



SPORTS
**AREA HIGH SCHOOLS COMPETE
IN STATE BASKETBALL TOURNEY**

Football — Page 12A

COOK OF THE WEEK
**SMITH LEARNED TO
COOK FROM MOTHER**

Jamie Smith — Page 9A



THE NESHOPA DEMOCRAT

Established 1881 — Oldest Business Institution in Neshoba County Philadelphia, Mississippi Wednesday, February 14, 2024 143rd Year No. 7 **\$1.00

BOGUE CHITTO

Child dies while playing with gun

By **DUNCAN DENT**
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A four-year-old child in the Bogue Chitto Community playing with a gun has died. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians released a

statement confirming the incident on Sunday and said the Federal Bureau of Investigation is assisting with the investigation. The child received the fatal gunshot wound at home and was pronounced dead at

Neshoba General after being driven there by a private vehicle, the authorities said. The statement released on Monday by Misty Brescia, director of the Office of Public Information for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indi-

ans, said: "Yesterday our Choctaw community experienced the very unfortunate loss of life of a young child. We extend our prayers and heartfelt condolences to the family during this difficult time.

"Choctaw Police & the FBI are investigating this incident. As this is an active investigation, we are unable to provide any details." Neshoba County Sheriff Eric Clark said he believed the child was four years old.

He said his office learned before turning the investigation over to Choctaw Police that the gunshot wound was likely a self-inflicted accident after the child found a hand-

See **CHILD**, page 2A



The back patio of the Philadelphia Country Club was recently updated as part of an effort to enhance the facility.

Philadelphia Country Club makes big improvements

By **JACE HENDERSON**
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The Philadelphia Country Club has undergone remarkable change with recent renovations to enhance the experience for its members and visitors alike.

With a commitment to excellence, the club has embraced innovations and improvements under Board President Mike Tinsley.

About two and a half years ago, the club invested \$35,000 in a new tennis court, complete with state-of-the-art LED lights, added pickleball lines, and a gated enclosure. The tennis courts previously served as a parking area for the swimming pool.

The clubhouse has also seen a significant facelift, featuring a remodeled interior, a new roof, fresh paint, and enhanced landscaping.

With an eye toward the future, there are even plans to potentially introduce a restaurant, adding to the allure of the club.

"The clubhouse is in the best shape it's been in since it was built," said Tinsley.

The club's dedication to creating a memorable atmosphere is evident in the



The Philadelphia Country Club recently dedicated two beautiful fire pits in loving memory of Billy Gene and Helen Tolbert, who loved the game of golf, especially at PCC. From left, Robert Tolbert, Tammy Tolbert Tawater and George Tawater were present. Thanks to George for the design, construction, and installation.

ballroom's popularity as a wedding venue, with five weddings already booked for the year. The addition of an outdoor patio, costing \$150,000 and officially completed about two months ago, has further heightened the appeal for weddings as well.

The club recently has paid tribute to deceased members with dedicated features on the patio like a fountain in memory of Stan Webb and two fire pits in memory of Billy Gene and Helen Tolbert, all avid golf enthusiasts and longtime club members.

The club has seen a notable increase in membership, with about 60 new members in the past year and a half, bringing the total active membership to about 240.

Membership, priced at \$130 per month, includes various amenities, with additional options for cart storage.

"For a small town, this is pretty awesome for what we've got. The course is a hidden jewel for East Mississippi," Tinsley said.

The golf course, boasting two freshwater lakes pumped by two wells, also offers more than just golfing opportunities. Members can enjoy fishing in the

See **CLUB**, page 3A

DISPENSARY

Aldermen OK Sunday marijuana

By **JACE HENDERSON**
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Aldermen have voted to amend the medical marijuana ordinance to allow for Sunday sales.

Aldermen approved the change requested by the owner of Dabbs Cannabis Dispensary to extend sales to Sundays in a 3-2 vote during last week's regular meeting.

Tony Wallace and Bobby Britton of Mendenhall own Dabbs Cannabis Dispensary, located at 1024 W Beacon St. across from Popeyes. They already own other dispensaries in Scott, Rankin, and Simpson counties, making Philadelphia their fifth.

Aldermen will formally vote on the new ordinance on Feb. 20 and if approved the change will take effect in about 30 days.

Ward 1 Alderman Justin Clearman, Ward 3 Alderman James Tatum, and Ward 4 Alderman Shaun Seals voted for the change, while Ward 2 Alderman Jim Fulton and Alderman-at-Large James Waltman opposed selling pot on Sundays.

Under the current ordinance approved in April 2023, businesses like Dabbs can operate Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

In other matters, aldermen voted to:

- Approve a motion to pay Perry Construction \$101,831 for work completed on the Booker T. Washington Gymnasium ADA Improvements. The motion was approved unanimously;
- Approve a motion to pay Wendell Holmes Sr., HVAC \$1,921 for blower units installed at Westside Community Center out of Bond B account. The motion was approved unanimously;
- Approve a motion to accept the resignation of Bryce Parker from the Street Department effective Feb. 2. The motion was approved unanimously;
- Approve a motion to hire John Ladd at \$10 per hour effective Feb. 8 with the Street Department pending a drug screen. The motion was approved unanimously;
- Approve a motion to approve welcome signs at 11 city entrance locations. The motion was approved unanimously;
- Approve a motion to allow Animal Control to apply for a grant. The motion was approved unanimously;
- Approve a motion to accept the resignation of John Lilley from the Police Department effective Feb. 6. The motion was approved unanimously;
- Approve a motion to accept

See **CITY**, page 2A

OPINION
Rich Lowry

PAGE 4A

JUST AMONG FRIENDS
Marianne Enochs

PAGE 9A

OPINION
Cal Thomas

PAGE 4A



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Money donated for kids' trophies

The Community in Action group of Philadelphia/Neshoba recently donated \$1,998.92 to the Park Board, covering the cost of 140 trophies for kids participating in the Booker T. Washington Gym sports league. Additionally, they donated \$5,000 for the HVAC project at the gym. In January, the group granted \$2,100 in college scholarships to five Philadelphia High School students, recognizing their achievements in essays about Martin Luther King Jr. The scholarships will be presented to those deserving students during the upcoming awards day at the school. Pictured are Summer Ward and Johnny Beckwith.

Child

Continued from page 1A

gun under a pillow in a bedroom.

