Daniel Wiggins, Shawn Butler and Austin Scott have developed a piece of technology called a flex roller crimper, which they have entered in the Farm Bureau Rural Entrepreneurship Challenge.
A concept first drawn on a napkin is becoming something real for three West Tennessee students.

University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture graduate students Shawn Butler and Austin Scott worked with University of Tennessee at Martin student Daniel Wiggins to develop a piece of technology that could save farmers money and make organic practices available on a large scale.

Their team placed in the top four in the Farm Bureau Rural Entrepreneurship Challenge, a national competition for food and agricultural businesses. There were more than 240 applicants from around the country and the group received $15,000 in startup funds along with a visit to Washington, D.C.

In January the team will head to Orlando, Florida, to compete in the final round, with the possibility of winning up to $25,000 more.

"It's been surprising, every advancement we've made," Scott said. "We wanted it to continue on and we had plans to, but the fact that it's actually taken shape is pretty cool."

The invention is a flex roller crimper to help farmers kill cover crops, crops that are planted to keep nutrients from leaving the soil and land from weeding over.

Butler said he developed the idea after he spent hours spraying cover crops with a herbicide. He researched other ways to kill cover crops and discovered roller crimpers, a hollow cylinder with blades on it. The blades pinch the stems of the cover crop, killing it without the use of herbicides.

However, Butler saw there was not a way to use a roller crimper on a large scale, and began developing the idea of adding a roller crimper to a planter, killing the cover crop and planting in a single pass over the land.

"It's kind of taking an organic practice and making it available for large scale, conventional use," Scott said.

Butler said he hoped their invention, which has a pending patent, will help farmers produce food in a safer, cost-efficient manner.

After developing the concept, Butler heard a professor at UT Martin say students pitching an idea in a local competition could skip the final. He and two classmates, Scott and Wiggins, decided to do so.

In Florida, the competition will be a new challenge, Butler said. The group will not be allowed a PowerPoint and will have four — rather than 10 or 15 — minutes to describe their invention. About 200-500 people will sit around the circular stage, and the team can only bring visual aids they can carry.

If the group won the $25,000 they could pay a fabrication shop to build the roller crimper, rather than trying to build it themselves while balancing school and work.

"It went from doing a presentation to skip a final to where we're at now," Butler said.

Reach Katherine at (731) 425-9748. Follow her on Twitter: @kathsburgess

UTM women's basketball hosting vocal group Unspoken

The vocal group Unspoken — joined by the JJ Weeks Band and David Dunn — will perform their tour "A Christmas Together" following the University of Tennessee at Martin women's basketball game against the University of Alabama. The basketball game will begin at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center, with the concert expected to begin at 7:30 p.m.

Unspoken has two consecutive top-five singles — "Who You Are" and "Lift My Life Up" — and has toured with the bands Sanctus Real and Big Daddy Weave. Some of the group's top hits include "Start a Fire," "Call It Grace" and "Good Fight."

Admission is $5 per person through today, $10 at the door prior to halftime of the game and $15 starting after halftime.

For more information or to purchase tickets, contact ticket manager Fran Spears at (731) 881-7207.
League of Striving Artists announces Holiday Art Bazaar

The League of Striving Artists, the student art organization at The University of Tennessee at Martin, will be hosting a Holiday Art Bazaar from Dec. 3 to Dec. 5. This event will be held in the Fine Arts Building Gallery sponsored by the UT Martin Visual and Theatre Arts Department.

The LSA Holiday Art Bazaar gives members of the community the opportunity to view and purchase a large selection of handmade items created by UTM art students, faculty and alumni. Items will include holiday cards, paintings, scarves, ceramics, glass ornaments and many other handmade works.

Admission is free and the event is open to the public. Many of the artists will be in attendance at the bazaar.

Purchase gifts for your family and friends in time for the holidays and support your local artists by coming to view their work!

The bazaar will be open on Dec. 3 from 7 to 8 p.m., Dec. 4 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Dec. 5 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Cash, check and charge will be accepted at the bazaar. Support the Arts (STARTS) contributors will join students and faculty for an early “insider” opening of the event on Dec. 3 from 5 to 7 p.m. For more information on the STARTS program and how to become a STARTS contributor, visit www.utm.edu/starts or call the Department of Visual and Theatre Arts at 731-881-7400.

Location of Event:
The University of Tennessee at Martin
Fine Arts Building Gallery
16 Mt. Pelia Rd.
Martin, TN 38238

Holiday at UTM benefit concert offers holiday cheer

The University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Music will host its annual Holiday at UTM benefit concert on Sunday at 3 p.m. UTM music ensembles and soloists will perform traditional holiday music that will be sure to brighten anyone’s holiday season. There will also be a special appearance by Santa Claus. The event will be held at Harriet Fulton Theatre in the UTM Fine Arts Building. Admission for adults is $10, children ages 6 – 11 is $5 and children under age 6 can attend free of charge. All proceeds for this event go directly towards benefiting the students of the music department. Tickets can be purchased at the door, or by contacting Sherry Adams at (731) 881-7402 or sadams@utm.edu. The performance will be recorded and broadcast on WLJT and other affiliate public television stations.

Inman students attend UTM leadership summit

From left, Inman Middle School students Hunter Lawrence, Izzy Arthurs, Rylan Perry and Kara Barnhart attended the FutureStar Leadership Summit at the University of Tennessee at Martin on Oct. 29. Hosted by the WestStar Leadership Program, the FutureStar summit gave students selected for their leadership potential a chance to participate in a variety of team-building exercises before touring the UT Martin campus.
Christmas Concert Tour at UT-Martin

A Christmas concert tour will take place at the Elam Center in Martin Wednesday night following UT-Martin women’s college basketball.

Contemporary Christian artists “Unspoken”, along with the J J Weeks Band and David Dunn will perform as part of their “Christmas Together Tour”.

Tickets are $5 thru today, and $10 on Tuesday up until halftime of the college basketball game featuring the women Skyhawks and Alabama.

Contact the UT-Martin ticket office for more information.

Holiday at UTM’ concert set for Sunday afternoon

The second annual “Holiday at UTM” concert will be presented Sunday afternoon in the Harriet Fulton Theatre, located in the Fine Arts Building at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

The concert, which benefits the UT Martin Department of Music, will begin at 3 p.m. and a reception will be held immediately afterward.

Tickets are $10 for attendees ages 12 and older and $5 for ages 6-11, with children younger than 6 to be admitted free of charge.

Tickets may be purchased at the door or by calling the department at (731) 881-7402.

The concert will feature performances by the New Pacer Singers, Wind Ensemble, UT Martin Big Band, University Singers and Percussion Ensemble, and will also include performances by Department of Music faculty members.

The event will be recorded by WLIT-DT and broadcast at a later date.

For more information, contact the UT Martin Department of Music.
Civil War era letter donated to UT Martin’s archives

“They came here to drive us away, but they found it far different.”

So explains a letter written by George W. Nowlin to his brother, Wade, after the Battle of Stones River near Murfreesboro in December 1862. Nowlin, who served in the 31st Tennessee Infantry during the Civil War, was a Greenfield resident and wrote to let his family know the events of that four-day battle and his part in them.

Nowlin’s first-hand account describes his work as a hospital steward in the Confederate Army, which included “dressing wounds, helping to amputate limbs, (and) attend(ing) to the nurses.” He describes the relative losses of each side, boasting that the Confederate troops took 7,000 prisoners, 60 pieces of artillery, a great many small arms and plenty of ammunition, as well as wagons, coffee, sugar, molasses and medicine whiskey from the opposing side.

He wrote his own letter on a piece of stationary taken from the bags of a Union soldier.

“They never drove the enemy from their breast works,” he concludes.

This letter, inadvertently dated June 4, 1862, now resides in the historical archives at the University of Tennessee at Martin after being donated by Nowlin relative and former Greenfield resident Bill Shannon.

Shannon, great-great-nephew of Nowlin, officially donated the letter to the UT Martin archives last month, making it the first Civil War letter to be kept there. Shannon resided in the Weakley County area for many years and studied engineering at the University of Tennessee Junior College, now UT Martin, from 1946-47. He later spent 31 years designing automobiles, including Thunderbird and Mustang models, for the Ford Motor Company in Michigan.

After the war, Nowlin returned to his home in Greenfield and became a druggist, or pharmacist, until he died Feb. 4, 1918. He is buried alongside relatives in the Mt. Olivet Cemetery in McKenzie.

For more information on the UT Martin archives, contact Karen Elmore, senior library assistant, at (731) 881-7094 or by email at kelmore@utm.edu.

District attorney to speak to UT Martin graduates

Amy Weirich, Shelby County district attorney, will address the fall 2015 graduating class at the University of Tennessee at Martin during commencement exercises Dec. 12 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

Ms. Weirich, a Germantown native, earned her bachelor’s degree from UT Martin in 1987 and went on to complete a law degree from the Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law at the University of Memphis.

She joined the district attorney’s office in 1991 as a courtroom prosecutor and handled many high-profile criminal cases.

She was also chief prosecutor of the Gang and Narcotics Prosecution Unit and division leader for the Special Prosecution Unit in criminal court.

Gov. Bill Haslam appointed her as Shelby County district attorney in January 2011, after which she was officially elected in August 2012 to complete the final two years of her predecessor’s term. She was re-elected to a full eight-year term in August 2014 and is the first woman to hold this position in Shelby County.

She helped create the Multi-Agency Gang Unit, which is the first federal, state and local law enforcement organization designed to curb gang activity. Her office also sponsors the annual “Do the Write Thing” anti-violence essay contest for students, runs the Truancy Reduction Mentoring Program and created Lives Worth Saving, a prostitution-diversion program with Calvary Episcopal Church and other nonprofit organizations.

Ms. Weirich serves on a variety of boards and commissions, and her office has been listed among the top 50 workplaces in Shelby County by the Commercial Appeal.

The entire UT Martin commencement program, including Ms. Weirich’s address, can be seen via a live webcast starting at 11 a.m. Dec. 12 at www.utm.edu.

