



District hires former news anchor as PR coordinator

In a recent meeting, the Board of the Johnston City Community Unit School District #1 hired Brooke Schlyer, former news anchor at WSIL-TV, as Community School Public Relations Coordinator (grant funded).

Schlyer hails from Michigan, and graduated from San Diego State University. She moved to southern Illinois in 2018 to be closer to family. "I got to live out my dream of being a TV news anchor, something I chased since my junior year of high school," Schlyer posted on social media upon her departure from Channel 3. She added, "I truly believe God brought me here to meet my husband, Nick, who's from southern Illinois." About her new job, Schlyer said, "I feel so grateful to be offered this position. There are so many positives happening at the Johnston City School District both inside the classroom and beyond. I can't wait to share those



Brooke Schlyer, formerly news anchor at WSIL-TV, has been hired by the school district as Community School Public Relations Coordinator.

stories with parents and the community." The position of Public Relations Coordinator is supported by the federally funded Full-Service Community School Grant.

School initiative to assess community needs, to target student success

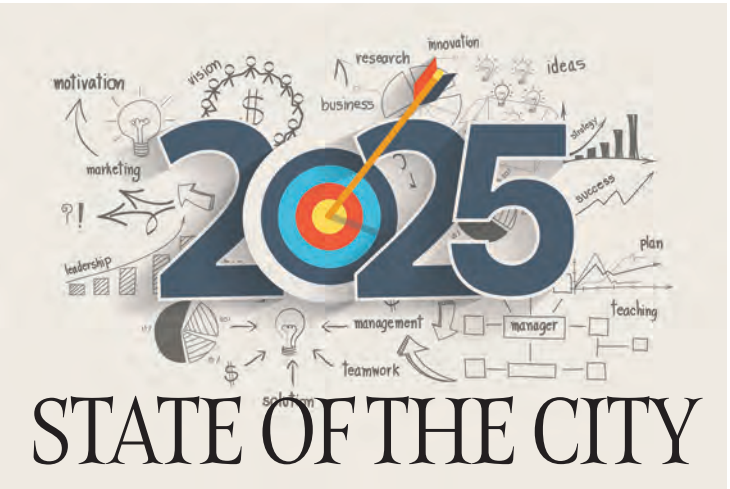
BY ARROW NEWS STAFF
With a goal of partnering with families and community-based organizations to provide support for students' success, the Johnston City School District hired Heather Miller and Ronda Koch as community school coordinators using funding from a grant received in July. The Full-Service Community School Grant is a federal program that will provide \$5 million to Johnston City schools over the next five years. Miller shared that this "unique grant aims to transform schools into community hubs that support not only students, but also their families and local businesses. By creating a network of wraparound services, the initiative addresses academic, health, and social needs, helping to build a stronger, more connected community."

The first task of the coordinators is to discover what our community really needs. To achieve that goal, the district will conduct a needs assessment to lay the groundwork for the program. "We'll be talking to a wide group of people—students, school staff and teachers, community and business leaders, people from social service agencies, and families to determine the needs," Koch said. "Then we'll determine as a community how we're going to address those needs." Miller added, "We want to start with services for the students and work our way out to the families." Miller holds master's degrees in both Emergency Management and Human Services. She and her husband have been a part of Johnston City for 10 years and are raising two boys here. She commented, "We

are grateful for how this wonderful, small town has embraced us as its own." Koch brings over 30 years of experience in education, communications, social services, and public health. She spent 13 years as a public health director, has worked with child protective agencies, and was owner/manager of a drug and alcohol training and consulting company specializing in adjudicated youth. She earned a bachelor's degree in communications, specializing in public relations, and a master's degree in workforce education, both from SIU-C. Approximately 1,059 students attend pre-K through grade 12 in the district. For more information about the community schools program, contact Miller at hmliller@jcindians.org or Koch at rkoch@jcindians.org.



Newly hired Community School Coordinators, Ronda Koch (L), Heather Miller (R) working temporarily in Unit Office before settling into new offices at Washington Middle School and Johnston City High School.



Growing Hometown Pride

Why should we who live in Johnston City be proud of our community? *Arrow* Reporter Tim Hastings recently interviewed two city officials for their take on Johnston City's progress in the past year. Here's what they had to say. [We would love your input as well and invite your comments on JCity Center's Facebook page.]

