

West Tennessee News Briefs

Man dead following collision with train

An Obion County man died early May 3 after a car and a train collided on Ed Moffatt Road, south of the Pleasant Hill community in rural Obion County.

Joshua Hairston, 41, succumbed to injuries sustained in a crash that occurred about 2:45 a.m., according to a preliminary report from the Tennessee Highway Patrol.

The THP reported Hairston was driving a 2012 Chevrolet Impala west on Ed Moffatt Road, approaching the railroad crossing. A train heading south was also approaching the railroad crossing, and a crash subsequently occurred between the car and the train.

No specific details were provided by the THP in its official preliminary report, provided by a THP public information officer in its Jackson District.

Neither the type of train nor the engineer's name were listed on the report from the state law enforcement agency. It did indicate there were no injuries to those involved on the train.

Numerous local law enforcement and fire/rescue agencies were on the scene for several hours early May 3 as it was cleared and investigation was under way.

UC Rotary awards \$143,950 to students

Eighty-seven high school seniors and graduates from each of the three high schools in Obion County will receive a combined 136 scholarships totaling \$143,950 from the Union City Rotary Club Scholarship program.

The number of students and the amount being provided is an increase over last year.

The recipients from Obion County, South Fulton and Union City high schools, as well as graduates of OCCHS and SFHS, meet the donors of their scholarships during a banquet May 8 at First Baptist Church in Union City.

Students who graduated from UCHS are awarded Verhine Trust scholarships by the organization. They will be honored separately from the May 8 program.

The annual Union City Rotary Club Scholarship program dates back to 1982 when Hardy Graham donated \$1,000 to establish a trust fund in memory of fellow Rotarian Gus B. White, the first president of the Union City Rotary Club. Additional trust funds were set up by members and local businesses in the following years to build the program to what it is today.

The Rotary Club also gets scholarship funds through donations from individuals and companies, through funds given to honor or memorialize a person and through money left to the program in wills.

County extends Director of Schools' contract

With a favorable annual evaluation, Obion County Director of Schools Tim Watkins earned a year's extension to his contract May 4.

The Obion County School Board approved the contract extension during its monthly meeting at South Fulton Middle/High School.

Watkins continued to make the grade on his evaluation by the board, this year receiving an overall average score of 3.77 out of a possible 5.

His overall average score from the seven board members was based on his evaluation in 19 specific components of job performance. The board addressed the evaluation at its annual retreat recently, according to board chairman Fritz Fussell.

"A very good score ... doing a very good job," Fussell announced.

Sheriff's Report

Cont. from Page 6

tint.
Shanta Monika Williams, B/F, 35- simple possession/casual exchange.
Laricus Antwon Adkisson, B/M, 41- aggravated assault.
John Obrien Ferrell, B/M, 33- public indecency, indecent exposure, resisting stop, frisk, halt, arrest or search (non-violent).

Tieannasia Harris, B/F, 38- hold for other agency.

Hunter James Lawson, W/M, 18- criminal trespass, vandalism.

Juanita Mason, B/F, 30- failure to appear.

Deantra Artavious James Nance, B/M, 18- assault on first responder, disorderly conduct.

Andre Kentrell Walker, B/M, 35- failure to provide proof insurance, unregistered vehicle, driving on revoked/suspended license, violation of light law.

Justin Wayne Montgomery, W/M, 43- capias, violation of probation.

Samuel John Rogers, W/M, 33- driving under the influence first offense.

Narveckie Lee Johnson, B/M, 49- criminal trespass.

James Quincy Penn, B/M, 57- driving on revoked/suspended license.

Carlow Jartavious Richardson, B/M, 21- domestic assault.

Christopher Wayne Baucom, B/M, 52- weekender.

Callie Brianna Hale,

W/F, 28- weekender.

Octavius Demond Lutten, B/M, 30- weekender.

Colby Garrett Swafford, W/M, 27- violation of probation.

Tyler Nathaniel Vaulx, B/M, 35- weekender.

Kristina Louise McGraw, U/F, 54- weekender.

