Baseball Team Wins Regional Title - Pg. A8

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Mt. Vernon, Kentucky 40456 - Volume 117 • Number 35 - Ph. (606) 256-2244 - .50 a copy - Thursday, June 12, 2003

Four arrested after car chase; drug charges lodged

Two men and two women were arrested last Friday, following a car chase on U.S. 25.

According to a press release from the Kentucky State Police, State Trooper Coby Smith observed a 1991 Honda passenger driving at an unsafe speed south on U.S. 25 in Rockcastle County about 4 p.m.

Smith gave chase and the vehicle, according to the release, accelerated and drove in a reckless manner until pulling behind the 59 Truck Plaza on U.S. 25 where one of the occupants, Angela D. Miller, 26, of Mt. Vernon, fled the vehicle on foot into a wooded area.

Miller was later apprehended, along with the driver of the vehicle, John D. Riddle, 36, of Mt. Vernon and two other passengers, Joshua D. Broughton, 24 and Dawn Straud, 23, both of Seymour, Indiana.

A search of the vehicle, led to the discovery of components used in the manufacture of methamphetamine. All four were arrested and charged with manufacturing methamphetamine and possession of anhydrous ammonia, not in a proper container.

Miller was additionally charged with resisting arrest and escape, 2nd degree. She was wanted for escaping the Rockcastle County Jail in April of 2003.

Riddle was also charged with fleeing and evading, 1st degree.

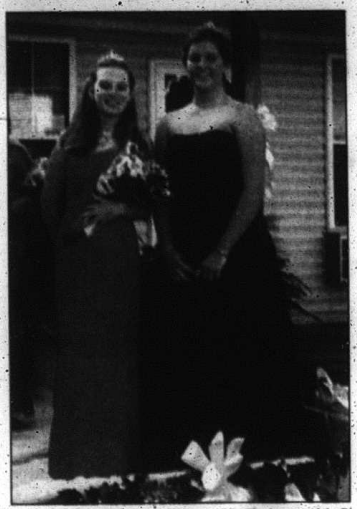
Trooper Coby Smith is continuing the investigation. Assisting in the arrest were deputies from the Rockcastle County Sheriff's Department.

Mt. Vernon man sentenced for growing marijuana plants

A Mt. Vernon man was sentenced in federal court to sixty months in prison for manufacturing in excess of 100 marijuana plants.

Scott Goforth, 32, of Rt. 2, Mt. Vernon, entered a guilty pleas on February 19, 2003 and was sentenced June 5 in United States District Court in London by Judge Karen K. Caldwell. In addition, Goforth's sixty months in prison will be followed by four years supervised release and $100 special assessment.

The case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, Rockcastle County Sheriff's Department and the Mt. Vernon Police Department and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Roger W. West.



Miss Ashley Cottrell was crowned Queen of the Headwaters of the Dix River Festival Saturday by last year's queen, Rachel Childress. Miss Cottrell, who graduated this year from RCHS, is the daughter of Darrell and Brenda Cottrell. She will attend Western Kentucky University in the fall.

In Mt. Vernon

Police Chief Mink resigns

By: Richard Anderkin

The police force in Mt. Vernon has had its problems lately and Monday it got worse.

Police Chief Bill Mink resigned after seventeen years on the force.

Mink had been on the force since 1986 and Chief since 1991.

In his letter of resignation to Mayor Clarice Kirby, Mink stated, "I feel that I have not had the full support from your office to allow me to supervise the police department efficiently during the past five months of your administration."

"In my opinion there is a very hostile work environment at City Hall and I feel that I cannot perform my duties to the best of my abilities under these conditions," he wrote.

At the beginning of Mayor Kirby's term in January, the city had nine police officers, but now have only three full-time officers.

The Mayor said that she had an officer for each shift and that there would, of course, be some overtime for those officers.

Kirby said that officer Barry Adams, who actually works full-time for the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency because of his extensive training in the illegal drug area of crime, will work when possible.

Assistant Chief Eddie Delaney, who is recovering from an accident is scheduled to go back to the doctor June 18th and the Mayor said she was not sure when or if he would actually return to work.

In a written statement concerning Chief Mink, Mayor Kirby stated, "I came in as Mayor full time, elected by the people. I am going to hold all people accountable. All department heads are treated the same, to be accountable."

"I didn't know there was a problem with the Chief. I had nothing noted as a problem. I tried to talk him out of resigning," she said on Wednesday.

In another statement released on Tuesday, the Mayor said she was sorry to see the Chief go.

