

**Tyrades . . . Continued from A-4**

in their loftier context from Shakespeare's sonnets and the Sermon On The Mount.

I hope this column inspires you to chat with your children about slang down through the decades, and to be more active in their tumultuous social lives.

"I don't know...they say root canals are lovely this time of year..."

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## FROM TNFINANCE.COM: Haslam: Six Tennessee counties (including Lawrence) eligible for disaster loans (The Tennessean)

Governor Bill Haslam announced Friday that the U.S. Small Business Administration will offer disaster loans to six Tennessee counties and one Alabama county affected by the severe storms and tornadoes that ravaged parts of the states in late December. The disaster declaration included Decatur, Hardin, **Lawrence**, Lewis, Perry and Wayne counties in Tennessee and Lauderdale County in Alabama.

## Haslam calls on Tennesseans to 'rally around' Rubio against Trump (Knoxville News Sentinel)

Governor Haslam amped up his endorsement of Florida Sen. Marco Rubio for the Republican presidential nomination Saturday, calling on Tennessee primary voters to rally together to fend off a hostile takeover of their party by billionaire Donald Trump. "It is time for Tennessee Republicans who do not want the party of Lincoln and Reagan taken over by Donald Trump to rally around Marco Rubio. It is clear Marco is the only candidate who can beat Trump."

## Congressional Art Competition submissions due April 8

**Students across the 7<sup>th</sup> District invited to participate**  
WASHINGTON D.C.-- Congressman Marsha Blackburn (TN-7) today announced details for the 2016 Congressional Art Competition. The annual art competition is sponsored by the U.S. House of Representatives and recognizes one outstanding artist in each congressional district. The winner in each congressional district, along with a parent or guardian, will receive free airfare to attend a reception in Washington, D.C. as well as visit the Cannon Tunnel of the U.S. Capitol to view their artwork. The winning piece of artwork will be displayed in the U.S. Capitol for one year.

"Each year we are thrilled to receive several exceptional pieces of artwork from students across Tennessee's Seventh Congressional District. The Congressional Art Competition is a wonderful opportunity for our students to share their creative talents with visitors who come from across the world to visit the U.S. Capitol. We encourage all high school students to participate in this wonderful program so that Tennessee's rich artistic history may be represented for all to enjoy," Blackburn said.

Additionally, Tennessee Wesleyan College and the Savannah College of Art and Design will offer a scholarship of \$3,000 to each Congressional Art Competition winner who enrolls there.

All submissions are due no later than April 8, 2016 to Congressman Blackburn's Franklin District Office. For the most up-to-date information, please visit [Blackburn.House.Gov](http://Blackburn.House.Gov).

## Letter to the Editor

### A new formula is needed

Editor - Local leaders once again fail to address the real problems of Lawrence County finances, ie, Jobs, Growth, Poverty, and the Promise of Future Generations.

A large number of our citizens (friends, family, and neighbors are forced to seek and secure Jobs in surrounding counties because of the lack of Leadership in Lawrence County. And their outright refusal to share the prosperity and control of our fair county with potential resourceful partners of commerce!

Instead, they want to make our county a retirement community. Maybe it is time to retire these elected officials and business leaders who continue to hold Lawrence County back and begin to create an environment that will keep our children and grandchildren at home in Lawrence County to prosper for generations to come!

I urge all of my fellow citizens to vote NO on the Wheel Tax referendum and any other new tax increase until our elected officials make good on their promises of new industry and jobs in our fair county. Cooperation and accountability equals results in Increased Revenue. This is the only formula needed for a successful Lawrence County....

Respectfully,

**Ricky W. Cromwell, Leoma**

## Pace quickens on Capitol Hill as Senate Committees continue to examine budget proposals and approve a wide variety of bills

The pace quickened on Capitol Hill this week as lawmakers considered a wide variety of bills and continued to review budget requests from departments and agencies of state governments. Senate committees have examined 35 of 53 proposed budgets from agencies and departments of state government since the budget was proposed by Governor Bill Haslam on February 1.

The hearings are expected to be completed by mid-March as the budget proposal is generally one of the last bills to be considered by the General Assembly before adjournment. It has been helpful to me that so many of you who work for these agencies have contacted me with suggestions. Your input is always welcome.

