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JAY JONES TO CLOSE OUT BARTLETT LIVE MUSIC SERIES SATURDAY

Staff Reports

BARTLETT, Tenn. — Award-winning Nashville recording artist and local native Jay Jones will close out the Bartlett LIVE Music Series on Saturday, Sept. 26, at W.J. Freeman Park.

Jones recently won Vocalist of

See LIVE, page 2A



ELMORE PARK PRINCIPAL WINS 2026 EMPOWERED AWARD

Staff Reports

BARTLETT, Tenn. — Dr. Ethan Randall, principal of Elmore Park Middle School, has been named a 2026 EmpowerEd Educator Award recipient by the Leaders Education Foundation, Bartlett

See Randall, page 3A



District leaders and Chamber of Commerce celebrate completion of 110-yard multi-use grounds.

Courtesy Photos: Bartlett City Schools

BARTLETT HIGH SCHOOL UNVEILS NEW OUTDOOR PRACTICE FACILITY

Staff Reports

BARTLETT, Tenn. — Last week, Bartlett High School officially celebrated the addition of a new outdoor practice facility on its campus with a ribbon-cutting ceremony held in partnership with the Bartlett Area Chamber of Commerce.

Funded by Bartlett City Schools, the 110-yard outdoor practice facility represents a major investment in the district's students and families. The multi-use space will provide expanded practice opportunities for several Bartlett High School athletic programs as well as the school's band program.

District and school leadership attended the event alongside community partners to mark the completion of the project. Among those present were Bartlett City Schools Superintendent Dr. David A. Stephens, Bartlett City

Board of Education Chairman David Cook, and members of the Board of Education.

Also joining the celebration were Bartlett High School Principal Shannon Abraham, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Chris Maley, Chief Financial Officer Lakisha Mitchell, and Executive Director of Athletics and School Support Tim Jones.

Project design and construction representatives from Chris Woods Construction Company and 4FDesign were also recognized for their work in bringing the facility from initial site work and structural framing to completion.

School officials noted that what started with excavation, foundation work, and steel beam placement has now transformed into a functional venue that will serve student programs and athletics for years to come.

Source: Bartlett City Schools



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Inside: [Community News](#) - Page 2A & 3A | [Church Listings](#) - Page 4A
[Classifieds](#) - Page 5A | [Puzzles](#) - Page 6A

The Bartlett Express

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BARTLETT CITY SCHOOLS BREAKS GROUND ON NEW ALTRURIA ELEMENTARY

Staff Reports

On Wednesday, Sept. 16, officials gathered for a ceremonial groundbreaking to celebrate a major milestone for Altruria Elementary:

construction of a brand-new school building. While dirt work has begun behind the existing facility, the ceremonial groundbreaking marks the official start of construction.

Attendees included Bartlett City Schools Superintendent David A. Stephens, Board of Education Chairman David Cook, school board members, Altruria Principal Brennan Harrison, Assistant Superintendent

Chris Maley, Chief Financial Officer Lakisha Mitchell, Operations Director Jeff Waller, and representatives from Linkous Construction and 4FDesign. Funded by Bartlett City

Schools, the new facility will serve students, faculty, staff and families as a long-term investment in the community. The campus will remain an active school zone throughout construction,

with safety measures coordinated among district operations, contractors and design teams.

