

PETERSBURG NEWS

A Lions Club Service to the Community

September 1, 2026

From the Mayor's Office



*Mayor
Shantel Gatlin*

Can you believe it's September already? The temperatures of recent have been extreme as well as the humidity. I hope you've been able to keep cool!

Our local elections took place here in Petersburg on August 6. Our residents had a chance to pick two write-in candidates for Alderman to cast their vote for. There were three citizens who qualified to be eligible for the status of a write-in candidate. The three candidates were Shelia Stephens, Grant Smith, and Troy Castile. Voter turnout was low, but in the end, two candidates were chosen by our citizens. Shelia Stephens received 27 votes, Grant Smith received 23 votes, and Troy Castile received 1 vote.

Congratulations to Shelia and Grant, both of whom will take their oath of office at the September meeting of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. We look forward to having these two fine citizens seated alongside us and look forward to working with them!

Fall is right around the corner. Enjoy the cooler temperatures and fall foliage.

God Bless You, and God Bless Petersburg.

Shantel Gatlin, Mayor

Construction Projects Continue

You've probably noticed a decrease in the construction work along High and Church Streets, but now, with that project winding toward completion, other projects are starting to spin up.

Primarily, the Post Office will be scheduled for new roofing shortly, and as soon as the materials and manpower are identified, the work to fix the leaking roof will begin.

Town Board Meeting- The board welcomes input and ideas for alternative solutions from the residents of Petersburg at the next meeting on Tuesday, September 8 @ 6 p.m.

Shantel Gatlin, Mayor

Historic Cumberland Cemetery

by Kevin J. Coffield



Cemetery fence and entrance gate.

A major milestone was recently reached by, Petersburg Lions Club Charities, on the Cumberland Cemetery project. Over the last several months, the idea for a historically influenced period fence fronting the Cumberland Cemetery was designed and executed, by the Petersburg Lions Club Charities, in conjunction with E. L. Ironworks, located in Toney, AL.

The goal for the project was to mark the cemetery as a hallowed place, worthy of respect, that also allowed for a public space for personal reflection. Reverencing all those interred there, some of whom are the founders of Petersburg, we honor their place in our history.

The idea and design for the fence were originated by the members of the Cemetery Project team. Once approved, the design was sent to E. L. Ironworks for fabrication, powder-coating and installation.

As things seem to happen, the installation crew showed up and were just short of completing the project when the sky decided to open up and bless the new fence with a torrential downpour.

The team returned the next day, finishing the installation, and providing us with the beautiful fence and gate we now see along High Street.

With this phase of the Cumberland cemetery project completed, we will continue to work toward project completion. We, the Petersburg Lions Club and Petersburg Lions Club Charities, hope when you drive by the cemetery, this new fence provides you with a smile, and perhaps, a sense of pride in our community.

America 250: A Journey



Bells Across America Bells Across Petersburg

Established by The Daughters of the American Revolution, as part of Constitution Day, "Bells Across America" marks the signing of our Constitution, September 17, 1787. The bells of Philadelphia rang out as our founders departed Independence Hall. The daunting task of forming "our more perfect union" was finalized 11 years after the Declaration of Independence.

Annually, on September 17, 3 p.m. (CMT), towns great and small, farms, factories, schools and churches toll their bells for a full minute in celebration. To establish this event locally, three years ago, The Robert Lewis Chapter, DAR chose our town for its inaugural commemorative event. Noting a resurgent interest in Petersburg history, its ties to the American Revolution and restoration discoveries, made our town an inspired choice.

Giving context to these histories, we begin with the Teeples Family donation of the historic bell gracing the Town Square Gazebo. Restoration revealed its hallmarks, research its origins. This Civil War era bell survived buried beside the carriage house office (ca.1870) of Dr. Flavius Sevanther McRady, a property he shared with brother pharmacist, John Calvin McRady, owner of McRady and Muse Druggist, on the SW corner of the Square. This bell, discovered during the collapsed carriage house excavation, soon took its place in history, as the foundation of discovery for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church Bell.

Restoration revealed hallmarks identifying the Bell as made by BNC, Blymyer Norton & Co., a large foundry with its bell making division only active 1866-1872, then sold to

("Bells" continued on pg. 3, col. 3)

Cumberland Presbyterian Church



Fall Planning

Pastor Troy Green

September is not a good time to plant trees, but it is a great time to *plan* to plant trees. Margie and I built our house in 2009, and we ran out of money before we ran out of house. One of the things that was undone was the landscaping. It forced me out in the yard, and I've come to love it. Working outside is a great time to commune with God. I've also learned some things along the way that I thought I might share. For example, Bradford Pears are the worst tree ever. They are invasive, thorny, and prone to breaking. There are much better options for small trees. Native small trees such as Dogwood, Redbud, White Fringe Tree, Witch Hazel, Serviceberry, and Carolina Silverbell are wonderful.