For more information, contact the UT Martin Office of University Relations at (731) 881-7615.
Miss Tennessee visits Parsons

Hannah Robison to emcee the Miss Parsons - Miss Decatur County Pageants

Miss Tennessee, Hannah Robison, will visit Parsons on Saturday, Dec. 5 as she will emcee the Miss Parsons - Miss Decatur County Pageant. The pageant will be held at Decatur County Middle School at 7:00 p.m. Also attending will be Miss Tennessee Outstanding Teen, Allie Privitt and Miss Tennessee Teen Princess, Desiree Dyson. Heather’s Dance Academy will perform as special entertainment.

There will be 11 contestants vying for the title of Miss Parsons or Miss Decatur County; six competing for title of Miss Parsons Outstanding Teen; and seven competing for title of Miss Parsons Teen Princess. There will also be four Miss Parsons Little Princesses, and according to event organizers all of these girls are princesses, so a pageant is not required for them.

Local sponsors helping to make this event possible include: Boaz Furniture & Appliance, Decatur County Government, Merle Norman, WestTN Bank, Gizmo Clinic, Red Door Galleria, Vise’s Pharmacy, Bob’s Pest Control, Tom Leitch Auto Center, Rhinestones & Rust, CB&S Bank, Farmers Bank, UTM Parsons, FirstBank, Wood Law Offices, One Stop, Townsend-Evans Insurance, City Drugs, Sherry’s Interiors, State Farm Insurance, Decatur County Insurance, McKell’s House of Style, Total Pain Management and Be Blessed Fashions.

Santa’s Village, To Celebrate 31st Season

The 31st Annual Santa’s Village, scheduled for December 10-13, will once again be held inside the Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex, located on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin.

Returning attractions at this year’s four-day event include: The Enchanted Forest, a petting farm, visit with Daniel Tiger, MTD model train display, amusement rides, vendor booths, wagon rides, and an appearance by Santa Claus.

It is absolutely free to the public but a $5 new toy or non-perishable canned good donation will be appreciated. All proceeds from Santa’s Village will go to help less fortunate families.

Over the past 30 years, Santa’s Village donations have totaled over $1.1 million, as almost 306,000 people have attended the event.

Santa’s Village will be held from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. on Thursday, December 10 and Friday, December 11; from 11 a.m. until 9 p.m. Saturday, December 12; and from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. on Sunday, December 13.

For more information about Santa’s Village, contact Martin Parks and Recreation Department at 731-587-6784.
Students help UT Martin Label Trees, Achieve Certified Arboretum Status

Members of the Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society at the University of Tennessee at Martin helped with the identification and mapping process that allowed the campus to qualify for arboretum status. More than 30 species of trees on the UT Martin main campus have been labeled and added to a mapping site so that interested visitors can easily locate and examine each type. Pictured around the certified arboretum sign are (standing, l-r) Colton Barber, Dalton Smith, Baylee West, UT Martin Interim Chancellor Bob Smith, Brandon Weber, Andre Delcalzo, Madilyn Peay, Jocee Blanton, Austin Parsley, Brant Luker, Will Lindsey, Flint Perkins, Dylan Enochs, Jonas Cothren, Gunner Boucher, Dr. Eric Peiren – wildlife biology professor, Martin Mayor Randy Brundige, (kneeling, l-r) Emmie Donaldson and Lauren Taylor.

Robison to speak at rededication ceremony for Eiffel Tower Dec. 12

Hannah Robison, the reigning Miss Tennessee and a top five finalist at this year’s Miss America pageant, will be among the speakers next week at the rededication of Paris’ Eiffel Tower replica.

The dedication of the monument and its freshly renovated base will take place at 2 p.m. Dec. 12 at Eiffel Tower Park. The monument, which is a frequent spot for visitors to the area to have photos made, now includes masonry platforms for guests to have their pictures taken.

A plaque detailing the work will be unveiled during the rededication, according to Tony Lawrence, Paris-Henry County Chamber of Commerce president and head of the Paris Parks and Recreation Department.

“We want to unveil the plaque formally thanking Lowe’s for the tremendous gift of labor and materials they donated to the rebrick- ing of the Eiffel Tower base and the building of the photo platforms,” he said.

“We celebrate loving where we live,” local Lowe’s manager Brody Hemingway said. “Helping with the restoration of such an iconic representative of Paris and Henry County was a natural fit for our Lowe's Heroes Project selection.

“The Lowe’s employees who donated their time knew they were contributing to their community's quality of life.”

Joining Robison as speakers will be Lawrence, Hemingway, Paris Mayor Carlton Gerrell and Henry County Mayor Brent Greer.

“We hope everyone will come out and help us celebrate the work done by Lowe’s and Parks and Recreation,” Lawrence said.
Santa's Village open in Martin Dec. 10 - 13

Santa's Village of Martin, Tenn. will mark the 31st anniversary of the event Dec. 10-13, to date, recording a total attendance of 305,728 people who have visited the site throughout the years.

Donations totaling $1,145,136 have also been distributed to area residents in need, thanks to those who have attended.

The fantasyland setting inside the Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin features the Enchanted Forest, a model train display, amusement rides, vendor booths and weather permitting, wagon rides Friday through Sunday.

A petting farm and 20 hours of continuous local entertainment will also be staged.

Hours of operation will be 6-9 p.m. Dec. 10-11, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Dec. 12 and 1-5 p.m. Dec. 13.

Admission is a suggested donation of $5 worth of nonperishable foods and/or toys.

Additional sponsors include Zaxby's, Casey's General Store, Simmons Bank, MTD Products and Savant Learning Center.

Co-sponsors for the event are the City of Martin, and UTM.

LOCAL STUDENTS ATTEND UT MARTIN'S FUTURESTAR LEADERSHIP SUMMIT - Nine middle school students from Obion County attended the FutureStar Leadership Summit on Oct. 29 at the University of Tennessee at Martin, hosted by the WestStar Leadership Program. Students were selected based on leadership potential and were able to participate in a variety of team-building exercises before touring the UT Martin campus. Pictured (front row, l-r) are Kaler Bobo, Union City Middle School; Reice Gray, Union City Middle School; Olga Lidia Acevedo, Ridgemont Elementary School; Tina Huang, Ridgemont Middle School; (back row) Brandon Ransom, South Fulton Middle School; Lucas Chambers, South Fulton Middle School; Olivia Dysart, Union City Middle School; Shawn Rutherford, Lake Road Elementary School; and Abigail Pollock, Lake Road Elementary School. For more information, contact Virginia Grimes, WestStar coordinator, at 731-881-7298 or by email at vgrimes@utm.edu. (Photo submitted)
UTM Department of Music to host holiday benefit concert

The University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Music will host their annual Holiday at UTM Benefit Concert Dec. 6 at 3 p.m.

UTM music ensembles and soloists will perform traditional holiday music sure to brighten the holiday season.

There will also be a special appearance by Santa Claus.

The event will be held at Harriet Fulton Theatre in the UTM Fine Arts Building.

Admission for adults is $10, children ages 6 - 11 is $5, and children under age 6 may attend free of charge.

All proceeds for this event go directly towards benefitting the students of the music department.

Tickets can be purchased at the door, or by contacting Sherry Adams at (731) 881-7402 or sadams@utm.edu.

The performance will be recorded and broadcast on WLJT and other affiliate public television stations.

West Tennessee students chosen as AT&T Distinguished Scholars

Twelve students from the University of Tennessee at Martin have been chosen as AT&T Distinguished Scholars for the 2015-16 academic year. The Distinguished Scholars program, created by AT&T in 2013, provides scholarships for students at the three main UT System campuses in Knoxville, Chattanooga and Martin each year. Eight of the selected students are from the West Tennessee area. Pictured are (front row, l-r) Darren Gibson, a senior finance major from Memphis; Cassidy Shambeau, a sophomore agriculture major from Selmer; Samantha McNeal, a freshman social work major from Somerville; Alexa Orr, a sophomore criminal justice major from Savannah; Rebecca Wisdom, a sophomore mathematics major from River and Brittany Hartfield, a senior biology major from Milan. (Not pictured are Brooklyn Holland, a sophomore agriculture major from Selmer, and Madison Lewis, a freshman education major from South Fulton.) They are joined by (back row, l-r) Dr. Lynn Alexander, dean, UT Martin College of Humanities and Fine Arts; Andy Wilson, vice chancellor for university advancement; Dr. Bob Smith, interim chancellor; Chuck Thomas III, regional director, AT&T External and Legislative Affairs; Dr. Cindy West, dean, College of Education Health and Behavioral Sciences; Dr. Todd Winters, dean, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences; and Dr. Chris Baxter, associate professor, College of Business and Global Affairs.
UT-M’s Dickens and Winters to visit Hirosaki University as distinguished faculty

By Erin Chesnut
Office of University Relations, UT-M

University of Tennessee at Martin faculty members Dr. Ross Dickens and Dr. Todd Winters will travel to Hirosaki University in Japan as distinguished visiting faculty Nov. 9-13. Dickens and Winters will spend their visit speaking on matters of importance in global finance and agriculture and interacting with international educators and business representatives.

UT Martin established a partnership with Hirosaki University in 1980, initiated by the late Dr. John Eisterhold, then UT Martin director of international programs, in cooperation with the president of Hirosaki University at that time. The institutions have each exchanged more than 30 students and faculty members since the practice began in 1985.

Dickens, professor of finance and dean of the UT Martin College of Business and Global Affairs, received a bachelor's degree from Presbyterian College in 1983, a master's degree from the University of North Carolina in 1987 and a doctoral degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in 1991.

He served as an assistant professor of finance at Louisiana Tech University and later worked his way through the faculty ranks at the University of South Alabama before joining the UT Martin faculty in 2013. Dickens has served as UT Martin chapter president of Beta Gamma Sigma Business Scholastic Honor Society since 2014 and became a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Scholastic Honor Society that same year.

"The chance to work with our international programs faculty and staff to strengthen ties with our sister school in Japan is a wonderful part of my job and the primary professional goal of the trip," he said. "In my role as a finance faculty member, I will be presenting topics related to the U.S. financial system with emphasis on the commercial banking industry."

Winters, professor of animal science and dean of the UT Martin College of Agricultural and Applied Sciences, earned a bachelor's degree from Washington State University in 1983, a master's degree from Purdue University in 1986 and a doctoral degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1992. He then became a postdoctoral research fellow with the National Institute of Health from 1992-1994.

