



CRIME

MADISON POLICE
BUST BURGLARY RING

Burn Boot Camp — See page, A2

ARTS

JACKSON ACADEMY
TO PERFORM CLASSIC

Peter Pan — See page, A3



Madison County's
leading newspaper.

MADISON COUNTY JOURNAL

Serving Madison, Ridgeland,
Canton, Flora, Gluckstadt.

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D.R. HORTON

Development sparks fear of rental houses

By MICHAEL SIMMONS
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Developers of a planned subdivision off Yandell Road agreed to work with the Madison County Board of Supervisors to implement covenants to make it harder to rent homes.

The action followed a lengthy discussion on Monday over everything from the reputation of the national home builder to the sizes of homes.

Woodgate subdivision, which will feature approximately 379 homes ranging from 1,500 square feet and

up, is going to be built by D.R. Horton, a national homebuilding company that has received negative publicity over the last few years for allegations of sub-par construction. The company has been involved in a number of lawsuits.

Developers of Woodgate

include Carl Sandberg, Nick Gullette, and Parker Sullivan, all of Madison County.

Supervisors unanimously approved a preliminary plat for the subdivision back in March, and are seeking approval of the final plat. However, concerned citizens living in neighboring subdivi-

sions are worried about D.R. Horton as the homebuilder, the size of the homes, the potential for the new homes to become rentals, and the overall impact on existing home values.

The developers and representatives of D.R. Horton answered a barrage of ques-

tions from both supervisors and citizens for over an hour on Monday.

Before the discussion even began, Board Attorney Mike Espy cautioned supervisors about what they say, alluding to the possibility of a lawsuit from the developers if the

See WOODGATE, page A2

\$9 MILLION

Topgolf developers seeking tax rebates

By DUNCAN DENT
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RIDGELAND — Developers of the proposed Topgolf development here are seeking about \$9 million in sales tax rebates through a Mississippi Development Authority program designed to invest in tourism in the state.

PraCon Global Investment Group hopes to utilize the Tourism Project Tax Incentive Program Act following MDA approval.

The project will divert 80 percent of sales tax collected from the project for a term of 15 years or when 30 percent of certain approved costs by the MDA has been collected. The term will end after that amount is collected or after 15 years, whichever happens first.

Gabriel Prado, CEO and president of PraCon Global Investment Group, said they expect to collect around \$8.7 million in ten years through the rebate plan. He said they expect Topgolf to represent a close to \$30 million investment.

The Board of Aldermen approved a resolution offering their support for the TPTPA diversions following MDA approval.

"The City is in full support of the Tourism Project and supports the application by the Applicant to MDA for the benefits allowed pursuant to the Tourism Program," the resolution reads in part.

Mayor Gene F. McGee said he was happy to see the resolution pass noting he thought it was a "very good program" that would bring such an asset to the state and city.

"The next step is to get Topgolf going," he said.

Prado said he hoped to break ground on the project within the next 30 or 60 days following the Architectural Review Board approval for the Topgolf facility at the regularly scheduled city board meeting on Oct. 3, of this month.

"This is a milestone," Prado said. "We are very excited and grateful for the support we have received from the Mayor and board."

The development is currently waiting on permits from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and Army Corp of Engineers to proceed with the development, of which Topgolf is a major piece.

In August, the city board approved preliminary plat approval for Phase I of the project.

The city board unanimously approved the Prado Vista Overlay District in mid-April.

The development will be

See TOPGOLF, page A3



Photos by J. Caraway Photography

Section leaders and captains celebrate after winning Governor's Cup at Pearl Invitational.

Germantown Band gearing up for competition this weekend

By DUNCAN DENT
duncan@onlinemadison.com

The Germantown High School Band is gearing up for the first 7A band competition this weekend at Northwest Rankin High School.

"We are the current 6A state champions so I guess we will be defending that in a way in the first-ever 7A championships," Germantown High School Director of Bands Justin Harvison said.

Harvison has been with the district for 16 years and helped found the band program at Germantown High School 13 years ago. He said his group of around 170 students is ready to compete.

"We have an exceptional group of students this year," Harvison said.

Their show this year is titled "Sonic Bloom" and features arrangements of existing music that Harvison called a "psychedelic intersection of music and nature."

"Basically the idea is 'What if plants could make their own music?'" Harvison said.

Music selections for the show include "The Bioluminescence of the Night" from the album Avatar by James Horner, Kingfisher's "Catch Fire" by John Mackey, "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini" by Sergei Rachmaninov, "The Rite of Spring" by Igor Stravinsky, "Flight of the Bumblebee" by Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov and "Firefly" by Ryan George.

He said this is a mix of music that people will recognize and some



Guard captains Ma'Cauli Hawkins, Brigitte Pepper, Christina Carter, Parker Turner and Catherine Lacey

selections people will likely encounter for the first time.

"There is a lot of variety in the music," Harvison said. "I think there is something for everyone. The students love it."

GHS has already performed well at invitational competitions this year including recent events in Ridgeland and Pearl. At both competitions, they took superior ratings in all six categories and were named champions of

both. Following the state competition, Harvison will take the band to St. Louis for the Bands of America Super Regional where they finished in the top 20 last year out of 70 bands.