Planning Commission chair: Football success a win for city

Johnston City Planning Commission Chairman Ron Kee believes the high school football team's recent advance to the final four in the state championship boosts our community's morale. "Football is in the DNA of this town," Kee said. "These boys in the past two years have done very well. It helps people come together. They get excited." Kee said student volunteers from the high school inspire residents as well.

"They've painted fences in town and they've decorated downtown windows," Kee said. "I feel like the kids take pride in giving back. It inspires some of us older ones." Kee is a 1972 graduate of Johnston City High School. **First step to growth—Waste water treatment study** Both Johnston City Mayor Doug Dobbins and Planning Commission Chairman Ron Kee agree that, for growth to occur, the city must deal with what's going

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

Discover 'The Yardbrary'

Little Free Library offers books for readers of all ages

Looking for a fun and enriching way to keep yourself and your family engaged during wintertime when nights come early and weather turns cold? Visit the brand-new Little Free Library in Johnston City and pick up a few books to enjoy. Little Free Libraries have become a worldwide sensation since they first appeared in 2010, with the nonprofit organization officially founded in Wisconsin in 2012. Today, there are over 175,000 Little Free Libraries in more than 120 countries, from Iceland to Pakistan, offering communities a simple yet powerful way to share books, foster connections, and inspire a lifelong love of reading. Thanks to a grant from the Little Free Library Impact Grant Program, Johnston City residents Tim and Jenny Ditch have joined this global movement by installing The Yardbrary at 713 West 5th Street. The new Little Free Library is officially registered and marked on the organization's map at www.littlefreelibrary.org. "We've loved finding Little Free Libraries in other towns during our travels. Our daughter especial-



ly enjoyed picking out a new book each time we came across one," says Jenny Ditch. "When I learned about the Impact Grant program, I knew I had to apply so our community could have its own." Visitors are encouraged to "take a book or leave a book," though The Yardbrary is currently well-stocked thanks to generous donations this fall. "Whether or not you have a book to contribute, you're welcome to stop by and browse." Jenny ensures that there's always a selection of books for all ages—kids, teens, and adults alike. "You may even find small surprises like stickers, toys, games, or puzzles," she adds. For updates, photos of new additions, and more,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

State of the City

FROM PAGE 1

down the drain. The city's aging waste water treatment facility is currently near maximum capacity. The mayor explained that the first step to addressing that problem, an engineering study of the waste water treatment system, is now approved and funded.

"One thing we're really proud of is a grant for some \$65,000 for a study to see if we need a new sewer plant and all the lines associated with it," Dobbins said. The grant will cover 100 percent of the cost of the study. Upon securing the engineering firm's recommendations, the city will seek funding for whatever is deemed necessary for future growth. "I think that's very important because we'd like to expand the city on the west side of the interstate," Dobbins said.

Kee believes that waste treatment plant improvements could cost between \$500,000 and \$1 million. He claims that the planning commission could help the city acquire a grant to pay 90 percent of project cost.

Mayor Dobbins recounted that the city has made progress demolishing dilapidated houses. "We did

about six this year including two the landowners did themselves," he said. "There are ten houses right now in various stages of the demolition process."

In other progress, Futiva has installed fiber optic cable giving all businesses and schools access to high-speed Internet. He also mentioned how other companies are vying to bring similar service to other parts of the city.

Improvement are not limited to the community's infrastructure and housing, but also include recreational facilities. The mayor shared that workers have been preparing space for four pickleball courts and two basketball courts at Arrowhead Lake and Campground.

Concerning economic growth, efforts to attract new businesses continue according Dobbins. Kee said members of the planning commission, along with the mayor, are reaching out to businesses seeking to expand or relocate to Johnston City. The city is also considering installing an electronic sign downtown to advertise city events.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR



January Events

JAN. 7
Business Leaders Meet-N-Greet, Andresen's, 9 am

JAN. 14
City Council, Scout Cabin, 5:00 pm

JAN. 16
Commodity Distribution/Food Pantry, First United Methodist, 9:30 am - 12:30 pm (emergency food available every Thu.)