Other trees to avoid are Silver Maple and Norway maple while maples such as Sugar and Red have fantastic fall color. For large trees it's hard to beat Oaks, and I'm particularly fond of Willow Oaks which have tall straight trunks and small leaves that make clean up easier, but White, Red, Overcup and Chinquapin all grow well here. There are terrible shrubs you can buy anywhere, like Burning Bush, Nandina, Japanese Barberry, and Asian Spirea, but should be avoided. They are popular and cheap but invasive. Hydrangea, Azalea, Spice Bush, and Blueberry are much better behaved. Whenever possible, select native plants which are adapted to the area and benefit wildlife. For example, some species of butterflies live only on specific native plants like Passion Flower, milk weed, aster and black-eyed Susan. Make sure to plant according to light, soil, and moisture needs and with the mature size in view. And one last tip: Bradford Pears make great wood chips.

"Gardening is an instrument of grace."

-May Sarton

Routes Bringing
Settlers to Petersburg

When we talk about how people came to Petersburg, it was either overland or by river. Southern middle Tennessee was reached either by traveling overland, using a system of regional pathways from the Carolinas or Virginia, or by traveling the Tennessee River to the Elk River. Then, following one of the tributaries that fed into the Lincoln-Marshall County area near Cane Creek. Once in the area, settlers relied heavily on animal paths.

Pioneers relied on both traces and paths along the Elk River. A trace is defined as "a rough, unpaved trail or beaten path created by the passage of feet, hooves, or wheels." Typically, originating as animal tracks and, over time used by both Native Americans and Europeans, they became migration and trade routes. Many became the highways used today. Avery's Trace, was a critical pathway that opened in 1788 and allowed pioneers to safely travel from East Tennessee, over the Cumberland Plateau and into middle Tennessee. Another trace in the general area is the Natchez Trace. The Avery Trace travelled in an east-west direction. The Natchez Trace travelled north-south.

People also relied on the Elk Ridge. The Elk Ridge is a 300' set of individual traces, dividing Lincoln from Marshall County. Pioneers cleared land around Petersburg to safely move wagons and avoid swamps and bogs in the area.

Fishing Ford Trace: Sections of the original trace exist in Belfast. It was a north-south route used by settlers and is one of the most prominent pioneer paths in Marshall County.

Bumpass Trail: Established in the early 1800's, this trace ran through Lincoln and Giles Counties. Settlers followed this trail eastward along The Elk River tributaries that ran directly into the bottoms of Cane Creek, surrounding Petersburg.

Over time, we will look more deeply at the ways people came to Petersburg.

Welcome to our new
Aldermen!

This September Board of Mayor and Alderman meeting will officially include two new Alderman, Mrs. Shelia Stephens and Mr. Grant Smith. Mrs. Stephens is on the Planning & Zoning Commission and has been filling a recently vacated position and Mr. Smith will complete the Board. I asked a small set of questions and gave them a chance to respond.

Q1: What are your expectations for being on the Board of Mayor and Alderman?

Mrs. Stephens: "To hopefully get everybody together, as one, and grow the town and make it like a family."

Mr. Smith: "I want to work with the other members to see the town of Petersburg grow and to learn," how to function on the board.

Q2: How do you see your role in moving Petersburg forward?

Mrs. Stephens: "When talking about working on the BOMA, she stated, "I had my doubts there for a while, but the more I sat and listened, I thought, we're going in the right direction but we've got to make sure we're in it for the people. The town needs to survive."

Mr. Smith: "Listening to the people, the citizens of Petersburg being realistic, being practical and beneficial for the town."

Q3: Do you have an overall vision for Petersburg?

Mrs. Stephens: "I want it to come together as one unit, everybody helping each other, like neighbors and family should. I want the town to grow as one, not divided. You don't get any growth if you're divided."

Mr. Smith: "When we moved here, the people were doing a lot of good things." He said he saw people helping each other saying, "that's a good sign, people helping each other."

First Baptist Church of Petersburg

107 Church St. 931-659-9957
Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Worship 11a.m. Wed. 6 p.m.

Cumberland Presbyterian Church

High St 931-212-6479
Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:35 a.m.

Medium United Methodist Church

Delina 931-993-6005
Sunday Services at 10 a.m.

Lone Oak Church of Christ

2419 Highway 130
Sunday school 9:30 a.m., Worship 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m.

Petersburg Church of Christ

205 Russell St.
Sunday Bible Study 10 a.m. Worship 11a.m., 6 p.m.
Wed. 7 p.m.

Cane Creek Church of Christ

Hwy 431
Sunday Bible Study 10 a.m., Worship 11 a.m.
Sunday 5 p.m.