Source: Bartlett City Schools

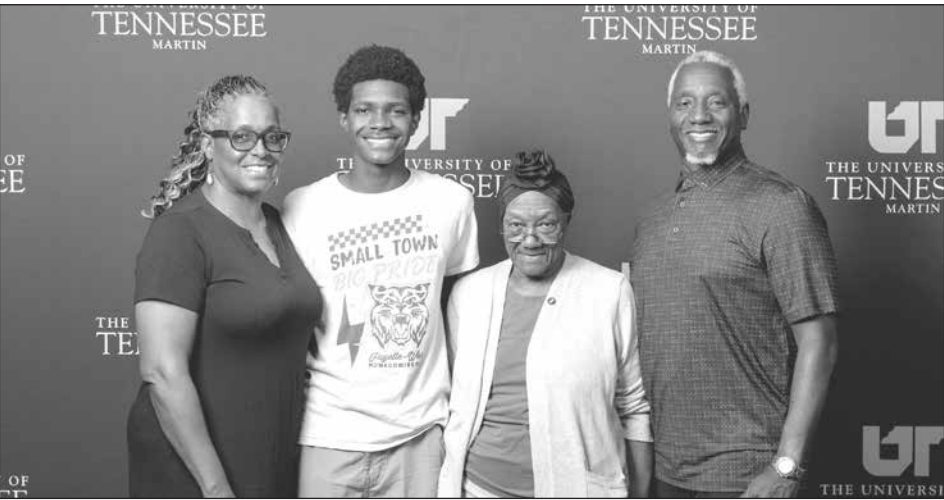
GOLF TEAM



Members of the Bartlett High School girls golf team celebrate after finishing as district runner-up and advancing to the regional tournament. Abigail took first-place medalist honors for the girls, while three Bartlett boys golfers also qualified for regionals.

Photo: Bartlett City Schools

CONTINUING A LEGACY



MARTIN, Tenn. - Sept. 16, 2026 - LOCAL STUDENT ATTENDS UT MARTIN LEGACY LUNCHEON - Michlal Watkins (second from left), a student at the University of Tennessee at Martin, attended the UT Martin Legacy Luncheon on Aug. 20 with his parents, Civil Watkins (first from left, who received degrees from UT Martin in 1992, 1994 and 2023) and Charles Watkins (who received degrees from UT Martin in 1991 and 1993) of Memphis, and his grandmother, Shirley Watkins. The Legacy Luncheon, held at the Paul Meek Library, is an event where alumni celebrate their children continuing their legacy as UT Martin students. For more information about UT Martin, visit www.utm.edu or call 1-800-829-UTM1 (-8861).



JONES, Continued from 1A



the Year (Southern Rock/Country) at the Josie Music Awards at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. Known for his versatility, his performance set list includes songs ranging from Charlie Daniels to Tool.

The free event runs from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., with food trucks opening at 6 p.m. The weather forecast calls for temperatures around 74 degrees at showtime. The Bartlett LIVE Music Series is free to the public

thanks to sponsors Side Porch Steakhouse, Worthington Chiropractic-Bartlett, Memphis Record Pressing, Dobbs Brothers Chevrolet of Bartlett, and First Horizon Bank. Source: City of Bartlett

WESTSTAR VAUGHN RISINGSTAR YOUTH SUMMIT SEEKS HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

MARTIN, Tenn. – The University of Tennessee at Martin WestStar Vaughn RisingStar Youth Summit is seeking high school seniors who have an interest in attending college and would benefit from a leadership program. The Vaughn RisingStar Youth Summit will take place Oct. 8-9 on the UT Martin main campus and includes an overnight stay. The summit is a fun, hands-on experience that helps students build the leadership skills, confidence and real-world knowledge they need to thrive in college, careers and life. The youth summit is a two-day program designed for high school seniors from public and private schools across West Tennessee. The summit equips students with the leadership skills, knowledge and confidence needed to navigate college,

careers and adulthood. The Vaughn RisingStar Youth Summit offers student leaders from across the region an opportunity to develop those essential skills while gaining a deeper understanding of the importance of community involvement. Participants experience college life firsthand, connect with peers from across West Tennessee and engage in interactive sessions led by professionals and mentors. Throughout the summit, students explore college and career pathways, build life skills and take part in meaningful activities designed to prepare them for future success. Adam Garner, the program director for the WestStar Leadership Program, said registration for the summit is now open. “We will have a multi-

tude of speakers who will come and give the students information about coming to college,” he said. “They will help the students navigate that next step. They will do mock job interviews to help them prepare for after college and entering the job market.” The cost of the program is \$120 per student, which includes housing, meals, UT Martin swag and all materials. For more information about the Vaughn RisingStar Youth Summit or to get registration information, contact Garner at adamgarn@utm.edu. For more information about the WestStar Leadership Program, visit www.utm.edu/weststar. For more information about UT Martin, visit www.utm.edu or call 1-800-829-UTM1 (-8861).

