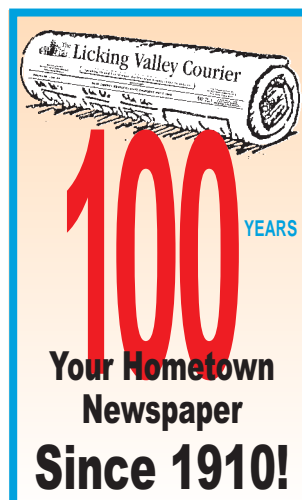


The Licking Valley Courier

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West Liberty, Kentucky 41472

Thursday, December 9, 2010



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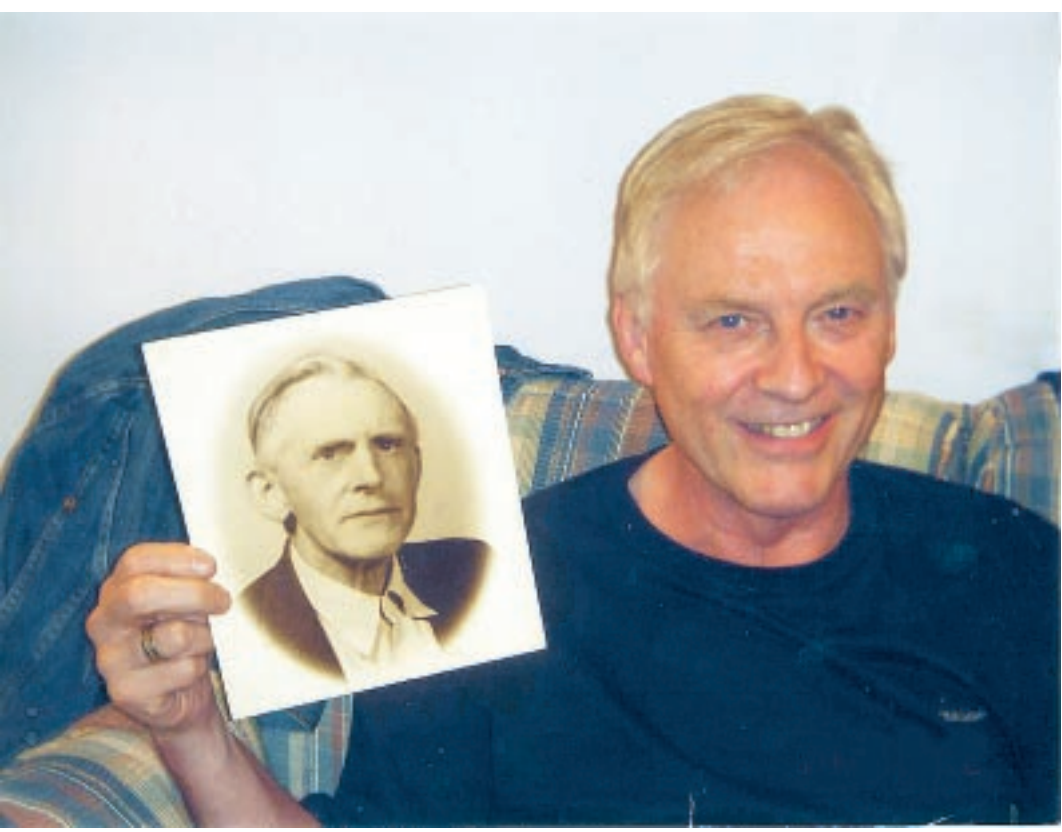
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Speaking Of and For Morgan, the Bluegrass County of the Mountains

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Long search for G.I. father leads to Morgan

Terry Francis a native of England now residing in British Columbia, holds a photo of his grandfather, James Hurt. Francis's long search for his World War II father, Stanley Hurt, eventually led him to Cannel City, where his grandfather and father lived prior to the war. Recognizing Francis's close resemblance to his grandfather, new-found family members immediately recognized him as a family member and welcomed him into their homes. Eventually, with their help and through a series of happy coincidences that facilitated the search, he was able to meet and get to know his father before his father's death earlier this year in Ohio. The story is published elsewhere in this edition.

