

Mount Vernon Signal

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DUI convictions here above state average

By: Richard Anderkin
 Most Rockcastle Countians won't even remember but, it wasn't too many years ago (1991) that a special prosecutor and judge were appointed to Rockcastle County to help clean up the back log of Drunk Driving cases in Rockcastle District Court. But now, according to a story in Sunday's Lexington Herald-Leader, if you are arrested on a drunk driving charge in Rockcastle County there is an eight out of ten chance you will be convicted.

The story centered mainly on the lack of DUI convictions in some Kentucky counties and it highlighted the counties with the most dismissed and amended cases.

Rockcastle County was not one of those counties. The statewide average for conviction of those charged with drunk driving is about 68 percent. Rockcastle County's DUI conviction rate is currently 77 percent.

Rockcastle County Attorney Jeff Burdette, who has aggressively prosecuted DUI offenders since taking office in 1994, said that he hopes people understand all the facts surrounding dismissal or amendment of a DUI case, something the Herald-Leader didn't do in their story.

Burdette admitted that it is apparent in some counties that Judges and prosecutors seem to be lax, when it comes to enforcing the law, but he said in Rockcastle County that isn't the case.

"Not every case is a sure fire conviction - there are often time problems with the arrest and in some cases a breath test is lower than the legal limit of .10 or a urine test or blood test comes back flawed," he said.

"None of that was pointed out in Sunday's story," Burdette said. But Mike Fox, the County Attorney in Carter County and President

Deadline to file for office is August 8th

Filing deadline for this Fall's General Election is August 8.

Locally races will be held for Family Court Circuit Judge, three school board seats and all the city council seats in the county.

To file for a city council seat, a candidate must pay \$20 fee and have two signatures from registered voters in that city.

A candidate must also be 21-year-old and have lived in the city limits for at least one year.

To file for school board, a candidate must pay a \$20 fee, have 20 signatures from registered voters in that city.

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Court hires employees

The Rockcastle County Fiscal Court hired two new employees last week during a special called meeting.

Rockcastle County Assistant 911 Director Bonnie Roark, 37, of Wildie was hired as the county's new Director of Emergency Services. She replaces Keith Graves who resigned earlier this year.

Currently, the DES job is a part-time position which pays \$4,500 per year.

The court also hired Billy Ray Sowder, as a prison work release supervisor.

Sowder will work 40 hours per

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Local man charged with cultivating

Kentucky State Police Detective Gary Lane, has arrested a Rockcastle County man on a charge of cultivating marijuana over five plants.

According to Lane, Bruce Shoemaker, 46, of Jack Hurd Road was arrested Monday.

Lane said that police found marijuana growing on Shoemaker's property on June 29.

Shoemaker is free on bond until his August 16th court date. His wife, Joleen was not arrested or charged.

of the Kentucky County Attorney Association, had some harsher comments about the Herald-Leader story.

"I can't believe the Herald-Leader wasn't more accurate in its story - It is hard to be objective if they would print only one side of an issue and misconstrue the facts the way they have," he said.

Fox said that in his court he had a DUI case where a defendant had a reading of 0.00 on a breath test. "I had no choice but to dismiss that case because there wasn't any evidence to

get a conviction, but that case was included in the Herald-Leader's statistics.

"The county attorney association in Kentucky realizes the importance of getting drunk drivers off the road and in the vast majority of cases, Judges and prosecutors work hard to gain convictions," he said.

Fox also pointed out that prosecutors have an obligation under state law to uphold justice for all.

"When there is a mistake made on a DUI case we have to make that

fact known to the defense, we have a dual role which requires us to make sure the right thing is done," he said.

As for Rockcastle, Fox said he thought the system was working.

"Mr. Burdette took over a somewhat difficult situation and in his first year, in office he had gained over twice as many convictions as his predecessor and in his first four years in office 907 people were convicted of DUI compared to 396 the previous four years.

Burdette also chaired the county

attorney's associations DUI committee which made recommendations to the state legislature on how to more effectively prosecute DUI offenders.

One final note: in comparison, in Pulaski County one of three DUI cases are either amended or dismissed.

The same judges, Mike Henry and Walter McGuire, preside over Pulaski and Rockcastle.

But in Pulaski, Fred Niekirk is responsible for prosecuting DUI offenders.

Burdette said that prosecutors have different cases with different facts, different officers of various types of training that result in different statistics. "We are pleased with our numbers, but will not criticize other courts which have different cases," he said.

In October, the law concerning driving under the influence will change. Drivers who have been drinking will be assumed to be under the influence if their breath test shows a reading of .08, down from the current level of .10.



Funds will help teens who are using drugs

Family Court Judge Debra Lambert has announced that federal grant monies have been awarded to fund a juvenile drug court in Lincoln. Pulaski and Rockcastle counties according to a new release, Judge Lambert applied for the funding after seeing scores of children in Family Court who had substance abuse issues or no reasonable means of overcoming their addictions. "I was amazed at the number of children in juvenile court for truancy, runaway or beyond control cases who were off-track because of drugs. The problem is severe."

Judge Lambert began looking for a means of rehabilitating these children and applied for funding to pay for drug tests and a drug court coordinator to administer the program. The juvenile drug court is a judge led rehabilitation for non-violent juvenile offenders. Judges volunteer their time and lead the very intensive program.