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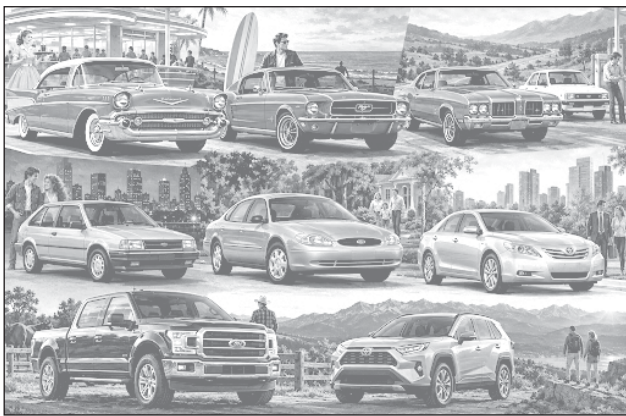
By David Peel

Best-Selling Cars by Decade

The 1950s belonged to the Chevrolet Bel Air, whose tailfins, two-tone paint, and V8 power captured postwar American optimism and suburban prosperity. The Chevrolet Bel Air, especially the 1957 model, epitomized ‘50s car culture, and its chrome features, tailfins, and two-tone paint jobs made it the quintessential car of the decade. Hard to believe it’s about to turn 70.

The 1960s were defined by the Ford Mustang. When it debuted in 1964, Ford priced it within reach of younger buyers, and offered a wide menu of options and engines, and the result was more than 400,000 sold in the first year and over a million by 1966.

Economic turmoil reshaped the 1970s. Amid the oil crisis and emissions regulations, the Oldsmobile Cutlass became America’s best-selling car for much of the decade by offering balance rather than extremes. Meanwhile Toyota gained ground: the Corolla offered



a solution to the oil crisis, environmental regulations, and quality issues, becoming popular for its fuel economy and durability.

By the 1980s, compacts and Japanese imports dominated. The Ford Escort was one of America’s best-selling cars, even topping passenger-car sales in years like 1987 and 1988.

The 1990s saw Detroit’s last stand at the top: the Ford Taurus sold over 1.9 million units from 1992 to 1996, the longest best-selling streak besides the Camry, before Toyota’s Camry took over in 1997.

The 2000s and 2010s saw the Camry be the bestselling car in America almost every

year since 1997, peaking in 2007.

But among all vehicles, the Ford F-Series has topped U.S. sales 1980s. That reign finally ended recently: F-150 sales fell 5% to 460,915 in 2024 while Toyota RAV4 sales rose 9% to 475,193, ending Ford’s near 50-year run atop U.S. sales.

Mr. Peel seeks justice for those injured in tractor-trailer and car accidents, medical malpractice, and disability. He often addresses churches, clubs, and groups without charge. Mr. Peel may be reached through PeelLawFirm.com wherein other articles may be accessed.

HALFWAY ALREADY?



Didn’t we just start football season?

It seems like I was just writing about opening night, looking forward to another season of packed stands, marching bands and hometown rivalries. Now Friday, Sept. 18, has come and gone, marking Week 5 of Tennessee’s high school football season. For teams that haven’t had an open date, five of their 10 regular-season games are already behind them.

I’m not sure how that happened. I barely feel like I’ve settled into the season, and we’re already talking about the second half.

The weather certainly isn’t helping. According to the National Weather Service, Jackson reached 99 degrees Sunday, Sept. 20—16 degrees above its normal high for that date. It’s hard to get into the spirit of fall football when stepping outside still feels like opening the oven. The schedule says we’re heading into Week 6, but the temperature feels more like Week 1.

Meanwhile, some teams are giving their fans plenty to be excited about. Across West Tennessee, Westview, Huntingdon, Humboldt, Lexington and Jackson Christian came through the fifth week with perfect 5–0

records. Munford remained unbeaten at 4–0, while Memphis Central and Southwind were also 5–0. Those are some impressive starts, and congratulations are certainly in order.

Of course, the standings don’t tell the whole story. Some teams have already worked through a particularly difficult stretch of their schedule, while others still have their biggest tests ahead.

Camden is a good example of why it helps to look beyond the overall record. The Lions are 1–4 overall but 1–0 in region play, and their five remaining games are all region contests. Their early schedule included Huntingdon, Dyersburg and McKenzie. That doesn’t make the losses any less disappointing, but there is still an opportunity to shape a different second half.

