

City's annual Memorial Day service to honor war dead, aid veterans

BY TIM HASTINGS
Retired U. S. Army Sergeant Bill Hatfield said Johnston City will honor those who died in service and host a veterans' benefits outreach at 9 a.m. on Memorial Day, Monday, May 27, at the war memorial on Broadway.

"It's important we let the community know that . . . one day a year, every name on this [war memorial] wall

deserves to be spoken," Hatfield affirmed. "They gave their lives—some in combat and some just in uniform (it all matters)—to give us the right to live in a free society."

The downtown war memorial is probably best known as the site of the "Lest We Forget" life-size sculpture of a fallen American soldier, crafted by

Johnston City artist and business owner, Jack Batts. Hatfield said U.S. Army Retired First Sergeant Gary Fravel of Thompsonville, will be guest speaker at this year's Memorial Day service. A Desert Storm veteran, Fravel is a past commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars District 15, which is comprised of posts in a dozen Southern Illinois

towns. "The city has invited the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Legion, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), AMVETS and all associated auxiliaries to set up a membership drive in the park across the street from the memorial," Hatfield said. American Legion Veterans' Service officer and retired U.S. Army nurse Patricia Caraker will be there to assist anyone in the community who needs help obtaining veteran benefits. Caraker serves veterans throughout the week at her

office in the Veterans Administration Hospital in Marion. Hatfield encourages veterans to attend and see which organizations they're eligible to join. "If you think for a fraction of a second that you're eligible to join any of these organizations, come see these people and they can steer you in the right direction."

"These organizations help vets," Hatfield said. "We need volunteers to join in order to further assist vets." As an example of service, he said VFW Dis-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)



Retired U. S. Army Sergeant Bill Hatfield stands next to the "Lest We Forget" war memorial in downtown Johnston City. Hatfield is helping plan the city's Memorial Day service and veterans' outreach on Monday, May 27. (Tim Hastings Photo)

Farmers' Market Finds

Johnston City's Farmers' Market offers more than produce. These tin men were spotted on a recent market day (Fridays, 3:00-6:00 pm at 116 E. Broadway Blvd.)

Johnston City cheers, fears total eclipse

BY TIM HASTINGS
"The heavens declare the glory of God." Psalm 19:1
Johnston City youth cheered, danced, and, in one case, cried during the total solar eclipse at 2 p.m. on Monday, April 8. It was the second time in seven years the town witnessed the phenomena.

Two adolescent boys cheered, danced, and ran about excitedly as they watched the four minutes of totality from a shelter at Arrowhead Park. They were among a party of about 20 JC first responders and their families gathered at the park for the eclipse.

Lane Smith, a Johnston City 14-year-old in the par-



Father and son Chris and Joel Ward of Lake Elmo, Minnesota, watch the eclipse from a shelter at Arrowhead Park. (Tim Hastings photo)



Ina Mae McDonald, Murfreesboro, TN, participates in children's activities at the park on eclipse weekend. (Sarah Fletcher photo)

ty of first responders, lay on his back on the cement floor of the park shelter to view the eclipse. "This is the second one I've seen," Smith said. "It was pretty cool both times."

Smith said he watched the 2017 eclipse from the same shelter. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime, or in this case, twice-in-a-lifetime experience," Smith mused.

Another child in the first responder party, Brandon Melton, age six of Johnston City, peeked briefly at totality and then ran back inside the shelter. "I didn't like it," Melton said hoarsely. "I thought the moon was going to suck up power from the sun and then the sun would explode." Minutes after totality ended, Melton regained his composure

and was talking cheerfully about his hobby collecting Pokemon cards. Kevin Lenihan, a manufacturing quality manager from the Chicago suburb of Gurnee, explained the

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)



School district hires assistant superintendent

Current JCHS principal Josh Pietrantoni will become assistant superintendent of Johnston City Schools as part of the district's transition plan to replace Superintendent Kathy Clark. Clark will retire at the end of the 2024-2025 school year. Pietrantoni will assume the role of district superintendent on July 1, 2025.