Weekend Christmas fest is a success for shopkeepers

By Mirandda Cantrell James

Morgan Countians ushered in the holiday season during the annual West Liberty-Morgan County Community Christmas Festival held last Friday and Saturday.

This year's event included a 15-unit Christmas parade on Friday evening, as well as the lighting of the Kiwanis Club's courthouse nativity scene featuring caroling and music provided by the high school and middle school bands and choir.

Saturday's activities included a pancake breakfast sponsored by the Morgan County Homemakers, a Christmas auction sponsored by the Historical Society, a performance by the Appalachian Troubadours, a chili supper and photos with Santa.

Local businesses observed extended hours with special gift items and refreshments for customers, many of whom also attended a Christmas bazaar featuring locally-made crafts and baked items at the Community Center gymnasium.

Judge Executive Tim Conley said the festival was a great success.

"Everything went very well," Conley said. "There were approximately 250 people at the nativity scene lighting, and the Main Street stores reported a spike in business during the festival. It was a good weekend, and the snow helped get everyone in the Christmas spirit."

A number of local businesses expressed satisfaction with the event and said they appreciate their customers who decided to kick off the Christmas shopping season at home this year. Plans already being discussed to expand the festival next year.

The festival committee would like to thank Assembly of Faith Church for preparing and serving hot chocolate to festival goers at the nativity scene lighting, the MCHS and MCMS bands and choir for providing music, and Chad Brooks for providing the horse drawn buggy for carriage rides through town.

Three people are indicted

At its meeting on Nov. 18, the Morgan County Grand Jury returned only two indictments naming three people with six felony counts. They were:

Jimmy M. Bailey, 36, of Tower Hill Road, West Liberty, five counts of 2nd degree criminal possession of a forged instrument drawn on First National Bank of West Liberty.

Harold Risner, 48, of Bloomington Road, Salyersville, and Mitchell Risner, 37, of Salyersville, burglary 3rd degree in connection with the Oct. 29 burglary of a building belonging to Melinda Barker.

An indictment is an allegation, not proof, that a crime was committed



Businesses' open houses with free refreshments for busy shoppers, the first snowfall of the year and free buggy rides around town behind Chad Brooks' matched team made last weekend's Ole Fashion Christmas Festival an enjoyable experience and a fitting start to the shopping season.

Hometown Christmas Fest was memorable experience

By Carla Jane Collinsworth

Thanks to West Liberty and area merchants, and all who had a part in planning and sponsoring the two-day Community Christmas Festival last Friday and Saturday, Dec. 3 and 4. The event included extended shopping hours in many of the shops which offered discounts on purchases, drawings for door prizes, and refreshments. The stores were packed with a great selection of gifts that would be suitable for Christmas or any occasion.

A pancake breakfast, a Christmas bazaar, an auction, Christmas parade, live entertainment by Morgan County Middle School and High School band, and the Appalachian Troubadours, lighting of the community Nativity scene, Christmas caroling and hot chocolate.

A highlight of the weekend's activities for many (including me) was a ride in the horse-drawn wagon, owned and driven by Mr. Chad Brooks of Liberty Road.

When I spotted the wagon and team traveling along the streets of West Liberty Saturday afternoon, I stopped my vehicle near the Commercial Bank drive-up facility, grabbed my camera off the back seat and hurried toward the wagon and team to get a picture. When asked if I wanted to ride my reply was "I'd love to." I was instructed to "climb in." When I got settled on a nice, padded seat up close to the front and asked the driver his name, I was pleased to learn that the young man was Chad Brooks. Although I'd never met Chad, I've been acquainted with several of his relatives for many years.

The ride in the cold, blowing snow brought back childhood memories of my dad, the late Gayle Nickell, who died eleven years ago today, on Thursday, Dec. 9, 1999, of a massive heart attack. Dad always kept a mule

team, sometimes two teams, and riding horses. It wasn't uncommon on cold, snowy days for dad to hitch up his team, throw a couple of bales of hay in the old wagon or sled for seats, and mom, my sister, and I would take our places for a ride up and down the hollers of my grandparents' farm on Caskey Fork where my sister, Marva, and I were raised. With the old farm, dad and his teams long gone, this horse-drawn wagon ride was truly a priceless experience. Many thanks, Chad.