Even the unbeaten teams have plenty left to prove. Westview, for example, finishes its regular season against Dyersburg and Covington. Getting through September without a loss is an accomplishment, but nobody gets to skip October on the strength of a good start.

That is part of what makes this point in the season interesting. Some fans are beginning to imagine a deep playoff run. Others are hoping their team can turn a corner. There is still plenty of football left, even if there is considerably less of it than I would like.

The older I get, the more

familiar that feeling becomes. You spend weeks looking forward to something, and then, while you’re busy enjoying it—or simply keeping up with everything else—it starts slipping behind you. Football season seems especially good at demonstrating that.

For seniors and their families, that passing time means a little more. These aren’t just games on a schedule. They are some of the last Friday nights wearing that uniform, playing in that band or cheering along that sideline. Another season will come around for the rest of us, but this particular group won’t get another one quite like it.

So I hope we make the most of the weeks ahead. Go to the game. Take the pictures. Visit with the people sitting beside you. Encourage the kids, whether their team is undefeated or still trying to find its footing.

There may even be some relief from the heat. The National Weather Service expects cooler air to spread across the Mid-South this week, with afternoon temperatures dropping into the lower to mid-80s across much of the region by Wednesday and Thursday. That sounds considerably more reasonable.

I’m ready for an evening that calls for a sweatshirt instead of another bottle of water. I’m just not ready for the season to be over.

Hopefully, fall will get here before football leaves.

Upcoming Events ...

EVENTS AT A GLANCE:

-URBAN BUSH WOMEN'S "DANCE FOR EVERY BODY" WORKSHOP

October 23, 2026, 5:30 p.m.

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Join the legendary Urban Bush Women for a free community workshop open to the public on Friday, October 23 at 5:30 p.m., prior to the company's evening show. "Dance for Everybody" embraces the idea that each individual has a unique and powerful contribution to make and that bodies are a formidable source of agency. The goal is for "every body" to find their level of challenge and comfort and partake

according to their abilities. This movement jam/dance class seeks to appreciacyouner@stmarysschool.org to reserve a spot.

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RANDALL, Continued from 1A

City Schools announced.

Randall received the Empowering Schools Award in recognition of his impact as an educational leader and his commitment to fostering an inclusive, student-centered environment.

Having served as principal of Elmore Park Middle School for the past 13 years, Randall brings more than two decades of K–8 educational experience to his role. Under his leadership, Elmore Park has earned an “A” rating from the Tennessee Department of Education and achieved multiple years of Level 5 growth on the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS).

Beyond school administration, Randall actively mentors educators and supports aspiring school leaders.

Bartlett City Schools commended Randall for representing the district among this year’s distin-

guished group of West Tennessee educators.

Source: Bartlett City Schools

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Board of Zoning Appeals will meet in the Assembly Chamber at Bartlett City Hall on Thursday, October 15, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. for a hearing to consider the following request:

Andrea Guy, property owner of 5000 Eagles Nest Road, is requesting a variance from the minimum lot area requirement of the Bartlett Zoning Ordinance. The subject property is located within the “A-O” Agricultural and Open Land Zoning District.

Any citizen who may wish to appear at Bartlett City Hall and testify either for or against this request will be heard. Written comments, either for or against, may be addressed to the attention of Kimberly Taylor, Director of Planning, City of Bartlett; 6382 Stage Road, Bartlett, TN 38134, and are to be received no later than 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 15, 2026.

David Parsons
Mayor

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Is God Dead? ... by Ty B. Kerley, DMin.

The Problem of Evil

Critics of theism and Christianity claim not only that God is dead but that He never truly existed in the first place. For if the God of Christianity truly exists, then why is there so much pain and suffering in the world? Atheists and Christians alike call this apparent conundrum; “The Problem of Evil.” The logical problem of evil presents as a question: “If the God of Christianity is omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing), and omnibenevolent (all-caring), then why is there evil in the world?” Did God create the evil that befalls man? If He, in fact, did not create evil, then where did it come from? Is God’s “good” creation not as good as advertised? Couldn’t God have created a world without evil? Or maybe one with less evil? The list of questions goes on and on. For the critic, the fact that there is evil and suffering in the world proves not only that God is dead but that He never existed in the first place. On the other hand, for the Christian, the existence of God and the existence of evil and suffering in the world are compatible realities.