"I want to assure the citizens and businesses in Mt. Vernon that they will in no way suffer or lack police protection in the near future because of the numbers who have chosen to go their ways. We will utilize the officers we have left and they will be working some overtime but I plan to hire at least two more officers and we are at this time taking applications," the Mayor wrote.

The former Chief said Tuesday that he did not want to "cause a stink", but that he and the mayor apparently didn't remember the same facts about some things, such as officer Chris Jones, who left the force shortly after graduating from the police academy at Eastern Kentucky University.

Cont. to A-12

Legislation was passed three years ago

Ky. High Court hears case on pension increase

Lawyers for the General Assembly's retirement system went before a seemingly skeptical Kentucky Supreme Court last Thursday to defend a pension increase legislators gave themselves three years ago.

On the other side, an assistant attorney general said legislators disregarded their own law by enacting a pension increase without an actuarial analysis.

In questioning both sides, the justices zeroed in on the manner in which the legislature exercised its power and on the very basis of legislative pensions- the use of an "assumed salary" rather than actual salary to determine benefits.

The justices also had much to say, often wryly, about how the pension increase was enacted: a one paragraph amendment, quietly slipped into a bill in the hectic final days of the 2000 General Assembly, with wording that was at best vague.

Holding up a copy of the bill, Justice William Cooper said the legislature had produced a statute "so incomprehensible" that the retirement system's executive director "had to send a letter to the author o this bill, saying, 'What in the world does this mean?'"

Attorney General Ben Chandler sued to block the "secret" pension increase and has made it a prominent part of his campaign for governor.

Lower courts have split on the issue. The Franklin County Circuit Court upheld it but was reversed by the state Court of Appeals, which said changes in pension laws for public employees must be accompanied by an actuarial analysis before either house or the General Assembly can consider it.

The analysis must include at least a ten year projection of what the change will cost. No analysis was done for the pension increase, which was the handwork of Republican state Sen. Albert Robinson of London, who represented Rockcastle County at the time.

James Dodrill, an attorney for the Judicial Form Retirement System, which covers legislators and judges, argued that a statute can only be struck down because it violates the constitution, not because it conflicts with another statute. In such cases, the more recent statute takes precedence, said Dodrill, of Richmond.

"It may not be smart. It may not make sense," Dodrill said. But "if people don't like it, they act within the political context and make changes."

On the other side, Assistant Attorney General Brent Irvin said it was absurd to think the General Assembly "was free to ignore" its own law requiring actuarial studies, which are for the protection of public employees.

Legislators do not recieve an annual salary. They are paid for each day spent on legislative work, increased each year for inflation. For most, the pay this year is $166.34 per day.

Pensions are based on an "assumed salary," which has been $27,500 since the retirement system was created. The effect of Robinson's amendment was to raise it to $46,000, coupled with regular cost-of-living increases.

Robinson has frequently complained about news coverage of the raise and his role in it. He insisted it would cost taxpayers nothing extra because the retirement system already had the money- an assertion confirmed in court last Thursday by the retirement system's general counsel, Eric Wampler.

When the system was set up, it was assumed that legislators would get annual pay raises of about 5 percent, Wampler said. The legislature appropriated money for the retirement fund accordingly. However, annual raises didn't occur. As a result, the ustem has assets for exceeding liabilities, Wampler said.

But Justice Donald Wintersheimer said the assumption "is not valid because the salaries themselves have never been increased."

"It's based on something that has not been formally, legally adopted by the General Assembly," Wintersheimer said.

The pension increase has been delayed pending the outcome of the lawsuit. Chief Justice Joseph E. Lambert is not taking part in the case because he is chairman of the Judicial Form Retirement System board.

Lambert is a former Rockcastle County attorney who still resides in the county.

Child Passenger Safety Check was a success

37 children in our county are riding safer today than they were last week, according to the Rockcastle County Health Department.

The department held a Child Passenger Safety Check, during which car seats were checked and a number of new seats were given out.

Due to the limited number of seats, the health department was unable to give everyone who came in a new seat.

However, another event is planned in the fall and it is hoped that more seats will be available for that event.

The health department also wanted to give a special thanks to David Eaton for the use of his block building to conduct the check.

Will also build restrooms for Sr. League Field

Court approves purchase of six cars for Sheriff's Department

After July 1st, the Rockcastle County Sheriff's Department will get a major upgrade in their vehicles.

The Rockcastle County Fiscal Court Tuesday approved the purchase of six surplus vehicles from the state -- two 1998 models and four 2000 models. Deputy Nathaniel Price told the court that he had managed to get the price down to $22,250 from the original asking price of $32,000 by the state and, Price told the court, the cars already have the cages installed which will cut down on the cost of getting the cars ready for use.