East Side Church of Christ

306 Water St. 931-659-9352
Sunday Bible Study 10 a.m., Worship 11a.m.

Hannah's Gap Baptist Church

283 Bledsoe Rd.- Petersburg
Sunday School 10 a.m. Worship 11 a.m.

Petersburg United Methodist Church

301 Church St.
Sunday School 10 a.m., Worship 11a.m.
Bible study Wed. 6 p.m.

Howell Church of Christ

Worship Sunday morning 9 a.m.
Bible Study Sunday morning- 10:15 a.m.
Sunday night 6 p.m. Wed. night- 6:30 p.m.

Liberty Valley Church of Christ

2900 Liberty Valley Rd., Belfast
Sunday School 10 a.m. Worship 9 a.m. & 5 p.m.
5th Sunday Service 10 a.m./Meal 11 a.m.
followed by Singing



Around Town Hall

by Laura Bailey

Good day, and I hope everyone has been trying to stay cool in this heat. We have a few things that we are trying to get done here at Town Hall. I am sure that most of you have noticed that Mr. William, our Public Works employee, hasn't been around for several weeks.

He's been sick but is in recovery now and home with his family. Please keep all of Mr. William's family in your thoughts and prayers.

We have completed all of the issues that we had with the town's insurance inspection. We fixed the small issue with the Community Center's downspouts and fascia boards, where they were deteriorating over time. The ceiling, in our historic firehall building, has been replaced along with the rings on the top of our swings at Morgan Park. We are aware of a couple of swings that are still in need of replacement, and we're in the process of getting that done.

We will be getting the notices and property tax receipts into the office this month. We will be trying to get those that are delinquent ready from the past years. Be sure and contact me if you have any questions about those that are delinquent and please have your receipt ready, if you dispute these charges, as proof of your payment. If you are getting a delinquent notice, it means that there was no receipt found in this office for payment.

And last, but not least, I would like to say thank you to all our citizens who helped the town by cleaning up in various places. The yards and businesses are looking great! You just don't know how much we appreciate it. Thanks again for your thoughtfulness!

September Happenings

by Donna Salyers

The last holiday of the summer, **Labor Day**, will be observed on **Monday, September 7, 2026**. Enjoy the day, grilling, family, and lots of summertime fun!

Lincoln County and Fayetteville City Schools will be closed for **Labor Day, Monday, September 7** and no school on **Friday, September 18** for staff development.

Marshall County Schools will be closed for **Labor Day, Monday, September 7**.

Petersburg Senior Citizens, 68 Morgan Circle, Petersburg, TN meets Monday thru Friday 9 a.m.-noon. They offer chair yoga every Monday at 11 a.m. **Bingo** is the first Thursday of each month from 9:30-10:30 a.m. They are adding lots of new events. Look them up on their Facebook page, **Petersburg Senior Citizens Center**.

Come and visit the **Petersburg Library**, located at the Morgan Cultural Center, 103 Alumni Lane, Petersburg.

Petersburg American Legion Post will meet on **Saturday, September 12 @ 9 a.m.**

Pickin' and Grinnin' on Petersburg Square will be on **Saturday, September 12, 5-8 p.m.**

Petersburg Parks and Recreation is having a **Community Yard Sale, Saturday, September 12, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. at Morgan Alumni Park** (next door to Dollar General on Hwy 431). They will charge a **\$5 set-up fee**. So, start gathering up your unwanted items and come yard sale with us in September. Space is limited, contact **Donna Salyers at (931) 625-2780** to reserve your 10x10 spot.

If you have, or know of, an event that will be happening in the coming month, please contact Donna Salyers. Call or text at (931) 625-2780 or email me at donnasalyers@hotmail.com.

I look forward to hearing from YOU!

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started." – **Mark Twain**

("Bells" continued from pg. 1, col. 3)

the Cincinnati Bell Company. The Petersburg Cumberland Presbyterian Church bell bears those hallmarks. A single known company catalogue survives in the Cincinnati Public Library archives. The archivist, captivated by this venture, discovered not only the catalogue, but the price for a 30" bell, \$75.00, identical to the Church bell. Then, lo and behold, a testimonial from Petersburg TN, Cummings & Bledsoe, 1889 for a 30" bell purchased July 10, 1888!

Here we recall E. Helen (Blake) Bledsoe, a true early Daughter of the American Revolution and revered widow of Civil War Veteran Theophilus Bledsoe. He survived briefly only to die of its privations (August issue, 2026). Though some sources purport she remarried, family tradition holds she remained his devoted widow. Neither diminishes her legacy.