Before joining the UT Martin faculty in 2013, Winters served as associate dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Ill.

"I'm very excited about the trip to Hirosaki and learning more about Japanese agriculture and culture," he said. "My lecture will be about GMOs [genetically modified organisms] in agriculture, which will be an interesting topic since Japan is one of the countries that does not grow genetically modified foods."

Hirosaki is located on the northern part of Japan's main island, Honshu, in the Aomori Prefecture.

For more information on the visit, contact either Dickens at 731-881-7306 or Winters at 731-881-7251.
Bethel University's Twinkle Ball

C.B. SCHMELTER/THE JACKSON SUN
Miss Tennessee Hannah Robison adjusts 7-year-old Gracie Aird’s sash before taking a picture with the Miss Tennessee Organization titleholders at the Twinkle Ball at Bethel University Wednesday night.

THE WEAKLEY COUNTY PRESS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2015

STEPSHENS SPEAKS — Rachel Stephens, interim director of Greek Life at UT Martin (third, from left) recently spoke to the Kiwanis Club of Martin about the many facets of being part of one of the 21 Greek organizations on campus at UTM. Stephens said that more than 865 students take part in Greek activities and there is a high percentage of involvement by Greeks in campus activities. She also explained that a number of Greeks are leaders, honors students, and/or athletes. She stated many hours of service are logged by Greek organizations. Stephens assumed her duties six months ago and loves being back on the campus where she completed her undergraduate studies. She is accompanied by Dr. Frank Black (left) Anita Bell, president of the Kiwanis Club of Martin, and Dr. Annie Jones, director of multicultural affairs at UT Martin and a member of Kiwanis Club program committee.
A recital of students enrolled in a unique music program at the University of Tennessee at Martin is set for 3 p.m. Dec. 12 in the Blankenship Recital Hall in the UTM Fine Arts Building. Admission is free.

The UTM Community Music Academy provides quality, affordable music lessons to instrumentalists and singers of all ages.

In particular, it provides area students with the opportunity for private study as they prepare for All-West auditions, solo and ensemble, and college auditions.

Teachers are both UTM faculty and select students, and rates have been set at a low level to allow as many people as possible to experience the joy of making music.

Half-hour lessons are $15 with an apprentice teacher who is a UTM student and $25 with a master teacher, who is a member of the UTM faculty.

Hour lessons are $25 for an apprentice teacher and $40 for a master teacher.

All lessons are taught in the new Fine Arts Building, located at the northwest corner of campus at 16 Mt. Pelia Road.

While the entire program was not ready at press time, these students are among those scheduled to perform: Melodi Clayton, a homeschooled freshman, will perform “Etude No. 5” by Fernando Sor on her guitar; Mikaela Vanasdale, Martin Middle School sixth-grader; “To a Wild Rose” by Edward MacDowell on clarinet; and Chloe Shelton, eighth-grader at Rosenwald School in Trenton, “Do You Hear What I Hear” on clarinet in a duet with her teacher, Brooke Howard.

Others performing and their instruments are Taylor Pannell, a senior at Gibson County, bassoon; Audrey Adams, junior at Union City, clarinet; and TJ Barker, a McKenzie Middle School eighth-grader, percussion.

According to Elizabeth Aleksander, coordinator, the academy is now accepting new students.

For more information or to enroll, visit www.utm.edu/communitymusic or email communitymusic@utm.edu.
The faculty and students of the University of Tennessee at Martin present "Holiday: A Music Benefit Concert" this Sunday afternoon at 3 in the Harriet Fulton Theatre. The program includes performances by the wind ensemble, New Pacer Singers, jazz band, and others. Proceeds benefit students in the Department of Music.

The Paducah School of Art and Design hosts the Fifth Annual Student and Faculty Holiday Art Sale tomorrow from 9 to 5 and Sunday from 11 to 3 at the Clemens Fine Arts Center Gallery. The sale includes jewelry, ceramics, photography, paintings, drawings, sculpture, and fabric art.

The Murray Woman’s Club holds an open house this Sunday afternoon at 2 at the clubhouse, located at 704 Vine Street in Murray. The event features seasonal music performed by the Murray Woman’s Club Music Department Chorus, the Calloway County High School Choir, and the Murray High School Choir. The event is free and open to the public, and refreshments are provided.

Toshiya Leonard, a senior communications major from Jonesboro, Ark., won the Best Pencil Media Award and Katelin Brown, a junior political science major from Dresden, led the Best Lobbying Firm, which included Tanner Bell, a sophomore accounting major from Martin, as lobbyist.

Justin Morgan, a senior political science major from Cookeville, and Ryan Leatherbarrow, a junior management major from Smyrna, were both inducted into the TISL BAR Association, Breydon Horton, a freshman communications major from Camden, received a coveted Carlisle Award, TISL’s oldest and most prestigious award, named in honor of TISL’s founder, Dr. Douglas Carlisle. Ten senators and representatives receive this award each year as chosen by the organization’s executive council.

Elizabeth Sanders, of Smithville, completed her term as 2014-15 secretary of state and is now a graduate student in the UT Martin Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. Rachel Washburn, a junior political science major from Summertown, also completed her term as 2014-15 chief justice after serving as an associate justice the year before.

The UT Martin TISL delegation is co-advised by Dr. Chris Baxter, professor of political science, and Dr. Anderson Starling, assistant professor of political science. For more information on TISL or how to become part of next year’s delegation, contact Baxter at 731-587-1737 or by email at cbaxter@utm.edu, or Starling at 731-587-3295 or by email at astarling@utm.edu.
Haslam says proposed higher education reshuffle won't involve UT campuses

December 8th, 2015 by Andy Sher in Local Regional News Read Time: 3 mins.

Republican Gov. Bill Haslam speaks at a Dec. 1 news conference at the state Capitol in Nashville, Tenn.

Photo by Erik Schelzig

NASHVILLE — Although Gov. Bill Haslam intends to create independent governing boards for the six universities overseen by the Tennessee Board of Regents, the governor says he has no intention of doing the same for the University of Tennessee system.

Haslam said he sees the UT system, which includes the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, in a different light.

The governor took pains to explain the two systems are entirely different when asked whether the TBR move — spurred by years of effort by powerful advocates for the University of Memphis — might encourage a similar situation with UTC.

"The UT system is very different than TBR," Haslam said. "You got 46 [TBR] institutions versus either four or six, depending on how you define UT with three campuses, the med school, the two institutes."

But Haslam acknowledged there long has been talk in some local circles about independence for UTC, which as the then-private University of Chattanooga became part of the UT system in 1969.

"Since [UTC] became a part of the system, that's been a question that's come up," Haslam conceded. "Heck, when I was running for governor, some people said, 'We're not getting our full attention that we should.'"
The regents system, created in 1922, is comprised of 46 separate institutions with six universities, 13 community colleges and 27 colleges of applied technology.

Chattanooga State, a two-year college, is part of the Tennessee Board of Regents and will remain so.

The University of Tennessee has its main, original campus in Knoxville, as well as UTC and UT-Martin in West Tennessee. The system also operates the UT Space Institute in Tullahoma, the UT Institute of Agriculture and the UT Health Science Center in Memphis.

Since becoming part of UT, the Chattanooga university's enrollment has more than doubled to more than 10,000. UTC also has developed graduate degree programs and seen accompanying growth in on-campus life. Observers say UT system President Joe DiPietro has allowed UTC to maintain a separate identity in a number of ways. For example, one of UTC's emblems is the "Power C" that stands for Chattanooga.

Last week, DiPietro drew distinctions between the UT and Regents' systems.

"We have a statewide board, and it functions very well," DePietro said. "We have more similarities in our six components than TBR does. So managing them is a little easier because we're more similar and there's less disparity."

Haslam's proposal calls for the University of Memphis and the five others — East Tennessee State, Middle Tennessee State, Tennessee State, Austin Peay and Tennessee Technological universities — to be governed by their own boards, which would appoint the campus presidents, manage the universities' budgets, set tuition and oversee other operational tasks.

But the Tennessee Board of Regents would continue to provide administrative support to the six state universities. Meanwhile, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, which for decades has acted to coordinate and referee activities between the UT and TBR systems, would be given beefed-up oversight and presumably the firm authority and resources to carry that out under Haslam's proposal.

Haslam last week pitched the move as the logical next step in his "Drive to 55" program that places new emphasis on two-year colleges and technical schools. The goal is boosting the percentage of Tennesseans with post-secondary degrees to 55 percent by 2025.

Still, powerful interests in Memphis have pushed the issue for years, winning pledges from former Govs. Don Sundquist and Phil Bredesen to do something for Memphis. While Sundquist and Bredesen never delivered, Haslam clearly intends to.

Among those pushing for an independent University of Memphis are Federal Express founder Fred Smith and Brad Martin, the retired chairman and CEO of Saks Inc. and a former interim president of the University of Memphis. Early in his career, Haslam once worked for Martin. Contact Andy Sher at asher@timesfreepress.com, 615-255-0550 or follow via twitter at AndySher1.
TN Code Academy to be available in 2016

A great opportunity for seventh-12th graders in the Northwest Tennessee area to learn about technology and online coding will be available this new year through the Tennessee Code Academy.

Program participants will meet on Tuesday and Thursday nights 6 p.m.-8 p.m. for six weeks, beginning Jan. 5, 2016. Classes will be held in room 215 at the Paul Meek Library at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

The TN Code Academy is an educational program that aims to create a fun, engaging and hands-on experience in which middle school and high school students are challenged to create with code and engage in innovative thinking. Experienced coders will walk participants through the process of creating with code through an interactive course that teaches the basics of computer programming through games, web, and mobile applications. Students will learn problem solving and coding both individually and as part of a team.

By the end of the academy, students will have a better understanding of programming, the future of computer science, and may even have a desire to enter into a similar career field themselves.

"Our goal is to introduce more young people to computer coding and computer engineering," said Carol Reed, executive director at the Northwest TN Entrepreneur Center. "By the end of the sessions, our students will be more prepared to consider computer coding as an occupation. There are a large number of jobs and occupations that use code directly and even more where knowing how to code is huge asset."

