



DAR/Barbara Ann Horton
 Jane Arnold, right, visits Saturday with a customer about her homemade jams and jelly.

SATURDAY

Shoppers flock to DeGaris Memorial Farmers Market

By **BARBARA ANN HORTON**
 Staff Writer

Shoppers were out Saturday morning at the Ed DeGaris Memorial Farmers Market to buy fresh produce, meat, baked goods and handcrafted items.

In dedicating the market Thursday to the late Poplar Bluff city councilman and police officer who gave much of his retirement to the community, city manager Matt Winters talked about the building being a hands on project.

"I mean, he was literally hands on and getting this

thing built. It is because of him that we have this and we thought it'd be appropriate and a nice tribute to Ed and what he did for our community here in Poplar Bluff to name this building after him," Winters said.

Everyone wanted the sign up before the first market of the season, Winters said.

He welcomed the DeGaris family to speak.

"Ed loved this town as much as anybody in his family and he took care of it about the same way,"

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Scholarships benefit youth who want to help children

By **BARBARA ANN HORTON**
 Staff Writer

Two Poplar Bluff students' college funds grew recently when they received scholarships from the Poplar Bluff Housing Authority and the Missouri National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials.

Jacob W. Phillips, 18, received \$2,000 and Kaile Harper, 20, got \$500.

Since Phillips and his mother Amanda Volle live in housing, he was eligible to apply for one of two scholarships awarded in the state by MONAHRO.

Housing authority executive director Darrin J. Taylor credits Phillips' academic

successes with having earned him the scholarship. Taylor said, \$1,000 is renewable if Phillips keeps his grades up.

After receiving his scholarship, Phillips said, "I'm really thankful for it. With the cost of education, it helps a lot with relieving the financial stress with college."

Phillips will start the University of Missouri, Columbia, in the fall to study pre-law.

"I was in and out of foster care during my early childhood years," Phillips said. "From that experience, I had a really good attorney who represented me.

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Teacher OF THE YEAR



Work ethic, kindness gets Hall Secondary Grade Level award

By **SAMANTHA TUCKER**
 Assistant Editor

Tracey Hall is a busy person. Her main job title at Poplar Bluff High School is practical arts department head — but teachers and students know her as a go-getter, a volunteer, an inspiration and a friend.

Like many teachers of the year, Hall was surprised to be awarded. She was named the Secondary Grade Level Teacher of the Year, also earning the honor for her PBHS campus.

"I was so excited," she recalled. "I just felt grateful to all the teachers and faculty that voted for me. I was shocked, but I was very grateful."

Pamela Davis, a business education teacher, said the recognition is well deserved.

"Tracey goes above and beyond her call of duty. You will find her arriving early to ensure each teacher has their needs met. She is often-times locating subs, copying lesson plans, and making sure classes are covered — on top of her own work," Davis said.

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(TOP) Tracey Hall poses with Poplar Bluff High School's FBLA team, which placed first in business management this year and qualified for the National FBLA Convention.

(ABOVE) Tracey Hall helps a student at Poplar Bluff High School. Hall said interacting with students is her favorite part of her job.

Photos provided

DESIGNED FOR TRAINING ON HOLOCAUST

Neelyville R-IV applies for pilot program

By **MISTY DeJOURNETT**
 Staff Writer

Neelyville School District has applied to participate in a pilot program which officials believe would help provide additional opportunities for teaching history.

The program is designed to provide more training when teaching about the Holocaust, Traci Reinbott, curriculum and director federal programs, told board members Thursday, during a meeting that also touched on other grant, building maintenance

and banking matters.

The program is from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, which on April 21 released a required state assessment for grades kindergarten through third.

Under new state requirements, every school district in Missouri must include Holocaust education in its curriculum, officials said. Neelyville already covers this topic, however, joining the pilot program, according to Reinbott, would provide more ability to do so.

In other business, Superintendent Heather Black stated Neelyville

had applied for a monthly increase on checking account withdrawals through Peoples Community Bank. Currently set at \$500,000, the district sought to raise that limit to \$700,000. Black explained that certain months, such as June, July and August, required exceeding the current limit due to payroll disbursements and recent bus purchases.

Additionally, the board addressed the expiration of Neelyville's three-year agreement with Hewlett Packard

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MISSOURI

Changes to donor privacy law would restore contract access

By **JASON HANCOCK**
 Missouri Independent

A legislative fix to a donor privacy law blamed for impeding public access to state contract information is sitting on Gov. Mike Parson's desk.

