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stadiums more than 100 times.”

Watching as the images came rolling in on the news that weekend, John McGinnis, a Grayson County native, found himself unable to sleep from the burden on his heart.

“I was watching it on the news like everyone else. I laid down and I tried to sleep and when stuff bothers you, you pray about it. I prayed about it, and I felt that God told me to go,” said McGinnis.

From the moment McGinnis realized what he needed to do, to his wife confirming that if that if what he felt then he needed to go, it was not long before he was on the road to start his 18-hour trip. “I left about 15 minutes after. I packed about three changes of clothes, hooked the boat up and left.”

Not yet into Houston, McGinnis would sight his first rescue, a car that had lost control on the road and found itself in the water. Saving the man, woman, and child inside the car was confirmation that he was where he was supposed to be.

“I was going down I-45 in Houston and I started seeing water on the sides. I saw a car off the side of the interstate with a hand hanging out of,” recounted McGinnis of his first rescue. “That kind of lit my fire a little bit.”

To get into Houston he had to veer from I-45, where cops were trying to divert those trying to get into the city, and take a back way in until he found a spot where he could enter at.

A former professional fisherman for Hardee’s and Fishing League Worldwide champion, he is no stranger to maneuvering unfamiliar waters, having fished from the west coast to the east and everywhere in between, but not even that could fully prepare him for the journey that lay ahead. What appears on the news as a flood, does not fully capture the dangers that lie in the water, starting with the current.

“The water was running crazy. You had to go faster than the water to control the boat. I’m running 45-50 mph and looking for people too. You don’t know where you’re at, plus the water is going from two feet to twenty feet. I was hitting cars, stop signs. And when you hit them, you had to get out, and sometimes the current would sweep you. It was crazy,” said McGinnis. “I’ve never been in a current this strong. I’ve been from one end of this country to the other and never seen anything like this.”

Other rescuers that he would work with who had brought flat bottom boats would have to turn back as the currents proved too strong.

“Cops were discouraging us from being there, because they were having to rescue the rescuers,” said McGinnis.

Not only was the current to be contended with, but the weather. Coming into Houston McGinnis had heard on local radio that those in need of rescue were to hang sheets from the roof, but on his first day out to find those in need, tornado warnings rang out all across the city, forcing families back inside to their attics.

“The first day I was down there, there were tornado warnings. So, the people couldn’t be on the roofs, they were in the attic, but then they couldn’t come back down,” he recalled.

Moving at high speeds in unfamiliar territory McGinnis spoke of the screams that rang through the air of those seeking someone to help. “You heard so many screams from different people you didn’t really know where they were coming from.”

As people were forced inside the screams became muffled, which led McGinnis to beating on roofs until finding a response. “If the voices were muffled I started beating on roofs and that’s how I found a lot of people.”

There would remain voices that couldn’t be located, a fact that haunted McGinnis in his work.

While the current and the tumultuous weather were enough to steer one off course, nature was not done presenting obstacles in weather alone.

“There were a lot of snakes, when the water came up, they came up and started moving towards the houses to get out of the water. Lots of alligators, and fire ants, the fire ants would float. It was horrible,” said McGinnis.

Despite the alligators, snakes, fire ants, currents, and weather, the people continued to push McGinnis onward.

“The people were so good to me,” he said. “There was nothing. Plastic wouldn’t work, there was no gas station, no place to sleep, no food, absolutely nothing. There were people that saw that on TV, an older woman and her daughter, and that next night when curfew kicked in, they met me at the place where I put in with a big thing of food they had fixed for me.”

Not only the people, but for McGinnis, a proclaimed evangelist, God continued to reinforce for him that he was serving a purpose. “Sometimes when God tells us something, we question God, was that God or was that just me. We believe everything the devil says, but we question God. My first load of people had two church pastors that had been praying as long as I had this burden.”

With no resources left in Houston, one problem presented itself quickly- gas. For many the lack of gas would keep them from continuing their rescue mission, but for a country boy, where there is a will there’s a way.

“Country people have country ways,” said McGinnis who used a hose he had with him to continue on. “I was borrowing gas out of old cars. They asked what are you doing for gas, I said there are old cars everywhere, what do you think I’m doing for gas.”

Fighting off all the obstacles, McGinnis would leave Houston, Texas after six days of rescuing people with hundreds of lives saved.

But his mission is not yet over. The people of Houston have yet to recover from the devastating rainfall, and it is likely to takes months and years for many to recover. For McGinnis, the burden continues with increased fervor as the 18-hour distance has become much shorter in heart.

The very people who were told to remain through the storm, only to wake up to a river running through their homes and no insurance to cover the damage are still in great need of help, and McGinnis has every intention to return to provide the very help they need now.

“I’m going back. I held their babies, their wives, I helped their husbands. These people are not somewhere far off in Texas, they’re part of me. I may not be able to help but two, 10, or 20 families, but whatever I can help, I’m going to do,” he said.

Now he looks for others to become involved in his work as well, with the help of his publisher, Ben Probus. A Go Fund Me page has been set up where donations can be made, The Kentucky Fisherman TX Flood Fund.

“Our motto in KY is ‘United we stand, divided we fall,’ if we would pull as one we could get something done. I have a construction company and have the ability to rebuild these houses, but I can’t buy all the materials myself. If I don’t get the materials here I won’t get it there,” said McGinnis of the need for funds.