OPINION
Charles Hurt

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Ligon Duncan

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OPINION
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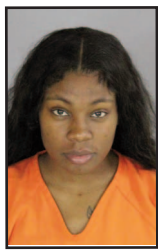
Madison police bust up burglary ring

By DUNCAN DENT
duncan@onlinemadison.com

MADISON — Three Florida women have been arrested and charged in connection with a series of car burglaries here last week. “The Madison Police Department expresses gratitude to the Richland Police Department, Pearl Police Department, Flowood Police Department, Rankin County Sheriff’s Department, Forrest County Sheriff’s Department, and the Alabama State Troopers for their assistance in capturing the suspects,” Madison Police Captain Kevin Newman said. “This coordinated effort among multiple law

enforcement agencies is commended as an example of exemplary teamwork in addressing the situation.”

According to Madison County jail records, Jasmine Danielle Atkins, 30, Maya Marie Habersham, 29, and Desire Shardae Robinson, 23, all from Florida have all been charged with conspiracy following their arrest in Hattiesburg by the Forrest County Sheriff’s Department. These three individuals are currently detained at the Madison County Detention Center. Madison Police Captain



Desire Robinson

Kevin Newman said at least five accomplices to these women have been arrested in Rankin County and Trussville, Ala. The arrests stem from an inci-

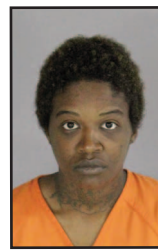


Jasmine Atkins

dent reported on Oct. 13, at 5:47 a.m. Newman said 11 vehicles were burglarized by forced entry at a shopping center at 2160 Main Street.

“The Madison Police Department responded to the scene and initiated an investigation,” Newman said. “Similar incidents were discovered at banks in Pearl, Newman said.

With the assistance of multiple law enforcement agencies, 41-year-old Danelle Amber King and 42-year-old Matthew Arthur, both from Cleveland, Tenn., were apprehended on Highway 49 in Richland, according to



Maya Habersham

Newman. “They are currently detained at the Rankin County Detention Center,” Newman said.

The Madison Police Department continued its investigation, leading them to a residence in Hattiesburg. The Forrest County Sheriff’s Department was contacted, and the three females were taken into custody after surveillance was set up on the residence.

Simultaneously, Newman said, investigators with the Madison Police Department and Rankin County Sheriff’s Department located other

individuals linked to the auto burglaries. Three individuals were apprehended on Interstate 59 at the 143 exit in Trussville, Ala.

The individuals taken into custody there are 29-year-old Raymone Marquis Davis, 27-year-old Victor Alexander Ogiste, and 28-year-old Danarius Trevon Young, all from Florida.

“These three individuals are detained at the Trussville Jail in Alabama,” Newman said. “Extradition paperwork is being filed to have them transported back to Madison, Mississippi.”

13-year-old charged in shooting death of Canton teen

By DUNCAN DENT
duncan@onlinemadison.com

CANTON — A 13-year-old boy has been charged in the shooting death of another juvenile at a residence here Friday.

Tristin Johnson, 13, was arrested and charged in the

shooting death of 15-year-old Larry Taylor, according to Police Chief Otha Brown.

Johnson has been charged with negligence and manslaughter, he said.

Brown said another juvenile, who is also 15 years old, has been charged with accessory after the fact. Brown

said he is unable to release this juvenile’s name at this time due to his involvement in youth court.

The charges stem from a call CPD received on Friday, Oct. 6, at about 6 p.m. reporting a shooting at a Frost Street residence.

Once officers arrived on

scene, Brown said they found Taylor who had been shot in his side.

According to Brown, the suspects were charged later that evening when they were brought in for questioning.

The case will be handed over to the Madison County District Attorney’s Office.

Taylor was a student at Porter Middle School. The Canton Public School District released this statement on Monday, Oct. 9, in regards to his death that said:

“The Canton Public School District Family extends its heartfelt condolences and sincere sympa-

thies to the family and friends of Porter Middle School student Larry Taylor. You are in our prayers as we mourn with you over the loss of your loved one.”

Woodgate

Continued from page A1

board were to go as far as rescinding the preliminary plat.

“I see a stenographer, that’s fine,” Espy said. “The board did not invite or hire the stenographer. I assume it’s from developers. There’s a lot of inferences. As your lawyer, whatever you say, your words will be taken down. It may be for litigation. It may not be.”

Espy warned supervisors of “rezoning, reliance, and rescension.”

He said this was not a matter of rezoning, so the board can’t take into consideration things like a change in the neighborhood. He said the developers relied on the unan-

imous approval of the preliminary plat to get started with ground clearing so the county could be liable for damages if the board ultimately decided to rescind the plat.

“There will be a measure of damages if this thing ever ends up in court, I’m sure,” he said.

District 2 Supervisor Trey Baxter asked Espy how the county could regulate whether or not these houses can be leased, with Espy saying there would have to be language in the covenants. Covenants are prepared by the developer, not the county.

“If you try to impose these restrictive standards on them,

they’re going to ask if you did it to anybody else,” he said.

Sandberg and Gullette told supervisors that the intent was not to create a build-to-rent neighborhood, meaning that the goal is to sell these homes to homeowners and not for rental property.