The Personal Privacy Protection Act received bipartisan support on

its way to being signed into law last year. The aim was to shield nonprofits from having to disclose their donors to government agencies.

But for months leading up to the law going into effect, state officials complained both publicly and privately about impacts it could have on key government functions — from hampering the administration

of certain tax credit programs to conflicting with existing laws regarding records of investigations by law enforcement agencies.

Those concerns culminated last August, when the Parson administration shut down immediate public access to state contracts, a major blow to government transparency. The governor's office later cited the

law as justification for withholding information about a fundraiser at the governor's mansion.

Proponents of the original law cried foul, saying the problem wasn't with the law but rather with an overly broad interpretation by the Parson administration. None of the

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TODAY'S PRAYER

Lord our God, Almighty Father in heaven, we stand before you as your children, whom you want to protect through the need of our time, through all sin and death. We praise you for giving us so much peace in an age full of trouble, and for granting us the assurance of your help. Amen

PAGE 3 OBITUARIES

Mike Smith
 — Lady Lake, Florida
 Gerald Saracini
 — Jonesboro, Ark.



Theresa Steffan of Poplar Bluff strings beads Saturday at her booth at the Ed DeGaris Memorial Farmers Market.

DAR photos/Barbara Ann Horton



Produce booth vendors provide a family with a variety of items on their shopping list.



David Dunlap, right, of Dunlap Pumpkin Farm watches a customer check out his booth.



Carolyn Simpson visits with Sara Wallace of Wappapello about how she makes her natural goat soap. Wallace hand milks the goats she raises and handcrafts the soap.

SHOPPERS

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DeGaris' widow Lisa Jones DeGaris said. "The rest of us will do anything we can if you need help with anything."

DeGaris' grandson Ashton, 13, who worked alongside his grandfather, represented the DeGaris family in cutting the ribbon.

The market being named for his grandfather is "amaz-

ing," Ashton said.

Saturday, market manager Debbie Merciers said 22 vendors showed up to sell their products ranging from meat, produce, baked items, plants, crafts, aprons, wax melts, bath bombs, jewelry. Ten vendors were there for the first time.

The market will be open from 8 a.m. to noon Saturdays continuing until September.

DONOR

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13 other states that passed similar laws had any of these issues, they argued.

But lawmakers vowed to make fixes to address the concerns of state agencies, and in the legislative session's final days included those changes in a sweeping bill originally focused on highway patrol records.

Chris Moreland, spokesman for the Office of Administration, which handles contracting and purchasing for the state, said his agency worked with lawmakers and nonprofit organizations to help find a compromise that would "allow the state to continue conducting business and partnering with nonprofits while maintaining protections around donor privacy."

If the governor signs the legislation, Moreland said, "the contracts website would be restored to its pre-Aug. 28, 2022, status, which would allow OA Purchasing to devote its limited staff resources to procurement rather than records requests."

The Personal Privacy Protection Act includes language prohibiting government agencies from releasing, publicizing or otherwise publicly disclosing any information that "identifies a person as a member, supporter, or volunteer of or donor" to a non-

profit organization.

The Department of Public Safety warned the law could undermine efforts to work with nonprofit partners and could conflict with existing laws regarding records of investigations by law enforcement agencies. It could also, the department warned, hinder prosecution of certain unlawful activity.

The Department of Revenue worried the law would negatively impact the agency's ability to administer tax credit programs and could interfere with reviewing or auditing withholding and income tax obligations of 501(c) nonprofit organizations.

Other state agencies cited that would "allow the state to continue conducting business and partnering with nonprofits while maintaining protections around donor privacy."

The legislation awaiting Parson's signature or veto states that personal information prohibited from being disclosed would not include information submitted for the purpose of seeking a contract or tax credit from the state.

It also specifies that information shared among law enforcement as part of an investigation would not be covered by the prohibition, nor would information provided voluntarily at a public meeting, among other provisions.

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HALL

FROM PAGE 1

Hall is also the lead teacher for summer school and even teaches a college course for Boys & Girls Club of the Heartland students through Three Rivers College.

Andrea Cox, the 2022 District Teacher of the Year, said Hall's work ethic shows through in her many extracurricular activities too. Among them are the Mules Baseball Boosters, where she cheers from the sidelines and does the legwork of designing pamphlets and gathering sponsorships. She also organizes fundraisers for other sports organizations.

"Mrs. Hall isn't afraid to jump in and help where needed or take the initiative and start a task herself," Cox wrote in her Teacher of the Year letter of recommendation.