Philadelphia Police Chief

Eric Lyons said his officers encountered a speeding vehicle at about 2:15 p.m. on Holland Avenue on Sunday.

He said a PPD officer observed the speeding car and attempted to stop it. But the vehicle did not stop until reaching Neshoba General where the officer discovered

there was a child inside suffering from a gunshot wound.

"No charges are expected in this incident from the Police Department," Lyons said.

He noted his office learned after the fact that the shooting occurred in the Bogue Chitto community on Tribal land.

(USPS 377-160)

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City

Continued from page 1A

the resignation of Jarron Tucker from the Fire Department effective Jan. 26. The motion was approved unanimously;

• Approve a motion to approve the purchase of a Motorola APX Next Multi

radio for the Fire Department for \$10,409 through Task Force Grant and reimbursable. The motion was approved unanimously;

• Approve a motion to accept a Paratech equipment bid from Nafeco at \$745,793.23 for the Fire Department. The motion was approved unanimously.

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Deputies arrest woman for fentanyl syringes

By DUNCAN DENT
duncan@neshobademocrat.com

A Neshoba County woman was arrested and charged on several counts after approaching a safety checkpoint on the wrong side of the road in the North Bend community late last month.

The woman, Beverly Ann Cumberland, 57, 10121 Road 2826, was arrested and charged with DUI, possession of a controlled substance, possession of paraphernalia, careless driving, and no insurance, according to Neshoba County Sheriff Eric Clark.

Cumberland was released from the Neshoba County Detention Center on an \$11,000 bond on Jan. 28.

Clark said deputies encountered Cumberland at the safety checkpoint at the



Cumberland

intersection of Road 781 and Road 624 at 11:55 a.m. on Jan. 27.

Deputies stopped Cumberland when she approached the checkpoint. She told deputies she was on her way to Meridian.

Clark said deputies had “a lot of clues” to suspect Cumberland was under the influence.

Clark said, among other things, Cumberland kept fidgeting with her purse alerting deputies to the possibility she might be hiding a weapon or something illegal.

A search of her purse found two syringes loaded with a fentanyl solution, five unloaded syringes, a small glass vial of a fentanyl solution, a glass pipe, and misdemeanor amounts of several prescription pills, Clark said.

Juveniles charged with pair of burglaries

By DUNCAN DENT
duncan@neshobademocrat.com

Two juveniles, both 17, were arrested and have been charged in connection with a pair of burglaries in December.

Neshoba County Sheriff Eric Clark said both juveniles face burglary charges related to incidents reported on Dec. 9 and Dec. 22. He said one juvenile also faces charges of assaulting a police officer after he had to be restrained when he was brought in on Jan. 31.

The names have not been

released and they will be handled through Youth Court.

The first incident on Dec. 9 was a vehicle break-in at Pendleton Square Apartments about 3 p.m. in which a black Glock pistol with a green laser site was taken from the driver's side door of a vehicle parked there.

The second incident was a burglary reported at a mobile home in the Stallo community on Road 832 in which a Play Station 4 game console and computer were reported stolen on Dec. 22 after the homeown-

er returned from work that afternoon.

The pistol, computer, and Play Station have all been recovered and returned to their proper owners.

Clark said one of the juveniles was first identified as a suspect shortly after the Dec. 9 incident when the victim said he had been told the juvenile was attempting to sell a pistol matching the description of the one taken from the victim's vehicle.

Police seeking info into Sherwood shooting

By DUNCAN DENT
duncan@neshobademocrat.com

Multiple shots fired into a residence on Sherwood Drive have police searching for suspects.

“We have no new information into possible suspects at this time,” said Philadelphia

Police Chief Eric Lyons.

Lyons said PPD received reports of shots fired into a residence on Sherwood Drive near Robinhood Circle on Friday, Feb. 9, at about 7 p.m.

Officers responded to the area where reports of about seven shots were fired with several striking the front of a resi-

dence. According to Lyons, several people were inside the residence including children, although no one was injured.

Anyone with information on this or other crimes should call CrimeStoppers at 1-855-485-8477 or PPD at (601) 656-2131.

Club

Continued from page 1A

lakes, adding an extra layer of recreational fun.

“A lot of times people join just to fish,” Tinsley said.

Country Club Superintendent Nolan Mitch has overseen a lot of the golf course's extensive improvements over the last three years.

Mitch's initiatives include tackling invasive grass, updating the golf course, and improving irrigation and drainage systems, and he has introduced new sandboxes.

“We've come a long way under Mike's leadership,” Mitch

said. “He brought me in, did a lot of stuff to this building, and we have grown. We want to keep growing. There's a lot more that we will continue doing.”

Mitch said he aims to continue enhancing the greens and fairways, with ongoing projects such as tree removal for optimal grass growth.