School Board Mtg., Unit Office, 6:00 pm

JAN. 20
NO SCHOOL - MLK Day

JC Planning Commission Meeting, Scout Cabin, 5 pm

JAN. 22
Prime-Timers, JCity Church, 9:30 am

Rotary Meeting, Indigo Realty Office, 4 pm

JAN. 24
Half day of school

JAN. 28
City Council, Scout Cabin, 5:00 pm

February Events

FEB. 4
Business Leaders Meet-N-Greet, Andresen's, 9 am

FEB. 5
Rotary Club - Lunch @ Andresen's, Noon

Blood Drive (sponsored by Rotary Club), Scout Cabin, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

FEB. 11
City Council, Scout Cabin, 5:00 pm

FEB. 14 - VALENTINE'S DAY
Half day of school

FEB. 17
NO SCHOOL-PRESIDENT'S DAY

JC Planning Commission Meeting, Scout Cabin, 5 pm

FEB. 18
Create Better Health Nutrition Ed. (cooking class), JCity Center, 6:00-7:30 pm

FEB. 19
Rotary Meeting, Indigo Realty Office, 4 pm

FEB. 20
Commodity Distribution/Food Pantry, First United

Methodist, 9:30 am - 12:30 pm (emergency food available every Thu.)

School Board Mtg., Unit Office, 6:00 pm

FEB. 25
City Council, Scout Cabin, 5:00 pm

Create Better Health Nutrition Ed. (cooking class), JCity Center, 6:00-7:30 pm

FEB. 26
Prime-Timers, JCity Church, 1:00 pm

Weekly Events

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

THURSDAYS
Food pantry/clothes closet open, First Christian, 505 E. Broadway, 3:30-5:30 pm

SATURDAYS
Free Community Meal (drive-thru), JCity Church, 5:30-6:00 pm (call 618-983-5254 by 5:00 if picking up 4 or more meals)

CONTINUED FROM P. 1
Little Library

follow The Yardbrary on Facebook and Instagram. As Jenny puts it, "Our goal is to make sure everyone can find something fun and different to read each time they visit."

Visit The Yardbrary today and become a part of this wonderful community experience.

U of I to offer free cooking classes

The University of Illinois Extension will offer free nutrition education sessions (cooking classes) focused on creating better health, February 18, 25, and March 4. Sessions will run 6:00-7:30 and are open to the whole family. The location, either JCity Center or JCity Church, will be determined by class size. For information, call 618-952-1272.

ARK
INSURANCE GROUP, INC.
Home Auto Life Health

Office: (618) 983-8000 Fax: (618) 983-8001

1109 Grand Ave.
Johnston City, IL 62951
arkinsurance@ark4me.com

K.D. CRAIN & SONS, INC.
13751 PROSPERITY ROAD
JOHNSTON CITY, IL 62951
PHONE 618/983-8606
FAX 618/983-5896

OFFICE: DAN CRAIN 618/983-8606
618/988-8873 Home
618/967-8761 Cell

EXCAVATING AND CONSTRUCTION

MURMAN & WILSON
FUNERAL HOME

KYLE SAVANT • RAYMOND SAVANT • ERIK SAVANT

618.983.6542

211 W. BROADWAY JOHNSTON CITY • MURMANANDWILSON.COM

Banterra

PROUDLY SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES SINCE 1975

908 GRAND AVE. | JOHNSTON CITY | 618-983-6925
BANTERRA.BANK | 866-226-8377 | MEMBER FDIC

JCity Church
FREE WILL BAPTIST

Randy Carney, pastor
randy@jcitychurch.com

609 Monroe Ave. (Broadway & Monroe)
PO Box 55 | Johnston City, IL 62951
jcitychurchfwb@gmail.com | www.jcity.church | 618-983-5254

Christ & Community First

Sunday School 9:30 | Morning Worship 10:30 | Wed. Night 7:00

futiva

Providing High Speed Internet Service

futiva.biz 618-736-2901

Coulson's
HEATING & COOLING

Since 1961

983-8133

Heating & Air Conditioning
Amana



Family Worship Center
400 W. 13th St.
Johnston City, IL,
(618) 952-1280
Pastors Brad & Kelly Dexter

First Baptist Church
401 E. 7th St.
Johnston City, IL 62951
(618) 983-6455
Larry Stevens, pastor

***First Christian Church**
505 E. Broadway Blvd.
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-6474
Adam King, pastor

***First United Methodist Church**
400 W. Broadway
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-5150
Sherry Cisneros, pastor

***Heritage Fellowship**
(Church of God of Prophecy)
308 W. 12th St.
Johnston City, IL 62951
Pastors Gaylon &
Dawn Stewart