The cost to enroll is $25 per student, payable the first night of the course. Checks are to be made payable to Weakley County Cooperative Extension. Spots are limited to only 25 students with registration extended to Dec. 28.

Those interested may register in person at the Weakley County 4-H office in the Weakley County Courthouse in Dresden, Tenn., or online at www.n.teccneconect.com.

For more information, contact Weakley County 4-H at (731) 364-3164 or NTEC at ntecenter@gmail.com or call (731) 587-4213 ext. 274.

This event is co-hosted by the Weakley County UT Cooperative Extension 4-H Program, the Northwest Tennessee Entrepreneur Center, the UTM Department of Agriculture and Applied Sciences and UTM Information and Technology Services.

The Northwest TN Entrepreneur Center is located at 206 White Street in Martin. To contact them or find out more information about their services, call (731) 587-4213 or visit www.n.teccneconect.com. This project is funded under an agreement with Launch Tennessee and the State of Tennessee.
UTM and Discovery Park celebrate World Soil Day

By MADILYN PEAY  
Special to the Press

After the sun, soil is perhaps the most important element of crop production, and thus, the human experience as we know it.

With that in mind, the University of Tennessee at Martin partnered with the Discovery Park of America and the local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to celebrate World Soil Day on Saturday. Several education stations were set up throughout Discovery Park where park visitors could learn about different varieties of soil. Students also distributed fun educational materials for both children and parents.

UTM students from the Agronomy Club, Wildlife Society and soil science classes set up and ran activities about soil texture, pH and infiltration. These activities demonstrated how soil functions in the environment. Soil is able to clean and store water, hold nutrients for plants and provide a home for a variety of microorganisms. It can store vast amounts of carbon and provides support for the structures built on top of it.

"I thought it was really cool how the kids, even if they didn’t understand the science, were really interested (in the activities). They got their parents interested because they never thought their kids would enjoy that," said Morgan Plunkett, a junior plant and soil science major.

Dr. Paula Gale, a UT Martin professor of soil science, organized the event with DPA and encouraged her students to volunteer and share what they learn in class with the public.

"I was excited when I was overwhelmed by students wanting to help," said Gale.

Chris Gunlefinger, assistant education director at Discovery Park, worked with Gale to coordinate the World Soil Day celebration.

"We’re always happy when an opportunity to work with UT Martin presents itself," said Gunlefinger. "World Soil Day is a unique chance to work with the university and students while providing interesting information and experiences to our visitors."

"Introducing children to the importance of soils is not only important today, but for our future," said Morgan Morrissett, a soil conservationist with the Obion and Lake counties branch of the USDA-NRCS. "I’m proud to be able to help share this information with the community."

The local NRCS office donated coloring books, folders and other educational materials that were distributed to visitors.

World Soil Day began on Dec. 5, 2012, as part of the Global Soil Partnership’s International Year of Soils through the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. Both World Soil Day and the International Year of Soils were established to educate people about the importance of soils in both society and the environment. These events celebrate soil and engage people to protect local soil varieties.

To learn more about World Soil Day and the International Year of Soils, visit the Global Soil Partnership webpage (www.fao.org/globalsoilpartnership/en/) or the Soil Science Society of America page (www.soils.org/iys). Anyone interested in learning more about soils in Weakley County and West Tennessee may contact Dr. Gale or the local USDA-NRCS office.

Students of Dr. Gale are hoping to return to DPA in April for Earth Day.
SOIL SIFTING — Dr. Barbara Darroch (right) and Kiah Ewer taught about soil texture during Discovery Park of America's celebration of World Soil Day on Saturday.

Pair from county attend UTM summit

Zeel Patel, left, a senior at Halls High School, and Jamilia Leake, center, a senior at Ripley High School, are pictured with Charley Deal, Executive Director, WestStar Leadership. The students attended the 2015 Rising Star Leadership Summit on Nov. 19-20 at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Sponsored by the WestStar Leadership Program and UT-Martin, the Rising Star program recognizes students serving in leadership roles within their schools and communities. Both girls represent their respective schools as 2015-2016 Lauderdale County Board of Education student board members.
Pair Of Martin Beauties Place In Pageant Court

The combined Miss University of Tennessee at Martin/Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival scholarship pageant was held Nov. 14 at UT Martin. Sarah Yarbrough (center, left), of Jackson, claimed the Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival title and Natalie King (center, right), of Paducah, took home the Miss UT Martin crown. They will both compete in the Miss Tennessee Scholarship Pageant in June 2016. They are pictured with their respective courts and the former titleholders: (l-r) Carsen Rooney, of Cordova, 2015 Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival; Paulina Castro, of Martin, second runner-up, Miss UT Martin; Delaney Timberman, of Savannah, first runner-up, Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival; Yarbrough; King; Yvannah Garcia, of Martin, first runner-up, Miss UT Martin; Noreli Mendez, of McKenzie, second runner-up, Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival; Shelby Dotson, of Rutherford, 2015 Miss UT Martin.

Charges Against Driver Dismissed
Pedestrian Struck By Motorist, Suffers Only Minor Injuries

A pedestrian suffered minor injuries after being struck by a passing motorist while crossing the street.

According to Capt. Phillip Fuqua, at approximately 11:02 a.m., Friday, December 4, Ptl. Aaron Gallimore of the Martin Police Department was dispatched to University Street in the vicinity of the University of Tennessee at Martin to investigate a report that a vehicle had struck a pedestrian.

Upon arrival, Officer Gallimore determined that a blue, 2000 Toyota Avalon, driven by Abdalmajed M. Alsaif, 26, of Martin, was westbound on University Street and failed to yield at the crosswalk.

The vehicle struck Gatlin L. Willis, 28 of Dyersburg, as he was walking across University Street in the crosswalk. The impact caused the victim to spin around and fall to the ground.

Willis, who received minor injuries, was examined at the Volunteer Community Hospital and later released.

Alsaif was issued a criminal summons for No Driver’s License, No Insurance, and Expired Tags.

During Alsaif’s appearance in Weakley County General Sessions Court on Monday, all charges were dismissed at cost.
Greek Life at UT Martin Speaks With Kiwanis Club

Rachel Stephens, interim director of Greek Life at UT Martin (third from left), spoke recently to the Kiwanis Club of Martin about the many facets of being part of one of the 21 Greek organizations here on campus. Rachel said that more than 865 students take part in Greek activities and that there is a high percentage of involvement by Greeks in campus activities. She explained that a number of Greeks are leaders, honors students, and/or athletes. She said that many hours of service are logged by Greek organizations. Rachel assumed her duties six months ago and loves being back on the campus where she completed her undergraduate studies. She is pictured here with Dr. Frank Black (left), Anita Bell, president of the Kiwanis Club of Martin, and Dr. Annie Jones (right), director of multicultural affairs at UT Martin and a member of Kiwanis Club program committee.
UT Martin Education Faculty, Staff Honored With Retirement Reception

Five employees from the University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Educational Studies were honored during a retirement reception in the Holland McCombs Tennessee Room on Nov. 17. Pictured at the reception are (starting second from left) Dr. Becky Cox, professor of education; Kristy Crawford, coordinator of education graduate programs; Dr. Beverly Hearn, former associate professor of education; Dr. Sandra Murray, former associate professor of education; and Ben Wolski, son of the late Dr. Crystal Whitlow, former associate professor of education. They are joined by Cindy West (far left), dean, College of Education, Health and Behavioral Sciences, and Dr. Norma Gerrell (far right), interim chair, Department of Educational Studies. Cox and Crawford will retire as of Dec. 31; Hearn and Whitlow retired June 30; and Murray retired July 31. Whitlow passed away in September.

Galapagos Islands, Ecuador to be toured

Anyone interested in visiting the Galapagos Islands and the Cloud Forest of Ecuador can reserve spaces in an upcoming University of Tennessee at Martin travel study.

The trip is planned for May 16-27, 2016, and will cost about $3,500-$3,750, which includes a round-trip flight, hotel stay, tours, guides, excursion fees and some meals. A $500 deposit is required by Jan. 15.

The trip will focus on experiencing the culture of Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands and will put emphasis on natural conservation and agriculture.

While in Ecuador, participants will take a tour of the city of Quito and ride Quito's Skyrail. The group will also tour a rose plantation, cocoa plantation and chocolate factory, as well as visit the indigenous markets in Otavalo and the leather goods village of Cotacachi to observe native culture and customs. A trip to Mitad del Mundo will allow participants to stand on the equator.

Travelers will spend two days at the Milpe Bird Sanctuary in the Ecuadorian Cloud Forest.

The trip will also include four days in the Galapagos Islands.

Participation in academic courses is not required for non-students, however those wishing to learn more about areas featured on the trip may wish to enroll in certain classes.

For more information, contact Dr. Dawn Wilkins at hwilkins@utm.edu; Dr. Sue Byrd, at sbyrd@utm.edu; or Dr. Craig Darroch at cdarroch@utm.edu.
PLAYING FOR LAUGHS — University of Tennessee at Martin music major and Discovery Park of America employee John-Alex Warner will be accompanying the singers during “Laughing All the Way... a History of the Christmas Carol,” at Discovery Park of America Saturday at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. in the ATA Traveling Exhibit Hall. The class will be delightful and is free with park admission, according to a spokesman. This event is an interactive and entertaining part of the DPA Family Education Series.

Santa's Village celebrates 31 years

The University of Tennessee at Martin will host the 31st annual Santa’s Village holiday celebration Thursday through Sunday at the Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex in Martin.

An estimated 305,728 people have attended the event to date, with more than $1,145,136 in food and toy donations distributed to needy area residents over the past three decades.

The doors will be open from 6-9 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday; and 1-5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is a suggested donation of nonperishable foods and/or new toys worth at least $5.

The event will feature the “enchanted forest,” an MTD model train display, amusement rides, vendor booths and, weather permitting, wagon rides Friday through Sunday.

Local entertainment and a petting farm will add to the festivities.

“Santa's Village is a wonderful, family-oriented holiday event, and we encourage people to come out and visit. We give special thanks to the sponsors and volunteers who contribute time and money to the event,” said Kim Kirby, Martin Parks and Recreation Department program director.