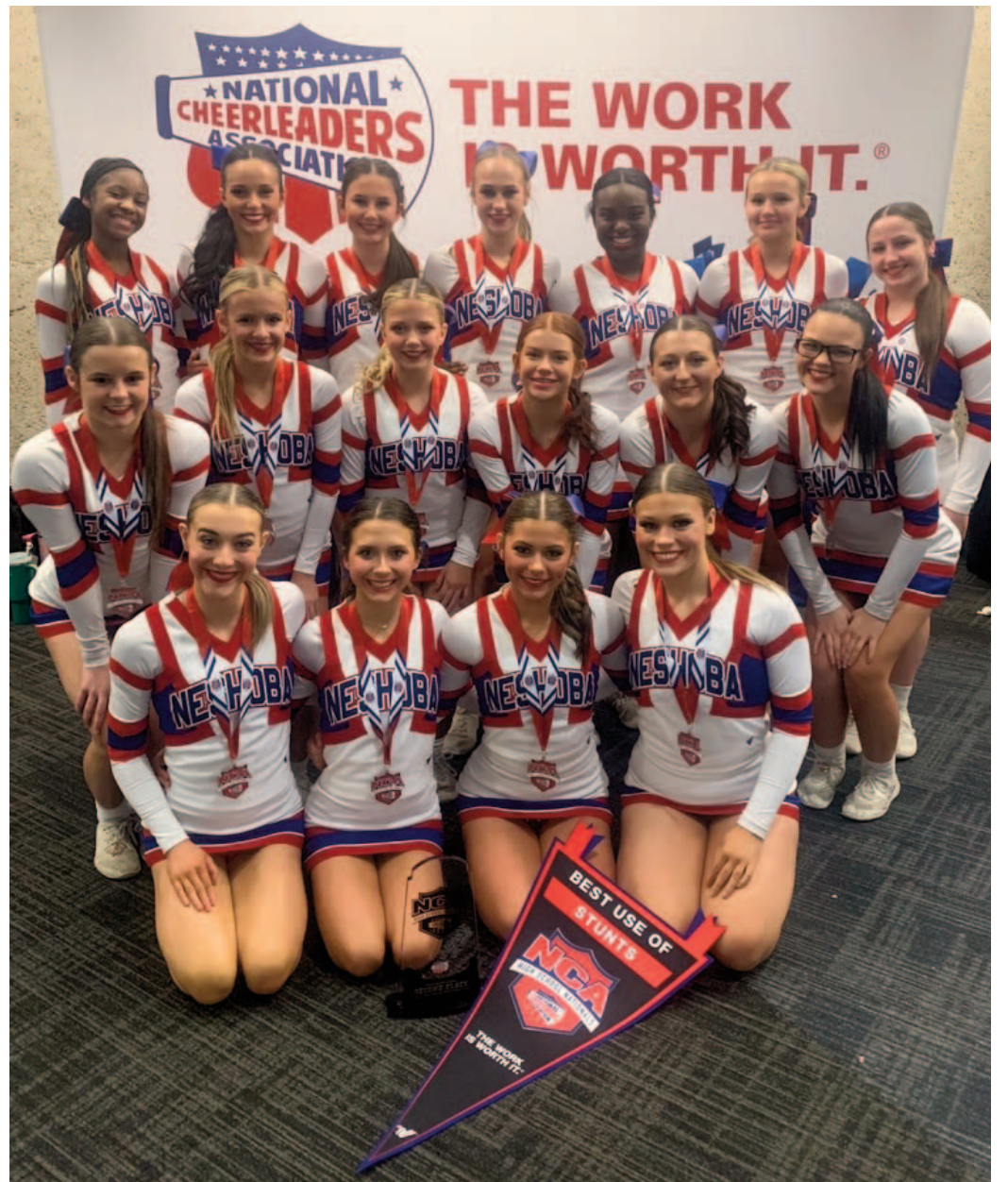
The next goal for the club is to fix cart paths damaged by tree roots along the course. Upgrading the cart paths may include a shift from asphalt to cement, depending on the price, but this upgrade showcases the club's commitment to providing a top-notch experience, he said.

“It's going to be a long and slow process, but eventually we

will reach our goal,” Mitch said. “I hope to leave a legacy here and an outstanding golf course. It's my dream in the future to host some potential pro players to play out here and enjoy what I am enjoying.”

The Philadelphia Country Club is currently on a transformative journey, officials say, blending tradition with innovation for an unparalleled experience that will last for years to come.

Board members include Tinsley, Terry Phillips, David Hayman, Johnny Hester, Trent Stribling, Brad Bounds, and Cameron Lesley.



Neshoba Cheerleaders compete in Dallas

The Neshoba Central Cheerleaders recently received 2nd place at the NCA National High School Cheerleading championship in Dallas. They also were awarded best use of stunts. Pictured, front row from left, are Baylor Coggins, Marley Bell, Alicia Greenlee, Hattie Hicks (Middle) Anna Norris, Laney Burrage, Presley Byrd, Macie Rae Parker, Sadie Martin, Bailey McAdory (Back) Alyssa Clemons, Miley Fulton, Halli Smith, Dixie Rebecca Hines, Marlee Washington, Haley Gipson, and Shelby Berry.



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Opinion

FOUNDED 1881

THE NESHOPA DEMOCRAT

*Truth, justice and progress, without fear or favor*JAMES E. PRINCE III, *Editor and Publisher*STEVE SWOGETINSKY, *Managing Editor*STEVE SWOGETINSKY, *Sports Editor*ARTHUR STANLEY DEARMAN, *Editor and Publisher 1966-2000*
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EDITORIALS

Expanding school choice

School choice is winning from coast to coast. Last year, six states created programs offering every student a shot at the high-quality education once exclusive to the privileged. Even more are moving in this direction in 2024.

There are alternatives to the traditional public school system in most of the country, and this is driving renewed interest. The nonprofit National School Choice Awareness Foundation released a survey last month suggesting that nearly 2 in 3 parents are exploring options other than their assigned district public school. Some 43% of those surveyed have already gone in a nontraditional direction, such as a charter school, private school, magnet school or homeschooling for at least one child.

Sensing the popularity of school choice, the Missouri House of Representatives last month approved open enrollment legislation granting parents the option of sending their children to any public school in the state, regardless of where they live, liberating those who might be trapped in a failing or dangerous environment. The state Senate has also advanced a bill to expand the current school choice scholarship program.

In other states, lawmakers are taking defensive positions to resist the assault of teachers unions desperate to retain their iron grip over the K-12 classroom. Nebraska enacted the Opportunity Scholarship Act last year to provide millions in public funds to help low-income families afford private schools. Lawmakers there began working this week on a proposal to sidestep a union-backed scheme to pull the plug on the program before it has a chance to help anyone.

Defenders of the status quo casually toss around terms like “racist” to describe

any who dare challenge their schoolhouse monopoly. The facts say otherwise. The Current Project, a nonprofit dedicated to creating upward mobility for Black single mothers, released a survey Monday suggesting these moms are tired of the “one size fits all” system. Some 86% responding to the nationwide poll said they’re more likely to vote for political candidates who embrace school choice.

The new way of thinking about education isn’t limited to K-12 schools. High school students who intend to go to college are no longer stuck with the standardized ACT or SAT admissions test, which have become increasingly politicized to fit in with the latest progressive fads.

Florida’s state university system last year began accepting the Classic Learning Test as an alternative, and the number of students ditching the testing duopoly for CLT has grown tenfold. Instead of reflecting the fleeting ideologies of the present, the exam draws from the timeless texts of civilization’s greatest minds to challenge students.

A similar appreciation for the timeless can be found at the University of Austin, a new private college offering a classically minded curriculum in a forum that, unlike most educational institutions, rejects today’s cancel culture in favor of critical thinking.

It’s a sign of the times that turning to the best minds of past generations for guidance has become a revolutionary idea. But the school choice revolution is exactly what’s needed to escape the groupthink that has imprisoned so many young minds. And freeing those minds is the key to the long-term health of our republic.