***JCity Church**
(Free Will Baptist)
609 Monroe
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-5254
Dr. Randy Carney, pastor

Johnston City United Pentecostal Church
1101 W. 10th
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-5938
Brandon Abernathy, pastor

***St. Paul's Catholic Church**
1103 Washington Ave.
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-5073
Father Brian Barker

***Stiritz United Methodist Church**
Sherry Cisneros, pastor

***Washington Ave. Baptist Church**
9th and Washington
Johnston City, IL 62951
Barry Robertson, pastor
618-694-2995

Other Ministries

***JC Kids' Lunch Bunch**
c/o JCity Church (see above)

***JCity Center for Hope and Renewal**
504 E. Broadway Blvd.
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-952-1272

***Manna Mission**
306 E. Broadway Blvd.
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-6262

*Active members of Johnston City Ministerial Alliance



The churches of Johnston City
working together to serve our
community as the
"hands and feet of Jesus."

Helping residents of the Johnston City School District
Call 618-952-1272 for information



Paul E Lawrence, Agent

305 E Broadway PO Box 118
Johnston City, IL 62951
Bus: 618-983-6953
paul.lawrence.by9j@statefarm.com



Darren & Shelley Pyle

1008 W. Broadway Blvd.
Johnston City, IL 62951 (618) 983-7777
pylefuneralhome.com

Washington Avenue Baptist Church



9th and Washington
Johnston City, IL 62951

Barry Robertson, pastor
618-694-2995



1012 W Broadway
404 S Logan
202 N Christopher Rd
21394 Shawneetown Rd
1413 S Park Ave



New Wineskins for a New Year

A DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT BY KEITH FLETCHER

"And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins." Luke 5:37 NIV

As the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Eve, we celebrate the passing of the old year and the beginning of a new one. Hope-filled people who faced many trials in 2024 look forward to a 2025 with less pain and suffering. More anxious folk anticipate things will only get worse. It's the glass half-full or half-empty old saw. Some embrace change and uncertainty with hopefulness, while others fear loss of control when their apple carts overturn. Why must things always change?

In the verse quoted above, Jesus addressed people satisfied with them-

selves and life as they knew it. They believed they were right with God because they claimed to keep so many rules—not only the ones God made, but also the man-made ones, even those that obscured kindness, love, and the goodness of God. These people felt threatened by the new teaching Jesus brought. He endangered both the status quo and their power structure. What Jesus brought did not fit into their "wineskin" (container)—the paradigm of a performance-based religion. This paradigm offered no real solutions for those genuinely seeking God's answers to life's problems.

In the new year, the problems we face won't be solved by the same old solutions. Admit it. Those solutions didn't really work in the past. That's why we brought those problems

with us into 2025. What we need is a new container or paradigm, one that will be pliable enough to handle the growing complexities we face in a new year and in an ever-changing world. Old wineskins blow up when filled with fresh wine. New wineskins offer hope for growth and change—optimism instead of fear. They allow room for God to fill us with faith-based confidence and a new perspective on old problems.

We cannot deny that the new year will be just that—*new*. No matter how good or bad last year was for us, 2025 will be better, or worse, or just more of the same. Only God knows. That's why we must trust Him to order our days. May He fill us with fresh hope for an uncertain future.

Keith Fletcher is director of JCity Center and former pastor of JCity Church.

FROM P. 4

The Magic Train

It was a similar combination of emotions that I'd observed at Wilson Gymnasium and many other gyms on a Friday or Saturday night—minus the illness of a young boy.

The team, coaches and fans wanted to give Gus Gillespie and his family a win. Maybe not a who-won-or-who-lost type of win, but a win that might make a family feel good and get their mind off the present for a few minutes. The team couldn't deliver, but that was minor on this night.

Back to the question—Where am I going with this?

Like the Gillespies, our family has also experi-

enced the death of a child. Our hearts go out to all families who have suffered through such loss.

Before our son's death, we used to think basketball, politics, sports in general, and a lot of other things were important. We had the smiles after a big win, the look of anger when we thought we were cheated, and the fuzzy warm feeling of having something good happen for the first time.

Basketball wins and losses come and go. Good feelings, all too often, are replaced with real-life, gut-wrenching tragedies that forever change your life. One day you might be in the gym practicing for the biggest weekend of the season; the next you might be in a hospital willing to

give up everything in life for a miracle to happen.

