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All The News While It's News

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Change in the air

Newspaper not immune to pandemic's collateral damage

"The Times They Are A-Changin'."

Wow, was Bob Dylan ever right!

I usually keep it light with these columns. Today ... not so much.

To put it mildly, these are challenging times for local businesses and individuals, and we at The Messenger have not been spared.

Like other businesses, we rely on our great customers to survive — in our case subscribers and advertisers. And with all of the shut-downs and restrictions put in place to help the country stop the spread of the coronavirus, everyone is suffering in some way.

Sadly, some local businesses have already closed, while some are laying off

employees and others are doing everything they can to make ends meet until this pandemic ends.

As a newspaper, we play a vital role in getting information out to the public, whether it is through our published edition, our website or through social media. As we stated in an editorial at the top of Tuesday's front page, "We are there with you." And we are!

That said, we will be doing so with some changes.

Starting next week, The Messenger will publish a newspaper on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with new stories posted online for subscribers on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

As announced a couple of weeks ago, the online



By DAVID CRITCHLOW JR.

version will remain free for a while as we continue to inform the community about the coronavirus pandemic — sharing updates as well as features. The website is nwtntoday.com.

From a news standpoint, our staff — which I'm proud to say was just notified of nine awards in a statewide

contest — will continue to cover hard news as well as the many inspirational stories locally.

The last few weeks have proven the staff's ability to do just that, as COVID-19 updates have been covered in detail, while heartwarming stories of generosity and kindness have been featured

with more to come.

Moving forward, all of the pages presently offered each week will continue, with both publications including sports, editorial, society and classified pages. Tuesday's newspaper will also feature agriculture, business, education and court news.

Thursday's newspapers will be highlighted with the weekly Friends and Neighbors feature page, as well as health, religion and outdoor news.

Despite these changes, we are still committed to delivering "All The News While It's News," which has been The Messenger's slogan since the late 1920s, and we expect to have larger papers packed full of local news.

And we welcome suggestions, so if you have a story idea, please email us at ucdm@ucmessenger.com. Our advertising department is also just a phone call away at 885-0744 or by email at advertising@ucmessenger.com.

For existing readers, subscriptions will be extended, while new subscribers will get a lower rate.

Through all of this, we ask that you please be patient with us, because it's all new to us, too.

In the meantime, wash your hands and keep your distance; it could save a life!

Editor David Critchlow Jr. may be contacted by email at dgc@ucmessenger.com.

One death attributed to coronavirus in OC

By CHRIS MENEES
Senior Staff Reporter

State health officials say Obion County now has one coronavirus death.

It was listed in the Tennessee Department of Health's daily update Thursday afternoon.

Obion County has had two confirmed cases of COVID-19, with one of them reported as a fatality, according to OC Mayor Benny McGuire.

There have been 72 negative tests thus far in the county, according to the state's latest update.

The state health department updates totals daily at 2 p.m. on its website (www.tn.gov/health) and on its Facebook page (listed as Tennessee Department of Health).

Because the updates come after The Messenger's deadline for its print edition, breaking news updates will be (See Page 7, Col. 1)



MAKING A DIFFERENCE — When Paige Burcham-Dennis (right), owner of Joann's prom and pageant gown shop in Union City, learned her store's garment bags are made of the same material as hospital-grade facial masks, she enlisted her

staff, friends and customers to donate and create masks which are needed by healthcare workers. Mrs. Dennis and Joann's employee Carrie Willis recently worked on just one day's shipments of materials and masks to help end the COVID-19 pandemic.

Local dress shop helping to provide medical masks

By MEGAN DAME
Staff Reporter

When future generations look back at this critical point in history, they will also, no doubt, look at how society reacted to the hardship with a critical eye.

Local business owner Paige Burcham-Dennis wants to know she contributed to helping others in the best way she knows how.

Mrs. Dennis is the owner of Joann's, a prom and pageant gown shop located on First Street in Union City.

After living and working in China for seven years, Mrs. Dennis took notice when news reports began popping up about the COVID-19 virus ravaging Asia, most notably, China.