— *The Washington Times*

CAL THOMAS

The unmaking of a president

Beginning with the election of John F. Kennedy in 1960 and through the re-election of Richard Nixon in 1972, political journalist and biographer Theodore H. White wrote books called “The Making of a President.” Were he alive today he might title one about Joe Biden “The Unmaking of a President.”

The deplorable state of the president is obvious to all but those who are desperately hoping they can drag him across the finish line in November.

The administration appears desperate, if not devastated, following the release of a report by Special Counsel Robert Hur that included Hur’s observation that Biden could not be indicted for “willfully” keeping and sharing classified papers because he is an “elderly man with a poor memory.”

At a hastily called news conference that seemed to underscore rather than refute Hur’s observations, Biden called the president of Egypt the president of Mexico. He also kept fumbling at what appeared to be pages in a notebook. These pages usually contain anticipated answers to reporters’ questions. He never got to the right pages.

As if this wasn’t enough self-inflicted damage, the administration rolled out the equally inarticulate vice president to defend Biden. Kamala Harris, whose remarks have been called “word salads” by critics, tried to convince us that what we are seeing and hearing is not the Biden she knows. In this, she followed the example of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, who has repeatedly claimed the southern border is “secure.” They want us to believe them instead of what our “lying

The next time you’re stopped for speeding, try telling the officer you didn’t intend to go 75 in a 30-mile-per-hour zone.

eyes” are telling us.

The major media, until recently enablers of the president, are starting to show cracks in their alliance. Writing in the largely pro-Biden New York Times, columnist Bret Stephens emphatically states, “Democrats can no longer stay silent about Biden.”

The equally fawning Washington Post: “‘Hair on fire’: Democratic worries grow over claims about Biden’s memory lapses.”

Politico reported on remarks by longtime Democratic Party strategist Paul Begala: “I’m a Biden supporter. And I slept like a baby last night. I woke up every two hours and wet the bed. (The Hur report) is terrible for Democrats. And anybody with a functioning brain knows that.” Speaking of the president’s press conference, Begala said, “I think Biden made it worse, no question about it.”

Ian Sams, the spokesman for the White House Counsel’s office, called passages in the Hur report about Biden’s mental state “gratuitous” and “inappropriate.” Except they weren’t. After spending five hours in two interviews with the president, Hur’s statements are at the heart of why he thinks a D.C. jury would be sympathetic to Biden and never convict him. It reminds me of then-FBI Director James Comey’s rationale for

not recommending Hillary Clinton be indicted for mishandling classified documents: “Although we did not find clear evidence that Secretary Clinton or her colleagues intended to violate laws governing the handling of classified information, there is evidence that they were extremely careless in their handling of very sensitive, highly classified information.”

The next time you’re stopped for speeding, try telling the officer you didn’t intend to go 75 in a 30-mile-per-hour zone.

No such absolution is granted to Donald Trump, because as Hur claimed, Trump’s case is different. That is unlikely to go down well with Trump supporters. No wonder so many believe there are two-tiers in our justice system.

Reporters are starting to interview doctors to get them to speculate about Biden’s mental state. While acknowledging they have not examined the president, some say he should be given a cognitive test. If he does take a test, the full results should be released. If he doesn’t, the media should keep asking why not?

Questions are being raised whether the president is fit for a second term. I’m wondering if he can make it to the end of this term and whether America’s enemies may see an opportunity to do things they would probably not do if a fully functioning president were in charge.

Email Cal Thomas at tcaeditors@tribpub.com. Look for Cal Thomas’ latest book “A Watchman in the Night: What I’ve Seen Over 50 Years Reporting on America” (HumanixBooks).

RICH LOWRY

Biden should surrender at the border

Perhaps the most head-spinning statement of the Biden years came about a week ago when President Joe Biden endorsed an impending Senate immigration deal so he could “shut down” the border.

This, after the president had dismantled all the Trump policies that had secured the border; after Biden and his minions had refused for years to call the chaos at the border a “crisis”; after doing all he could to re-direct illegal immigrants to newly created legal channels to launder them into the country through different means.

Then, all of a sudden, when the calendar flipped from 2023 to the election year of 2024, Biden sounded like a Donald Trump-style border hawk.

The Senate deal represents Biden’s best chance to try to escape the border morass of his own creation. The latest NBC News poll highlights the president’s dilemma — he trails Trump by 35 points on who would do a better job securing the border.

The way out for Biden isn’t passing the bill and immediately shutting down the border. The fact of the matter is that the deal is unlikely to pass given fierce opposition in the Republican-held House, and the border shutdown isn’t quite as advertised (it is triggered only when there are elevated levels of illegal immigration and asylum-seekers would continue to come through ports of entry).

No, what Biden and the Democrats are hoping is that they can turn the politics of immigration on its head by

Give Biden the border shutdown authority he wants. This, after the president had dismantled all the Trump policies that had secured the border.

blaming Republicans for rejecting a solution to the border out of sheer partisan cussedness and loyalty to Donald Trump, who vociferously opposes the deal.

“We need help,” Biden said after the bill was released. “Why won’t they give me the help?”

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a Democrat from New York, asked: “Will the senators drown out the political noise from Trump and his minions and do the right thing for America? It’s a crucial question. History is looking down on every one of us right now.”

It’s not obvious when Democrats began to think that cracking down on the border is the way to be on “the right side of history,” but clearly a memo went out sometime over the last month.

It’s not as though Biden has been trying his utmost to control the border — using executive orders, creative interpretations of the laws and any other tool at hand — and then in frustration came to Congress for new authorities because he’s exhausted every one he already has.

He’s ignored the pleas for help from border states, disregarded the distress of big city Democrat mayors, and looked away from the damning

images of long lines of illegal immigrants from all over the world walking into the country.

His position now is, effectively, that Congress has to stop him from continuing on his current course lest things truly get out of hand.

If this doesn’t make much sense, at the very least he’s, for now, divided the GOP on an issue that had united them.

It’s unclear how much Biden can get from this, given that he’s president and the border failures have been on his watch. Still, it behooves Republican opponents of the deal to try to limit any potential political damage. The GOP House should counter by offering a simple, easy-to-understand bill to give Biden the clear, immediate authority to shut down the border without any of the triggers or limits of the Senate deal, or other complex provisions.

