

**HERALD
BRIEF**

High school to host anti-tobacco rally March 21

In observance of Kick Butts Day, a nationally organized campaign by Tobacco-Free Kids, an anti-tobacco rally will be held at the Holmes County Central High School Gymnasium on Wednesday, March 21 at 8:30 a.m. in Lexington. The rally will focus on tobacco use in the local community, encourage youth to reject tobacco industries marketing and stay tobacco free.

The rally is organized by Community Students Learning Center, The Mississippi Tobacco-Free Coalition of Madison, Yazoo & Holmes Counties and The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi.

Dragons' basketball tryouts start March 17

The Mississippi Dragons and Lady Dragons will be hosting the first of a couple A.A.U. basketball tryouts on Saturday, March 17 in Greenwood, at the Greenwood Rec Center. The teams will consist of boys, grades 5-6 and girls, grades 6-11.

There will be four teams: 5th-6th grade boys, 6th-7th grade girls, 8th-9th grade girls and 10th-11th grade girls. These teams are for young athletes that want to travel around the state and country playing against top athletes and gaining experience and exposure. The season will start in April.

Tryouts for 5th-6th grade boys and 6th-7th grade girls will be from 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. and 8th-9th grade and 10th-11th grade will be from 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Tryout fee is \$20. For more information, contact Charles Cooley @ 662-458-1942 or demetriccooley@yahoo.com.

See next week's Herald for follow up on schools

School stakeholders and parents voiced their concerns and frustrations with the Holmes County Consolidated School board about the forthcoming district's restructuring. See next week's paper for the story.

Durant man pleads guilty to conspiracy

Darnell Branch, 33, of Durant, pled guilty on March 7 before U.S. District Judge Carlton W. Reeves, to conspiring to sell stolen firearms, announced U.S. Attorney Mike Hurst and Special Agent in Charge Dana Nichols of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF).

Around 2:30 a.m. on July 28, 2014, Estelle Cook and co-defendant Corey Hughes tore a hole in the side of Central Mississippi Firearms, a gun store in Kosciusko, Mississippi, and stole 41 guns. Darnell Branch, Corey Hughes, Estelle Cook, and others sold at least a dozen of the stolen guns in Durant and Lexington, Mississippi. Branch participated in the sale of at least nine of the stolen guns to six different buyers. Branch also bought one of the stolen guns.

On October 3, 2017, a federal grand jury indicted

Hughes, Cook, Branch, and Frederick Russell for their unlawful conspiracy to possess and sell stolen firearms. On the same day, a federal grand jury indicted Jermaine Griffin for receiving and possessing one of the stolen guns.

At a March 8 hearing, Branch became the fifth defendant to plead guilty to his role in the conspiracy. He will be sentenced by Judge Reeves on June 11, 2018, and faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Co-defendant Frederick Russell pled guilty on January 10, 2018, to conspiracy to possess and sell stolen firearms. He will be sentenced by Judge Reeves on May 30, 2018, and faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Co-defendant Estelle Cook pled guilty on February 8, (Continued on page 4.)

Charges still pending on man who smashed store windows, displays in Durant

By Matthew Breazeale

Official charges are still pending against a suspect who reportedly went on a rampage of destruction along

Chamber of Commerce banquet to host "An evening with Coach Vince Dooley"

By Matthew Breazeale

The "most successful coach in the University of Georgia history," Vince Dooley, will be hosted by the Holmes County Chamber of Commerce as keynote speaker during the 29th annual Membership/Awards Banquet set for Thursday, April 5.

The chamber of commerce event will be held at the Carroll Cafeteria on the campus of Holmes Community College in Goodman, 6 p.m.

A silent auction will be held at the banquet from 6 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Charlie Mae Joiner, president for the Holmes County Chamber of Commerce, said tickets may be purchased from the chamber office in Lexington, 104 W. China Street, or from chamber board members Jim Thompson, Watt Ervin, Maria Por-

Depot and Madison Streets in Durant.

Police responded around 6:15 p.m. on Tuesday, March 6 after reports were made

of an individual vandalizing storefront windows and displays of businesses.

The suspect, who has not been officially named by police as he has not been officially charged with a crime, was described as a black

male by Durant Assistant Police Chief J.W. Greer.

"We were able to attain this guy," said Greer on Tuesday night, March 6, "get him in custody, that way we can get him to Jackson and get him checked out, see what's going on with him."

At the time, the suspect was being held at the Durant Po-

lice Department inside city hall, while EMTs "stabilized him," according to Greer.

Greer said the suspect was incapacitated but authorities were attempting to get more information from him while EMTs checked him out.

The suspect did not appear to suffer any cuts or bruises, (Continued on page 4.)

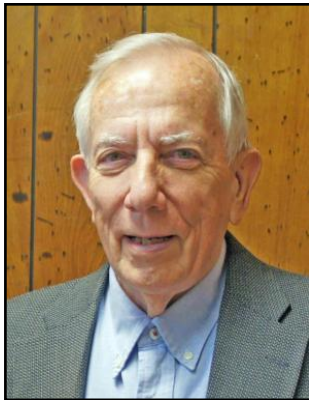
ter, Verlinda Alexander, (Continued on page 3.)

Longtime Herald publishers retire, paper welcomes new owners

By Matthew Breazeale

Longtime publishers and owners of the *Holmes County Herald* newspaper, Bruce and Libby Hill, officially relinquished their roles on Thursday, March 8 to Shoccoe Media, LLC as new owner of Holmes County's longest operating news publication.

The *Holmes County Herald* printed its first issue on January 22, 1959 under the ownership of the Holmes County Publishing Company with Chester Marshall serving as editor. In October 1960, Jack Shearer became the editor. He served until November 1962 when Paul Tardy became the editor. On July 15, 1965, Tardy was the owner, changing the ownership to *Holmes County Herald*. On March 18, 1970, the ownership of the *Herald* changed to East Holmes Publishing Enterprises, Inc. with Bruce and Libby Hill



BRUCE HILL



LIBBY HILL

becoming sole stockholders.

"After spending more than half of our lives living in Holmes County and publish-

ing the *Holmes County Herald*, we move on with mixed emotions," said the Hills in a joint statement. "On the one hand it is like marrying off your only daughter; turning over your "baby" to another to care for her. While, on the other hand, we see how new life can be put into the old with new ownership and new vision.

"We are thankful for the wonderful memories acquired over a period of 48 years; living and working alongside the people of Holmes County," the Hills continued. "For the most part, our three children grew up in the county and our entire family have made many lifelong friends.

"Thanks for the memories of the people who stood alongside of us as we took over the reigns of the *Herald* in March 1970. Without their advice, assistance and (Continued on page 3.)



Hudson Haffey (pictured above, seated) makes technical adjustments to his homemade drink dispensing machine while his classmates look on at Central Holmes Christian School in Lexington. Haffey, the son of Jim and Rae Anne Haffey of Kosciusko, joined the entire student body at Central Holmes in presenting a project during the school's 2018 Science Fair on Wednesday, March 7 in the school's gymnasium. Class winners for the science fair are featured on page 2 in this week's Herald.

(Photo by Matthew Breazeale)

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Thursday
Sunny
70/49
Precip. Chance
0%



Friday
Thunderstorms
68/59
Precip. Chance
90%



Saturday
A.M. Showers
77/54
Precip. Chance
40%



Sunday
A.M. Showers
71/53
Precip. Chance
40%



Monday
Isolated T'Storms
77/48
Precip. Chance
30%



Tuesday
Partly Cloudy
62/40
Precip. Chance
10%



Wednesday
Sunny
62/43
Precip. Chance
0%

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