



SPORTS
Perkins leaves WCHS with school record **1B**



BUSINESS
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Standard



WCHS senior Kolton Hutchins shows his enthusiasm Friday night during graduation at Nunley Stadium. Lisa Hobbs photos

Triumphant night

WCHS graduates 405

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

High school careers that included bed bugs and a bomb threat came to an explosive end Friday night at Nunley Stadium when 405 seniors walked the stage to become WCHS graduates.

It was a ceremony highlighted by singing, guitar playing, and words of wisdom.

In her valedictorian speech, Courtney Curtis promised that adventure awaits every one of the graduates. She said leaving high school should not be a time to mourn, but a time to count your blessings.

"Instead of feeling sorrow, be grateful for everyone who has shaped you into the person you are now," said Curtis.

Salutatorian Abigail Mathis reminded her classmates no one will be thinking about their high school grades 10 years from now. The memories that will linger, she said, will be the friendships that were made.

In a shared speech, class president Bethany



Decorating caps was popular for the 2018 graduating class. While some had inspirational saying for the future, others contained students' initials.

Eye and student body president Allison Cripps challenged graduates to not let high school be the best years of their lives.

Continued on 3A



Emergency responders tend to motorcycle rider Bruce Wheatley, 71, after a crash at the intersection of Beersheba Highway and Shellsford Road on Saturday morning. James Clark photo

Motorcycle rider struck by pickup

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

A 71-year-old motorcycle rider was airlifted Saturday morning after he reportedly pulled into the path of an oncoming pickup and was sent flying about 30 feet.

Birmingham, Ala., resident Bruce Wheatley was airlifted to Erlanger Medical Center in Chattanooga. He was part of a group of three motorcycle riders from Birmingham who are in the area for a weekend motorcycle rally in Dunlap.

The accident took place around 10:30 a.m. at the intersection of Beersheba Highway and Shellsford Road by Forest Nursery. According to eyewitness reports, the group of three motorcycles stopped at Shellsford Road, then proceeded to turn left onto Beersheba Highway heading toward Irving College.

The first two motorcycles made the turn successfully, but Wheatley's motorcycle pulled into the path of a Chevrolet Z71 pickup driven by Clint Grissom,

19. The pickup was heading toward McMinnville.

The two vehicles collided in the middle of the intersection with Wheatley and his motorcycle getting knocked about 30 feet onto a nearby lawn. Motorists who saw the accident unfold rushed to Wheatley's aid, found him unconscious on the grass, and feared he might be dead. When he regained consciousness he began asking what happened.

Eyewitnesses say Wheatley is lucky to be alive and credit the slow speed of the pickup as the reason why. The pickup was only estimated to be traveling 30 to 35 mph on the two-lane highway.

It is not known why Wheatley pulled into the path of the pickup. Onlookers speculate he may have been trying to keep up with his group, or that he may have believed the intersection was a four-way stop.

Grissom was not injured.

The Highway Patrol was on the scene investigating. The accident closed that section of Beersheba Highway for more than one hour.

Remembering a 'silent soldier'

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

Virgle A. Raper spent more than 15 years serving his country. If he were alive today, this interview may not have taken place.

"He was a silent soldier," said Terry Raper of his father, who was born in April 1925. "That's what I call it. He never talked about it. He never told us anything about where he was, or what he did. All I knew was he was in the military. That was pretty much it."

What hid behind the quiet will never truly be known. Those unspoken words were forever sealed when Virgle passed away in 1977.

Memorial Day is a time to honor soldiers who died in service to their country. These are soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice and gave their life for America.

Virgle didn't die in military service, but he did compile a distinguished military career.



Virgle A. Raper spent 15 years in the U.S. military and served in both World War II and the Korean War. He is shown in Korea in this photo.

MEMORIAL DAY

The community's Memorial Day ceremony will be held Monday morning at 7 a.m. at Warren County Memorial Airport. For information on the keynote speaker, see page 3A

Continued on 3A



McMinnville Public Works employees have ripped out two of the four outdoor tennis courts. They will be completely replaced. However, no time frame has been established for that work to be complete. Lisa Hobbs photo

Court adjourned

Tennis facilities to be replaced

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

Out with the old and in with the new.

A year-long wait to serve up two new outdoor tennis courts is finally over and demolition took place this past week.

"I have no idea how long it will be," said McMinnville Parks and Recreation director Scott McCord, when asked when the new courts will reopen.

City employees ripped everything out this past week. Over the years, new layers of asphalt were added as a cost-saving

measure rather than replacement. The end result was a top layer that cracked and was uneven because the layers underneath were deteriorating.

In 2016, McCord requested of city officials that he be allowed to completely demolish the old and install new. Officials placed \$100,000 in the budget of Parks and Recreation for that work.

Continued on 5A

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