Moms and dads, hug your kids. Kids, tell your moms and dads how much you love them. Do it now while family members have smiles on their faces and good feelings in their hearts. Do it every day—not just when you feel it is needed.

After a final horn has ended a basketball game, real-life family stories remain, with chapters neither the Gillespie family nor any family can remove.

That Magic Train found a place in people's hearts. For many years, Marshall County annually held a Magic Train Basketball Shootout in Gunner's memory, with proceeds helping children facing cancer.



Retail

PART TIME CASHIER: Johnston City Food Shop. Three to four days a week and rotate weekends. 20-25 hours a week. Available for any shift between 8am and 8pm. Applications available at the front of the store.

FULL-TIME SALES ASSOCIATE Johnston City ZX.

Education

TEACHERS, 2nd Grade (2): Send letter of interest, resume with references, and proof of certification to Mrs. Kathy Clark, Superintendent, Johnston City C.U.S.D. #1, 1113 Grand Ave., Johnston City, IL 62951.

PARAPROFESSIONAL Lincoln School: See jcindians.org for link to application. Return application and proof of certification to Mrs.

Kathy Clark, Superintendent, Johnston City C.U.S.D. #1, 1113 Grand Ave., Johnston City, IL 62951.

COACH—High School Assistant Baseball Coach: Send letter of interest to Mrs. Lindsey Bush, IHSA Athletic Director, Johnston City High School, 1500 Jefferson Avenue, Johnston City, IL 62951.

Transportation

BUS MONITOR, SUBSTITUTE BUS DRIVER, SUBSTITUTE BUS MONITOR: See website for links to the applications for these positions; return application to Mrs. Rebecca Vancil, Director of Transportation, Johnston City C.U.S.D. #1, 1113 Grand Ave., Johnston City, IL 62951.

Food Service

OPAA! is now hiring Kitchen Staff and Substitute Kitchen Staff. Please click the links at jcindians.org for more information and to apply for these positions.

Miscellaneous

HOUSE MANAGER: Bliishaven, 801 West 14th St., Johnston City. Full-time, 8-hour shift, weekends as needed, overnight shift.

Job Summary: We are seeking a dedicated House Manager to oversee the daily operations of a private residence. The ideal candidate will be responsible for managing household staff, coordinating events, and ensuring the smooth running of the household.

JCity Arrow News. Published monthly by JCity Center for Hope and Renewal, Inc.

504 E. Broadway Blvd., Johnston City, IL 62951, 618-952-1272, jcencycenter@gmail.com, www.jcity.center

CREATIVE DIRECTOR Keith Fletcher
MANAGING EDITOR Sarah Fletcher
REPORTERS Tim Hastings, Doug Hancock, Margie Sanders
PODCAST CO-HOST Doug Hancock
SPONSOR RELATIONS Margie Sanders
DISTRIBUTION TEAM Phil Crosby, Doug Hancock
Don & Brenda McChesney
STUDENT REPORTER/VIDEO EDITOR Ben Johnson

BOARD MEMBERS
Keith Fletcher, chairman
Mike Tyson, secretary
Brenda McChesney, treasurer
Cris Corzine-McCloskey
Randy McIntosh
Marta Phillips

To submit news items, story ideas, events, employment/volunteer opportunities, donations, please call 618-952-1272 or email jcencycenter@gmail.com. All items for publication must pertain to events, individuals, or jobs located within Johnston City, Illinois.

Unless otherwise noted, all content in JCity Arrow News (podcast & print edition) is Copyright © 2024 of JCity Center for Hope and Renewal, Inc. All rights reserved.

To become a sponsor, call 618-952-1272 or email jcencycenter@gmail.com.



Friday (1/3/2025)

Coed Varsity Wrestling, Murdale
Tourney (A) 2 pm, Mult. Opp.

Saturday (1/4)

Coed Varsity Wrestling, Murdale
Tourney (A) 9 pm, Mult. Opp.
Boys Middle School Basketball
v. Ewing (A) 4 pm @ Waltonville

Monday (1/6)

Girls Middle School Basketball
(A) 6 pm, Sesser-Valier
Girls Varsity Basketball
(A) 6 pm, Hamilton Co.

Tuesday (1/7)

Coed Varsity Bowling
(H) 3:30 pm, Herrin
Boys Varsity Basketball
(A) 6 pm, Galatia

Wednesday (1/8)

Girls Middle School Basketball
(A) 6 pm, Hamilton Co.