UT Martin and the City of Martin co-sponsor the event each year. Additional sponsors, to date, include Zaxby’s, Casey’s General Store, Simmons Bank, MTD Products and Savant Learning Systems.

There will not be a professional photographer on site this year, so visitors are encouraged to bring personal cameras to document visits with Santa, a spokesman said.

For more information about Santa's Village, contact the Martin Parks and Recreation Department at (731) 587-6784.
The streets were lined with people, young and old, for the annual Christmas Parade held last Saturday as the grand marshals (law enforcement officers) led the parade. In the miscellaneous division, first place went to Polar Express-UT Martin Center; second place-Heather's Dance Academy; and third place-Tennessee Valley Twirlers. In the traditional floats, first place went to Decatur County Girl Scouts; second place went to Westwood Health Care and Rehabilitation Center and third place went to Amazing Grace ministries. Certificate of Participation awards went to Robin's Nest-1st, Cashmaster-2nd and Farmers Bank-3rd. Jason's Outdoor Store received an honorable mention. Parsons officials say they want to send a special thanks to everyone who participated. "We couldn't have done it without you – Merry Christmas!"

Local student attends UT Martin Weststar Risingstar Leadership

Grayson Chandler (left), a student from Adamsville High School, attended the WestStar Leadership Program's RisingStar Leadership Summit at the University of Tennessee at Martin in November. The summit is held each year to promote leadership and interpersonal skills among high school juniors and seniors in West Tennessee. Chandler is pictured with Charley Deal, executive director of the WestStar Leadership Program. For more information, contact WestStar at 731-881-7298.
STUDENTS, Zeel Patel, left, a senior at Halls High School, and Jamilia Leake, center, a senior at Ripley High School, attended the 2015 Rising Star Leadership Summit, November 19th through the 20th at the University of Tennessee at Martin. They are pictured with Charley Deal, right, executive director, WestStar Leadership, which sponsored the event, along with the UT-Martin. The Rising Star program recognizes students serving in leadership roles within their schools and communities. Both girls represent their respective schools as 2015-2016 Lauderdale County Board of Education student board members.

Santa's Village opens in Martin
The University of Tennessee at Martin will host the 31st annual Santa's Village holiday celebration today through Sunday at the Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex in Martin.

Approximately 305,730 people have attended the event to date, and more than $1,145,136 in food and toy donations have been distributed to needy area residents over the past three decades.

The doors will be open from 6 to 9 p.m. today and Friday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is a suggested donation of nonperishable foods and/or new toys worth at least $5.

The event will feature the "enchanted forest," MTD model train display, amusement rides, vendor booths and (weather permitting) wagon rides on Friday through Sunday. Local entertainment and a petting farm will add to the festivities.

There will not be a professional photographer this year, so visitors are encouraged to bring personal cameras to document visits with Santa.

For more information about Santa's Village, contact the Martin Parks and Recreation Department at (731) 587-6784.
Santa’s Village returns to Martin for 31st year

The University of Tennessee at Martin will host the 31st annual Santa’s Village holiday celebration Dec. 10-13 in the Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex in Martin. Approximately 305,728 people have attended the event to date, and more than $1,145,136 in food and toy donations have been distributed to residents in need over the past three decades.

The doors will be open for Santa’s Village from 6 to 9 p.m. on Dec. 10-11, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Dec. 12 and 1 to 5 p.m. on Dec. 13. Admission is a suggested donation of nonperishable foods and/or new toys worth at least $5.

The event will feature the “enchanted forest,” MTD model train display, amusement rides, vendor booths and (weather permitting) wagon rides on Friday through Sunday. Local entertainment and a petting farm will add to the festivities.

On Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m., Daniel the Tiger will be visiting the village.

“Santa’s Village is a wonderful, family-oriented holiday event, and we encourage people to come out and visit,” said Kim Kirby, Martin Parks and Recreation Department program director. We give special thanks to the sponsors and volunteers who contribute time and money to the event,”

The university and the city of Martin co-sponsor the event annually. Additional sponsors to date include Zaxby’s, Casey’s General Store, Simmons Bank, MTD Products and Savant Learning Systems.

There will not be a professional photographer this year, so visitors are encouraged to bring personal cameras to document visits with Santa.

For more information about Santa’s Village, contact the Martin Parks and Recreation Department at 731-587-6784.
Shelby County DA speaks at UTM commencement

THE JACKSON SUN

Jordan Murphy, Claire Davis and Patrek Wells expressed identical sentiments Saturday morning at the University of Tennessee at Martin — they were each proud to become college graduates. Murphy, Davis and Wells were among more than 500 summer and fall semester students eligible to receive degrees during December commencement in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. Amy Weirich, Shelby County district attorney and a 1987 UT Martin graduate, was the commencement speaker.

Murphy, 22, of Camden, and a five-year member of the Skyhawk football team, will use his health and human performance degree to enter law enforcement. "I've been waiting four and a half years to do this," he said before commencement exercises began. "I mean, I got the opportunity to come and play football up here, and just getting a degree is so much better. I never really thought that it would come to this point, but it's finally here."

Davis, 23, of Union City, majored in psychology and plans to continue her education. "I am beyond excited to finally have this [degree] under my belt," she said. "My next step is to get into the grad program for occupational therapy at UT Health Science Center Memphis."

More education is also ahead for Patrek Wells, 21, of Memphis, who majored in social work. She plans to become "an advocate for children that are in situations beyond their control" and will begin graduate school in June at the University of Tennessee College of Social Work in Nashville. "I'm overly excited. I'm happy; I made it," she said of completing her degree, noting that her hard work was being rewarded. "I'm graduating with honors, and I've been on the dean's list since my freshman year."

Dr. Bob Smith welcomed the capacity audience as he presided over his first UT Martin commencement since becoming interim chancellor in June. "Our congratulations go out to all of the friends and family members who have helped these graduates reach this honor of walking across this stage to receive their diplomas," Smith said.

Following introductions and special music by Dr. Roberto Mancusi, associate professor of music and faculty senate president, Smith introduced Weirich, who is the first woman to serve as district attorney in Shelby County. The Germantown native holds a law degree from the Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law at the University of Memphis.

Recently undecided about her commencement speech topic, Weirich told the audience that she turned to her daughter Lillie for advice. Home from her first semester at college, Lillie advised her mom to, "Tell them what you wish someone had told you." She used the idea to offer simple advice to graduates for moving forward in life after earning their degrees.

"First and foremost, you have been given an incredible education," she said, recalling her years at UT Martin where she was active in student government and editor of The Pacer student newspa-

Amy Weirich, Shelby County district attorney and UT Martin graduate, speaks to Saturday's December commencement audience in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. Pictured on the stage in the foreground with Weirich are (left) Dr. Jerald Ogg, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, and Dr. Bob Smith, interim chancellor.
per. "And I remember the mentors, the leaders, the advisers, the faculty who were never too tired, never too busy to lend a helping hand, to give sage advice about the crisis of the week or what someone's plans should be for the future." She added, "Whatever it is that is on your five-year, 10-year, 15-year plan, you can do it with what has been given to you."

Weirich linked the university's agricultural setting to her expectations for each graduate. "You are the latest crop to come from this institution, and to whom much has been given, much will be expected," she said. "We will be watching for you to continue the great traditions and to accomplish great things." She noted that each individual's success will be dependent, in part, on staying connected. "Belong to something, whether it's a professional organization, whether it's a church, whether it is some club or organization," she said. "Belong to something that keeps you connected with where life is going to take you."

Given her personal success, Weirich likely surprised some in the audience by saying that "success is not something we arrive at" in life. "What does happen are the day-to-day successes," she said. "But those successes only come if you are willing and brave enough to fail, because those that have failed, those that have fallen, those that have made mistakes, they have done so because they've been in the arena. They have been fighting for something that was important to them.

"I tell young prosecutors when they start in our office, we have the greatest corporate mission of any place of employment in the world. Your job is to do the right thing every day for the right reason."
LIGHTS GALORE — The Ned McWherter Agricultural Pavilion was full of lights for a record-breaking year of Santa’s Village, which was held from Thursday of last week until Sunday. This year’s 31st annual event brought 18,106 visitors, the highest number of visitors in the event’s history.

THESE ARE THE DROIDS YOU’RE LOOKING FOR — (From left) R2-D2, a storm trooper, Darth Vader, Yoda and C-3PO made an appearance at Santa’s Village just before the release of the newest Star Wars movie, The Force Awakens, which will premiere at Cine in Martin on Thursday night.
Claire Davis, Jordan Murphy and PaTreka Wells expressed identical sentiments Saturday at the University of Tennessee at Martin. They were each proud to become college graduates.

They were among more than 500 summer and fall semester students eligible to receive degrees at commencement at the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

Amy Weirich, Shelby County district attorney and a 1987 UT Martin graduate, addressed the graduates.

Ms. Davis, 23, from Union City, majored in psychology and plans to continue her education.

"I am beyond excited to finally have this (degree) under my belt," she said. "My next step is to get into the grad program for occupational therapy at (UT Health Science Center) Memphis."

Murphy, 22, from Camden, will use his health and human performance degree to enter law enforcement.

"I've been waiting four and a half years to do this," he said. "I mean, I got the opportunity to come and play football up here, and just getting a degree is so much better. I never really thought that it would come to this point, but it's finally here."

More education is also ahead for Ms. Wells, 21, of Memphis, who majored in social work. She will begin graduate school next year.

Recently undecided about her speech topic, Ms. Weirich said her daughter, Lillie, advised her to "tell them what you wish someone had told you."

"First and foremost, you have been given an incredible education," she said, recalling her years at UT Martin. "And I remember the mentors, the leaders, the advisers, the faculty who were never too tired, never too busy to lend a helping hand, to give sage advice about the crisis of the week or what someone's plans should be for the future."

She linked UTM's agricultural setting to her expectations for each graduate.

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"What does happen are the day-to-day successes," she said. "But those successes only come if you are willing and brave enough to fail, because those that have failed, those that have fallen, those that have made mistakes, they have done so because they've been in the arena. They have been fighting for something that was important to them."

