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Standard

CUMBERLAND CAVERNS LIVE

New tune



Concerts return to Cumberland Caverns for the first time in 2018 next weekend with the debut of a new series called Cumberland Caverns Live. Pictured is the natural beauty of the Volcano Room during a Widespread Panic show in 2014.

Concert series asks for funding as 2018 season kicks off Saturday



- FEB. 3
- Front Country, pictured above, and John Stickly Trio
- FEB. 25
- Travis Meadows and Chris Knight
- MARCH 10
- Mother's Finest

BY **LISA HOBBS**  
Reporter for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Cumberland Caverns Live is seeking an energetic sum of money from McMinnville officials for efforts to return music to Cumberland Caverns.

RCS Production president Stephen Moore requested underwriting of \$48,000 from the city to boost a partnership between RCS and Cumberland Caverns to offer a new concert series due to Bluegrass Underground's relocation.

RCS Production works with hundreds of entertainers from big names like Taylor Swift and Alan Jackson all the way down to up-and-coming musicians.

"We are a talent acquisition and talent services company out of Atlanta, Ga.," said Moore. "We've been in business since 1982. We have traditional venues, like small amphitheaters and a lot of small and medium sized festivals that we work with, but also we are pretty well known for delivering concerts to very unique venues."

RCS has six concerts lined up thus far at Cumberland Caverns. The new series kicks off Feb. 3 with Front Country and the Jon Stickley Trio.

Other artists already announced include Chris Knight and Travis Meadows on Feb. 25; Mother's Finest on March 10; Shawn Mullins on March 17; The Secret Sisters and Lilly Hiatt on April 14; and High Valley on May 12.

According to Cumberland Caverns marketing director Kelly Roberts, visitors to Cumberland Caverns soared as people were drawn to the cave by the attention generated by Bluegrass Underground.

"For eight of the last 10 years, we averaged a little over 34,000 visitors a year combined," said Roberts. "In 2016, we broke that 30,000-plus glass ceiling and we hit over 52,000 people coming to the cave from all 50 states and 19 different countries. In 2017, it proved to be another record-breaking year with over 56,000 people. In 2018, we are going to see about 60,000 people."

Continued on 3A

SCHOOL VIOLENCE



A rural Kentucky town just across the Tennessee line continues to mourn after 15-year-olds Preston Ryan Cope and Bailey Nicole Holt were killed outside their high school Tuesday. See story **page 6A**

Gun scare unfounded, sheriff says

WCMS student denies making threat to shoot

BY **DUANE SHERRILL**  
Reporter for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Rumors that a Warren County Middle School student was planning to bring a gun to school Friday proved to be just rumors, although it did spark a notification from the school to parents assuring them the issue had been addressed.

"There was nothing to it," said Sheriff Jackie Matheny of the rumor that swept through WCMS on Thursday and Friday.

The sheriff said once law enforcement was notified of the potential gun threat, officers were dispatched to the boy's home where he was questioned Thursday night. The boy reportedly told another student he was going to bring a gun to school and

shoot him.

"He denied saying it and there's no evidence to prove he did," Matheny said, noting the home where the boy lives was checked. "He had no access to a firearm."

Matheny noted similar rumors have swept through the school system in recent years, many coming on the heels of actual school shootings like the one in Marshall County, Ky., on Tuesday that left two students dead, several injured, and a community to mourn.

"We get rumors about things like this all the time and thank God they haven't been true," said Matheny, who stressed the public should always report potential threats to authorities.

In a post on the internet, WCMS principal Gerald Tidwell assured parents the matter was checked out to ensure there was no threat to students.

"Please rest assured that the matter has been properly handled and your child is safe at WCMS," Tidwell said.



MATHENY

Man reportedly lies about being raped by burglars

BY **DUANE SHERRILL**  
Reporter for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

A man who claimed he was robbed and sexually assaulted by bandits has been charged with lying to police after they found his story was fabricated.

The suspect, Kenneth D. Goodson, 44, is charged with filing a false report and will face hearing March 13.

Goodson contacted police and summoned them to Saint Thomas River Park Hospital where he was waiting. He then told them a story about being victimized by robbers.

"He stated that earlier in the morning a couple of unknown

male individuals broke into his home and demanded that he give them his medications," said McMinnville policeman Justin Colwell, adding Goodson said he refused their demand. "He stated that when he refused, he was sexually assaulted by one of the males."

Police launched an investigation but soon realized things did not add up. Faced with further questions, Goodson reportedly admitted he had made the story.

"He stated that the sexual assault, as well as the burglary, did not happen," Colwell said.

It is not known if Goodson made up the story to get more drugs or if he had other motives.

Mouth-watering pizza



Two local schools are now offering Smart Mouth pizza during lunch. WCMS students Alexis Baltimore, left, and Savana White enjoy this tasty development. For story, see page 3A.

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