Pietrantoni began working in the district in 2006 as a special education teacher at Johnston City High School. In 2018, he was hired as assistant principal for both Washington Middle and JCHS. In 2019, he took over as principal at WMS. In 2020, he moved to JCHS, where he has served as principal for the past four years.

According to Superintendent Clark, "Mr. Pietrantoni clearly understands the culture and traditions



Josh Pietrantoni, currently JCHS principal, has been named assistant superintendent for the 2024-25 school year.

in the Johnston City School District, and I am confident that he will carry those onward in even greater and better ways."

At its April meeting, the school board hired Kristi Schell as JCHS principal to fill the position vacated by Pietrantoni.

The district also hired Becky Vancil as director of transportation to oversee

a new bus system in the coming school year—part of its effort to bring student transportation services back in-house. Current plans include leasing as many as 10 buses for five years. The district has used independent bus companies to provide transportation for more than 40 years. Since 2022, all students have had access to free transportation, regardless of where they reside in the district.

In other school-related news, the superintendent reported at a recent business leaders meeting that the district plans to build a greenhouse at JCHS, and the next phase of construction and renovations at Jefferson School will begin soon. Tentatively, these projects are scheduled for completion by July 2025.



Brandon Melton, age 6, of Johnston City, regains his composure after a frightening eclipse experience.

FROM PAGE 1...

Eclipse observers converge on JCity

uniqueness of the event as he set up a telescope with solar filter near the public gazebo on Broadway. "It (2017) was a great eclipse, but this one's going to be better because the moon's position is a little closer to the earth. So, it's going to obscure more of the sun and totality is going to last four minutes," Lenihan said.

"In 2017, totality only lasted just over two minutes," stated Lenihan. "And [this year] it's going to be much darker too because the shadow on the earth is going to be broader. The closest area to us that's going to be lit is a mile away."

The amateur astronomer said he was especially looking forward to seeing the sun's corona, or atmosphere visible during totality. "The corona is one of the most fascinating structures in the solar system," Lenihan said. "It's very delicate. It almost looks like a glowing cobweb of gas."

Rick Hendrix, retired Redi-Mix driver from the Chicago suburb of Crestwood, said he watched the 2017 eclipse from the Stuckey's gas station and convenience store near I-57, and decided to return to the same spot for the April 8, 2024, event. Hendrix said he came better prepared this time. "We didn't have 'nothing' before, except those little eclipse glasses," Hendrix said. "Now I've picked up solar binoculars and a little telescope with a solar filter on it."

Hendrix, his son, and two of their friends monitored the eclipse from lawn chairs under a portable cloth pop-

up shelter on a grassy area near Stuckey's. "We asked permission to set up here and they said we were welcome," Hendrix shared.

Matthew Cook, a registered nurse from Titusville, Florida, set up his telescope in Arrowhead Park a couple of hours before totality. "I'm hoping to see some of the mountains of the moon back-lit by the solar eclipse, and maybe some solar flares" Cook said.

Brian Sacapanio, DJ for Music In Motion, broadcast relevant hits from a portable studio set up in Arrowhead Park. His playlist included Bonnie Tyler's "Total Eclipse of the Heart," the Rolling Stones' "I Want To Paint It Black," and Ozzy Osbourne's "Bark at the Moon." Sacapanio also announced a countdown to totality.

Besides local groups, the campground attracted out-of-state visitors and vehicles with license plates from Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and many others. Around 200 campers and other visitors watched the eclipse at the park.

Perfect viewing conditions welcomed visitors. Eclipse Day came sunny with highs in the 70s, while rain and clouds dominated the skies the next four days.

The next total solar eclipse visible from Johnston City will occur in 75 years, one visiting amateur astronomer noted.



Lunch Bunch in the Park
June 3 - Aug. 2 - 11:30 am - 12:30 pm

Memorial Day Service (CONT. FROM P. 1)

district 15 is hosting a golf scramble in Benton on June 24. Proceeds will benefit veterans and their families.