Coed Varsity Wrestling, JC
Triangular (H) 6 pm, Mult. Opp.

Thursday (1/9)

Girls Varsity Basketball
(A) 6 pm, Christopher
Girls Middle School Basketball
(H) 6 pm, Goreville
Boys Middle School Basketball
(A) 6 pm, Vienna

Saturday (1/11)

Coed Varsity Wrestling, Steve
Johnston Memorial Invit. in
Paducah (A) 10 am, Mult. Opp.
Girls Varsity Basketball
(A) 1 pm, Galatia
Boys Varsity Basketball (Fresh.,
JV, Var.) (A) 5 pm, Christopher

Monday (1/13)

Boys Middle School Basketball
(A) 5:30 pm, Zeigler-Royalton
Boys JV & Varsity Basketball
(A) 6 pm, Thompsonville

JANUARY 2025
CALENDAR OF ALL SCHOOL SPORTS

Girls Varsity Basketball
(H) 6 pm, Goreville
Girls Middle School Basketball
(A) 6 pm, Central Jr. High (WF)

Tuesday (1/14)

Coed Varsity Bowling
(H) 3:30 pm. OPEN
Boys JV & Varsity Basketball
(H) 6 pm, Webber
Boys Middle School Basketball
(A) 6 pm, Unity Point
Coed Vars. Wrestling, Harrisburg
Triangular (A) 6 pm, Mult. Opp.

Wednesday (1/15)

Coed Varsity Wrestling (JV only)
(A) 6 pm, Carbondale

Thursday (1/16)

Girls Varsity Basketball
(H) 6 pm, Steeleville
Boys Middle School Basketball
(H) 6 pm, Sesser-Valier

Friday (1/17)

Boys JV & Varsity Basketball,
(H) 6 pm, Trico

Saturday (1/18)

Girls Varsity Basketball. Eldorado
Tourn. (A) TBA, Mult. Opp.
Coed Varsity Wrestling. Carmi JV
Invitational (A) 9 am, Mult. Opp.
Boys Freshmen Basketball
(A) 12 pm, Galatia

Monday (1/20)

Boys Varsity Basketball,
JC Arrowhead Classic
1/20-1/25 (H) TBA Mult. Opp.
Girls Varsity Track
1st day of practice (H) TBA
Boys Varsity Track
1st day of practice (H) TBA
Coed Varsity Wrestling, Carmi
Invitational (A) 9 am, Mult. Opp.
Boys Middle School-C
Basketball. 5th grade A/B
(H) 5 pm, Sesser-Valier

Wednesday (1/22)

Boys Middle School Basketball
(A) 6 pm. Goreville

Thursday (1/23)

Boys Middle School Basketball
(A) 6 pm. Christopher

Friday (1/24)

Coed Varsity Wrestling, Fresh.
Tourney (A) TBA Mult. Opp.
Boys Middle School-C
Basketball. Eldorado 5th grade
Tourney (A) TBA Mult. Opp.

Monday (1/27)

Girls Varsity Basketball
(A) 6 pm, Christopher
Coed Varsity Wrestling JC
Triangular (H) 6 pm, Mult. Opp.
Boys Middle School Basketball
(H) 6 pm, Hamilton Co.

Wednesday (1/29)

Coed Vars. Wrestling BDC Conf.
Meet @ Trico (A) 6 pm, Mult. Opp.
Boys Middle School Basketball
(H) 6 pm, WF

Thursday (1/30)

Boys Middle School Basketball
(A) 5:30 pm. Eldorado
Girls Varsity Basketball
(A) 6 pm, Sesser-Valier

Friday (1/31)

Boys JV & Varsity Basketball
(H) 6 pm. Zeigler-Royalton

OPINION

Remembering the Magic Train

BY JIMMY DEAN

I wrote this article in 2008, 17 months after we lost our son, and shortly before the death of young Gunner Gillespie the son of current Marion head basketball coach Gus Gillespie. With the start of a new year, I thought it appropriate to share this again. [Editor's note: Some content has been updated for clarity.]