### Efficiency in Handgun Permitting Act overcomes first hurdle

Among bills approved in Senate committees this week was the "Efficiency in Handgun Permitting Act" which aims to improve the process for gun owners and lowers the fee associated with obtaining a handgun carry permit. Senate Bill 2566 was given approval by the Senate Judiciary Committee and is part of a package of bills submitted to the legislature by Governor Bill Haslam. The legislation extends the current five-year handgun carry permit to eight years, lowers the initial handgun permit fee from \$115 for five years to \$100 for eight years and expands the renewal cycle from six months to eight years after the expiration of a permit before a person must reapply as a "new" applicant.

Under the proposal, background checks will continue to be conducted at the time of initial issuance and at the time of renewal. Additionally, an internal background check will be conducted in the fourth year of the eight-year permit without charge. It also gives a member of the armed forces, whose permit does not expire

## From the County Executive's Desk ■ By Lawrence County Executive T. R. Williams

# Project Aware tackles the "elephant in the room": mental health issues



T.R. Williams

When we don't talk about something that's obvious, we call it the elephant in the room.

A health problem that affects one in five of us is obvious. We suffer from it ourselves, have family members that experience it, see its effect on people we encounter every day, but still don't want to talk about it.

Fortunately, a ground-breaking program in Lawrence County schools is chasing elephants away before they grow too large to leave the room.

Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education) is addressing mental health issues and helping students deal with problems that are very treatable. With treatment, 90 percent of those issues are temporary, and the other 10 percent are manageable. Without treatment, they are elephants that squeeze life and joy from every room they enter.

Our school system was one of three counties in Tennessee and 60 nationwide awarded \$2.3 million each from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for the five-year program. Longtime elementary guidance counselor April Abercrombie is the Director and Steve Seaton, who leads the county's successful student mentoring program, is Assistant Director.

Abercrombie says half of all mental illnesses surface by the time a person is 14. Children experience sadness along with every other emotion, but depression is a different thing. They can have a bout of nerves, but chronic anxiety is a problem. The root of these issues can include an improper diet, a head injury, extreme stress, a hormonal imbalance, or genetics. They are often physical as well as emotional and psychological.

Project AWARE's goals are to prevent problems and intervene where they exist. One component is Youth Mental Health First Aid, an eight-hour seminar that teaches participants how to assess for the risk of suicide or self-harm; listen nonjudgmentally; give reassurance and information; encourage appropriate professional help, self-help and other support strategies. Many in our community have already taken the course, and it can be presented to other groups at any time.

Project AWARE recently hired two social workers who are Student Support Liaisons (SSLs) and work with schools and parents of students who have issues. "Students' families are a piece of the puzzle that hasn't been addressed before. There has been no one who could leave school and go out to find parents," who may be in denial about their child's problems or suffering from mental issues themselves. The SSLs received 20 referrals for help the very first day, Abercrombie adds.

SSLs also meet with students to determine if they need therapeutic help. Project AWARE has contracted with

Health Connect America, which can prescribe medication when needed and provide individual and family therapy, regardless of insurance and ability to pay. Therapy sessions are conducted at school, eliminating issues like parents' transportation problems and conflicting work schedules.

Abercrombie and Seaton are meeting with teachers, who are under incredible stress. They are caught between students with emotional issues and demands for higher and higher test scores. At several of those meetings, Seaton says, "Teachers wept."

Student support and understanding is also necessary for the program's success. Educating peers about mental health problems helps create an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding, making it easier for students to seek help.

Members of the community are helping through the ongoing mentoring program, which is a partnership between the faith-based organization IAM4Kids and the school system. After they're approved as mentors and go through a training session, adults are only required to have lunch once a week at school with their mentees. Teachers and staff at New Prospect, Ingram Sowell, Leoma (and soon David Crockett) are mentoring students and the Kids Helping Kids program at LCHS pairs teen mentors with younger students.

I am so impressed with the passion for this program that I see in Mrs. Abercrombie and Mr. Seaton. Like the rest of us, they have witnessed the effect that mental illness can have on people if it remains untreated. Project AWARE is designed to not only prevent episodes of school violence that grab headlines, but stop issues that rob individuals of their potential for full, happy, and productive lives. Two Facebook messages Abercrombie shared reveal the kind of suffering that is all too widespread:

"I just wanted to tell you as a sufferer of panic attacks and major depressive disorder I am so proud of all the work you are doing. I wish somebody had been around to explain it to me; it was not something to be embarrassed about. Thank you!"

"I sat in my home almost two years barely leaving for anything. I felt like a complete failure. I commend the work you're doing and could go on and on, but thank you. . . . these kids need people to be educated and aware, it's more common than we think."

