

Murder at Yellow Tree



Yellow Tree night club outside of Lexington city limits on MS Highway 12 was cordoned off with sheriff's tape Monday afternoon, July 23. (Photo by Matthew Breazeale)

By Matthew Breazeale
The Holmes County Sheriff's Department is conducting a homicide investigation into the shooting death of Goodman resident James

West Police Chief Peeples investigating local burglary

West Police Chief Demarcus Peeples reported that a burglary case remains under investigation after a call was made on June 18.

A meeting place for a local church, the L.J. Hardware and Paint Building on Green Street in West, suffered damages as well as had an air conditioning window unit taken from the property. The building's front door was apparently kicked in and the window where the air conditioning unit sat was damaged, all according to Peeples.

One alleged juvenile suspect was one house arrest. Peeples said he expected to make contact with two other juvenile suspects by the week's end.

Peeples estimated that between \$600 and \$800 worth of damages had been committed but he believed the church had insurance. Peeples added that the juvenile currently under house arrest does have a criminal history in West.

"If you commit a crime in West you will be charged," Peeples added, "juveniles and adults both."

Wise. Wise, 43, was found outside the Yellow Tree night club, located outside Lexington city limits on MS Highway 12, with one gunshot wound. Sheriff's deputies responded after Wise was transported in a private vehicle to UMMC Lexington around 5:30 a.m. July 22.

When deputies arrived at the local hospital Wise was deceased and the county coroner was notified.

Sheriff Willie March said it was yet to be determined if Wise was shot from in front or from the back because of the nature of Wise's wounds.

March said people were present at Yellow Tree during the time of the shoot-

ing but information was not readily forthcoming.

"Everyone we talked to so far said they were inside the club," Marsh said, "they were inside and said they heard the shot (outside the building). When they came outside (Wise) was laying there on the ground. It's kind of hard to believe, there was no one (outside) but these two people (the victim and the shooter). If anyone doesn't want to be identified they can call crime stoppers."

March said Tuesday morning, July 24, the department is looking at two suspects in the case but there was no clear cut motive.

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Durant's top police officials "suspended without pay"

The Mayor of Durant, Dr. Henry Robinson, Jr. confirmed Monday afternoon, July 23, that Durant's top two police officials have been both suspended without pay effective on Friday, July 20.

Robinson said it was a decision made by the board of aldermen during an executive session "pending the outcome of an internal investigation," to suspend Police Chief John Haynes and Assistant Police Chief J.W. Greer for "personnel matters."

Durant Police Officer Zelic Shaw will serve as interim police chief according to Robinson.



JOHN HAYNES



J.W. GREER

Paddling banned at school district with 4-0 board vote

HCCSD

In a history-making, unanimous vote Wednesday night, July 18, the Holmes County Consolidated School District Board of Trustees banned the age-old school system policy of corporal punishment. This is the first time physical punishment of students has been removed from the district policy.

The 4-0 vote drew rousing applause from several audience members. Board member Elder William Dean was not in attendance.

New district Superintendent Dr. James L. Henderson, made the recommendation

as a part of his students-first mission for the newly state-administered, consolidated school district which began operations July 1, 2018. He would be the first to admit that he received whippings from his parents.

However, he emphasized that in his 20 years of school administration, corporal punishment has not been as effective as one might think, and it can cause psychological problems in some of today's students.

In Sarah Carr's April 14, 2014 article in *The Hechinger Report* on the paddling of black students in Mis-

issippi, Joyce Parker, the African-American founder of a community organization in Greenville, pointed out the paddle symbolizes a "legacy we're trying to outlive." "During slavery, we were whipped on the back, beat on the back and dehumanized ... The sad part is that we are doing it...to ourselves now."

Superintendent Henderson and others share similar views.

According to Henderson, the Board's vote to ban corporal punishment also included a replacement policy.

He pointed out that "by

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Locals take over ownership of Odd Fellows Cemetery from city

LOFC Inc.

On July 9, 2018 the Lexington Board of Aldermen voted unanimously to transfer ownership of the Odd Fellows Cemetery to Lexington Odd Fellows Cemetery, Inc., a corporation created by a group of people who have relatives and loved ones interred at Odd Fellows.

For over 150 years the city of Lexington has maintained the cemetery, but with rising costs and, like many small municipalities, revenue challenges, the city decided that it was time for it to get out

of the cemetery maintenance business and to transfer that responsibility to a private entity.

This group of people then came together to create a corporation specifically for the purpose of maintaining Odd Fellows Cemetery.

The new corporation's officers are President, Ed Thurmond; Vice-President, Chris Hammett; Secretary, Betsy Padgett, and Treasurer, Pat Barrett, Jr.

Those officers also serve as members of the corporation's board of directors along with

Phil Cohen, Allie Povall, Jr., Harold Hammett, Jr. and Julian Watson, who also serves as chairman of the board.

Maintenance of the cemetery requires money, and the corporation intends to begin raising money almost immediately.

Thurmond said, "The cost of maintaining the cemetery will be significant, and the revenues to cover those costs can come only from private donations. We have created an endowment fund to receive contributions, which

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Board members for the Lexington Odd Fellows Cemetery Inc. are pictured above (from left): Pat Barrett Jr., Harold Hammett Jr., Chris Hammett, Julian Watson, Betsy Padgett, Ed Thurmond and Al Povall. (Photo submitted)

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