A miracle of sorts occurred in early December 2007, when the Marion Wildcats knocked off the favored Belleville Althoff Crusaders. Josh Martin banked in the game-winning, three-point basket as the game buzzer sounded. As I looked around in the moments that followed, a lot of expressions caught my attention— the look on Aaron Maddox's face after getting his first South Seven win, the jubilation of excited Marion fans and the stunned and angry Althoff supporters who surrounded the scorers' table. Some might call this show of emotions priceless. A roller coaster of emotions, all from 32 minutes of high school basketball on a cold December evening, revealed just how important the sport is to some people.

Where am I going with this? Let me back up a couple of days to November 26, 2007. On a trip to Murray State, our group, which included Coach Rich Herrin, stopped at Marshall County High School in Draffenville, Kentucky—home to the Hoopfest, three days of games featuring the top teams in the United States.

When we walked into the gym, Coach Gus Gillespie spotted us, stopped practice, introduced Coach Herrin, and had him say a few words to the team. Hamilton County High School graduate Ron Winemiller, a former manager at SIU for Coach Herrin, and assistant at Marshall County, came over to give Rich a bear hug.

This was only the second or third time I had met Gus Gillespie, but I could tell by watching the team practice, that his players liked, worked hard for, and respected him.

Jimmy Dean is a freelance writer and former mayor of Johnston City. Reach him at jrdean@mchsi.com.



We stayed about 20 minutes before going on to Murray, little knowing how the next few days would take a drastic change for Marshall County and Coach Gillespie.

Thursday, December 6, 2007, as I was headed back to Murray to eat lunch with my daughter Kara and attend the Hoopfest that evening, I received bad news.

Coach Herrin called to tell me that Coach Gillespie and family were in Nashville, Tennessee, at Vanderbilt Hospital, where his seven-year-old son, Gunner, was in critical condition. It seems Gunner had been born prematurely and had experienced health prob-

lems most of his young life. But only days before, they had discovered a tumor on his brain stem.

That night, Reed Con-dor Gymnasium was a sea of yellow as cheerleaders, fans, and even players from opposing teams wore Gun-ner's Magic Train T-shirts, featuring Gunner's drawing of a train with the caption, "I think I can." Raffles and donation boxes provided ways to help the Gillespies with medical expenses.

After a gut wrenching, four-point loss by Mar-shall County to Muhlenberg North, Coach Winemiller exited the locker room to go meet with the press, trying to keep things as normal as possible. However, the emotions of the game and the thought of one his closest friend's family suffering could be seen like a road map on Winemiller's young face.

CONTINUED ON P.3

Indian Pride

Here a some reasons we're proud of our Johnston City In-dians:

JCHS student Seth Rice (see photo below) took the Oath of Enlistment with the United States Air Force during the Indian's home basketball game, December 17. This marks the beginning of an honorable journey in service to our nation. Congratulations Seth!

The Football Indians were named John A. Logan Col-lege's Team of the Year. An 11-2 record and another trip to the IHSA 2A semifinals helped them earn this honor. This season was the second time the Indians have made the semifinals in the last three seasons. Nolan Causey, Jace Weaver, Evan Sanders, and Logan Moore were named to the SICA All-South Football Team.



At a recent home basketball game, player Seth Rice (right) shakes hands with a recruiter after enlisting in the Air Force (JCHS photo).

Indigo REALTY

900 W BROADWAY BLVD
JOHNSTON CITY, IL 62951
618-952-5200
CONTACT@INDIGOREALTY.NET
HTTPS://INDIGOREALTY.NET

Down Home Comforts

All Things Home with a Southern Flair
Florist, Home Decor, & Gifts

411 E. Broadway Blvd. Johnston City, IL 62951
(618) 923-1124

Join us on social media!

Edward Jones

Ashton Stephens
Financial Advisor

504 West Broadway
Johnston City, IL 62951
Bus. 618-983-6317
ashton.stephens@edwardjones.com

JC Manna Mission
THRIFT STORE

306 E. Broadway Blvd., Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-6262
Mon. & Wed.: 9:30-4:00 • Tues.: 9:30-5:30
& First Sat. Monthly: 9:30-12:30

Legence Bank Member FDIC

LEGENCEBANK.COM

LUXE PRO PAINTING

CHRISTINA WATSON
OWNER

618-952-4030
luxepropainting@gmail.com
luxepropainting.com

INTERIOR/EXTERIOR
COMMERCIAL

FREE ESTIMATES
FULLY INSURED

Call Direct View Website

SCAN ME SCAN ME