Board member Shannon Graham said she believes Watkins is "doing a fine job," while chair pro tem Barry Adams said he likes the fact that the schools director is "always available."

"Tim (Watkins) did a great job in doing what we had to do," board member Tim Britt said of the director's job performance over the past year.

Board member Jared Poore commended the director's efforts "through all the easy decisions and all the tough decisions," telling Watkins, "I'm glad we've got you at the helm."

"I think you've done another great job," Fussell continued, adding that he looks forward to the next school year and what is on the horizon.

Adams made the motion to accept Watkins' evaluation and extend the director's existing contract for one year, maintaining the four-year contract maximum allowed by state law. It was seconded by Fussell and approved by a 5-0 vote.

Vice chairman Keisha Hooper and board member Chris Akin were absent.

"Like we said, I think you're doing an outstanding job," Fussell told Watkins. "You work hard. I know we just went through a budget, and that's a tough time to go through. You're doing a good job on that."

Watkins expressed his appreciation to the board members for their continued support.

"I can't ask for a better work situation," he said. He continued by voicing gratitude for the system's staff.

"I couldn't do my job without them doing theirs, so I appreciate all of them," Watkins said.

Downtown Milan building could be demolished

A historic downtown building could soon be demolished after owners of the property failed to attend a hearing about the condition of the building.

The old barber shop located next to the Ritz Theater at 1115 South Main Street was the subject of the hearing. The City of Milan contends the building violates section 13-201 involving the slum clearance.

Present at the hearing were building inspector Byron Burns, and codes consultant Jim Pillow on behalf of the city. The property owner, Georgia Community Investments, LLC was not present at the hearing.

The hearing officer, Richard W. Vaughn, agreed that proper notice had been given and the city had carried its burden of proof that the building is unfit for business use.

Georgia Community Investments, LLC now has 60 days from May 12 to demolish the structure and remove all related debris or appeal the city's decision.

Developer eyeing Bradford for mobile home park

The City of Bradford is hoping to welcome a lot of new residents in the future.

The Board voted to approve the first reading of a plan to rezone a property on Gin Street from R2 to R3, allowing for multi-family housing.

"We've got an individual that that wants to put a mobile home park in this area," Alderman Jason Adams said. "He's already purchased the land. He presented a preliminary plan of what it might look like."

The plan presented to the Board shows four rows of mobile homes, roughly 20 in total, running parallel to the street, organized more like a small neighborhood than a mobile home park.

"He's going to spread them out pretty wide," Adams said. "You could put twice the amount of homes in there if you turned them the other way, but he said he wanted them to feel more like homes. That matters a lot. He doesn't want people to come and go, he wants people to stay there and make it their home."

Board members agreed that the development could be a great opportunity for the city.

There will be a public hearing on the rezoning on Monday, June 1, at 5:00 p.m. inside City Hall before the Board's next regular meeting.

Shortly after the meeting began, Alderman Paul Richards announced his intent to run for Mayor of Bradford later this year. Richards, who has served in his role as Alderman since 2022, encouraged his fellow Aldermen to seek the Mayor's Office as well if they felt led to do so. Mayor Dwayne Reynolds announced in January that he would not be seeking reelection.

Is God Dead? The Science of Babel

By Ty Kerley



Kerley

Christians hold that the eight survivors of The Great Flood (Noah and his wife, their three sons, and their wives) disembarked the Ark on Mount Ararat and then migrated to the Plains of Shinar in ancient Mesopotamia. There, rather than multiply and spread throughout the entire earth as God had commanded, this remnant of humanity collectively built a city and a great tower that "reached up to the heavens" and attempted to compete with God. It was there and then that the entire human race was gathered as one race, one people, speaking one language, all the while disobeying God's command to disperse. "Then God said, 'Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.' So, the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore, its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth" (Gen 11:7-9).