With Christmas nearing, I wish everyone a blessed Christmas. Enjoy the company of family and friends this holiday season; time spent with loved ones is the best gift; and amid all the hustle and bustle, take time to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

Jobless rate down from Oct. 2009

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Morgan County was among 113 Kentucky counties in which unemployment rates fell between October 2009 and October 2010, according to the Kentucky Office of Employment and Training, an agency of the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet.

Morgan's jobless rate was 12.8 percent in October, a decrease from 13.5 percent a year ago.

In Morgan, 662 of the county's 5,189 member workforce were unemployed at the end of October.

Woodford County recorded the lowest jobless rate in the Commonwealth at 6.6 percent. It was followed by Webster

See **JOBLESS RATE** Page 4

Final blood drive of year scheduled today at Center

Look for your local blood drive in the lower level of the Morgan County Community Center, in West Liberty, today, Thursday, Dec. 9, from noon until 7 p.m.. This will be the last blood drive in West Liberty this year. The drive is sponsored by Morgan County Kiwanis Club.

Blood donors must be 17-years-old (16 with parental consent), weigh at least 110 pounds, be in general good health and meet additional requirements. Sixteen-year-old donors must have a signed parental permission slip, which can be found on the Kentucky Blood center's web site: www.kybloodcenter.org.

The Kentucky Blood Center, serving more than half of Kentucky's counties, is a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring a safe, adequate blood supply for patients at nearly 70 Kentucky hospitals and clinics. KBC relies on volunteers to collect 400 units of blood per day to meet area patients' needs. Over the last year KBC distributed nearly 130,000 units of blood and blood products.

Cops for Kids accepting letters from needy for toys

Morgan County's Cops for Kids are accepting letters from anyone requesting assistance for Christmas toys for their child(ren) this year. Letters must include the following: name, address, telephone, reason for assistance, and how many children in the household. Please send your letters to: Morgan County Cops for Kids, P.O. Box 935, West Liberty, Ky. 41472. ALL LETTERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY DECEMBER 15, 2010. If you don't believe you can have your letter in before the deadline you can call Lowell at 495-5566 or Scott at 743-7805 or any other Cops for Kid member.

This year's Cops for Kids charity basketball game was a little different from last year; instead of one game and two teams, 10 teams participated for a total of five basketball games. Thanks to the local businesses and organizations that entered teams: Morgan County ARH, Mountain Telephone, Standafer Builders, Napa Auto Parts, County and State Maintenance Departments, Eastern Kentucky Correctional Complex, Little Sandy Correctional Complex, the volunteer firefighters that make up the Morgan County Smoke Eaters, and the law enforcement officers and personnel that makes up the Morgan County Law Dogs.

Cops for Kids also extends its thanks to all the sponsors who have helped throughout the year. Thanks to Jackie Mayberry and Zach Haney for helping referee the early games. And a special thank you to Coach Matthew Perry for donating his time to be a referee.

The winner of the Sig Sauer P90 Pistol raffle was Johnny McClure. Thanks to all the businesses who donated door prizes.

Cops for Kids would also like to thank EKCC for donating some 13 inch TV's and game systems. The televisions will be sold for \$20 each to help raise funds for toys; if you are interested in buying one, you can call Lowell at 495-5566.



Year's biggest?

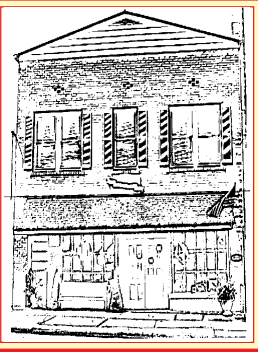
David Wayne Nickell is not one to swipe things. But after spotting these giant turnips in Roger Nickell's turnip patch, he couldn't resist. One weighed 7 pounds, the other 8 3/4 pounds and measured 30 inches around, the biggest ones brought to the LVC office this year, maybe ever. David said Roger and Linda are the best farmers he knows and says "keep up the hard work, cuz." He also promised not to swipe any more of their turnips.

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