But, they said it was illegal to put a blanket restriction on rentals because it would violate federal law and certain language would also impact the ability to receive an FHA or VA home loan.

Board President Gerald Steen said that there are subdivisions in the county that don’t allow for any rentals at

all. Baxter said the municipalities have strict guidelines for rentals.

“We don’t want to do anything that’s illegal from a Fair Housing (Act) standpoint or prejudice to a class of individuals,” Gullette said.

Gullette said that even if a neighborhood outright bans rentals, that doesn’t mean it’s legal, just that it hasn’t been challenged.

“We don’t want to do anything illegal with this development,” he said.

Sandberg said that he was unable to find any neighborhoods with outright bans and only a handful with restrictions, such as a fee and length of occupancy requirements.

David Humphries, an attorney with Carson Law Group representing the developers, said he was sure they all could come to an agreement on covenants to ease concerns.

“I think that these guys are perfectly willing to take a suggested covenant — take it and consider it and most likely incorporate it,” he said.

Humphries then asked the board to treat other developers the same way, saying recently two other subdivisions were approved without discussion or asking for rental restrictions.

He said everyone needs to be on “the same playing field.”

Scott Whitehurst, the regional president for the

Gulf Coast region of D.R. Horton, said they, too, aren’t looking at this becoming a rental neighborhood and that everyone seemed to be on the same page but saying different things.

He also tried to alleviate concerns from the board members and others about the company’s recent negative publicity.

Whitehurst said that they use the same local subcontractors and local suppliers as other builders, a sentiment echoed by District 4 Supervisor Karl Banks.

“We have built a million houses,” Whitehurst said. “Have we screwed up? Yep. Do we always try to make it right? Yes. That’s what we strive to do, a little better than we did yesterday. We’re not perfect, but we try to be.”

Sandberg said he was aware of the negative publicity and ended up touring a development in Alabama that Woodgate would be modeled after. He said he even built a house in Sweetbriar Plantation where D.R. Horton has built homes.

Banks said in his over 30 years as a county supervisor, the board has never asked a developer who was going to be building the homes, and that the issue with Woodgate all centered around D.R. Horton and national negative press.

“For some reason in this development, these develop-

ers have been getting hit upside the head,” he said. “I feel sorry for the developers.”

The lengthy discussion didn’t leave many assurances for concerned citizens though.

Regina Edwards, a resident of Deerfield, said she has read all the negative publicity and just doesn’t “trust” D.R. Horton “right now.”

“What are you going to do to ensure that our property values do not depreciate with the Woodgate development,” she asked the board, before saying if they do lose home values the board and developers could expect a lawsuit to be filed.

She is also concerned about the traffic situation on Yandell Road.

Mona Crothers brought up mold issues in D.R. Horton homes and asked if a D.R. Horton employee would move into a D.R. Horton home. She also wanted to know the number of houses that will be over 2,200 square feet.

Whitehurst said they have had mold problems in the past, mainly in coastal areas, but they are familiar with the local climate. As far as the square footage of homes, he said the minimums are the minimums but the market will ultimately dictate what is built.

Sandberg said he hopes the entire development is completed within the next 8 years.

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Portraying Peter Pan, Wendy, John, and Michael in Jackson Academy's upcoming production of "Peter Pan: A Musical Adventure" are, from left, Danielle Wallace, Thomas Earl, Jack Satcher, and Anna Mitchell Peters. Show times are Saturday, October 21 at 7 p.m., Sunday, October 22 at 2 p.m., and Monday, October 23 at 7 p.m.

JA to perform 'Peter Pan'

By STAFF REPORTS
news@onlinemadison.com

Audiences will be enchanted as Peter Pan, Wendy, and her siblings fly to adventures in Neverland in Jackson Academy's production of "Peter Pan: A Musical Adventure." Show times are Saturday, October 21 at 7 p.m., Sunday, October 22 at 2 p.m., and Monday, October 23 at 7 p.m. The musical will be held in the school's 800-seat Performing Arts Center (PAC) on Ridgewood Road. Under the direction of JA's

Director of Performing Arts Kerri Sanders, the professional caliber production involves significant preparation on many levels. Actors on stage and crew members behind the curtains learned about the PAC's fly system from the professional company, ZFX Flying Effects. Students and parents, led by Technical Directors Andy Prince and Chris Lloyd, have constructed elaborate sets, including a crocodile as large as a Jeep. The school's Theatre Production class is highly involved in the building. Director of

Choral Music Garrett Lindsey has worked with actors, crew, and musicians, including orchestrating music to time correctly with the flights of Peter, Wendy, and her siblings.

Members of the community are invited to JA to see this spectacular musical production that involves a large student cast and crew from Middle and Upper School. For tickets, visit <https://japac.ludus.com/index.php>.

Veterans Town Hall set for Oct. 25

By JOHN LEE
john@onlinemadison.com

Madison County is holding a Veteran's Town Hall in Canton on Oct. 25 to offer vital information for veterans.