"It is not a get-out-of-jail-free card," Lambert said. Frequent drug tests, court appearances, as well as school attendance and substance abuse counseling, not just for the child, but for the whole family, are required.

Local agencies have committed to offering the needed services and Lambert looks forward to getting the court up and running as soon as possible. She knows that the job is a difficult one, however, particularly because young substance abusers are often resistant to ending their addiction because they have not yet formed the foundation belief that drugs are wrong.

"I am so excited about having the tools with which to work on the problem. I learned of the funding on the same day I received a juvenile's positive drug test for PCP, an extremely dangerous drug. While I was wondering what in the world I could do to help him, I got the phone call," Lambert said.

Congressman Hal Rogers has been a strong advocate of drug courts, having worked to increase the national drug court budget to \$40 million this year and Governor Paul E. Patton approved the award of the grant funds to be administered under the Byrne Grant program.

Additionally, Kentucky's drug court programs have won national

awards for their successful treatment of addicted individuals, helping them to restore themselves to productive, non-criminal members of society.

Oak Ridge Boys in Renfro

They have one of the most distinct and recognizable sounds in the music industry. The four part harmony and upbeat songs of The Oak Ridge Boys, Duane Allen, Richard Sterban, Joe Bonsall and William Lee Golden, have spawned scores of hits and earned them Grammy, Dove, CMA and ACM awards and garnered a host of other industry and fan accolades. The Oak Ridge Boys will perform in concert at Renfro Valley Saturdays night.

The Oaks bring fifteen years of hits and fifty years of tradition to the stage every time they step before an audience. The Oaks represent a tradition that extends back to 1945, before Hank Williams had a career.

The original group, based in Knoxville, Tennessee, began performing country and gospel music in nearby Oak Ridge, where the atomic bomb was being developed. They called themselves "The Oak Ridge Quartet" and began regular Grand Ole Opry appearances in the fall of '45. By the mid-'50's they were featured in Time magazine as one of the top groups in the nation.

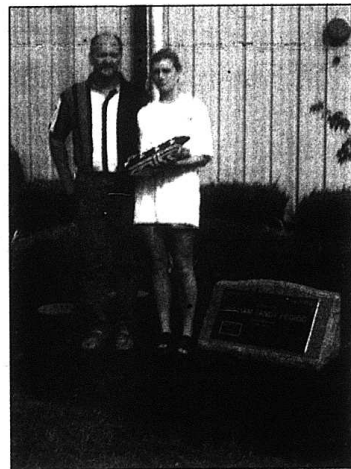
In the late '60's over 30 members had come and gone, the line-up included Duane Allen, William Lee Golden, Noel Fox and Willie Wynn. Among their many acquaintances in the gospel field were Bonsall and Sterban, both admired the popular

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Phone Numbers

The Rockcastle County Fiscal Court has a new phone number for the county's Dog Warden.

It is (606) 256-1833. Also some people have inquired about the phone number for the Rockcastle Sheriff's office, which is not published due to an error of the phone company. It is (606) 256-2032.



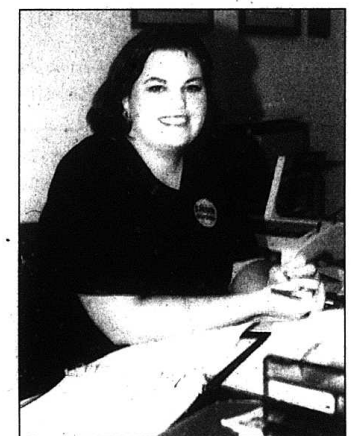
Monument placed in honor of Pedigo

270 employees and management of Rockcastle County Manufacturing took time Monday morning to honor former Plant Manager Tandy Pedigo during a memorial service on the plant property.

Pedigo died unexpectedly in

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Robbins retires from Rockcastle Library



Miss Kristiana Burk

Only the second person ever to fill the position of librarian at the Rockcastle County Library has retired.

After 28 years of service to Rockcastle County and its readers, Mrs. Geraldine Robbins relinquished her duties at the library on July 1.

Mrs. Robbins had served as librarian for the ten years, when she took over for Mrs. Alleyne Davis.

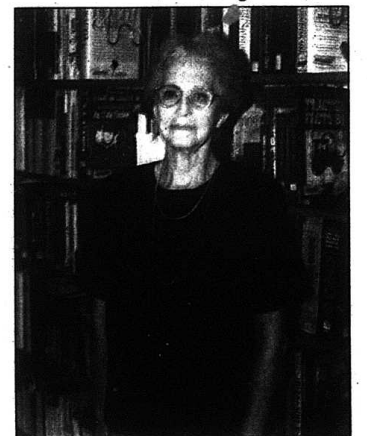
Before that, Mrs. Robbins operated the county's bookmobile for eighteen years.

Mrs. Robbins was very instrumental in helping the library to move into the technology age, by making computers and the Internet accessible to county residents. She says she is very proud of the fact that the library was able to increase the number of services it provides under her watch.

"A lot of older people refuse to learn about computers and how to use them, but in my position I simply told myself that I had to do it and I did," she said.

"I think we have been able to make a change for the better in the last ten years and I know we have helped a lot of people - it makes you feel good when you have a sense of accomplishment," she said.

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Mrs. Geraldine Robbins