A Johnston City native, Hatfield was disabled in Desert Storm, is active in VFW District 15, and serves on the City Council.

Veterans' organizations wishing to have a table at the outreach should contact the Johnston City Clerk's office at 618-983-6651.



EDITORIAL

Time to rethink litter, recycling

BY JIMMY DEAN

Several years ago, when my oldest daughter started teaching, she was sponsor of a club that required some community service work. One of the projects she selected for the club was participating in a community beautification day in which members of the club helped pick up trash.

My daughter got an up-close and personal look at discarded cans, cups, wrappers, bottles, etc., and it changed her (and my) thinking on litter and recycling. Before that day I hadn't thought much about this. Fast forward to now, and it is a subject that's pretty high on my concern list.

Unless there's a down-pour with lightning, I walk every morning. I can tell you people's favorite beer (Budweiser), drink (five-hour energy) and candy bar (Milky Way) by the trash left along the route I walk. Sometimes dirty diapers and unmentionables are scattered along the streets

near two schools.

It amazes me the amount and the whereabouts of people who discard their garbage when traveling in a vehicle. A railroad crossing seems, for some reason, to be a favorite depository for beer bottles. The amount of glass in the ditch and on the street where I walk makes me sometimes wonder if a large party took place there the night before.

Some days I will pick up the trash. Other days I take my granddaughter for a walk, and we recycle cans so she can learn.

At least twice a week, I take milk jugs and other plastics, along with newspapers, to either the county pick-up in Marion, or Centerstone in West Frankfort.

We don't produce much plastic waste; but a comment once made by the county recycling director got my attention. He said, "If everyone would bring in just a few milk cartons, cans, and other things, it would add up to keeping a large amount of debris out of the rivers."

Think about that the next time you have some recyclables to discard; then, take them to the correct place.



Jimmy Dean is a freelance writer and a former Mayor of Johnston City. He can be reached at jrdean@mchsi.com.

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Randy Carney, pastor

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Middle school students write Mother's Day tributes

Mother's Day gift-giving ideas for kids

BY RACHEL E. HAYES
5TH GRADE

I think we all know that Mother's Day is a special day to celebrate our mothers, grandmothers, and mother figures in our lives, and it will be here soon. If you're a kid, like me, and don't have a lot of money to buy something special, here are some ideas for a Mother's Day gift that won't cost a lot.

One thing you could do is make a bouquet with wildflowers. Don't worry about whether you know if it's a wildflower or a weed, your mothers and grandmothers won't care. It will still look great, and they're sure to love it. You could also make a card or a crafty gift. My mom always tells me that homemade things are her favorite. Most [mothers] especially love crafts with

hand prints from their little ones. Another thing you could do is make a special meal. If you need to, you could ask siblings or an adult for some help. They will be glad you did it. Another idea is that maybe you could get someone you know to take a picture of you and the person you are celebrating. That would be special, too. One last idea would be to make a coupon book. Coupons could say, "Good for one free hug" or "Good for one chore of choice" or something like that.

If you use some of these ideas, or some of your own, anything you do to celebrate the women in your lives will be special to them. They will all be thankful you thought of them on their special day. I hope these ideas get your own ideas flowing.

One last thing...Happy Mother's Day.

Thoughts about Moms

BY JAYDYN GIBBS

Mother's Day is special to all moms. Moms are there to teach us how to grow. Yes, I know it may be rough, but our moms teach us things like how to walk, how to talk, how to read, write, cook, clean, and many other things. We may think that she does not like us and that she hates us, but deep down inside she loves us with all of her heart. Don't ever be afraid to go to your mom for anything. She will be there to listen to you and help you in any way she can. She will always be there to hug you and hold your hand. So, this Mother's Day, you should make her day. Tell her thank you for all that she does for you. Buy her a gift, especially chocolate. You could even get her a stuffed animal that says "I love you". Tell her you are sorry for all that



Washington Middle School Librarian Margie Sanders uses monthly issues of the *Arrow* to teach students about newspapers and how they are produced. These Mother's Day tributes were written by two of her students.

you have done wrong that made her upset. Write her a poem like, "Roses are red, violets are blue, I will forever be thankful for you." You can make her a card. Have fun with your mom. Kids, be thankful for her, be kind to her, love your mom the way she deserves to be loved. Make sure to put a smile on her face. Trust

me, I know how all of this feels. I do these things for my mom, especially when I have been bad and made her upset. Always remember that your mom loves you so much. So, to all of the moms out there: Thank you for all that you do for us. Happy Mother's Day to all of you!