Madison County Veteran Service Officer Mendell Kemp says there are over 6,000 veterans in the county and this town hall will be an important place for veterans to raise any concerns they have about things like disability and pension claims, survivor's benefits, and more. "This town hall will clear up any misunderstandings about why claims have recently been denied or if veterans haven't gotten the ratings they think they deserve," Kemp said. "The Jackson VA Regional Office has been closed for over a year due to mold in the building and the original staff is working from home. Because

of this, there is a lot of information veterans need. As the County Veteran Service Officer and Vietnam veteran, I see every day that veterans need information that the office does not have."

The town hall will be held at the Canton Multipurpose Complex at 501 Soldiers Colony Rd., located about two miles west of the Canton Square. It begins at 3 p.m. and ends at 6 p.m.

Kemp said representatives from the Jackson VA Regional Office, Jackson VA Medical Center, and the Mississippi Veterans Affairs Board will make a presentation and address all questions and concerns from anyone in attendance.

"The Madison County Board of Supervisors and County Veteran Services Office are honoring veterans and their families by providing updated information

about accessing Disability and Pension Claims, Education and Job Training, Healthcare, Home Loans and Dependents / Survivor's Benefits," he said. "Veterans will be able to check the status of pending claims and file new claims. They'll have a better understanding of what they are entitled to."

For more information about the town hall, contact Kemp at (601) 855-5518 or menal.kemp@madison-co.com, and Casey Davis at (601) 855-5689 or casey.davis@madison-co.com.

PAID POLITICAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Clay Mansell seeks election as State Representative



Clay Mansell

I am honored to announce my candidacy for Mississippi House District 56.

For twenty years, the people of House District 56 have benefited from solid, conservative leadership with Speaker Philip Gunn as our representative. With his decision to not seek re-election to the House of Representatives, the people of House District 56 will need to elect a new leader who will take up the mantle and continue advancing common sense solutions to the issues facing our state.

From economic and educational issues to infrastructure and public safety concerns, it is my intention to represent the people of Clinton, Madison and Flora following the common sense, problem-solving conservative Republican ideas that have moved Mississippi in a positive direction since Republicans gained control over legislative and statewide offices.

Originally from Madison County, I moved to Clinton in 1997 to attend Mississippi College and earned a degree in Business Administration. I and my wife of twenty-one years, Amanda Puryear, have three children: Annabelle (15), Bentlee (9) and Grayson (3). We attend Morrison Heights Baptist Church.

I have spent my entire career as an entrepreneur and small business owner. I understand

well as given me the skill set to get along with a wide array of people and get things accomplished.

In addition to responsible management of taxpayer dollars, I also will prioritize job creation and economic development, education, public safety, and infrastructure.

The children in Mississippi's foster care system are also especially near and dear to my heart.

Our family has fostered eleven foster children over the last four years and adopted one child. Each life has value, and we must protect all of our children and ensure they are given every opportunity to succeed in life. For the sake of these children, as well as every child in Mississippi, it is crucial that our state institutions function at the highest possible effectiveness.

Serving people and our community is a high priority in my life. I serve as Chair of the Board of Trustees for Merit Health Hospital, immediate Past President of the Mississippi College Alumni Association and serve on numerous other boards. When called upon to serve, I take it seriously, and I step up to do the work. If you see fit to elect me, I promise to serve you honorably and do the work.

I am asking for your prayers, your support and your vote as I seek to serve the people of Clinton, Madison and Flora as your state representative for House District 56.

I look forward to meeting you on the campaign trail!

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Topgolf

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built in the northeastern corner of Sunnybrook Road and Colony Park Boulevard.

In addition to Topgolf, The 77-acre Prado Vista development will include a national grocery chain, two high-end hotels, more than 100,000 square feet of office, retail and restaurant space, an entertainment venue, 228 homes, and a riverwalk.

Developers say they plan to have signalized entrances on Colony Park Boulevard as well as entrances and exits on Sunnybrook Road. Concrete walls will also be built to reduce noise and light pollution.

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STRONG READERS
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Literacy Based Promotion Act Annual Report of Performance and Student Retention

The Literacy Based Promotion Act (LBPA) was enacted to improve the reading skills of Kindergarten through Grade 3 students enrolled in public schools so that every student completing the 3rd grade is able to read at or above grade level. This report displays the components required under [MS Code 37-177-17](#) of the LBPA, which include the number and percentage of students: scoring at each performance level on the state assessment in reading and math, taking the alternative assessments (retest), being retained at each grade level Kindergarten through 8th grade, passing for good-cause exemptions; and any revised district policies for promotion and retention.

