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WEDNESDAY

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Fire claims Melton's life

Blaze destroys Oak Street house

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

A woman who was pulled from a burning home Monday morning and given CPR by emergency responders succumbed to her injuries later that day.

Nancy Jean Cook Melton, 62, died Monday afternoon at Vanderbilt Medical Center after she was airlifted there from Saint Thomas River Park Hospital.

The fire erupted at her home at 120 Oak Street in McMinnville. Firefighters battled smoke and flames to pull her from a second-floor room.

"The guys got in there real quick, found her, and got her out. She had a faint pulse," said McMinnville Fire Chief Kendall Mayfield. "They started doing CPR on her, and she started coming back around."

According to Mayfield, the fire originated

on the second floor. Firefighters Adam Whitman and Toby Pearsall made it in the home and found Melton. They rushed her outside to emergency responders who administered CPR.

After the flames erupted, Melton reportedly rushed downstairs to get a pot of water to throw on the fire. She ran upstairs with the water, but was overtaken by smoke.

"Her husband was downstairs," Mayfield said. "He tried to get to her, but couldn't make it up the stairs because of smoke."

The exact cause of the fire is unknown. However, Melton was a smoker and fire officials say that's one theory as to what could have caused the fire.

Working to save Melton's life with CPR were Warren County EMT supervisor Daniel Scruggs, paramedic David Lockhart, EMT Ben Knox, and firefighter Marty White, who is a McMinnville Fire Department engineer.



Lisa Hobbs photos

McMinnville Fire Department personnel use a ladder truck to battle a blaze at 120 Oak Street on Monday morning. Firefighters were able to pull Nancy Melton, 62, from the home and perform CPR. It initially appeared efforts to save her life were successful, but she died later Monday at Vanderbilt Medical Center.

Roy Davis, Cumberland Caverns founder, dies

The man who turned a remote cave off a gravel road into an international tourist attraction passed away Saturday. Cumberland Caverns founder Roy Davis has died at age 84.

Mr. Davis devoted more than 55 years to enhancing and commercializing Cumberland Caverns. The underground attraction is credited with bringing more than 1 million people to Warren County since it opened in 1956.

An Indiana native, Mr. Davis went to David Lipscomb University in Nashville before finding his way to Warren County. His work at Cumberland Caverns began in the early 1950s and the cave would



DAVIS

remain dear to his heart the rest of his life.

"He fell in love with this one cave in particular and decided to make Warren County his home," said longtime friend and former Cumberland Caverns tour guide Ed Yarbrough. "He and Tank Gorin turned a virtually unknown cave from literally a hole in the ground to a major tourist attraction. Their dream, which almost everyone called them crazy for having in the beginning, has welcomed guests from all 50 states and roughly 19 plus countries."

Continued on **8A**

County EMS quiet on crash

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

Mum's the word from Warren County EMS regarding an interstate crash that left one man critically injured Saturday morning in Nashville.

EMS director Preston Denney has been instructed to remain silent about the accident, even to Warren County commissioners.

"Preston, can you give us some kind of an update on the situation that happened Saturday morning?" asked Commissioner Teddy Boyd during a Safety Committee meeting Monday.

Denney stated, "I was told today that pretty much any discussion from this point on needs to come from County

Executive Herschel Wells or the county attorney."

According to a report from Metro Nashville Police, Cornelius Hurt, 29, of Nashville was critically injured when the Warren County ambulance struck his Nissan Altima, which was stopped on the shoulder from a wreck moments earlier.

While mostly on the shoulder, the Altima was said to be slightly in one lane of travel. The ambulance was driven by Henry Dekort, 57, with paramedic Savannah Cleek, 23, a passenger.

While details of the incident are being kept under wraps, the condition of the county ambulance is not. Denney said it could be a total loss.

Continued on **6A**

Circuit Court Clerk candidates make their cases

BY **JAMES CLARK**
Editor for the Southern Standard
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Technology was a hot topic when the three Democratic candidates for Circuit Court Clerk spoke at a political forum sponsored by Southern Standard and WCPI.

Casi Powell Cantrell, Duane Sherrill and Melanie Milstead are fighting for the Democratic nomination and will be on the ballot May 1. Early

voting begins next Wednesday, April 11.

All three candidates touted the familiarity they've gained working with the Circuit Court Clerk's office in their professional careers.

Sherrill spent 28 years at the newspaper and would visit the clerk's office several times a week to gather information for stories. Milstead has spent almost 14 years in the legal field and works with the clerk's office in her job



MILSTEAD



SHERRILL



POWELL

with the District Attorney's office. Cantrell is office manager for the law firm Galligan and

Newman and regularly files cases with the clerk's office.

Cantrell said she began

working for Galligan and Newman at age 19 as the receptionist. After a couple years, she became a legal secretary and is now office manager.

"We know the technology is outdated," said Cantrell in speaking about the clerk's office. "We know we need email rather than fax. It would save money. If you email, it's a push of a button. They've been scanning documents at the clerk's office since 2014. It's a free service. We

should use it. Credit cards are an absolute must. Most other clerk's offices you can pay online. You can pay traffic citations online."

Sherrill said a move to more electronic files would save money, while also providing more convenient access to information. Instead of people having to make trips to the clerk's office, they could go online.

Continued on **2A**

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