Price also said the Sheriff's Department have several departments already interested in the vehicles which these cars will replace and their sale should net at least $14,700 of the $22,250 to buy the newer vehicles.

The only snag the court encountered was that, since it is June and the last month of the 2002-03 fiscal year, the General Fund only had $34,069 to make it through this month, the purchase would have to be put off until the 2003-04 funds begin to arrive July 1.

The problem was taken care of by Judge Buzz Carloftis calling Harold Markey, fleet manager for the surplus vehicles and getting his assurance that the cars would be held for them until after July 1st.

The court also authorized the purchase of a vehicle to be used by a local officer working with a federal drug enforcement task force.

The court also approved the construction of restroom facilities at the county-owned senior league ballpark at the Brodhead Fairgrounds. Portable restrooms are currently being used.

The estimated cost of $10,000 includes using a septic tank system for the restroom but the magistrates directed Gene Cromer, county employee overseeing the project, to explore possibly tying into Brodhead sewer system. Brodhead's city council has agreed to contribute $2,000 of the cost.

During the discussion of the restroom at the senior league field, Judge Carloftis brought up the fact that there are no softball facilities for girls in the county.

Carloftis said while he and other were at the site of the senior league field discussing the restrooms, he was approached by a young girl who asked why thee was no facility for softball, saying that girls in the county had to go to Crab Orchard or Lancaster to play.

Uttering a rare expletive, Carloftis bluntly told the court it was a "damn shame," that this was the case and said he thought the four county governments (the three cities and the county) needed to work together, pool their (meager) resources to provide some type of program for all young people in the county.

"None of us can do it alone," Carloftis said, "but working together we should be able to dress our parks up, hire a director, etc."

Magistrate Billy McKinney pointed out that a Parks and Recreation Department was needed in order to qualify for grants.

Carloftis told the court that he would be asking the mayors of the three cities in the county to participate in working on this project.

The court also discussed a 50-50 matching grant which is available from the Department of Agriculture for removal and disposal of dead animals. Carloftis told the court that the specifics had not been made known

Cont. to A-12

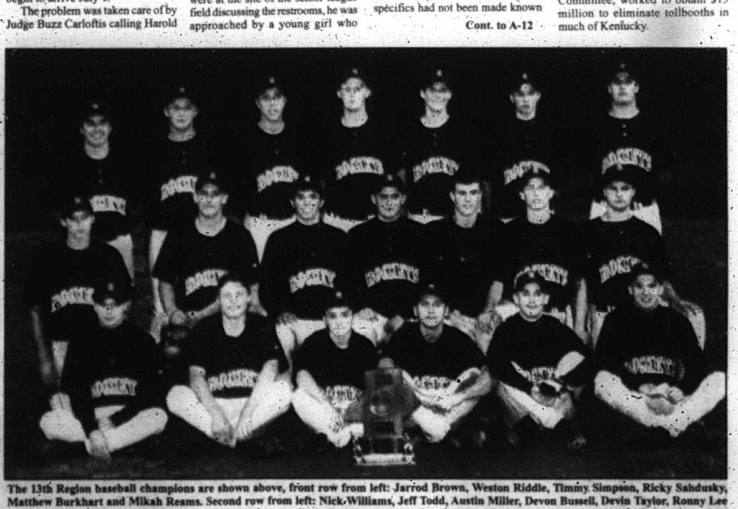
Tollbooths going down

Tollbooths on the Daniel Boone Parkway began disappearing Monday.

U.S. Representative Harold Rogers of Somerset who represents Kentucky's 5th district, which includes Rockcastle County, climbed into a bulldozer at 10 a.m. and knocked down the first tollbooth at the London Toll Plaza on the Daniel Boone Parkway.

He was later joined by Kentucky Transportation Secretary James C. Codell.

Earlier this year, Rogers who is the powerful chairman of the House of Representative's Transportation Committee, worked to obtain $13 million to eliminate tollbooths in much of Kenlucky.



The 13th Region baseball champions are shown above, front row from left: Jarrod Brown, Weston Riddle, Timmy Simpson, Ricky Sahdusky, Matthew Burkhart and Mikah Reams. Second row from left: Nick Williams, Jeff Todd, Austin Miller, Devon Bussell, Devin Taylor, Ronny Lee McClure and Phillip Boreing. Back row from left: Aaron Cash, Ben Graves, Aaron Anderkin, Adam Hensley, Jacob Penewit, Colby Brown and Stephen Boreing. The Rockets play in Corbin on Thursday at 7:30 against Hazard. If the Rockets are able to win the three game series they will advance to the final eight in the state which will be played at Applebee's Park in Lexington.