Love, Jaydyn Gibbs

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

A son witnesses his mother's faith, action

BY RICK DITCH

Many are familiar with the biblical account of prophet Elijah fleeing his homeland of Israel and going north all the way to Sidon. There he encounters a widow who provides for him, and by so doing, saves herself and her son. In homage to Mother's Day, let's look at this with particular interest, seeing the events through the eyes of a young son, who watches and learns from his single-parent rearing.

God has revealed to Elijah that there is a particular widow in Sidon whom He has prepared to provide for the prophet. Elijah calls out to her as he arrives in the city, barely inside the

city gate. She has been gathering sticks with which she plans to build a fire and make a single piece of bread with the last of her flour and oil. When Elijah asks for a small bit of bread, she replies, "As the Lord, your God lives, I do not have bread; only a handful of flour in a bin and a little oil in a jar--just enough for my son and I to have a bit to eat before we die."

The statement "the Lord, your God" reveals that she knows Elijah is a foreigner from Israel; it reveals to Elijah that she is the widow whom God sent him to find. Elijah then tells her to make a small cake and feed him first, then care for herself

and her son. "The Lord God of Israel" says that if she does so, her flour will not run out nor the oil run dry. This is where the young son sees his mother's great faith and obedience. He sees the resulting miracle of a bin of replenishing flour and an oil jar that does not run dry, as God promised through the prophet. The son also sees his mother exercise her gift of hospitality and provide a place of shelter for the displaced prophet, as he is allowed to stay in the upstairs room of their home. That places Elijah in their home, when the son later becomes deathly sick and dies of his illness. Elijah takes the dead boy in

receive God's blessing. So, this Mother's Day, let's join in the enthusiasm of the widow's son. Let's deliberately celebrate the lives of mothers both past and present, who have exhibited love, patience, integrity, and faith. Certainly, their lives have influenced ours.

Rick Ditch has been a member of our community nearly all his life and serves the Lord in the First United Methodist Church by filling the roles of teacher and lay speaker, as needed.



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(618) 952-1280
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(618) 983-6455
Larry Stevens, pastor

***First Christian Church**
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c/o JCity Church (see above)

***JCity Center for Hope and Renewal**
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***Manna Mission**
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**Active members of Johnston City Ministerial Alliance*

his arms and prays to God to bring the child back to life. In the same way that Jesus restored life to Lazarus, God restored the life of this child. So now, the faith and action of the mother are revealed to her son's eyes in that he not only sees her as a loving mother, but also that his very life and breath depend on the extension of God's blessing.

Jesus teaches us in Luke 4:23-27, that it is those who believe God's message who



Special Events

MAY 2
Info mtg. for incoming Kindergarten parents, Jefferson School, 6 pm

MAY 3
(Alternate time) Info mtg. for incoming Kindergarten parents, Jefferson, 9 am

MAY 8
Sports physicals, JCHS, 8:30 am - 2:00 pm

MAY 9
Lunch Bunch volunteer mtg., JCity Church, 6:30 pm

MAY 10
Lincoln School Summer Dreams / Ice Cream Carnival, 5-7 pm

MAY 12 - Mother's Day

MAY 14
High School Baccalaureate, JC United Pentecostal Church, 7 pm

MAY 15-22
Early school dismissal

MAY 16
Washington Middle School Club Night, Book Fair & Mostaccioli, 5-7 pm

MAY 17
JCHS Graduation, 7:30 PM

MAY 21
8th Grade Promotion, 6 pm

MAY 27 - Memorial Day
Commemorative service at Fallen Soldier Memorial, 9:00 am

MAY 28-31
Lunch Bunch provides meals for summer school students (meals in park by Scout Cabin begin June 3)

Weekly Events

MONDAYS
SIMI (Southern Illinois Men of Integrity), 7 pm. Call 618-952-1272 for details.