Formally, the logical problem of evil can be presented in this form: 1) There is suffering in the world; 2) There is an omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly good God; and 3) There is no morally sufficient reason for an omnipotent, perfectly good God to allow evil and suffering. In agreement with philosopher Eleonore Stump, I have formulated the argument from evil by substituting the word “suffering” instead of evil. The reason, quite simply, is that the problem is not with evil specifically but with the suffering that evil brings about. In other words, Charles Manson was considered to have been evil all of his adult life, but he did not cause suffering for the last fifty years in

prison. In that way, it would seem the issue is not with evil but with the suffering that evil brings about.

The logical problem of suffering is not a new invention. It has been around almost as long as man himself. Scarcely three pages into the Genesis account of creation, we see one man, Cain, rise up and murder his brother, Abel, and in the words of the Christian apologist Clay Jones, “We have been going to funerals ever since.” Long ago, the Greek philosopher Epicurus (BC 341 – 270) recognized and formulated the logical problem of evil as pointed questions that continue to be asked even today: “Is God willing to prevent evil, but He is unable? Then He is impotent. Is He able but not willing? Then, He is malevolent. Is He both willing and able? Whence, then, is evil?” It is an indicting set of questions. Questions that, nevertheless, need to be asked and questions that need to be answered.

The theistic answers to Epicurus’ questions generally come in two forms. The Free Will Defense, and theodicy. The Free Will Defense does not necessarily seek to answer why a good God might allow evil to exist. Still, it is an argument that attempts to show that there is no logical contradiction in the simultaneous existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent God and the existence of suffering in the world. On the other hand, arguments giving possible reasons why God allows evil to exist are called theodicy. The following articles on this topic cover the highlights of both defenses.

We can begin to touch upon the subject of suffering by first wrapping our minds around what evil is. Merriam-Webster defines “evil” as “morally reprehensible: sinful, wicked; an evil impulse arising from actual or imputed bad character or conduct.” And when that

evil impulse is acted upon, suffering always follows. Augustine, the fourth-century bishop of Hippo who wrote extensively about the existence of evil, identified evil as “a privation” of good. Augustine argued that since evil was a privation, it was not a created thing but the absence of a thing. Much like the hole in one’s pocket is not a thing but is the absence of a thing, namely, the absence of fabric.

In the same way, Augustine reasoned that evil is not a created thing but is the absence of good. And, since evil is not a created thing, then it was not a creation of God. This is a critical assertion because it cannot be argued that there is a perfectly good God if, in fact, God is the creator of the evil that brings about suffering. We can safely say that premise 1 is true. I do not think there is any argument to be made there; there is suffering in the world. We might even say this constitutes a bit of common ground between Christians and nonbelievers. Premise 2 also seems to be true; there is an omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly good God. Premise 3, then, becomes the major point of contention between Christians and nonbelievers.

Join us again next week as we continue to discuss evil and the suffering caused by it. This topic is important because many argue that evil and suffering in the world can help directly answer the question: *is God 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, OK. You can contact him at dr.kerley@isGoddead.com

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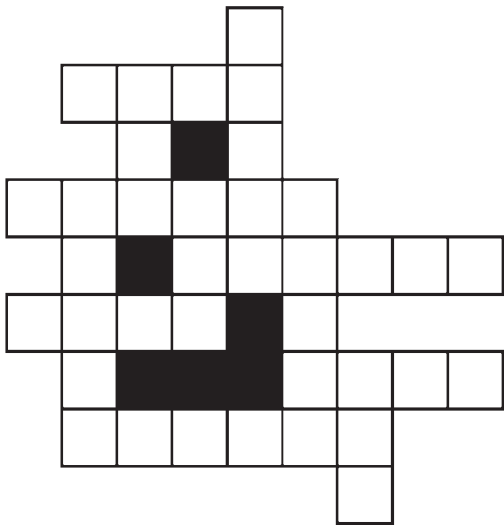


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♥TOSUP
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EAG
♥TCSA
APNEC
♥EGL
EPYLON
GYSIO
♥ESLA



Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. HAGNEC becomes CHANGE). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked (♥) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥RATHE becomes HATER or EARTH or HEART). Fit each string's word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Ashley and Wynonna

6 Consumer protection agcy.

9 Catchall abbr.

12 Track star Bolt

13 Tic-tac-toe win

14 "The Matrix" character

15 Refuse an offer

16 Seattle suburb that's home to Microsoft

18 Credit rating publisher

20 Skin soother

21 Corp. money exec

23 Overly

24 Part of LGBTQ

25 Hit on the noggin

27 Japanese fish dish

29 Tranquil

31 Sort of dive

35 Police ID

37 Employ

38 Hairnet

41 Moray, for one

43 Past

44 Plane-related

45 Country song?

47 Archbishop Tutu

49 Stag

52 Altar affirmative

53 Reuben bread

54 More practical

55 Aachen article

56 Rowing need

57 Birch's kin

5 Stuffed shirt

6 Gift giver's words

7 Low digits

8 Atlantic fish

9 — Holmes (Sherlock's sister)

10 Mortise partner

11 Encryptions

17 "Butterfly" singer Carey

19 Medicated

21 "60 Minutes" aիր

22 Nemesis

24 Fill in — blank

26 Explosive sound

28 Bed cover

30 Wee bit

32 Tiara stone

33 Work unit

34 Old Olds

36 Census info

38 "Sexy" Beatles girl

39 "— say more?"

40 Director Welles

42 — apso (small dog)

45 Novelist Seton

46 Airline to Tel Aviv

48 Spanish gold

50 Born

51 Blunder

DOWN

1 Roast beef au —

2 "Suits" network

3 "Shark Tank" star — John

4 Flintstones' pet

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Even Exchange

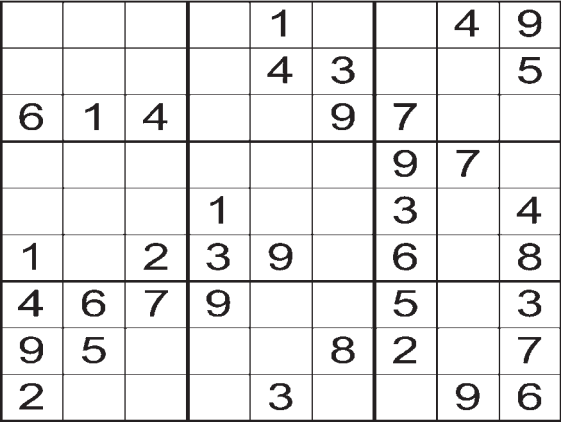
by Donna Pettman

Each numbered row contains two clues and two 6-letter answers. The two answers differ from each other by only one letter, which has already been inserted. For example, if you exchange the A from MASTER for an I, you get MISTER. Do not change the order of the letters.

1. White Cliffs of — O — — — Under water worker — I — — —
2. Monkey with — A — — — Bad humor — E — — —
3. Police ID — D — — Flat-bottomed boat — R — —
4. Canonized one S — — — Muffled F — — —
5. Dollywood owner — T — — Come again? — D — —
6. Whittle — A — — Bend in the road — U — —
7. Saunter — B — — Abundant — P — —
8. Mountainous — I — — Yuletide shrub — O — —
9. Scream, like a pig — — — — L Noisy door sound — — — — K
10. Royal chair — — — — E Multitude — — — — G

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Weekly SUDOKU



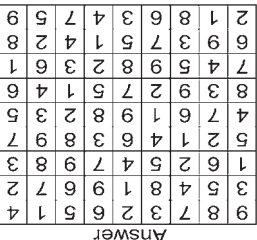
Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

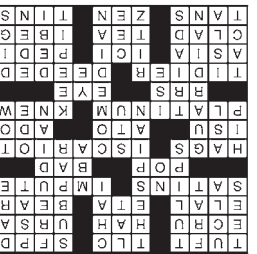
♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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See This Week's
Answers In Next
Week's Edition



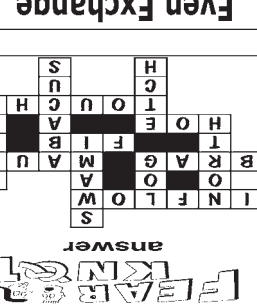
Weekly SUDOKU



Solution time: 25 mins.