Since appearing on the news in Houston, McGinnis has been praised by Governor Matt Bevin, Senators Rand Paul and Ted Cruz, Coach John Calipari, and more. But for him, the glory returns to God, “I’m just proud God helped me to get one,” he reiterated.

He remains in contact today with the lives that he touched, and was in return changed by as well. “I’m in contact with a lot of these people and I’m keeping up with the Facebook pages. These people are sleeping in their yard and they think everyone has forgotten about them. They’re sleeping in their yards with rattlesnakes, alligators, and mosquitos, at best, in tents if they’re lucky to have one. No one had insurance. They’re just waiting on people to help.”

“These people are real people. They love God. They are praying right now, someone has to be the one to answer that prayer. We’re taught we’re the hands of God, and then we expect someone else to do it,” said McGinnis.

For more information visit gofundme.com/the-Kentucky-fishermantx-flood-fund and liking Mr. Kentucky’s page on Facebook or call John McGinnis at 270-823-7764. Donations can also be sent to P.O. Box 427, Clarkson, KY 42726.

Hire Memorial Lecture to explore

Quilt-making in Monroe County

Staff Report

Sandy Staebell, an Associate Professor in Library Special Collections at Western Kentucky University, will speak on the topic of “Heritage, Tradition and Craft: Quilt-making in Monroe County” at the upcoming meeting of the Monroe County Historical Society.

Exploring the rich legacy of this traditional craft in Monroe County with a particular emphasis on quilts dating from the 20th century, Staebell’s talk is based on interviews she conducted last August with several area quilters and also features several Monroe County quilts in the collection of the Kentucky Museum at Western Kentucky University. When asked about the quilts she saw, Staebell remarked, “What really impressed me was the sense of tradition and legacy that was apparent in all the quilts I saw during my visit to Monroe County. Quilters from this area bring a high degree of skill to the craft, and a connecting thread runs through the quilters of the past and the quilters of today.”

This presentation will start at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 21st, and is sponsored by the Osby Lee Hire and Lillian K. Garrison Hire Memorial Lecture at Western Kentucky University – Department of Library Special Collections. It is open to the public, and attendees are invited to bring a quilt or two of their own to share with the audience at the end of the program.



THE "PIECE MAKERS" QUILT CLUB celebrated Kentucky Extension Homemakers Week with a window display on Main Street in the window of Berry Jo's Hair Fashions.

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to 1 p.m. at the Economic Development Center, 202 N. Magnolia St.

TOMPKINSVILLE CITY COMMISSION

Regular meeting Thursday, October 26 from 6 to 8 p.m at the Economic Development Center, 202 N. Magnolia Street.

FALL-O-WEEN

Halloween family fun for all on Third Street on Saturday, October 28

ZOMBIE WALK AND NERF WAR

The Monroe County Tourism Commission will host its annual Zombie Walk on Saturday October 28th. Registration will begin at 4:00pm CST in the parking lot of the Monroe County Extension Office (1194 Columbia Ave.). The walk will begin at 4:30. Prizes will be awarded in various age groups. Participating youth must be accompanied by an adult. Then at 6:16pm, local author, Bradley Botts, will host a Zombie Nerf War as a fundraiser for “Children without Christmas”. The Zombie Nerf War will be held at the Monroe County Fairgrounds. Zombies and civilians needed. Prizes will be awarded. Admission will be one toy (\$5.00 or greater value) per person. For additional information call Patti at 270-487-1314.

CARD SHOWER FOR MAY VAN PETTET

May Van will celebrate her 86th birthday on Saturday,

October 28. Send cards to her at 2793 Center Point Rd., Tompkinsville, KY 42167.

QUILTING CHALLENGE

Guidelines for the 2018 Celebration of Quilts & Quilting Challenges have been released! You may pick up a copy at Robertson’s Decorating or obtain a digital copy by contacting Sheila at sheila.rush@ky.gov

NEW NUMBER FOR VA VAN RIDES

Veterans needing to reserve a seat on the DAV van traveling to the VA Medical Center in Louisville have a number to call: 502-780-3245. There is no long-distance call charge if using a cell phone; there will be a charge if calling from a landline phone.

ADDICTION SCREENINGS

Narconon can help you take steps to overcome addiction in your family. If your loved one is struggling with drug abuse of any kind, now is the time to get them the help they need. Call today for free screenings or referrals. 1- 800-431-1754.

WILLIAM B. HARLAN MEMORIAL LIBRARY

offers bookmobile service to any patrons within the county who are physically unable to visit the library. The bookmobile runs on a 2-week schedule. If you are interested in becoming a bookmobile patron, please call the library at 270-487-5301.

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Thanksgiving 1932. Only two years later, Leslie Cheek died at age 61.

The Cheeks and the arts

Cheekwood passed to Leslie and Mabel’s daughter, Huldah Cheek Sharp who resided in the mansion with her husband, Walter, until the 1950s. It was at that time Cheekwood became an art museum and botanical garden that continues to delight visitors.

Cheekwood is not the only contribution of the family to the world of art. Leslie and Mabel’s son, Leslie Cheek Jr., studied art at Harvard and architecture at Yale and Columbia. After serving as head of the Fine Arts Department at the College of William and Mary, he worked as director of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts which he transformed from a small gallery to a nationally recognized cultural center.

Realizing that rural areas of Virginia had limited access to fine art, Leslie Cheek Jr., designed the Artmobile to take exhibitions of the museum’s collection to the public. He later established the Virginia Museum Theatre to integrate the exhibition galleries with film, dance, and music.