District: Madison County School District (4500) School Year : 2022-2023

State Assessment - 3rd Grade ELA

Level 5	31.0% (284)
Level 4	41.7% (382)
Level 3	16.9% (155)
Level 2	7.2% (66)
Level 1	≤5% (30)

State Assessment - 3rd Grade Math

Level 5	38.0% (348)
Level 4	32.2% (295)
Level 3	16.5% (151)
Level 2	10.2% (93)
Level 1	≤5% (28)

Level 4 and 5 indicate proficiency

3rd Grade Reading Assessment for Promotion

Assessment	Not Met	Met
Initial (MAAP-ELA)	11.1% (102)	88.9% (813)
Initial & Retest (MAAP-ELA)	7.5% (69)	92.5% (847)

Students Retained K-8th

Grade	Retained
K	8.6% (76)
1st	9.8% (98)
2nd	≤5% (45)
3rd	≤5% (21)
4th	≤5% (<10)
5th	≤5% (<10)
6th	≤5% (<10)
7th	≤5% (<10)
8th	≤5% (<10)

Students Promoted by Good Cause Exemption

23.1% (12)	A. Limited-English Proficiency with less than two Years in English Learner Program.
≤5% (<10)	B. Students with disabilities for whom participation in statewide accountability system is not appropriate.
55.8% (29)	C. Students with disabilities receiving two years intensive remediation or previously retained.
≤5% (<10)	D. Students tested on an alternative assessment (for 2022-2023 this is an alternate form of the 3rd Grade MAAP-ELA).
21.2% (11)	E. Students receiving two years intensive remediation and previously retained for two years.
100% (52)	TOTAL

Local School Board Promotion / Retention Policy:
<https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/reports/LBPA/2022/4500.pdf>
Policy Revision Date : 07/11/2022

Opinion & Editorials

CAL THOMAS

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MADISON COUNTY JOURNAL

"To glorify God, and enjoy Him forever."

JAMES E. PRINCE III
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Associate Editor & Publisher

EDITORIALS

IRS leaker gets off light

The left shamelessly protects its own. Charles Edward Littlejohn, for example, admitted Thursday he pilfered 15 years' worth of sensitive tax returns from thousands of filers. Despite pulling off one of the biggest privacy heists in history, prosecutors in the Department of Justice gave the serial thief a deal guaranteeing he won't spend much time, if any, behind bars.

That's because Littlejohn's objective in leaking the documents was almost certainly to tilt the 2020 election in then-candidate Joe Biden's favor. In 2019, he realized he could abuse his access as an IRS contractor to look up anyone's tax returns — including those of Donald Trump, the sitting president.

Littlejohn used an elaborate subterfuge to sneak Mr. Trump's tax returns out of a high-security facility so he could forward the records to The New York Times, which proceeded to publish a story with the headline "Long-concealed records show Trump's chronic losses and years of tax avoidance" just five weeks before the election.

Then Littlejohn provided ProPublica what it called "An unprecedented trove of leaked IRS data." The left-leaning website went on to create a series of more than 50 stories revealing purloined facts about prominent taxpayers, framing the material in ways that promoted legislation to raise taxes and "crack down" on individual retirement accounts.

The strategic accessing of tens of thousands of tax returns involved so many people that U.S. District Judge Ana C. Reyes waived the Crime Victims' Rights Act notification provision saying, "the number of potential victims in this case makes it impracticable to provide all of the victims the rights provided under" the law.

Individuals will never know their returns were leaked unless they happen to stumble upon a webpage buried deep within the DOJ website.

When federal prosecutors went after Mr. Trump, they contorted the law to come up with 91 felony counts, purported crimes of which they could not identify a single victim. But Littlejohn's trespass against thousands somehow merits a solitary count of improperly disclosing tax return information. The longest possible penalty Judge Reyes, who was appointed by President Biden, could impose is five years in prison, but sentencing guidelines can reduce that to a few months at most, or none at all.

The leaker surely knows that once he's free, he'll be rewarded for his service to causes held dear by the Democratic Party. He has seen how all of the other "resistance" celebrities elude punishment, or even end up with a job at a university, think tank or other liberal institution.

Then-FBI lawyer Kevin Clinesmith forged evidence to frame Carter Page, a Trump campaign volunteer, as a foreign agent as part of a plot to perpetuate the Trump-Russia hoax. He received probation for his crime and even kept his law license.

Former FBI Deputy Director Andy McCabe, another key figure in the Russia scandal, was fired for ethics violations. But as soon as the Biden administration assumed power, his back pay was restored and he was compensated with a job as a talking head on CNN and as a professor at George Mason University. Another fired FBI agent, Peter Strzok, was given a teaching job at Georgetown.

Unless this cycle of reward is broken, the crimes will continue.

— *The Washington Times*

Appeasing dictators

The Biden administration is looking to ease sanctions on the regime of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro because the socialist dictator promises to hold free and fair elections, according to Monday's Washington Post scoop.

Mr. Maduro's 2018 election victory was widely seen as a fraud, with then-U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo posting on social media: "Sham elections change nothing. We need Venezuelan people running this country... a nation with so much to offer the world."

The United States refused to recognize the tally, and an alliance of 14 Latin American nations and Canada declared the results illegitimate. Next year, Mr. Maduro's term ends, and he's up for reelection.

Under the deal, the Post reported, Mr. Maduro would "commit to accepting international electoral observations and opening up media access for the elections."

What a joke.

In 2021, a European Union observation mission into Venezuela's regional elections concluded its elections "were marked by an excessive use of state resources in the campaign, unequal access to the media, voter coercion on election day and the arbitrary disqualification of candidates."

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement after that election that the Maduro regime "deprived Venezuelans yet again of their right to participate in a free and fair electoral process" and "grossly skewed the process."

Based on the pledge of a ruthless despot, the U.S. plans to reward Mr. Maduro by unlocking what is potentially billions of dollars in oil revenue.