"I tell young prosecutors when they start in our office, we have the greatest corporate mission of any place of employment in the world. Your job is to do the right thing every day for the right reason."
Delaney Evans (left), a student from Dyer County High School, attended the WestStar Leadership Program's RisingStar Leadership Summit at the University of Tennessee at Martin in November. The summit is held each year to promote leadership and interpersonal skills among high school juniors and seniors in West Tennessee. Evans is pictured with Charley Deal, executive director of the WestStar Leadership Program. For more information, contact WestStar at 731-881-7298.

Pictured from left: Mason Cullen, of Dickson; Alex Clark, of Dyersburg; and Houston Howard, of Paris, won second place in the undergraduate four-year college category at the 2015 Association for Computing Machinery Mid-Southeast Regional Conference held in Gatlinburg in November. The students are all senior computer science majors at the University of Tennessee at Martin. They used three-dimensional modeling software, virtual sculpting software and the Unity game engine to create "Virtual Campus," a fully-interactive virtual tour of the UT Martin campus and primary buildings. The senior research project was mentored in part by Dr. Somsak Sukittanon, professor of engineering, and is intended for use by prospective students. The team is pictured in front of a projection of their virtual world.
It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like CHRISTMAS

Santa's Village
See Story, Page 2
Santa and his elves were visited by hundreds of youngsters. Those pictured are (l to r): Elf - Hanna Simpson, 10-year-old Tilley Hopper, Santa, six-year-old Sadie Kern, Elf - Beth Ann Crowe, and Elf - Kaylie Martin. The elves are members of Westview H.S. Anchor Club.

Attendance At Santa’s Village Breaks All Records

DAVID FISHER
News Writer

The 31st Annual Santa’s Village was a huge success thousands of visitors and an enormous amount of food and toys donated to those less fortunate.

During the four-day event, visitors poured into the Ned R. McWherter Agricultural Complex, located on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin. Each year, the Martin Parks and Recreation employees and other volunteers transform the home of the UT Martin Rodeo into a winter wonderland of fun for the whole family.

According to Martin Parks & Recreation Director Bryan Moore, this year’s crowd at Santa’s Village broke all records.

“It was a huge success,” Moore said. “There were 18,106 visitors, which is the most we’ve ever had.” He noted the previous record, set in 2013, was 17,810.

There were 23,370 cans of food items collected to help feed the hungry. Additionally, visitors donated 32 fifty-five-gallon bags of toys and 12 bicycles.

Moore stated the unseasonably warm weather may have contributed to the great turnout.

Returning attractions at this year’s four-day event included: The Enchanted Forest, a petting farm, visit with Daniel Tiger, MTD model train display, amusement rides, vendor booths, wagon rides, and an appearance by Santa Claus.
Several Weakley County students attended the WestStar Leadership Program's RisingStar Leadership Summit at the University of Tennessee at Martin in November. The summit is held each year to promote leadership and interpersonal skills among high school juniors and seniors in West Tennessee. Pictured (above left, l-r) are Barbara Virgin, executive director of the Weakley County Chamber of Commerce; Will Dickens, Jacob Smith and Emily Fowler, all from Westview High School; Anna Wright, Bentley Gordon, Maycie Rollins and Lillian Nichols, all from Gleason High School; and Charley Deal, executive director of the WestStar Leadership Program.

Several community volunteers assisted employees from the University of Tennessee at Martin with the WestStar Leadership Program's RisingStar Leadership Summit in November. Pictured (above right, front row, l-r) are Virginia Grimes, WestStar coordinator; Diana Ramos, WestStar student assistant; Anna Page, mortgage loan officer, Commercial Bank and Trust; Jordan Jones, WestStar administrative assistant; Barbara Virgin, executive director, Weakley County Chamber of Commerce; (back row) Marvin Flatt, career education director, Weakley County School System; Emily Anne Sparks, admissions counselor; Charley Deal, WestStar executive director; Steve Vantrease, associate director of alumni relations; Jared Anderson, assistant director of alumni relations; and Garrett Cote, admissions counselor. For more information, contact WestStar at 731-881-7298.
Local Program Promotes Leadership, Interpersonal Skills

Weirich Urges Grads To Stay Connected,
Do The Right Thing

Amy Weirich, Shelby County district attorney and UT Martin graduate, speaks to Saturday's December commencement audience in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. Pictured on the stage in the foreground with Weirich are (l) Dr. Jerald Ogg, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, and Dr. Bob Smith, interim chancellor.
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"I tell young prosecutors when they start in our office, we have the greatest corporate mission of any place of employment in the world. Your job is to do the right thing every day for the right reason."

She closed by telling a story from early in her service as district attorney when she visited a poor, crime-ridden neighborhood. Weirich was approached by a woman who asked that she do something about a business that served as a front for illegal drug sales. By applying the law, her office was able to successfully shut down the business. When the police later arrived to close the business, the woman who had approached Weirich thanked an officer present for what they were doing. The woman said to the officers, "This will be the first time I remember being able to let my children play outside."

"I challenge you with that," she said. "You have been given an incredible education," Weirich said. "And it's now your job to go out and continue to grow the beauty in the garden, to remove what must be removed for the flowers to bloom, for the sun to reach, to do everything you can every day so that our children can play outside."

Dr. Keith Carver, Crockett County native and executive assistant to UT President Joe DiPietro, represented the UT System and offered comments following Weirich's address. He later joined Bob Smith to confer degrees.
Longtime UTM employee retires after 45 years

December 17, 2015 by (btpl新闻ews Staff-1WBTV)

MARTIN, Tenn. — A retiring worker for a local university was honored Thursday for her 45 years of service to the school.

Wanda Brundige has spent the last four-plus decades working for the University of Tennessee at Martin, most recently as the administrative services assistant for the Jackson center.

Brundige even earned her bachelor’s degree from UTM while she’s been working there.

She says it’s been an honor to work for such a great university for as long as she has, and she had a few words of advice for those getting into the work force today.

“To jump in full force, to be involved in every aspect of your work, and if you see something that needs doing, do that,” Brundige said.

Brundige says she plans to spend her retirement with her kids and grandkids and would like to get some travel in as well.

The McNairy County News

Thursday, December 17, 2015

Local residents receive degrees from UT Martin

Several McNairy County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent fall commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:
- Adamsville - Darren Richard Bart, Payten Desiree Mardis, James Kameron McDaniel, Kama Rippie, Jacob Thomas Warshaw, Kory Seth White;
- Bethel Springs - Jessica Ann Crowe, Julie Denise Lawson, Darryl Wayne Weatherford;
- Cheyenne - Bridgette Leann Butler;
- Ramer - Mallory Layne Stuts;
- Selmer - Elizabeth Carole Atlee, Allison Paige Coleman, Hannah Dawn Godfrey, Selina Marie Hill, Elizabeth Dawn Jones, Joseph Ross Landreth, Ashley Nicole Mathews, Jamie Leigh Miller, Christopher Trac Smalley, Lacey Irene Tanner, Nathaniel Cole West;
- Stantonville - Melanie Pickens.

The students receiving graduate degrees were:
- Adamsville - Julie Smith Gibbs;
- Ramer - Amanda Gayle Gray.
Ken Oldham repairs shoes, boots at The Crafty Cobbler

When Ken Oldham decided to go into business for himself, he took a step back in time.
Oldham opened The Crafty Cobbler at 208 Cheyenne Drive Suite E in October, and repairs shoes and boots.

"We repair purses, luggage, most any leather goods," Oldham said. "I build saddles from the ground up, but primarily it's boot and shoe repair."

Oldham didn't discover the trade overnight.
"Before we moved here I tutored under a friend of mine in Murfreesboro called the Shoe Fixer," Oldham said. "I also trained Quarter Horses for 20 years, and when we decided to move to West Tennessee, I was introduced to John Luthi, UTM's rodeo coach, and he was the one who said learn boot and shoe repair."

Oldham said family was the main reason he and wife Lin — a sales representative for food wholesaler Charles C. Parks in Nashville — decided on Jackson.
"My wife and I have three small nieces and nephews, so we transferred here," Oldham said. "Jackson offers the best opportunity for what I'm doing."

Since Oldham had the know-how, he decided to put Luthi's advice into motion.
"Most people don't throw anything away if they don't have to, and they will get it fixed if they can," Oldham said. "Repairing shoes is a lost art, a lot of people are not taking up. It's a craft ... that's how I got my (business) name. The only other Crafty Cobbler is in Florida."

Oldham said he is open to working on any pair of shoes.
"We don't turn anything down," Oldham said. "If I feel like I can help somebody with their problem, I'll be glad to help."

But there can be exceptions.
"There are some shoes we can't fix, namely shoes made in one piece," Oldham said. "It's almost impossible to fix something poured into a mold ... that is a difficult fix."

Oldham said repairing women's shoes is a challenge, but not his biggest.
"Ladies shoes ... a lot of times ladies bring their boots in with zippers, and you have to know what you are doing with a zipper on a boot," Oldham said. "Also the
material ... you have to be careful, because leather is very impressionable, the same with plastics. You have to be careful not to rip and tear the material.

Some customers he may not be able to help, but there are those who have made more than one visit to the business. "We've had repeat business," Oldham said. "Some will have another pair of shoes they will bring in. One guy had three or four pairs, and one pair I tore them down to the heel seat.

"I manufactured my own welt — that's the top of the sole of the boot — and put a new mid-sole in, then the primary sole and heel."

Oldham said working continuously without interruption, the project took about three to three-and-a-half hours.

Oldman makes the most of the 600-square-foot facility that's located across Cheyenne Drive from the Bank of Jackson, which is on West University Parkway.

"I bought most of my equipment from the guy who trained me," Oldham said. "What I didn't buy from him, I bought from friends or colleagues who were associates of his. People will spend one-quarter of what they normally spend having their shoes repaired instead of buying a new pair of shoes, and a good cobbler can make a pair of boots or shoes look brand new."

Since saddles are custom made, The Crafty Cobbler is limited on the amount of inventory the store carries.

"We carry shoe polish, shoe shine, suede leather care products. As I grow, I'm going to carry a full line of shoe care products, shoelaces."

The Crafty Cobbler is open four days a week — 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays.