THURSDAYS
Food pantry open, First Christian Church, 505 E. Broadway, 3-5 pm

FRIDAYS
Farmers Market, 3-6 pm

SATURDAYS
Free drive-thru meal for the community, JCity Church, 609 Monroe, 5:30-6:00 pm (ending May 18)

Monthly Events

1ST TUESDAY
Business Leaders Mtg., Andresen's, 9:00 am

1ST THURSDAY
Ministerial Alliance Mtg., JCity Center, 6:00 pm

1ST & 3RD TUESDAYS
Lions Club, JCity Church, 6:00 pm

2ND MONDAY
Library Board Mtg., Public Library, 6:30 pm

2ND & 4TH TUESDAYS
City Council Mtg., Scout Cabin, 5:00 pm

3RD MONDAY
Planning Commission Mtg., JCity Church, 4:00 pm

3RD THURSDAY
Commodity Distribution/Food Pantry, First United Methodist Church, 10 am - 1 pm (emergency food available every Thursday)

School Board Mtg., Unit Office, 1113 Grand Ave., 7 pm

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JCity SPORTS NEWS

Year-End Review

School Sports & More

BY DOUG HANCOCK
As this school year quickly comes to a close, here's a quick review of spring sports. Our JCHS softball squad, ranked 18th in Class 2A, is sporting a 17-5 record, and will be a force to reckon with when the regionals begin. In baseball, the varsity is stinging after a 3-2 loss to conference rival Vienna, but cooperative weather will find the Indians eager to get on the winning side.

Moving on to track, let's start with WMS girls' and boys' teams. These young athletes achieved personal records at a recent track meet in Farrington, with the girls' team placing 2nd and the boys' team finishing 3rd. One WMS track star, Jack Carmine, a fleet-footed hurdler, holds #1 state ranking in Class L, plus #1 in Illinois (any class), and 21st in the nation. Wow! At JCHS, both squads have upcoming conference meets, which the *Arrow* hopes to

cover in the next issue.

But wait, there's more. The JCHS Bass Fishing team placed 12th out of 51 boats at a recent tournament on the Lake of Egypt, netting 10.81 lbs. And let's not fail to mention Ava Anderson, who has achieved recognition as a three-time Scholar Bowl all-stater. Plus, Coach Trevor Stanley was chosen as a 2023-2024 Coach of the Year by the Illinois High School Scholastic Bowl Coaches Association, an honor given to only three individuals in the state.

There'll be more to talk about on the monthly *Arrow* podcast after the April 29 JCHS Awards Night, as many worthy seniors are receiving scholarships.

In other news, sports physicals are available Wednesday, May 8, 8:30 am - 2:00 pm in the JCHS CNA lab. This physical DOES NOT fulfill the physical requirement of the State of Il-



JCHS Seniors Hope Newell and Carsyn Clark paint a dugout at Arrowhead Ball Field, April 23. This was the school's annual "Senior Give-Back Day." About 60 seniors provided community service throughout Johnston City.

linois for incoming 6th and 9th grade students, but it will count as a sports physical for any student. A \$10 donation is expected.

And finally, since not all students pursue traditional sports, WMS Club Night is May 16, from 5-7 pm. The event includes a mostaccioli dinner and various games and robotics. Cost is \$5 per person; children under 5 are free.

JC Junior League Baseball/Softball

Opening Day

May 4, 2024

- Parade begins at 10:00 AM from the JCHS parking lot.
- Opening ceremony and flag raising will take place on A Field at the completion of the parade.
- Team pictures can be taken by Shooting Star Photography.
 - Games begin at noon
- Concession Stand with new items, prices and Barney Moore BBQ!!!

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