At her passing, 1883, such was her community standing and generosity, that she bequeathed monuments for her extended family as well as donating \$50 to build the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Church Elders then sold their interest in the building shared with the Masons and Methodist Episcopal Church for \$250. They completed their church crowning High St. in 1889 (Cost \$100-\$200). The 30" bell, was ordered and shipped (1888) through the Cummings and Bledsoe Mercantile, owned by Joseph Greer Cummings and wife Ella (Bledsoe), Theophilus' sister. Helen would share their home in the closing years of her life.

With their melodious tone and wondrous history, these bells link us to our past, carrying our resilient little town from the Revolution to the present and beyond. Let Freedom Ring!

Join us at the Gazebo on Thursday, September 17, from 2:30-3:30, as the Robert Lewis Chapter DAR and Petersburg commemorates Constitution Day!

The Lions Club is accepting a limited number of advertisements to offset the cost of producing this community newspaper. Ad space is \$25 per month. If you want to advertise in the paper, please contact us at: (256) 221-9902 or kevincofield1953@gmail.com.

The Petersburg News

If you're interested in receiving The Petersburg News electronic edition, contact kevincofield1953@gmail.com and he'll be more than happy to add you to our growing list of readers! The Petersburg News is produced by the Lions club for the people of Petersburg. We hope you enjoy!

No one plans to fail

but we do fail to plan.

<http://www.petersburgcpchurch.org/>

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Need a place to host wedding receptions, family reunions, etc.? The Lions Community Building may be just what you need. Rental = \$100 + \$50 deposit. Deposit will be returned if renters properly clean up after events. For more information, contact Nancy McDonald at (931) 637-0720.

Tables & Chairs for Events



Need tables and chairs for an event? The Lions Club has them for rent. Tables are \$5, and chairs are \$1.00. A \$50 security deposit is required. Contact Nancy McDonald: Call (931) 637-0720.

Town Hall Information

120 Eastside Square
Petersburg, TN 37144
(931) 659-9826

Open Monday-Friday 8 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Petersburg Colt Show – Almost Perfect

by Warren Gill



Stick Horse Class at the Petersburg Colt Show.

It was a steamy Saturday afternoon. Rain was forecast. The show ring of the Petersburg Community Cultural Center was prepared. The lights from Christopher Equipment Rental were in place.

Everything was ready, but would anybody show up? Then the Dotson Bother's Farm horse trailer pulled into the Bedford, Lincoln, Moore Co-op showground. The 74th Petersburg Colt Show was on – No turning back now.

After a drizzle of rain passed, the evening turned cool with a light, pleasant breeze. Promptly at 6 p.m., show Manager Conner Dempsey called for the lights to be turned on. Horse show announcer, Hardison Greene, called the crowd to attention for the National Anthem followed by a prayer from Alan Gill. The first class was introduced by an impressive trumpet rendition of Reveille by young Nico Higgs. For a moment I thought I was at Churchill Downs at the start of the Kentucky Derby.

The crowd was breathless with anticipation as the first class entered the ring – The Stick Horse Class. The first class was presided over by flamboyantly attired Emily Brewer, proprietor of Red Heels, Wright Doors General Store in Petersburg. Five outstanding entries strutted their stuff so impressively that the judge gave them all blue ribbons. The first class started the show with an abundance of humor and cuteness.

Official Judge Thom Meek then took over for the rest of the show. His experience and expertise were much in evidence as he skillfully sorted the next 18 classes with many of the best weanlings, yearlings, and model horses in the Tennessee Walking Horse breed.

By rule, weanlings are under a year old. This year's entries were clearly born during the

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spring of this year and were as pretty and perky as you would expect as they circled the ring with their long-strided, Tennessee Walking Horse gait, unique to the breed.

The contestants in both the weanling and yearling divisions represented the best of the breed, many of them destined for show ring glory in coming years. The young stallions and fillies are shown separately until the championship classes.

Some of the most beautiful horses of the breed were shown in the model classes. My mother would never be accused of being a horse judge, but she appreciated beauty, and she would agree that the model horses were astonishingly attractive.

The Colt Show cleared almost \$5000 which will go to support the work being done at the Morgan Cultural Center so it will continue to be a worthwhile addition to the Petersburg community.

Next year will be the 75th anniversary of the Petersburg Colt Show. We invite suggestions from the community to help make it a special event.

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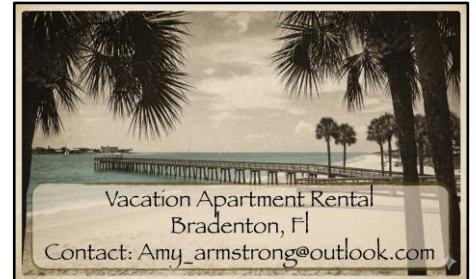
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6am-7pm

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Petersburg, TN



"The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined."

- James Madison