represents every single student and faculty at Sevier Middle. By respecting it, you respect yourself and your peers."

STUDENT VIEWS ON NEWS

LOCAL



Kingsport installs blocks on park benches

In September 2019, wooden blocks were added to park benches in Glen Bruce Park, the Greenbelt, and other public spaces in Kingsport. City manager Chris McCartt made this decision to keep homeless people from sleeping on these

benches. McCartt hoped this would cut down on drug use and crime in these areas. Many people in the community have been critical of this decision because Kingsport does not have enough homeless shelters.



"Kingsport should not have wooden blocks on their benches. The homeless need to sleep somewhere."

Micah Hale, 7th Grade

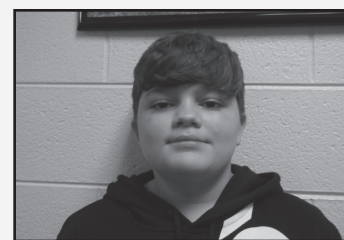
STATE



Kingsport Mets, other teams, may be cut

Major League Baseball plans to cut 42 minor league teams in the near future, which could include the Kingsport Mets, to cut costs. Nine of the teams that have a probability of being cut belong to the 10-

team Appalachian League. If this were to happen, Kingsport, Bristol and Johnson City would all lose their baseball teams. Members of Congress have sent a letter to the MLB opposing this decision.



"They should not be taking away our local team."

Timmy Baker, 6th Grade

NATION



California electric company turns off power

Pacific Gas and Electric, a power company in California, has been turning off electricity to customers. They believe that the electricity wires, wind, and the fact that it is so dry, can spark up more wildfires. The weather conditions can knock down towers and land

them in dry areas and catch on fire. So, the company turned off the electricity for about 450,000 people for 48 hours or more. A lot of people in California have been critical of this decision and believe it is time to bury the power lines.



"Maybe they can cut the power off, but not all the time. So, they will still be preventing wildfires, but people will still have electricity."

Mela Brice, 6th Grade

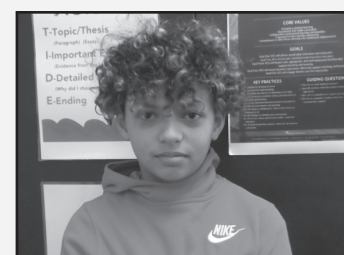
WORLD



Rain forest is burning down in Brazil

The Amazon rainforest is burning with all of the creatures inside of it, putting these animals out of their habitat. Since January, more than 70,000 fires have been detected in Brazil's Amazon rainforest. The Amazon spans over

many more countries, not just Brazil. The golden lion tamarin monkey is one of the rarest animals in the Amazon but is in danger because of the raging fires. People who are trying to clear forest areas are the ones causing these fires.



"I think it is good because they are replacing it with more plants that will help feed people."

Cameron Hardy, 7th grade