"When we first moved here two years ago, I started driving a bus for Lifeline Blood Services, and I work for them Mondays and Tuesdays," Oldham said. "We opened The Crafty Cobbler Oct. 7, and our business has been well-received ... we're just looking to do better, to improve, and we're looking forward to serving our community."

Reach David Thomas at (731) 425-9637. Follow him on Twitter: @dgthomasbiz

Residents receive degrees from UTM

Several Decatur County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent fall commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were: Decaturville - Michael A. Dickson, Ryan Alden Douris and Pamela Joy Pearcy; Parsons - Chelsey Alexandra Box, William Byrn Crosby, Edward James Hearns, Andrew Chance McMahon, Steven Seth Melton, Twyla Kay Pratt, Morgan Mariah Schwab, Lacy Faye Nicole White and Heather Mariah Coleman.
Haynes graduates from UT Martin

(l-r) Danielle Spencer, of Kenton; Kayley Haynes of Decaturville; and Maliah O’Harmon of McKenzie, received their degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during commencement exercises Dec. 12. More than 500 students from the summer and fall 2015 classes received degrees during the ceremony. For more information about UT Martin academic programs, contact the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at 731-881-7020.

Locals earn UTM degrees

Several Lauderdale County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent fall commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

Students receiving undergraduate degrees were Phyllis Lavern McCadney of Gates; Kristen L. Deaton, TraKetha F. Jacox-Reed, Johnathon Miller, Anna Kristin Smith, and Thomas Gilkison Wright, IV, of Halls; Chelsea Elaine Rhoads of Henning; and Chelsea Leenda Edwards, Seth T. Emerson, Tammy Pilcher Herron, Stevie T. Lee, Wendi R. Lucas, Angela F. Montgomery, Briana Nicole Newman, Sandy Mischelle Patterson, Austin Comer Rorie, Rhonda L. Savage, Rachel LeeAnn Savage, Sheena Marie Simmons, Patricia Temple, Katrina Louise Toomes, and Priscilla Robinson Waits of Ripley.

Students receiving graduate degrees were Dana Clement Parmenter and Laura Catherine Webb of Ripley.
LOCAL RESIDENT GRADUATES FROM UT MARTIN – Left to right, Kaitlyn White, of Savannah; Landon Sowell, of South Fulton; and Andrea Smith, of Greenfield, received their degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during commencement exercises Dec. 12. More than 500 students from the summer and fall 2015 classes received degrees during the ceremony. For more information about UT Martin academic programs, contact the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at 731-881-7020.
Several Obion County residents were among the students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent fall commencement.

Among those who received undergraduate degrees were:
- Kenton — Tyson Puckett Greene.
- Rives — Katie Beth Vancleave.

Students who were awarded graduate degrees included:
- Troy — Mary Unger

LOCAL GRADS — Among the students who received their degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during commencement exercises earlier this month were (from left) Danielle Spencer of Kenton, Kayley Haynes of Decaturville and Maliah O’Harmon of McKenzie. More than 500 students from the summer and fall 2015 classes received degrees during the ceremony.

RECEIVE DEGREES — Hailey Smith (left) of Tiptonville and Alton Alexander of Hornbeak received their degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during commencement exercises earlier this month. More than 500 students from the summer and fall 2015 classes received degrees during the ceremony. For more information about UT Martin academic programs, contact the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at (731) 881-7020.
The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:

Dresden - John Miller Herron, Jeffrey Duane Reid, Colton Thomas Rinker, William Shawn Whites;
Gleason - Sabrina Dawn Black, Elizabeth Dawn Terrell;
Greenfield - Julie Elaine Arnold, Jacelyn Nicole Bates, Dalton Lee Potts, Andrea Shannon Smith;
McKenzie - Rebekah Anne Townsend;
Sharon - John Howard Nanney.

The students receiving graduate degrees were:

Dresden - Amanda Jane Armstrong, Max Devon Carlton, Sunny Jackson Cooksey;
Gleason - Karen Lee Fowler;
Martin - Jennifer Lee Cooper, Abbie Fuqua McClure, Whitney W. Simmons.

Several Weakley County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent fall commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

LOCAL RESIDENT GRADUATES FROM UT MARTIN: Pictured from left: Kevin Cartmell, of Martin; Alex Clark, of Dyersburg; Jessica Lagrone, of Bells; and Matthew Poborsky, of Jackson, received their degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during commencement exercises Dec. 12. More than 500 students from the summer and fall 2015 classes received degrees during the ceremony. For more information about UT Martin academic programs, contact the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at 731-881-7020.
Locals receive degrees

Freed-Hardeman University
Camden resident Thomas James Bivins was awarded a Bachelor of Science in biology from Freed-Hardeman University (F.H.U.) during commencement exercises Friday, Dec. 11.

U.T. Martin
Several Benton County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the Saturday, Dec. 12, fall commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the U.T. Martin campus.

After a lot of hard work, Camden local Heather M. Clark Sowell received her graduate degree during the graduation ceremonies on Saturday.

Thirteen undergraduate students from Benton County received their degrees during the commencement. Graduates from Big Sandy were Amanda N. Mason and Autumn Mira-Kay Ratliff. Holladay natives Heather M. Coleman and Taylor J. Douglas also graduated.

13 earn degrees from U.T. Martin
Several Benton County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the Saturday, Dec. 12, fall commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the U.T. Martin campus.

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The Lauderdale County Enterprise, Ripley, Tennessee, December 24, 2015

Local Students Earn Degrees
Lauderdale County students, including Phillis Lavern McCadney, of Gates; Kristen L. Deaton, Traketha F. Jacox-Reed, Johnathon Miller, Anna Kristin Smith, and Thomas Gilkison Wright IV, all of Halls; Chelsea Elaine Rhoads, of Henning; and Chelsea Leenda Edwards, Seth T. Emerson, Tammy Pilcher Herron, Stevie T. Lee, Wendi R. Lucas, Angela F. Montgomery, Briana Nicole Newman, Sandy Mischelle Patterson, Austin Comer Rorie, Rhonda L. Savage, Rachel LeeAnn Savage, Sheena Marie Simmons, Patricia Temple, Katrina Louise Toomes, Priscilla Robinson Waits, all of Ripley, were among the students at the University of Tennessee at Martin who received undergraduate degrees at the fall commencement ceremony on the UT Martin campus.

J. Douglas also graduated. Camden graduates included Alyx K. Burrus, Crystal R. Floyd, Kayla M. Leonard, Mary B. Markham, Jordan A. Murphy, Bobbie J. Smith, Tiffany N. Walker, Amanda C. Warf, and Grant T. Wright.

Dana Clement Parmenter and Laura Catherine Webb, both of Ripley, received graduate degrees during the ceremony.
NO PARKING — The parking lot adjacent to UTM's Graham Stadium was flooded on Monday as continuous rain gave way to deluges across the county.

County weather proves more stormy than wintry

By CLAY SMITH
The Press

Instead of a white Christmas, Weakley County residents were greeted with a stormy Christmas as strong winds blew and rain fell throughout much of the weekend.

Harsh weather began on Wednesday with a tornado warning throughout the county lasting until 5:30 p.m. Sirens blared in Martin as storm clouds rolled quickly through the sky, which gave off a unique orange-yellow glow.

Power outages and fallen trees and limbs were reported due to heavy winds, and the amount of rain put stress on many drainage ditches.

"We've had some pretty substantial flooding because so much rain came in so fast," said Public Works director Marty Ables. "We now have some places barricaded off, and we're trying to drain off as much water as possible."

Combined tornado, wind and flood warnings have been issued in Weakley County over the last several days. (Photo by Chance Farmer, The Pacer)

With rising river levels and additional showers, a flash flood watch remained in effect until noon on Monday.

A wind advisory remained in effect until 6 p.m. on Monday evening. Wind speeds were reported ranging from 20 to 30 mph with gusts of over 40 mph.
NEW MAYOR PLANS WALK – New Milan Mayor B.W. Beasley plans to walk to work from his home to City Hall on his first full day in office, Monday, January 4. Walking through Milan neighborhoods was a big part of Beasley's mayoral campaign, and he wants to promote health and wellness for all residents. He invites residents to have coffee and conversation at Crenney's café around 7:30 am.
Caroline Parish is First Ned McWherter Institute Graduate

MARTIN — Caroline Parish boasts quite a resume as she moves closer to her dream of becoming an attorney. She received her political science degree Dec. 12 from the University of Tennessee at Martin, graduating a year ahead of schedule. In doing so, she became the university’s first Ned Ray McWherter Institute participant to complete the leadership-development program and earn her degree. Her success can be traced, in part, to following a piece of advice that her father repeats often to Caroline and her friends: “Don’t be goofy.”

Donald Parish, a 1979 UT Martin graduate, is in his second term as judge of the 24th Circuit Court for Carroll, Benton, Henry, Decatur and Hardin counties. His sage advice encourages his daughter and anyone else who will listen to “not be silly,” “make good decisions,” and “be on your best behavior.” Caroline checks all of those as she aims to follow in her dad’s footsteps, attend the University of Tennessee College of Law and become a practicing attorney.

Caroline attended Huntingdon schools and credits her high school years for establishing a foundation for leadership skills. UT Martin was not among her initial college choices, but then she was nominated to participate in the first-ever Rising Star Leadership Summit during fall of her senior year in 2011. Rising Star, sponsored by UT Martin’s WestStar Leadership Program, is a two-day event for West Tennessee high school juniors and seniors who show leadership potential in their respective schools.

The Rising Star experience sealed Parish’s decision to attend UT Martin, where she chose to major in political science. “I think the main reason I chose political science was I have grown up in my dad’s law office, and when my grandmother couldn’t pick me up from school, it was ‘go to the courtroom with my dad,’” she remembered. In addition to her academic pursuits, she immersed herself in college life, pledging Alpha Omicron Pi sorority, taking leadership roles in student government and serving as a Peer Enabling Program leader to mentor incoming freshmen.