What an incredible story! But is it true? *Can it be true?* Today there are some 6,000 languages spoken around the world. Can it be that all of these languages came from a common single language, a first language? Linguists (scholars who study languages) tell us that languages evolve and change over time due to migration, mixing, and cultural considerations. These language changes can act as a road map leading back to the language family from which it evolved. Linguist John McWhorter writes, "Typically, speakers leave footprints from their old language in their version of the new one." Here is an example. If we look at the word father, we begin to understand that some words in various languages have striking similarities. The English word *father*, is *vater* in German, *padre* in Spanish, and *padre* in Italian. From this simple comparison, it is easy to see that English and German are very similar to each other, as are the Spanish and Italian. Similarities between English and German are seen not only in the word "father" but also in many other words. For these reasons, linguists classify both English and German as members of the *Germanic* family. Likewise, Italian and Spanish are considered members of the Latin family. Based upon these and other comparison criteria, the 6,000 languages spoken around the world are grouped into approximately 400 language families. Much like a family tree, the world language tree becomes more condensed and compacted, moving from the leaves to the branches to the main trunk. Similarly, linguists further classify and group these 400 language families into proto-languages. For example, English falls into the Germanic family, and the Germanic family falls into the Indo-European proto-language family. Other proto-language families include *Afro-Asiatic*, *Mia-Yao*, *Turkic*, and *Semetic*, among many others. Using the analogy of a language tree, we could say that 6,000 languages (leaves) condense into 400 language families (branches), which further condense into 50 or so proto-language families (major branches).

From this perspective, looking at the world's languages raises the ultimate question: "Is there evidence that the 50 or so proto-languages are further condensed into a single language? Looking at it from the other direction: "Is there evidence that a single language (trunk) later further branches to 50 or so proto languages which later further branch into 400 language families, which eventually branch into the 6,000 languages spoken today? It is an important question because, according to Christianity, all languages should go back to a single language, the Noachic language spoken by the eight survivors of The Great Flood. In other words, the Noachic language is the singular trunk of the language tree.

The problem is that linguists do not see a linkage between the proto-languages, which indicates they all derive from one singular ancient language. McWhorter argues that those attempts at reconstructing the Noachic proto-language are not considered valid in the field of linguistics and that these reconstructions are horribly biased and, in the end, are "hopelessly untenable." But why would this be the case? Why do linguists find it impossible to back-track along the language family tree from the major branches to the main trunk? Christianity holds that there was only one language after The Great Flood: the Noachic language. If true, there should be a clear path back to Noah's language, but there isn't.

Why? While there are currently 50 proto-language families that linguists have discovered, there is the expectation that more families will be discovered. Perhaps it is that when all is said and done, linguists will discover and recognize approximately 78 proto-language families, one language family for each of the families that were given new languages and dispersed from Babel (cf Gen 10-11). Perhaps this is why linguists can only trace language families back so far and then run into a roadblock. If all the people on earth were gathered after The Flood, and all shared one common language, then each of the approximate 78 families were dispersed in different directions, each with a new language, then what we see is exactly what we would expect. At one point in ancient history, the language of Noah suddenly ceased, and perhaps some 70 new proto-languages suddenly appeared.

Once again, we see "all things merge into one." Join us next week as we look at the bottleneaking of human history after The Great Flood. Until then, *is God really dead?*

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Ty B. Kerley, DMin., is an ordained minister who teaches Christian apologetics, and relief preaches in Southern Oklahoma. Dr. Kerley and his wife Vicki are members of the Waurika church of Christ, and live in Ardmore. You can contact him at: dr.kerley@isGoddead.com.

NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 67-5-508, Tennessee Code Annotated, the property assessment records of Gibson County will be available for public inspection at Room 202, Gibson County Courthouse during normal business hours. Any person desiring to inspect these records may do so at the appointed time and place.

The Gibson County Board of Equalization will begin its annual session to examine and equalize the county assessments on June 1, 2026. The Board will meet each weekday from the hours of 9:00am to 3:00pm in Room 202, Gibson County Courthouse.

Any owner of property who wishes to make a complaint or appeal to the County Board of Equalization must appear before said Board at this time personally or by personal appearance of an agent for the owner bearing the owner's written authorization. Failure to appear and appeal an assessment will result in the assessment becoming final without further right of appeal.