The GOP’s posture should be, “You, Mr. President, say you want to be a border hawk. Well, we think you already have the ability to do much more than you’re doing now, but regardless, here’s a new, unmistakable codification of your ability, nay, responsibility, to exclude all illegal immigrants. Have at it.”

If Biden took that deal, it would represent a complete surrender. If he rejected it, as is likely, it would once again show his lack of seriousness about border security.

Rich Lowry is editor of National Review, a leading conservative magazine founded by William F. Buckley.

FLASHBACKS

February 18, 1944

Appreciably hindered, no doubt, by the critical condition of many roads in the county, as well as a great deal of illness, Neshoba County lagged to the final moment in reaching its quota in the Fourth War Loan drive but it was reached, thanks to the hard work of members of the drive committee, the County War Finance Director, F. L. Grubbs, and other interested citizens.

Stating that the Court House “has been badly abused and poorly kept,” and that the county jail was “unsanitary,” the Neshoba County Grand Jury recommended correction of these conditions in its report to the Circuit Court, presented upon adjournment last week.

February 18, 1954

One of Neshoba County’s most prominent civic leaders, Mrs. Martha Moss, was named today as chairman of the 1954 Easter Seal Campaign in Neshoba County.

It has been the opinion of many people, for a long time, that Philadelphia and Neshoba County should have a live wire chamber of commerce, with a full time paid secretary-manager.

February 20, 1964

A campaign to rid the city of Philadelphia of rats will be held next Thursday and Fri-

day, Feb. 27 and Feb. 28. The City, in cooperation with the Health Department, will distribute the material to all homes and businesses in the area.

Finals in the District Four basketball tournament will get started in the Philadelphia gymnasium tonight (Thursday) with the four winners in the sub-district games last weekend playing for the district title and the right to meet District Three next week.

February 21, 1974

Mayor Alan King signs a proclamation designating February as American Music Month. The Mississippi Federation of Music Clubs and the Lydian Music Club join in encouraging and stimulating interest in American music and its enjoyment and appreciation.

Five persons have been charged with possession of whiskey and beer in connection with recent raids.

February 22, 1984

Neshoba County Agent Ivory Lyles has returned home after hospitalization for injuries suffered in a traffic accident.

For the first time since 1979 the Philadelphia High School boys basketball team will not be involved in the North Mississippi Basketball

Tournament.

February 16, 1994

New officers of the Neshoba County Shrine Club were installed at a meeting at the clubhouse on Highway 15 south.

February 25, 2004

A form of methamphetamine knows as “ice” is becoming more and more popular in Neshoba County, authorities said this week after making four unrelated felony drug arrests.

The Ford franchise here was sold to a Union dealer and closed Feb. 10, ending more than a 100-year run for the automaker in Neshoba County.

February 19, 2014

A pizza carry out franchise and two new retailers are expected to open in Philadelphia soon. Factory Connection, a clothing store, is moving into the old Sears building in Canal Place Shopping Center.

The Community Development Partnership was presented a state Community Economic Development Award in recognition of the historic log cabin in Northside Park, which was rebuilt last year after being destroyed in an EF-5 tornado in 2011.

LETTERS

The Democrat welcomes letters, comments or suggestions: Editor and Publisher Jim Prince
jprince@neshobademocrat.com

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BIBLE SELECTION

it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

— 1 Corinthians 13: 6-7 (ESV)

License plate reader leads to arrest at casino

By DUNCAN DENT
duncan@neshobademocrat.com

A Jackson man wanted on charges in multiple jurisdictions was arrested at the Golden Moon Casino last week after a license plate reader alerted county law enforcement authorities he was driv-

ing a stolen vehicle.

The man, John Rickman Jr., 45, 2600 Greenway Drive, Jackson, was arrested and charged with possession of a controlled substance and giving false ID information, according to Neshoba County Sheriff Eric Clark.

Rickman faces charges in

other jurisdictions as well, Clark said.

Rickman is wanted in McNairy County, Tenn., for violation of his probation on a burglary conviction, according to Clark.

Clark said in addition to the vehicle he



Rickman

was driving being reported stolen out of Jackson, Tunica officials are interested in Rickman as well.

Clark said Tuesday his office is still working on extraditing Rickman but believes he will be turned over to Tennessee authorities first.

Sheriff's deputies were first alerted to Rickman's presence in Neshoba County when the stolen vehicle he was driving appeared on a license plate reader camera on Highway 16 leaving town at about 4:19 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 8.

Clark said the vehicle was tracked to the Golden Moon's east parking lot where

deputies secured the vehicle and notified casino security.

With the help of security, NCSO deputies were able to locate Rickman in the Golden Moon and arrest him.

During the arrest deputies found drugs on Rickman and Clark said he gave fake information to the arresting officers.

Man arrested for theft at chicken farms

By DUNCAN DENT
duncan@neshobademocrat.com

A Walnut Grove man has been arrested and charged in connection with the theft of materials and equipment from area chicken farms.

The man, Jerry Lee Higgins, 47, 300 Bob Drive Road, Walnut Grove, was arrested and charged with three counts of grand larceny, according to Neshoba County Sheriff Eric Clark.

Neshoba County Jail records show Higgins was brought in on Feb. 7 at 3:39 p.m.

Clark said Higgins was handed over to Leake County officials on Feb. 10 for similar charges. Clark said his office

has also been contacted by Scott County regarding Higgins.

Clark said investigators connected Higgins to the theft of equipment and materials from several poultry farms in Neshoba County.

Higgins has been charged in connection with the theft of 300 sheets of tin used to cover chicken houses worth an estimated \$19,000 taken from a farm on Road 266 in the Beatline community. This theft is believed to have occurred in January and was reported on Feb. 3.

Higgins is also suspected in several other incidents including a theft on Road 1129 in the Laurel Hill community in November in which \$9,000 of

materials and equipment were reported stolen.

Another is said to have occurred on Road 2446 off of Highway 19 South in the Bethesda community in December where \$22,000 in materials and equipment were reported stolen.

"If you own a poultry farm and have suffered fraud or thefts to Mr. Higgins, contact your local sheriff's office," Clark said. "Mr. Higgins is known for thefts of metal roofing and other poultry items."

Contact East Mississippi Crime Stoppers at (855) 485-TIPS or the NCSO at (601) 656-1414 if you have information about a crime.