In fall 2013, another leadership-development opportunity surfaced when she was chosen to participate in the first Ned Ray McWherter Institute class. The NRMI, made possible by a lead gift from philanthropist Clayton McWhorter, is a three-year, progressive, interdisciplinary program that pairs participants with faculty mentors. The experience included personal coaching, sessions in leadership and professional skills, networking and even etiquette training. Related travel included trips with other NRMI students to New York City and Japan.

“It (the institute) honed in my leadership skills, gave me strong connections, and it also gave me a renewed sense of manners and class,” she said, adding that meeting Clayton McWhorter for the first time was a highlight of the experience. “I think that was an awesome opportunity for me to meet him,” she said. “I think meeting him and being able to shake his hand and know that he has invested in my future was the biggest opportunity for me.”

Her involvement in the NRMI led to another accomplishment on Parish’s list of “firsts.” In spring 2015, she became the first UT Martin student to receive an internship with the UT Office of Government Relations and Advocacy in Nashville, sponsored by WestStar and the institute. Her selection was based on participation in the Rising Star Program, campus leadership involvement and her academic credentials. Carey Whitworth, director for advocacy and special assistant to Anthony Haynes, UT vice president for government relations and advocacy, welcomed Parish’s assistance during the busy legislative session.

“Caroline assisted our office in managing a large legislative workload by conducting research, tracking bills, monitoring the work of legislative committees and working to help craft communications to our internal and external constituencies about issues facing the university,” Whitworth said in an email. “She had strong organizational skills that were particularly helpful in the communications and special events arenas.”

Whitworth particularly noted Parish’s involvement with UT Day on the Hill, a key annual University of Tennessee advocacy event held during the legislative session, where she assisted with both UT Day preparations and event execution.

“I mean, not many people get to intern with UT and with the legislature. I think that was a big deal,” Parish said, who lived just two blocks from the capitol during the internship. “I found who I was (living and working on her own), because it was just me there all the time.”

Life following graduation has slowed a bit for Parish as she rejoined her father and mother, Cathy, in their hometown of Huntington to await the outcome of her law school application. Besides heeding her father’s advice not to “be goofy,” she also remembers her parents often saying, “To whom much is given, much is required.” She knows she has been given much and eventually wants to give back.

She is already planning to return home following law school be involved in community service and help people in the area. “There’s people right down the street that need your help, and I believe that I can benefit those people who are less fortunate than me in my community by giving back to them,” she said.

Caroline Parish is prepared for whatever lies ahead, thanks to the sound advice of supportive parents and the firm academic and leadership foundation established at UT Martin. She’s already proven she knows how to be first in line to seize life’s next great opportunities and is excited to see where the next steps lead.
MARTIN (Dec. 28, 2015) — HUNTINGDON NATIVE EARNs DEGREE - Caroline Parish is joined by her parents, Cathy and Donald, during commencement Dec. 12 at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Caroline became the university’s first Ned Ray McWherter Institute participant to complete the leadership-development program and earn her degree.

Area Fall UTM Graduates

Several Carroll County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent fall commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus. Carroll County students receiving undergraduate degrees were: McKenzie - James Franklin Arnold, Teresa Ann Brawner; Justin Seth Bush, Katie Anne Chadwick, Ashley Dee'Anna Delaney; Maliah O. Harmon, Mary Katlin Haywood, Ramon Anthony Hernandez, Benjamin Ray Kee, Lacey Lanette Lane, Zachary Allen McEwen; Bruceton - Jessica Marie Hollingsworth, Kyle Robert Jann, April Renae Stepp; Cedar Grove - Shewba L. Wood; Clarkesburg - Lindsey Alyce Bell; Huntingdon - William K. Arnhold, Dylan Taylor Cliff, Amelia Catherine Jordan, Joshua Eric McMackin, Caroline Faith Parish, Ashlee Nicole Porter, Hailey Jordan Prueett; Trezevant - Lindsey Kay Faller, Morgan Brittany Woodard. Allison Owen Winston of McKenzie received a graduate degree.

Online MBA ranked high

Discover Business has included the University of Tennessee at Martin’s online master of business administration program in its first Top Accredited Online MBA and Graduate Business Programs Guide, available at www.discoverbusiness.us/education/online-mba/.

The guide focuses on programs that are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, are not-for-profit or public institutions, and offer nearly identical program versions in a physical, on-campus option.

“Our goal here is to acknowledge the best online MBA programs that are pushing the education experience into the future and building up the next generation of business leaders,” said Mark Koning, a Discover Business representative.

The guide includes the top 53 online programs in alphabetical order.
Somerville Board Approves Asst. Police Chief’s Salary Increase; Plans Open House for UT Martin Chancellor

The Town of Somerville Board of Mayor and Aldermen met on Monday, December 14, 2015. The board gave out trophies to the first, second, and third place Christmas parade float winners. First place went to the Williston and Moscow First United Methodist churches, second place to Somerville First Baptist, and third place to Mt. Olive Baptist Church.

**Mayor Comments**

Mayor Ronnie Neill stated we have been talking to UT Martin. We met with Charley Deal of UT Martin and Senator Dolores Gresham. Bob Smith, UT Martin’s interim chancellor, will come to Somerville on Monday, January 4th and we discussed holding a reception for him out at the hospital that day. We could invite potential donors, along with alumni, officials, and residents and show off the building. He asked the board if this met their approval and it was approved.

The board approved their meeting schedule and holiday schedule for 2016. Next was discussion of the assistant police chief salary. City administrator Bob Turner gave the board an analysis on what a $2.00 per hour salary increase would be for Assistant Chief Harlan Kee, which would be including overtime, making it approximately $52,655.

Neill asked what about going to a straight salary. Turner said if so, it would probably need to be more to compensate him for the additional time he could work and not having overtime. It was suggested to make him salaried at $53,655. The board asked Kee what did he think. Kee said he would do a salary but the number he thought was $55,000. I’ve been here 20 years and I think I deserve it, he stated.

Neill then made the motion to do a flat salary of $55,000 and it was seconded. Alderman Sandra Myers said this should be retro from when he took over the duties of the chief a few weeks ago and the board agreed, approving the motion.

The board then welcomed their new chief, David Webb, who started work that day. Chief Webb stated I appreciate your confidence in me. I met with all the officers this evening and we went over the direction we want for the police department. We want to keep their morale up and get out in the neighborhoods and make contact, he said.

Mayor Neill told the board for their information that the Hamilton County mayor is proposing that the state sales tax be reallocated and that counties get part of that money. This tax has always gone to the cities. Nothing has been introduced into the legislature and some counties are not in favor of this. Under this proposal, our city would lose about $47,000 a year, he said.

Turner said he has talked with Rossville Mayor Judy Watters who is thinking about conducting a population census in 2016. You can benefit about $100 per person in taxes that you pick up in the census. Watters thinks they can pick up 300 more in their town. He said we could do the same thing. A motion was approved to authorize the special census.

The board discussed opening a new section in the city cemetery. It is the area at the Sycamore Street/Oak Street exit from the cemetery. The lots at the back of the cemetery are not selling because they are so far back and not
Graduates are urged to stay connected, do the right thing

Jordan Murphy, Claire Davis and Pa'Treka Wells expressed identical sentiments Saturday morning at the University of Tennessee at Martin—they were each proud to become college graduates. Murphy, Davis and Wells were among more than 500 summer and fall semester students eligible to receive degrees during December commencement in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. Amy Weirich, Shelby County district attorney and a 1987 UT Martin graduate, was the commencement speaker.

Dr. Bob Smith welcomed the capacity audience as he presided over his first UT Martin commencement since becoming interim chancellor in June. “Our congratulations go out to all of the friends and family members who have helped these graduates reach this honor of walking across this stage to receive their diplomas,” Smith said.

Following introductions and special music by Dr. Roberto Mancusi, associate professor of music and faculty senate president, Smith introduced Weirich, who is the first woman to serve as district attorney in Shelby County. The Germantown native holds a law degree from the Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law at the University of Memphis.

Recently undecided about her commencement speech topic, Weirich told the audience that she turned to her daughter Lillie for advice. Home from her first semester at college, Lillie advised her mom to, “Tell them what you wish someone had told you.” She used the idea to offer simple advice to graduates for moving forward in life after earning their degrees.

“First and foremost, you have been given an incredible education,” she said, recalling her years at UT Martin where she was active in student government and editor of The Pacer student newspaper. “And I remember the mentors, the leaders, the advisers, the faculty who were never too tired, never too busy to lend a helping hand, to give sage advice about the crisis of the week or what someone’s plans should be for the future.” She added, “Whatever it is that is on your five-year, 10-year, 15-year plan, you can do it with what has been given to you.”

Weirich linked the university’s agricultural setting to her expectations for each graduate. “You are the latest crop to come from this institution, and to whom much has been given, much will be expected,” she said. “We will be watching for you to continue the great traditions and to accomplish great things.” She noted that each individual’s success will be dependent, in part, on staying connected. “Belong to something, whether it’s a professional organization, whether it’s a church, whether it is some club or organization,” she said. “Belong to something that keeps you connected with where life is going to take you.

“I tell young prosecutors when they start in our office, we have the greatest corporate mission of any place of employment in the world. Your job is to do the right thing every day for the right reason.” She closed by telling a story from early in her service as district attorney when she visited a poor, crime-ridden neighborhood.

Weirich was approached by a woman who asked that she do something about a business that served as a front for illegal drug sales. By applying the law, her office was able to successfully shut down the business. When the police later arrived to close the business, the woman who had approached Weirich thanked an officer present for what they were doing. The woman said to the officers, “This will be the first time I remember being able to let my children play outside.”

“Treas,” Weirich said, “I challenge you with that. You have been given an incredible education,”
NEW MEMBER – Members of the University of Tennessee at Martin and the City of Martin Town and Gown Association gathered for breakfast Dec. 14 in the UT Martin Dunagan Alumni Center. The Town and Gown program seeks to provide a network of resources for campus and local community members to collaborate on area services, events, programs, commerce and education. Businesses that have committed to the program for five years are presented with a framed print and five annual membership medallions. Thomas Seratt (center), regional president, First Citizens National Bank, accepted the bank’s first medallion during the association breakfast. He is pictured with city of Martin Mayor Randy Brundige (left) and UT Martin Interim Chancellor Dr. Bob Smith.