As the coronavirus began to spread all over the world, it became clear that protective gear like face masks, gloves and shoe covers were going to run short.

When Mrs. Dennis realized the formal wear garment bags they use at the store are made of the exact same material as hospital-grade masks — non-woven polypropylene — her mission was clear. According to Mrs. Dennis, one Joann's garment bag can create 38 masks.

Mrs. Dennis reached out to some of her contacts in the formal wear and pageant gown industry.

(See Page 7, Col. 4)

Community to pray for medical staff

By CHRIS MENEES
Senior Staff Reporter

Healthcare workers — who are on the front line during the coronavirus pandemic — need prayer now more than ever.

With that in mind, members of a Troy church are holding an open prayer vigil Monday night outside Baptist Memorial Hospital-Union City.

Social distancing guide-

lines will be strictly followed and those attending should stay inside their vehicles at all times.

Tony Jones, minister of worship and students at Troy First Baptist Church, said the prayer vigil is an effort to show support for all local medical staff and let them know the community is praying for them.

Those involved will arrive at 7 p.m. Monday

outside the hospital on Bishop Street, and a corporate prayer will be led by a minister at 7:30.

Those attending are being asked to park in areas around the hospital and turn on their vehicle's flashers as they pray together at dusk.

"We are asking people not to get out of their vehicles. Stay inside the vehicle," Jones urged.

(See Page 7, Col. 5)

UC schools to be closed through May 4

By MIKE HUTCHENS
Special to The Messenger

Adapt and adjust. Like all other school systems in the state, Union City is operating under that philosophy while dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to sweep the world.

President Donald Trump extended social distancing guidelines until the end of the month earlier this week, and Union City Schools will thus remain closed until May 4 due to concerns over the coronavirus.

There have been no classes in the Union City system since March 19.

Students were initially set to return April 13 — after a two-week period first initiated by Gov. Bill Lee and an already-scheduled spring break April 6-10. President Trump and Lee last week added two more weeks to address heightened concerns over the crisis and its widespread effects before Trump then extended that through April 30 in his Monday address.

UC Director of Schools Wes Kennedy held his second meeting with other Union City school administrators Thursday morning, with the group making several decisions on events that were on the original 2019-20 school calendar and delaying a handful of others.

Graduation is still on the docket for May 16 at 8 p.m. at War Memorial Stadium. Kennedy said he would consider alternative plans if the virus concerns remain and regulations are still in place at that date. Baccalaureate services remain scheduled for May 10 at the Civic Auditorium.

The last day of classes for the remainder of the student body — if school resumes — is still set for May 21.

Awards Day in the UC School System is still set for May 15 and will be both a big and busy one for all involved. In addition to academic accolades, the winner of the car donated by City Auto Plex, based on perfect attendance, will be announced.

That same day, students at Union City Middle School will present their science

(See Page 7, Col. 3)

Good Evening

On the Inside
GIRL Scouts launch virtual programming...Page 3.

Sports
SKYHAWKS' Perry adds All-America honor...Page 4.

Deaths
Susan (Pryor) Webb, 63, Holladay; Earnest "Robot" Roberson, 72, Union City.

Inserts
Walgreens.

On the Outside

TODAY
68 WIND 2-5 MPH
52 MPH

SATURDAY
69 WIND 2-5 MPH
51 MPH

Tonight: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 52. Calm wind becoming east-southeast around 5 mph.

Saturday: A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 69 and a low around 51. North wind around 5 mph. Union City temperatures during the past 24 hours, high 69, low 45, with .02 inches of precipitation recorded at the wastewater treatment plant, as of 7 a.m. There has been 19.07 inches of precipitation recorded since Jan. 1. There was 24.04 inches of precipitation measured one year ago today. Sunrise tomorrow 6:35, sunset 7:21.

Kentucky Lake stages: As of 7 a.m., the lake level was 361.92 feet above sea level.

"We'll watch this and take appropriate steps necessary for enforcement as we see

(See Page 7, Col. 6)



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