ECCC partners with Mississippi Power

By STAFF REPORTS
news@neshobademocrat.com

East Central Community College President Dr. Brent Gregory recently accepted a Deeply Rooted, Future Focused capital campaign contribution from Chris Phillips, the District General Manager for Mississipp-

pi Power, in a partnership to promote science, technology, engineering, and mathematics at the community college level.

"Supporting East Central Community College's efforts to enhance Newton Hall and the school's engineering program is a true win-win," said Mississippi Power District General

Manager Chris Phillips. "Fostering the continued improvement of local STEM programs in our area will help make ECCC a premier destination for engineering majors. We look forward to continuing our partnership and expanding the pool of future engineers to help serve our customers for decades to come."

With both organizations, ECCC and Mississippi Power, having served the residents of Mississippi for almost 100 years, the college

looks forward to building upon the foundation of past leaders to benefit future generations with the help of donations and partnerships such as this.

"We are so thankful for this donation from Mississippi Power, and the relationship we have developed," said ECCC's Executive Director of the Foundation, Dr. Stacey Hollingsworth. "Having commitments from local companies and industries speak very highly of what we are trying to accomplish with the Deeply Rooted, Future Focused campaign, and again we are very grateful for Mississippi Power's support."

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SOCIETY

Smith's cooking inspired by mom

By JACE HENDERSON
jace@neshobademocrat.com

Jamie Smith's cooking journey began with learning to cook anything and everything from her mother, the late Judy Ladd.

Reflecting on her formative years growing up in Neshoba County, Smith fondly recalled her mother's approach to cooking — a pinch of this, a dash of that, with no precise measurements.

"She was one of those that didn't measure. You just had to figure it out," Smith said. "She could cook just about anything. My best memories are cooking with her."

Smith, a registered nurse at Centerwell Home Health, skillfully balances her rewarding professional career with the responsibilities of being a mother to Caitlin Draughon and Bryson Smith. Additionally, she cherishes her role as a grandmother to Emmet Branning, Maddox Draughon, and Maylee Draughon.

While Smith finds joy in crafting dishes like sausage and potato soup and chocolate oatmeal cookies, it's her meatloaf that steals the spotlight.

"Bryson is constantly wanting me to cook meatloaf," she chuckled.

Family gatherings and holidays at the Smith household are marked by cherished traditions like a classic spread of turkey and ham, mashed potatoes, butter beans, and homemade Christmas candies.

Smith, however, isn't limited to a conventional approach. She embraces the grill, expertly preparing burgers, steaks, pork chops, and corn on the cob.

"Cooking brings my family together," she said. "My kids are older now, and usually when I cook, they all come running."

The secret to Smith's flavorful food lies in her family's love for seasonings like onion powder and garlic powder, adding that extra touch of warmth to their shared meals.

Outside the kitchen, when she's not whipping up savory dishes, Smith loves spending quality time with her grandchildren.

For Smith, cooking transcends the act of preparing meals. It's about forging connections, sharing laughter, and celebrating life in the heart of the kitchen or around the dinner table with her family.



Jamie Smith with her children, Caitlin Draughon and Bryson Smith, and grandchildren, Emmet Branning, Maddox Draughon, and Maylee Draughon

SAUSAGE AND POTATO SOUP

1-pound Italian ground sausage
½ white onion (optional) - diced
1 tablespoon minced garlic
6 cups chicken broth
2 cups water

4-5 yellow potatoes - cut into 1-inch pieces
3 teaspoons salt - or to taste
1 teaspoon black pepper

Other seasonings we like (to taste)- onion powder, chicken powder, garlic powder, Italian seasoning, red pepper

2 cups heavy cream
4 cups chopped kale and/or spinach
Chopped bacon or bacon

bits and grated parmesan cheese for topping - optional
In a large pot sauté

COOK OF THE WEEK

sausage 5-6 minutes until browned. Use a slotted spoon to transfer sausage to a plate and set aside.

In the same pot, add butter and sauté onions over medium heat until translucent. Add garlic and sauté for another minute until fragrant.

BRYSON'S SPICY MEATLOAF

1 ½ pounds ground beef
1 egg
1 onion, chopped
1 cup milk
1 cup dried breadcrumbs or crackers
Salt and pepper to taste
Spicy seasonings of choice to taste
Jalapeño peppers
Bell pepper
Pepperoncini peppers to garnish
½ cup ketchup
2 tablespoons brown sugar
2 tablespoons prepared mustard

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Lightly grease a 9x5-inch loaf pan. Combine ground beef, onion, jalapeño pepper, bell pepper, milk, breadcrumbs, and egg in a large bowl; season with salt and pepper, and spicy seasonings. Transfer into prepared loaf pan. Mix ketchup, brown sugar, and mustard together in a small bowl until well combined; pour over meatloaf and spread it evenly over the top. Bake in the preheated oven until no longer pink in the center, about 1 hour. Place the pepperoncini peppers on top.

CHOCOLATE OATMEAL COOKIES

2 cups white sugar
½ cup margarine (1 stick)
½ cup milk
3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
1 pinch salt
3 cups quick cooking oats
½ cup peanut butter
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Bring sugar, margarine, milk, cocoa, and salt to a rapid boil in a saucepan for 1 minute. Remove from heat. Add quick-cooking oats, peanut butter, and vanilla; mix well. Working quickly, drop by teaspoonfuls onto waxed paper and let cool.

■ Know someone who should be featured as Cook of the Week? Nominate them by emailing the Democrat at jace@neshobademocrat.com.

Just Among Friends

By MARIANNE ENOCHS
friends@neshobademocrat.com

Congratulations to Tyler Jordan Greer who completed the requirements for his license to preach the Gospel as he may have the opportunity to exercise his gifts in the work of the ministry.

Greer completed his training at Old Hopewell Baptist Church in Collins and was elated to become a minister. He is also currently working on a second master's degree in Christian Theology at William Carey University.

Representatives of the Citizens Bank presented a check to Choctaw Central High School last Thursday at the C-TEC building.

Stacy Brantley, Mark Taylor, Jackie Hester, and Channing Peebles of the bank made the check presentation.

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben and members of the National Technical Honor Society accepted the donation on behalf of the Choctaw Tribal Schools.

