Falcon Band
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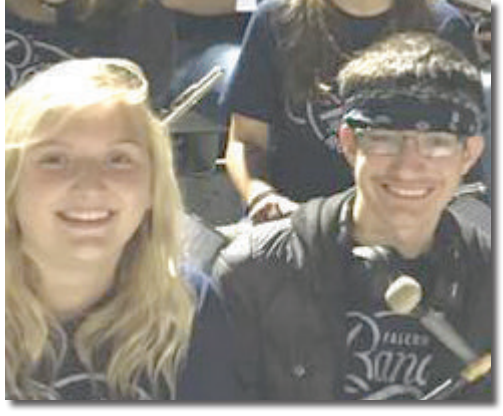

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MONROE COUNTY
THE CITIZEN

Year 27, Number 42 | A member of the Jobe Publishing Inc. Newspaper Network | Wednesday, October 18, 2017 | SINGLE COPY - 50¢

Help wanted:

Job fair draws some, but still face labor shortage

JOB FAIR visitors considered the possibilities of Stephens Manufacturing.

By **ANNE PYBURN CRAIG**
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Sixty-one people, including seniors from Monroe County High School, met with five local employers at the first-ever Job Fair sponsored by the Monroe County Chamber of Commerce and the Cooperative Extension, held at the Extension of-

See **JOB FAIR** continued on page **2**

Monroe County Schools

Celebrating success

By **ANNE PYBURN CRAIG**
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Last winter, Monroe County Junior Beta Club members earned their way to the National Beta Club convention in Orlando, Florida at Disney World in June with a string of impressive wins at the state level. Last Thursday evening at the school board meeting, triumphant Betas who'd conquered Florida were awarded certificates and rounds of applause, having proven that even at the national level among thousands of their peers, these young Monroe Countians stood out.

Tompkinsville and Gamaliel students repeated their state level triumph in the Living Literature competition, placing first and second. Gamaliel's team placed second in Technology, third for their banner and came in in the top 10 for Robotics, and Gamaliel student Jack Holland placed third in the national Social Studies competition. Tompkinsville's Songfest team was in the national Top 10. Monroe County Middle School placed first in the nation in Technology, and student Maylee Collins placed fourth in Quilting.

"Due to a lot of hard work and the generosity of our sponsors, the kids got to go to Disney World," said instructional superintendent Christie Biggerstaff before reading the list of winners.

"Saying 'thank you' seems so inadequate," organizer Andrea Starnes told the board. "These are our babies! For many, it was their first time out of Kentucky. We made lifetime memories. Thank you, thank you."