President Biden's foreign policy through appeasement hasn't been working so well on the world stage.

In May 2021, the Biden administration waived sanctions on Nord Stream 2, a

Russian pipeline feeding gas into Germany. At the time, Mr. Blinken said Mr. Biden wanted "a predictable, stable relationship with Russia."

Nine months later, Russia invaded Ukraine.

Mr. Biden made the same mistake with Iran. In hopes of reviving President Barack Obama's nuclear deal, the Biden administration eased enforcement of the country's oil sanctions.

The total revenue for the world's largest state sponsor of terror during Mr. Biden's tenure is between \$81 billion and \$90.7 billion, according to estimates from The Heritage Foundation. In contrast, Iran's revenue in 2020 was \$7.9 billion under President Donald Trump.

In September, the Biden administration sweetened Iran's coffers by paying \$6 billion ransom as part of a prisoner exchange. A few weeks later, Hamas, backed by Iran, invaded Israel, killing some 1,400 civilians.

A wider regional war in the Middle East coupled with Russia's continued assault on Ukraine could disrupt fuel shipments, driving up the cost of oil and gas.

Last year, the Biden administration sold off more than 40% of our Strategic Petroleum Reserve to combat rising gas prices. The reserve now holds 351 million barrels, well below the Obama administration's peak of 727 million barrels.

As gas prices continue to tick up at the pump, Mr. Biden is running out of options to keep prices low. By pursuing his Green New Deal, he has hamstrung domestic energy production.

So off to murderous dictators he goes — hoping and praying some of America's greatest enemies can bail him out with their oil production.

It's a strategy of weakness that will continue to be exploited by the world's worst actors.

— *The Washington Times*

Hating Jews

There is no "cure" for antisemitism, but universal denunciation by all people of good will might help push it back in the closet, or under the Earth where it belongs.

"Come," they say, "let us destroy them as a nation, so that Israel's name is remembered no more." (Psalm 83:4)

The murderous attack on Israel has ripped away what remained of a thin veneer that has covered up growing antisemitism in America and some of the rest of the world. Until now it has only periodically raised its ugly head. The reaction by pro-Palestinian groups to Israel's necessary and defensible response to the terrorist attacks from Gaza reveals how this disease has spread.

For years prior to the invasion, there were occasional demonstrations against Jewish and pro-Israel speakers on some college campuses. Now, students and even some college presidents have blamed the killings on Israel for its "occupation" of land that is rightfully and historically theirs. This is like blaming Jews for their own deaths in the Holocaust.

After the attacks by Hamas, swastikas emerged in several U.S. cities. The BBC reported antisemitic incidents "quadrupled in the UK."

We are constantly warned that words matter and so they do. Words can be used to heal, or to incite. The American Jewish Committee (AJC) has compiled a partial list of words used against Jews that have fueled hatred and violence, dating back to medieval times, and now reborn and spread by antisemitic websites.

Two of these include "Dirty, filthy Jews" and "dual loyalty," the latter even used by ex-President Trump to suggest that Jews born in America are more loyal to Israel than the U.S.

"From the river to the sea" is another. AJC notes "At a London rally organized by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign on October 9, demonstrators in front of the Israeli embassy chanted 'From the River to the Sea' — a call for Palestinian control over the entirety of Israel's borders, from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea."

While it is free expression to advocate for Palestinians to have their own state, this chant is an undisguised call for the state of Israel to be eliminated, which is the point of the Hamas Charter and the goal of Iran.

Add "Deicide" and "Blood Libel" to the list. AJC cites a protestor's sign in Miami that read "Jesus was Palestinian, and you killed him too!"

"In Los Angeles, protesters hoisted a banner with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wearing a Hitler mustache and devouring a Palestinian child. Both tropes voiced in 2021 echo centuries-old methods of maligning Jews."

Then there are the Holocaust deniers. These include people who say The Diary of Anne Frank is fake. Some also claim the Holocaust (if it hap-

pened) was a rationale for illegally establishing the modern Jewish state in 1948. Jews have had a presence in the land for nearly 4,000 years. There are also those who say the number of Jews killed during World War II was far less than 6 million.

No wonder Gen. Dwight Eisenhower ordered photographers to capture images at some of the Nazi death camps. He foresaw there would be people who would deny it happened.

Lyricist Oscar Hammerstein wrote a powerful song for the Broadway musical "South Pacific." Producers wanted to keep it out of the film adaptation, but Hammerstein argued for its inclusion and prevailed. It's called "You've Got to Be Carefully Taught." Babies aren't born haters. Antisemitic books like "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" and other literature have been amplified today because of social media and various groups with which troubled minds associate, teaching them to hate Jews (and others).

There is no "cure" for antisemitism, but universal denunciation by all people of good will might help push it back in the closet, or under the Earth where it belongs. It also might help if some pro-Palestinian students were forced to listen to a Holocaust survivor and the true history of Judaism and Israel.

Email Cal Thomas at tcaeditors@tribpub.com. Look for his latest book "A Watchman in the Night: What I've Seen Over 50 Years Reporting on America" (HumanixBooks).



CHARLES HURT

Stupid Party vs. Evil Party

I hate to break it to you, House Republicans, but nobody cares who you pick as the leader of your silly little club. So just pick the next idiot and get on with your job.