The donation was made possible through the School Stash Debit Cards program in which the Citizens Bank donates a small amount of money to the Choctaw Tribal Schools when an individual uses the Choctaw Tribal Schools debit card in a qualified transaction. The money is donated by the bank at no cost to the debit card holder. It is the bank's way of investing in the children's education. The more purchases made using the debit card, the more money accumulates for the fund. Thank you to the Citizens Bank for investing in the students' future!

She's here! Precious little Addison Kate Beckham was so anxious to meet her parents, Hannah Jones Beckham and Eric Beckham, that she arrived 3 weeks early on Feb. 3! They were overjoyed and beyond grateful to finally meet her.

Her joyful grandparents are Doug and Deanna Prince Jones and Pete and Bobbie Beckham. This precious baby has two sets of great-grandparents. Her maternal great-grandparents are Jimmy and Phyllis Prince. Her paternal great-grandparents are Richard and Joan Jones. Congratulations!

This 10-U All-Star Team was awarded the Sportsmanship Award for the 2023 AAA DYB State Tournament. This award is a very prestigious one which speaks well for the team who represented our city and county. Great job, players and coaches!

Members of the team are Jack Allen Leeper; Jaxson Vaughn; John Parker Cockrell; Levi Dees; Patton Phillips; Kyson Nash; Braylen Davis; Talan Schooler; Luke Howell; MJ Spurlock; Christian Spurlock. Congratulations to each and every member of this team!

A cruise to Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and the Grand Turk was a wonderful trip for Charles and Janice Murphy Griffin recently. They traveled with three other couples who have been friends from high school days in Eupora and frequently travel together. The weather was great and the food was wonderful!

The group enjoyed touring the San Juan National Historic

Site of Castillo San Cristobal and the Grand Turk Lighthouse Weather Station among other sites. Before boarding the cruise ship, they spent a few days in St. Augustine, Fla., exploring the rich history of this old city which was founded in 1565 and is the oldest continuously occupied settlement of European and African-American origin in the United States. It was a great trip!

We have another brand new resident of Neshoba County! A precious little miracle, Ellis Andrew Skinner, made his debut on Feb. 2, weighing 4 pounds and 15 ounces. He is perfectly beautiful! His parents are Dr. Thad and Sara Breland Skinner who welcomed him with absolute joy! He wore his first little outfit on Feb. 9 and looked adorable! Congratulations!!

Yellowstone National Park was shrouded in a deep white blanket of snow everywhere when four friends arrived to tour its magical surroundings. Maudean Sanders, Regina Gipson Hicks, Marsha McDonald, and Tammie Sullivan Weaver visited Yellowstone last month. They said it was a fabulous trip. Old Faithful shot into the air on time through the snow and made a spectacular appearance. What a memorable experience.

Call in your news to Just Among Friends, 601-656-4000, or mail it to the Democrat, P.O. Box 30, Philadelphia, 39350; friends@neshobademocrat.com

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& Martha Thompson



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Great-grandparents: Judy & Billy
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Stella Ovitt
Love,
Paw (Steve Nance)



Briggs Smith
Parents: Cooper & Kinsey Smith
Grandparents: Jason & Marley
Gentry, Terry & Wendy Smith,
L.P. & Angie Bassett, Kathy Gentry
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Easton Wedgeworth
Parents: Caleb & Marlee McKee
Grandparents: Todd & Patti McKee
Jeana Williams
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John Clois Cheatham
Parents: Daniel & Dekota Cheatham
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Vivian Grace Lofton
Grandparents: Andy & Linda Lofton



Layla Livingston
Parents: Matt & Lauren Livingston
Grandparents: Mark & Sherri
Livingston and Greg & Linda McKee



Riley Livingston
Parents: Matt & Lauren Livingston
Grandparents: Mark & Sherri
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Adeline Humphries
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Getting the Message/Rev. Chris Shelton Christ died for sinners

In Revelation 1:1, we are told that the book of Revelation is "the revelation of Jesus Christ." God gave him this revelation, so the first thing we learn is that the source of the book is God and that it is primarily about Christ.

The book is about Christ because he is the Mediator God appointed between God and man. In Revelation, Christ has conquered sin, death, and the devil.

Though the Lord Jesus Christ has conquered and been exalted, there is still great opposition from the world and the devil toward his people. So, the book is given to the saints to give them the vision of Christ exalted above to assure them that, as Martin Luther said, "though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us, we will be still because God has willed his truth to triumph through us."

However cryptic or confusing some of the vision and symbols are in the book of Revelation, it is a revelation we have great need of. The book sheds light and clarity on truths in the Bible and the gospel.

We are shown two destinies; one is the certain judgment of God, the other a new heaven and earth of righteousness prepared for Christ's people.

The prophets anticipating the gospel also become clearer to us. If you read through the book of Revelation and then go to Isaiah 55, you understand how gracious God is in appealing to sinners with such statements as, "Incline your ear and come to me. Hear that your soul may live. Seek the Lord while he may be

found, call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return to the Lord and he will have compassion upon him."

In Revelation 1:3, John speaks of the blessedness of those who hear and keep the words of the book, "for the time is near." The next great event in redemptive history is the return of Christ in glory.

Someone told me of a man who prepared for disaster at the approach of Y2K. The man quit his job, invested in survival supplies, and made all kinds of sacrificial preparations.

But the word of Christ, the revelation of Christ, is for his sheep. He says, "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes." He means spiritually awake, looking for and longing for the day of Christ.

Thomas Manton says the following: "His first coming was obscure; he came in the form of a servant. Now he will come in power and glory. Then Christ occasionally showed his glory, now he will come in the glory of his Father.

The Rev. Chris Shelton is pastor of Union's First Presbyterian Church.

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State basketball tournament underway

By STAFF REPORTS
sports@neshobademocrat.com

The Mississippi High School Athletics Association basketball tournament is underway.

The Philadelphia Tornados played Bruce in first-round action in the 2A tournament on Tuesday after the Democrat went to press. If they win, they move on to play the winner of East Union and Leflore County on Saturday.

The Tornados were the 2A Region 4 District Champions this season.

In 4A action, the District Champion Choctaw Central Warriors were set to face off against North Pontotoc on Tuesday. The winner will move on to play either Itawamba Agricultural or

Caledonia on Saturday.

The Lady Tornados, also the 2A Region 4 District Champions this season, kicked off first round action against MS Palmer on Tuesday. The winner moves on to play East Union on Friday.