I encourage you all to support Project AWARE in any way you can. Please educate yourself about mental health issues and don't be afraid to speak up if you or someone you love is suffering. An elephant should not be a permanent fixture in any room.

To learn more, e-mail [april.abercrombie@lcss.us](mailto:april.abercrombie@lcss.us), Steve Seaton at [sseaton@lcss.us](mailto:sseaton@lcss.us) or call 762-5251 extension 109. To find out more about the mentoring program, go to [IAM4Kidsmentoring.org](http://IAM4Kidsmentoring.org).

## Representative Doss sponsors Economic Development legislation on behalf of Governor



(NASHVILLE)—House Majority Leader Gerald McCormick (R-Chattanooga) announced this week that State Representative Barry Doss (R-Leoma) would co-sponsor House Bill 2570, which is part of Governor Bill Haslam's legislative package this session that aims to increase economic development across the state.

The legislation, known as the 'Rural Economic Opportunity Act of 2016', has two central parts. First, the bill would implement the 'Propelling Rural Economic Progress' fund, or simply, 'PREP'. This groundbreaking proposal would allow grants from the PREP fund to be used on a yearly basis to assist rural counties in building infrastructure to make their communities more attractive to prospective companies. Monies from the PREP fund could be spent in any of the three grand divisions of the state in an effort to facilitate economic growth in rural areas.

The second component of the proposed legislation would restructure the county tier system making it easier for businesses in rural counties to qualify for job tax credits. This, in turn, would make it easier for businesses in those counties to expand and hire new workers. The plan would add a fourth tier to the existing three tier system, which would be comprised of counties ranking near the bottom in per capita income, poverty rate, and unemployment rate. It would also lower the minimum job creation threshold for local businesses from twenty-five, to twenty jobs in Tier 3 counties, and ten jobs in Tier 4 counties.

"This is certainly a significant piece of legislation that could have a great impact on our rural communities throughout the state," said Leader McCormick. "I appreciate Representative Doss signing on to cosponsor this bill, and I applaud his consistent track record of trying to improve the lives of rural Tennesseans."

This bill is part of a larger initiative by Governor Haslam and the Department of Economic and Community Development to help all counties develop flourishing economies, especially those currently classified as "distressed."

"Rural communities are the lifeblood of our state, so increasing economic development opportunities in these areas has always been important to me. I am extremely excited to cosponsor this legislation, and I believe it can serve as a catalyst in luring new companies to some of our underachieving counties," said Representative Doss.

Additional information regarding this legislation can be found on the General Assembly website at <http://wapp.capitol.tn.gov/apps/BillInfo/Default.aspx?BillNumber=HB2570>.

Barry Doss lives in Leoma and represents District 70, which includes all of Giles County and the majority of Lawrence County. He can be reached by calling (615) 741-7476 or by emailing Rep. Barry.Doss@capitol.tn.gov.

## First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

any state-operated institution of higher learning. It also allows any child who is receiving the discount provided for by this bill, but whose parent dies during the time the child is enrolled, will be eligible to continue to receive it. Both bills now go to the Senate Finance Committee for consideration before going to the full Senate for a final vote.

**Federal Refugee Program** -- Legislation that I co-sponsored urging Tennessee's Attorney General to commence legal action in response to the federal government forcing Tennessee to spend state dollars for the Refugee Resettlement Program was approved by the full Senate this week. Senate Joint Resolution 467 addresses a program in which Tennessee no longer participates. In 2007, Governor Phil Bredesen withdrew the State of Tennessee from the program. The federal government then selected a non-governmental volunteer organization which contracts with them to resettle refugees in Tennessee. The resolution aims to get legal clarity regarding the expenditure of state money on the program and other state operated social service programs since the program is operated by an entity outside state government. The resolution also references the federal requirement under the Refugee Act of 1980 to consult with states regarding the placement of refugees before those refugees are placed within its borders. Governor Bill Haslam wrote a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry last fall asking for more information from the federal government regarding those plans as it affects Tennessee. However, Department of Safety and Homeland Security Commissioner Bill Gibbons told members of the Finance Committee last week that to his knowledge no reply has been received from the U.S. State Department in response to that request. If the Attorney General does not commence civil action, the resolution gives the General Assembly the authority to hire outside counsel for this purpose. The phone calls and emails from district 28 were almost unanimously in support of this resolution and I was happy to co-sponsor it with Lt. Governor Ramsey and vote for it on the floor



Capitol Hill Week in Review  
State Senator  
Joey Hensley MD