How easy does it have to be? You don't even have to pick someone from the ranks of the blithering morons in Congress.

Just walk out to Independence Avenue, flag down the first cab going by, and haul the driver into the House chamber and make him speaker of the House.

OK, OK. So you people have somehow managed to screw up every corner of this country and the cabdriver you just hauled in off the street doesn't speak English. Then just grab the passenger from the back seat of the cab and make her speaker of the House.

I mean, Dennis Hastert did this job. Hakeem Jeffries could do this job. If they could do it, just about anybody could do it.

President Biden could probably do this job. Vice President Kamala Harris already does this job in the Senate. OK, maybe Mr. Biden would screw it up, but he screws everything up.

America is bankrupt and sits on the precipice of catastrophe, and you guys are squabbling like children over

Republicans have to look abroad for problems to solve. If the past is any measure, though, Republicans will somehow screw this up, too.

something nobody cares about.

We have an invasion of terrorists at the border. Government-funded inflation has spiked consumer prices to the highest point in two generations. Gas prices are already high and once again on the march skyward.

And again, America is bankrupt — \$33 trillion in debt — and you clowns are still printing money.

In the last election, American voters put the "good guys" in charge to start solving these problems. Unfortunately, the "good guys" also happen to be the Stupid Party. Sadly, it is still an improvement over the evil and dishonest alternative.

Now comes House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, the latest sacrificial offering to be speaker of the House. This is great news because it allows Republicans to spend the next year reminding voters how an extremist Democrat radicalized by Sen. Bernie Sanders

tried to assassinate Mr. Scalise and as many other Republican lawmakers as he could find.

If the past is any measure, though, Republicans will somehow screw this up, too.

Mr. Scalise is already doing his part. Apparently, America's broken border, gas prices, inflation and the looming threat of China are not enough to get Congress to grow up and start working. But you know what is?

The horrifying, despicable terrorist attacks by Hamas in Israel halfway around the world. Mr. Scalise announced this week that his very first priority if he gets elected to lead the clown show in Washington will be to reiterate our allegiance to Israel.

All well and good, especially since American citizens were killed and an unknown number of American hostages are being held by Hamas savages. But where exactly do Americans have to get in line to have their government address the problems facing them every day?

Israel's security and prosperity are certainly important, but not as important or urgent to Americans as America's security and prosperity.

Charles Hurt is the opinion editor of the Washington Times.

BIBLE SELECTION

The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant. My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

— Psalm 25:14-15 (ESV)



Mayor signs Fire Prevention proclamation

Mayor Mary Hawkins Butler has officially signed a proclamation recognizing October 8 to October 14 as Fire Prevention Awareness week in Madison. This week serves as a reminder to us all about the importance of fire safety, preparedness, and prevention.

OBITUARIES

Helene Latza Wright

Helene Latza Wright, 62, of Madison, MS, passed away on October 13, 2023, surrounded by her friends and family.

Helene, born on August 23, 1961, to Steve and Mattie Burns Latza at Tyndall Air Force Base in Panama City, Florida. She immediately brought joy and laughter into the world.

Helene was fiercely dedicated to her children, friends, family, and pets. Family came first and was a value she instilled in those around her.

Helene was predeceased by her mother, Mattie Burns Latza. She is survived by her husband Tommy Wright; daughter, Mary Francis Taylor (Wade); son, Eric Wright; grandchildren, Jude and Mabry; father Steve Latza; brother Steven Latza (Terri) and sister Evelyn Ziccardi (Vince).

Services will be held at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Madison MS, on Thursday, October 19, 2023, at 10:00 AM. Visitation will be from 9:00 to 10:00 AM. Burial services will be held at Goshen Cemetery in Coffeeville, MS, at 2:00 PM.

Dr. Louis Buford Yerger

Dr. Louis Buford Yerger passed away on October 11, 2023, in Madison, Mississippi, surrounded by his family.

He was born in Jackson, Mississippi, on December 8, 1934, to Buford and Margaret Yerger. He was educated in Jackson until his family moved to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, where he graduated from Hattiesburg High School in 1953.

After studying engineering at Auburn University, he attended the University of Mississippi Medical Center where he pursued his medical degree specializing as an Orthopedic Surgeon.

He later taught at the University of Mississippi Medical Center where his dedication to education was recognized with eight Professor of the Year Awards as well as multiple All-Star Teaching Awards.

Dr. Yerger's contributions to medicine extended beyond the classroom, earning him a well-deserved place in the Hall of Fame at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine for Outstanding Achievement in Orthopedic Surgery and

Rehab.

His work extended globally as he undertook multiple mission trips to Ethiopia and Honduras, providing healthcare and compassion to underserved communities.

He was an active member of St. James Episcopal Church where he served as Vestry Member, Senior Warden, Sunday School Teacher and EFM Mentor.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Margaret Hinton Yerger; his father, Buford Yerger; his sisters Margaret Yerger Mallett and Anne Yerger (Charles) Hooker.