The District Champion Lady Warriors absolutely crushed New Albany 87-5 in first-round action on Monday. They play Itawamba Agricultural on Friday in second-round action.

The District Champion Neshoba Central Lady Rockets, ranked top in the state, kick off the 6A tournament on Friday against Center Hill. The winner moves on to play Olive Branch or Vicksburg.



The Tornados celebrate a District Championship.



The Lady Tornados celebrate a District Championship.

Rebelettes face Parklane in first round of tournament

By ROBBIE ROBERTSON
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The Leake girls move to 28-7

on the season and will be the No. 4 seed from the North in the Class 5A Tournament this week at Copiah. Leake will face South

No. 1 Parklane on Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

The Leake boys move to 26-11 on the season and will also be

the No. 4 seed from the North and will take on No. 1 seed Oak Forest on Wednesday at 7:45 p.m.

Leake girls 55, Pillow 53
The Rebelettes avenged two previous losses by taking down the Lady Mustangs on Tuesday in an elimination game at the Class 5A North State Tournament.

The game was tight from the outset as Pillow led 18-17 at the end of the first period and each team scored 17 points in the second period as the Lady Mustangs led 35-34 at the half. Each team scored 17 points in the third period as Pillow led 49-48 going to the fourth. Leake took the fourth period 7-4 and finished with two free throws from Anna Morgan Young to secure the win.

Senior Katye Jones had her best game of the year with 24 points and a season high 16 rebounds. Young had 12 points and four rebounds. Jenna Allen also had eight points while Marleigh Myers had six points and three rebounds. Olivia Rudolph had four points and three

rebounds.

Leake boys 58, Bayou 55 (2 OT)

The Rebels needed two over-times but eventually took a three-point win over the host Colts on Tuesday.

Samuel Prince led Leake with 32 points while Matthew Nowell had six points.

East Rankin girls 51, Leake 30

After splitting games in the regular season, the Lady Patriots handed the Rebelettes their worst loss of the season with a 21-point setback in the tournament semifinals.

Ella Bell led Leake with eight points and five rebounds while Marleigh Myers had six points. Katye Jones had five points and four rebounds while Jenna Allen also had five points. Olivia Rudolph also had seven rebounds.

Heritage boys 54, Leake 19
The Patriots outscored the

Rebels in every period and took a 35-point win in the second round of the Class 5A tournament on Friday.

Matthew Nowell led Leake with five points while Samuel Prince had four points.

Bayou girls 67, Leake 58
The homestanding Lady Colts overcame an early deficit and took a nine-point win over the Rebelettes in the tournament consolation game on Saturday.

Marleigh Myers led Leake with 12 points and seven rebounds while Anna Morgan Young had 12 points. Codi Breedlove had nine points while Caroline Cheatham had six points three steals and three assists. Ella Bell and Jenna Allen also had six points apiece.

Simpson boys 66, Leake 42

The Rebels lost to the Cougars for the fourth time this season, dropping a 24-point decision.

Samuel Prince lead Leake with 16 points while Gage Warren had 12 points.

Yellowjackets primed for postseason

By ROBBIE ROBERTSON
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Despite a homecourt advantage, Union was unable to bring home a division championship last week.

The Union girls started the 4-2A tournament with a 57-41 win over Eupora but then fell 54-46 to Philadelphia in the tournament finals.

The Union boys were upset in the first round, falling 56-55 to Sebastopol in the semifinals. Union then bounced back and beat Eupora 71-51 in the consolation game on Friday to finish third.

The Union girls defeated Bruce 63-22 in first-round action on Monday in a 7 p.m. contest while the Union boys will play at Calhoun City on Tuesday.

Sebastopol boys 56, Union 55

The Bobcats took a one-point

win over the Yellowjackets in the semifinals of the 4-2A Tournament on Thursday.

U'Darrian Hickmon led Union with 20 points while Keon Hutchins had 17 points. Kamarion Rushing also had 10 points for Union.

Union girls 57, Eupora 41

The Lady Yellowjackets started slow but pulled away to take a 16-point win over the Lady Eagles on Tuesday and advance to the 4-2A finals.

Kylee Madden led Union with 13 points, nine assists, three rebounds and three steals while Sydney Coward had 12 points, six rebounds, four assists and three steals. Elle Killen had 11 points and five rebounds while Rymia Craft had eight points and six rebounds. Destiny Campbell had six points and five rebounds while Gracyn Tillman had five points.

Union boys 71, Eupora 51

The Yellowjackets overcame an early deficit and pulled away in the second half to take a 20-point win on Friday.

U'Darrian Hickmon led Union with 27 points while Keon Hutchins had 16 points. Mason Tucker had 10 points while Zie Buckley, Kamini Townsend and Kamarion Rushing each had six points apiece.

Philadelphia girls 54, Union 46

The Lady Yellowjackets fell behind early as the Lady Tornados took an eight-point win to claim the 4-2A championship.

Kylee Madden led Union with 18 points while Rymia Craft had 15 points and Gracyn Tillman added six points.

Leake baseball hits the diamond

By ROBBIE ROBERTSON
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The Leake Academy baseball team kicked off the baseball season last week with a win over for-

mer district foe Winston Academy.

The Rebels banged out 11 hits and built an early lead to take a 10-6 win over the Patriots.

Leake has two games scheduled this week as they will host Class 6A Jackson Academy on Tuesday in the home opener and will then play at Tri-County Academy on Thursday.

Leake 10, Winston 6

The Rebels jumped out to an early lead and held off the Patriots late to take a four-run win over the Patriots on Thursday in the season opener.

Leake scored three in the first and four in the second and led 7-1 after two innings. Leake added two in the third and one in the fourth and led 10-4 after four innings. Winston added two more runs for the final margin.

Leake had 11 hits in the contest as Tyler Winstead was 2-for-4 with two RBIs. Grayson McDonald was 2-for-4 while Reece Atkinson was 2-for-3 with two runs scored. Caden Stovall was 2-for-3 with an RBI. Rhett Stovall singled, scored twice and had three RBIs while Mathan Weaver singled and scored twice. Charlie Brantley also scored twice while Jon Donovan doubled and drove in a run.

Atkinson started on the mound and picked up the win, pitching the first two innings, giving up three runs on two hits and two walks while striking out five.

Rhett Stovall pitched the next three innings and gave up two runs on five hits while striking out two. Donovan pitched the last two innings and gave up two unearned runs on one hit while striking out four.

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