See **SCHOOL BOARD** continued on page **5**

The bullying plague

Intimidation, humiliation, ridicule

By **ANNE PYBURN CRAIG**
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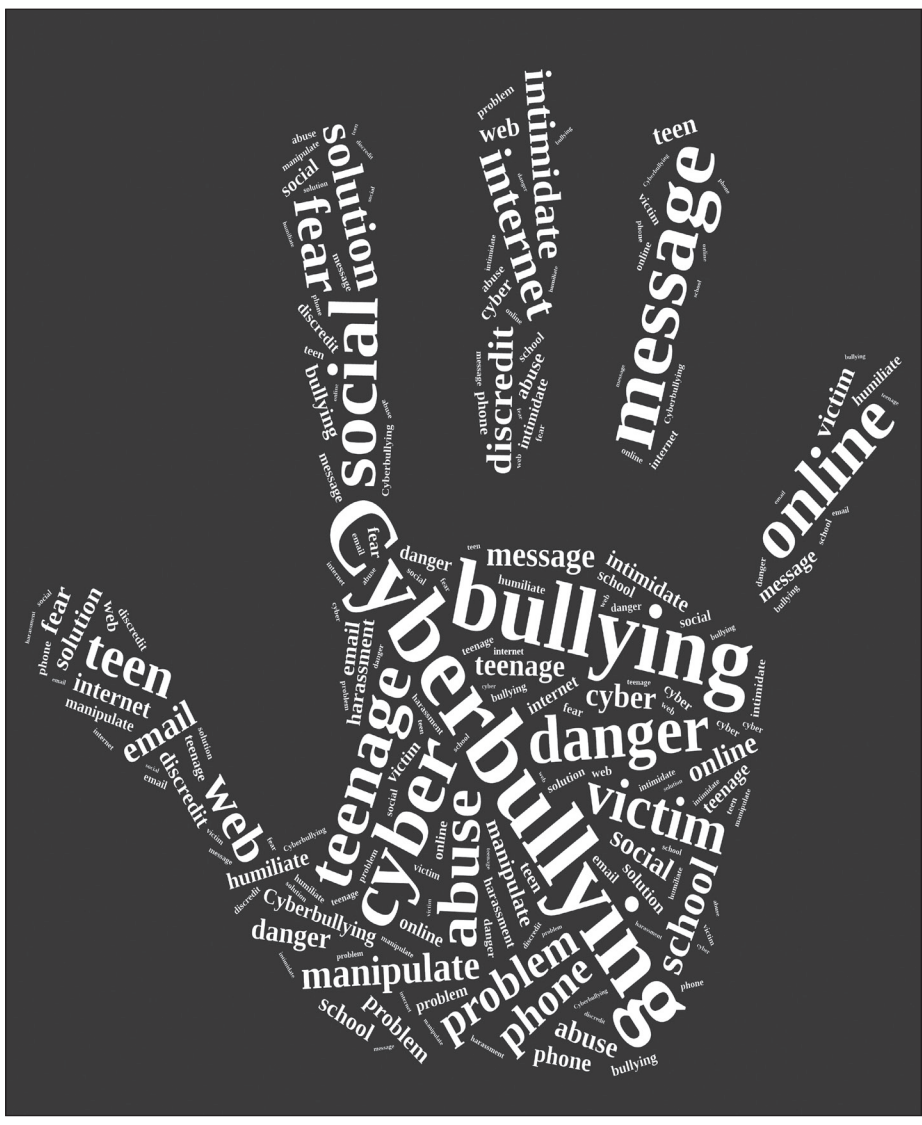
"He just turned nine in August," says Mary, a mom of two in a school district in the Jobe Publishing coverage area. (Names in this story have been changed.) "When the new school year started he was coming home saying how much he loved third grade, loved his teachers. The first couple of weeks, he was making straight 100's."

Then, as if a light had gone out, everything changed. "Joe" started bringing home failing grades and acting out wildly. "I started getting calls from the teachers," Mary says. "I couldn't get him to do anything all of a sudden. And he started saying that he hated school, didn't want to go."

Despite his mom's questions, Joe couldn't seem to explain himself. A widow and working mom, Mary was at her wit's end. Then, on Thursday morning the week before fall

See **BULLYING** continued on page **5**



Jobe Publishing explores the plague of bullying in area schools and how education officials address the issue.

Bullying

How area schools respond

By **ANNE PYBURN CRAIG**
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It used to be considered a rite of passage. Kids will be kids, and kids can be cruel. But when the Center for Disease Control began to study bullying, they found hard evidence for what teachers, parents and kids have long known to be true: Bullying is unhealthy. It hurts victims, hurts bullies, and can transform experiences that should be safe into utter misery.

Data from the 2012-2013 school year compiled by the Kentucky Department of Education revealed 15,520 incidents of bullying, about one every four minutes. About one in five kids reported having been bullied on school property; for special needs kids, the number shoots up to three in five. This data and the CDC findings drove the creation of a Youth Bullying Prevention Task Force that convened in 2014-2015, seeking to define the problem and develop prevention strategies that could be adopted statewide. School districts throughout South Central Kentucky have been striving to respond, establishing better reporting systems and seeking to educate staff and students about prevention and response.

This week, October 15-21, has been proclaimed "Kentucky Safe Schools Week," an awareness campaign that urges students and staff alike to "Get Involved and Get It Solved." The formal definition of bullying adopted by the task force is "unwanted verbal, physical, or social behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time and can happen anywhere."

Bullying isn't just a kid problem. It can happen in a workplace, in a marriage, in government; some people never seem to outgrow whatever dark urge compels them to unhealthy attempts at dominating others.

It is wildly common around puberty, when young people with rapidly changing bodies and minds seem driven to establish some sort of pecking order. According to bullying.gov, a large study of middle schoolers found many had experienced various forms of bullying, such as

- name calling (44.2 %);
- teasing (43.3 %);
- spreading rumors or lies (36.3%);
- pushing or shoving (32.4%);
- hitting, slapping, or kicking (29.2%);
- leaving out (28.5%);
- threatening (27.4%);
- stealing belongings (27.3%);
- sexual comments or gestures (23.7%);

See **RESPOND** continued on page **6**

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