Buford is survived by his wife of 63 years, Margaret Gay Bennett Yerger, and their four children, Michael Graeme

(Beth) Yerger, John Buford (Tina) Yerger, Gay Mallory Yerger, and Liz Yerger (Steve) Fisher; eight grandchildren, three great grandchildren, and his sister Helen Yerger (Bob) Blacklock.

Services will be held Saturday, October 21, at St. James Episcopal Church, Jackson, with visitation at 10:00 am and a Memorial Service at 11:00 am. The interment service will be at The Chapel of the Cross, Madison, followed by a celebration in the Parish Hall.

Memorials can be made to St. James Episcopal Church and to the Mississippi NICA, The National Interscholastic Cycling Association at www.mississippiimb.org.

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES/J. Ligon Duncan III

Jesus before Caiaphas

If you have your Bibles, I'd invite you to turn with me to Matthew chapter 26 verses 57 – 68 where Jesus faces a night and a morning of trials. The gospel writers tell us this in detail so that we would see something of what our Lord underwent that night.

In verses 57 – 63, where we see the beginning of the trial, I want you to see Jesus' silence. In verse 64, where Jesus responds to the high priest's question under oath, I want you to see Jesus' bold witness.

I. Jesus' Silence First in verses 57 – 63, Jesus is taken to the Sanhedrin. The scribes and elders are already gathered at the house of Caiaphas. They were the ones who had hatched this plot against Jesus.

Matthew writes this so that we might understand that the religious leaders of God's people were the leading conspirators against the Messiah. In this judicial meeting, they are going to question and try Jesus. And it's important to realize that the Sanhedrin has already decided to convict Jesus.

Matthew tells us that two witnesses step forward and accuse Jesus of saying that He was going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. Despite this being an utter misrepresentation of Jesus' words, the charge that they made was very serious.

So the high priest turns to Jesus and asks Him to defend Himself against the charges that have been made. And Jesus remained silent. Now, there's a reason for this. Jesus' silence both shows His contempt for the kangaroo court before which He has been brought, and it also shows the injustice of what is

being done. But more significantly, this shows His willingness to submit to God's will and His willingness to die for you. The Lord Jesus Christ is so in love with His people, that He will not stand in the way of an injustice done to His own person so that He can lay down His life.

II. Jesus' Bold Witness In verse 64, you need to understand in the first place that His speaking is not a contradiction of His previous silence. He speaks here under oath from the high priest, not to defend Himself, but to say something that is going to get Him in deeper trouble with the Sanhedrin.

Jesus is saying to the high priest, "You think you're My judge, but I am your judge. In fact, I am the judge of heaven and earth. I am the one seated by God at His right hand of power to judge the world, and You will see me coming hereafter on clouds with power and glory."

Jesus is declaring to the Sanhedrin that He is their Judge. No wonder the high priest tore his robes. You couldn't find a clearer, bolder claim to Jesus Messiahship, His Lordship, and His deity. His answer under oath is a bold witness to His position and power.

And I want to tell you that every human being must come to grips with that particular claim about the Lord Jesus, because there are only two possible responses. You either defy that claim or you embrace it. Perhaps you are skeptical of the Lord Jesus

Christ. He's not letting you off the hook. He's claiming His Lordship over all of us. Have you embraced Him?

III. The Sanhedrin's Pitiful Response

In verses 65 – 68, the response of the Sanhedrin to Jesus' answer is pitiful. The Sanhedrin gets the message. They understand precisely what Jesus is claiming about Himself, but they choose the wrong response. Caiaphas accuses Jesus of blasphemy. Blasphemy, of course, is the sin of claiming to be God or equal with Him, or of attacking God's authority and majesty in any way.

And then we're told that that whole crowd begins to abuse and mock the Lord Jesus Christ. All of this was in accordance with Old Testament prophecy. Remember Isaiah 50 verse 6: "I gave my back to those who strike me, and my cheeks to those who pluck out the beard. I did not cover my face from humiliation or spitting."

When you see Christ being struck by the members of the Sanhedrin, you must remember this: By His stripes you are healed. That should have been the hand of God across our faces at the heavenly trial, and He willingly takes it for us from the hands of wicked men because He loves us. The Lord Jesus Christ, in all His glory, endures that humiliation so that we might never, ever experience that humiliation, and so that we might be joint heirs.

If you've come this day with a hard heart for the Lord Jesus Christ, I want you to look at Him as He stands before this fickle, unscrupulous crowd of religious leaders, and He keeps His voice silent to every opportunity of defense. And He only speaks when it is going to lead to His conviction. And He takes it all because He was willing to bear on His back the due penalty for your sin. Hallelujah, what a Savior.

The Rev. Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III is Chancellor and CEO of Reformed Theological Seminary. He can be reached at 601-923-1600 or by email at jhyde@rts.edu.

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Advertisement for Reformed Theological Seminary featuring a grid of student portraits and the text 'INVEST in the FUTURE of the CHURCH'. Includes the website rts.edu/give.



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The Madison County Economic Development Authority and the Madison County Business League and Foundation created the Visionary Leadership Award in 2011 to recognize and thank certain individuals or communities for their visionary leadership contributions to the community, their investments in people and community service, resulting in an overall higher quality of life for Madison County. Congratulations to the City of Gluckstadt for receiving The Visionary Leadership Award for 2023.

CONGRATULATIONS

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