Answers

1. Nearby, Nearby
2. Beard, Board
3. Roster, Foster
4. Camel, Cameo
5. Elite, Elite
6. Sensor, Senior
7. Geese, Reese
8. Palace, Palate
9. Flour, Floor
10. Policy, Police



CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: R equals C

QINY RMVKL BMV RNKK FCMFKC
QIM GMYC "HM" MH EMACYIJHP
JH N KCPJEKNYJGC NEECAZKB?
NHYY ZMLJCE.

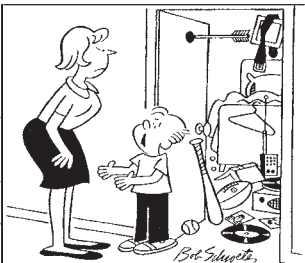
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STICKELERS

Match the words on the left with their meanings on the right.

1. penurious a. dirty, filthy
2. fruition b. realization
3. alimentary c. resentment
4. umbrage d. stingy
5. squalid e. related to nourishment

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"Clean up my room? You act like _____ is just around the corner."

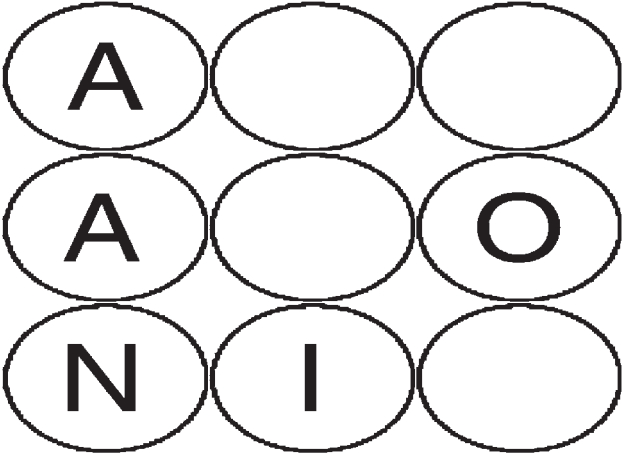
SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

- Chant HAMNET
- Former RIPOR
- Candid SOTHEN
- Patrol STUCO

TODAY'S WORD

WORD SPIRAL



Fill in the missing letters to reveal the nine-letter word that starts at one of the four corners and moves clockwise around the perimeter before ending in the center.

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7	2	4	8	2	8	6	8	2	4	2	6	7
B	A	D	C	C	H	S	E	T	O	I	E	E
5	7	5	8	3	7	6	2	6	3	6	7	6
F	G	A	R	C	E	C	O	U	O	R	N	E
8	4	5	6	3	4	3	8	7	5	3	7	3
I	N	M	L	M	O	F	S	E	E	O	R	R
2	4	5	2	4	5	4	7	2	8	7	5	7
N	T	I	S	B	S	E	O	J	H	U	Y	S
8	6	5	4	5	3	8	3	8	4	2	3	4
Y	O	O	A	U	T	O	A	U	Q	U	S	U
5	4	3	6	2	3	6	3	4	2	5	3	4
R	I	S	V	S	U	E	R	T	T	S	E	T
2	3	8	4	2	8	2	8	4	2	8	2	8
I	D	R	E	F	H	I	O	R	E	M	D	E

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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Special sweet potatoes that, when consumed, cause folks to speak more frankly: candid yams.

answer

FAMILY

Today's Word

3. Ghoul; 4. Sprain

1. Synonym; 2. Brief

Solution

SCRAMBLERS

IMMEDIATE

Answer

Word Spiral

TRACK

Sticklers Answer



BOLTING BOLTON WILDCATS PICK UP THIRD STRAIGHT WIN PULLING OUT THRILLER AT MILLINGTON



Thomas Seller, Jr.
Richardson Media Group

The rivalry between the Bolton Wildcats and Millington Trojans hasn’t lost any steam over the years.

Separated by just 12 minutes on Highway 385, many of the players of Wildcats Head Coach CJ Marshall have lined up with Scott Blair’s Trojans during youth football.