Another of Hall's passions is Future Business Leaders of America, and as an advisor, she encourages her students to test their limits. It paid off this year with big wins for PBHS students.

"I pushed them out of their comfort zone a little bit... and this year we had a team place first in business management to qualify for the National FBLA Convention. So that's awesome to see them succeed and do things, and then I'm excited to see what they do after school," Hall said.

Hall's enthusiasm for teaching and background in business comes in part from her mother Sharon Davis, who taught physical education at PBHS and served as the first district coordinator. Hall wanted to



Photo provided

Tracey Hall, center, is the practical arts department head at PBHS as well as a teacher, FBLA advisor, Mules Baseball Booster organizer and more.

pursue education immediately, but her mom urged her to have a backup career. Hall earned a bachelor's degree in human resources management at Arkansas State University in 1999, followed by a certificate in education from Southeast Missouri State University in 2004, and topped those off 14 years later with a master's of science in education technology from the University of Central Missouri.

Her background uniquely qualifies her for business education, she said, so "that's why I teach business instead of some other subjects."

Perhaps unsurprising given how much she tackles every day, Hall said her biggest challenge is time.

"There just seems to never be enough time to get everything done," she said. However, the perks of her job make up for it.

"My very favorite part is working with the kids,"

Hall explained. "It changes every day so it's always something new and something fun when you work with kids, and I always learn something from them all the time."

This is where people said she truly goes above and beyond. According to Cox, "Mrs. Hall has a great bond with her students. They value her as a teacher and leader."

Even students who wish they were elsewhere find a mentor and ally in Hall.

"Many of the students who attend summer school at PBHS do not want to be here and do not hesitate to share their feelings. Tracey was able to diffuse situations that could have resulted in students being removed from summer school and, therefore, losing their opportunity to recover credits. She treated students with kindness and respect while maintaining an appropriate level of accountability," said Hope

Conover, the math department chair.

Parents had similarly glowing reviews. Shannon Edmundsen, whose three children have all had at least one class with Hall, said, "Something that really stuck out to me about Mrs. Hall is how she would always advocate for her students. I know she truly cares about each and every one of her students and genuinely wants the best for them."

The most heartfelt compliments came from the students themselves.

"Mrs. Hall is very kind-hearted. Even on her bad days, she keeps a smile on her face and makes her classroom a very positive environment where you always feel welcomed, cared about, understood, and heard," sophomore Makena Decker said.

Decker struggled with anxiety and isolation during her first semester at PBHS until she transferred to one of Hall's classes. She credits Hall with helping her find her way at school.

Freshman Preston Moore said he joined FBLA at Hall's recommendation and is grateful he did.

"Trying new things isn't something I usually do. However, Mrs. Hall continuously challenges me to branch out of my comfort zone — first in joining FBLA and then in choosing to compete in multiple areas that I didn't really know much about beforehand," he said. "I'm thankful Mrs. Hall didn't give up on me because it's taught me that I'm capable of trying new things and being successful in them."

Hall lives in Poplar Bluff with her husband and two sons.

SCHOLARSHIPS

FROM PAGE 1

I wanted to go back home with my mom, and the attorney was a voice for me when I was in a really vulnerable spot. I felt like, that's what I wanted to do when I grew up, be there for kids in difficult situations as well.

"We moved back to Poplar Bluff my senior year so I didn't do a lot with Poplar Bluff High School. I work full time at Walmart to help save some money."

When he heads to school this fall, he already will have 41 college credits from College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls, Idaho, and Three Rivers College.

Harper's mother, Tammy, is the office manager for the local housing authority which made Kaile eligible to apply for the \$500 MO-NAHRO scholarship. She applied for the scholarship by writing an essay.

She graduated from Poplar Bluff High School in May 2021, and is a junior at



DAR/Barbara Ann Horton

From left, Kaile Harper and Jacob W. Phillips accept scholarships from Darrin J. Taylor, housing authority executive director.

Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri.

"I am studying child and family development with an emphasis in child life to one day become a child life specialist for a children's hospital," Harper said.

While she's home for the summer, she said, "I work at

John Scott's office, the law firm on Main Street. I saved up enough money to go back in August."

She has two brothers, Tyler Harper and Dylan Harper.

"I would say how grateful I am for the Poplar Bluff Housing Authority and Mis-

souri National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials for giving me such an amazing opportunity to continue my education," Harper said. "I want to give a shout out to my mom for always supporting me and allowing me to follow my dreams."

DUE TO THE MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY, OUR OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED MAY 29th.

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Friday, May 26th • 3 pm	Wednesday, May 31st

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