Now on opposite sides, Bolton arrived at Mooney Boswell Stadium Friday night trying to end a losing streak against the Trojans. In a hard fought game showered by official flags, the Wildcats emerged with a 12-8 victory over Millington.

“It was a situation where we had to preserve and overcome a lot of things adversitywise with the flow of the game,” Marshall said. “But it was a situation where I preached to my guys that nothing in life is going to be easy. This game was a testament to that. We had to preserve physically, mentally and emotionally. We were able to get it done.”

Bolton’s fourth quarter touchdown pass made the difference and pushed the Wildcat winning streak to three in a row.

Wildcats (3-2) started 2026 dropping the first two games to the White Station Spartans and Memphis Central Warriors by a combined score of 84-0.

Then Bolton started its winning ways with a 6-0 victory over league foe Fayette-Ware and then picked up a big win over defending Region 8-3A champs Melrose 24-12.

“When I made the schedule, even going back to our scrimmages this summer,” Marshall noted. “We scrimmaged Arlington which is a 6A program. We scrimmaged Jackson Northside who is a playoff caliber 4A team.

“We knew what we had ahead of us when it pertained to White Station and Central,” he added. “We wanted to make sure the guys were battle-tested from those games to get ready for league play in order to get ready. We took some bumps on the head in the first couple of games. As you can see, we’re beginning to turn it around.”

After a scoreless first period, Bolton finally cracked the scoreboard in the second quarter when Gentry Hines Jr. rushed up the middle of the Millington defense for a 9-yard TD and 6-0 advantage with 3 minutes and 21 seconds remaining in the first half.

Despite being scoreless at the break, Millington had some success running BJ Martin, Chris Duckworth and Noah Thomas.

“It’s disappointing, very disappointing,” Blair acknowledged. “We felt like we had three pretty good days of practice in a row. We go out and make way too many stupid, bonehead mistakes. Stuff we don’t do in practice, we don’t at any other time. We come out here and it happens. I got to do a better job of cleaning that stuff up and get-

ting them to under the little things mean everything.”

Millington (0-4) had a breakthrough in the third quarter when Christian Green fielded a punt at the 50-yard line. He raced to his left and eluded the Bolton defenders to reach the end zone for the tie.

Duckworth added the two points to give the Trojans an 8-6 lead.

The next 23 minutes of the game was played under a cloud of penalties ranging from undisciplined mistakes to inexcusable plays.

“We had a fumble on a drive,” Blair noted. “We had a 15-yard penalty that gave them a first down. They had about 15 seconds, run off the clock before they stopped things. If we had, had 15 more seconds from the 9-yard line right there instead of 1 second, we had a couple of plays we could have run. That means everything. That’s the frustrating part.”

Millington had a chance to win the game with one tick left on the clock. Bolton placed itself in the winner’s seat when Calvin Wilford caught a 37-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Kylon Gipson with 10 minutes left in the game.

Trojan defenders like Kaleb Clark, Ayden Folsom, Kolyn Clark and John Thomas limited Bolton’s attack throughout the night and gave the offense one more shot at pulling out the win.

Facing fourth down with 15 yards to go at the 36 yard line, Trojan signal caller Cole Hawkins hit Duckworth with a pass with 9 seconds on the clock.

Duckworth jetted to the 19 yard line and stepped out of bounds with a second on the clock. A 10-yard penalty on Bolton placed the ball at the 9-yard line.

Hawkins’ final pass dropped to the black paint of the end zone and sent the Wildcats into celebration mode.

“The little things mean everything and we’re playing our hearts out,” Blair said. “That’s one of the reasons why all of their emotions get worn on their sleeves. They’re playing so hard and they want all the good things to happen. What they don’t understand is that all the good things will come if they keep doing all the little things.”

Bolton looks to make it four in a row welcoming Douglass to Arlington next Friday. The Trojans look to pick up a Region 8-4A win with the Kirby Cougars coming to Flag City.

“The plan each week is to come out, play well enough to win the game,” Blair said. “Right now we’ve just got to do a better job. We have to do a better job of stopping people on defense. We’ve got to do a better job of tackling.

“We’ve got to do a better job of controlling the clock and running those drives we need,” he concluded. “We had about two or three drives tonight to where we put several plays together. Then something bonehead would happen and we’d shoot ourselves in the foot.”

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