

**Blazing a trail**

Local officials held a pair of events for Scott County's first-ever Trail Awareness Day Thursday in an effort to get residents and visitors outside and go take a hike. **Page 1B.**



# Senate overrides guns in bars veto

■ **Sen. Doug Jackson**, D-Dickson, the sponsor of the bill, said he also expects the House to override the veto.

By **LUCAS L. JOHNSON II**  
 Associated Press Writer

NASHVILLE — The state Senate voted 22-10 on Thursday to once again override the governor's veto of a bill to allow handgun carry permit holders to bring weapons into bars and alcohol-serving restaurants.

Democratic Gov. Phil Bredesen last week vetoed the guns bill sponsored by Sen. Doug Jackson, D-Dickson, on the basis that "guns and alcohol don't mix." The House had passed the bill on a 66-31 vote, while the Senate approved it by a 23-9 margin.

"On this issue, I respectfully submit to this body that the governor is wrong," Jackson said before Thursday's vote.

The measure would apply to the state's 270,000 handgun carry permit holders. Bar and restaurant owners would maintain the power to ban all weapons from their establishments.

"I haven't gotten a complaint from a single citizen that a permit holder made them feel uncomfortable," Jackson said.

Bredesen vetoed a similar measure last year, flanked by law enforcement officers and prosecutors who opposed the bill, but he was easily overridden by the Legislature.

The governor said earlier this week that he expected Thursday's override of his veto, which takes only a majority in both chambers of the General Assembly. Jackson said he expects the House to also override the latest veto because it initially passed by a large margin.

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**Annette Giadrone of Kingsport prepares to pick up her son Leo, 4, so he can look through the binoculars in the new Anderson Treehouse at Warriors Path State Park on Thursday.**

## Accessible tree house opens at Warriors Path

■ **'When you're 8 or 88, it doesn't matter — when you're in a tree house, you're a kid.'**

— James Roth

By **MATTHEW LANE**  
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KINGSPORT — Warriors Path State Park unveiled the latest attraction in the "Darrell's Dream" Boundless Playground on Thursday — a universally accessible tree house, the first of its kind in any state park in the nation.



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The Anderson Treehouse overlooks the playground and is located behind the adventure island section of the complex. The tree house is called universally accessible because it is Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant, featuring a 240-foot winding walkway that can be walked or navigated by wheelchair.

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**James Roth with Forever Young Treehouses enjoys the view from the tree house. At left, Sam and DeLois Anderson speak at the grand opening.**

# Hawkins tot found locked in filthy room holding knife

■ **Thomas E. McClellan** and Jennifer R. McClellan have been charged with child abuse and child neglect or endangerment.

By **JEFF BOBO**  
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ROGERSVILLE — The parents of a 2-year-old girl allegedly found naked, locked in her bedroom holding a long knife, and covered with human feces have been charged with child abuse.

The discovery was made Monday morning, although both parents weren't formally charged until Wednesday.

About 10 a.m. Monday, the Hawkins County Sheriff's Office was called to a complaint of possible child neglect at the residence of Thomas Eugene McClellan, 20, and Jennifer Renee McClellan, 21, 148 Austin Mill Road, Rogersville.

Upon their arrival, deputies observed a child later identified as the McClellans' 2-year-old daughter banging on her bedroom window with what Detective Lt. Randy Collier described as a 12- to 15-inch cake knife. The child was alone in the room.

Deputies made contact with the parents, who were asleep in their bedroom, and advised Thomas McClellan the child was in possession of a knife.

Deputies were unable to open the door.

Deputy Reba McLean stated in her report that Thomas McClellan had to force his way into the child's bedroom by breaking the door frame to gain entry to the room.



T. McClellan



J. McClellan

The door had a childproof lock on the inside to prevent her from getting out.

"Once I entered the bedroom the child was standing naked with the knife in hand, and also with human feces on the child, walls, window and bed," McLean said. "Upon my investigation I found no food in the refrigerator and rotten food on the counter, stovetop, sink and floor. There was animal feces about the house."

"The residence was cluttered excessively. There was a long gun laying in the parents' bedroom closet and shells laying on the bedroom floor where the child had access to."

The Department of Children's Services was called to the scene and placed the girl in protective custody.

"Jennifer McClellan and Thomas McClellan came to the sheriff's office, where they were interviewed and admitted that they put their child at risk by neglect," Collier said.

The McClellans were each officially charged on a sole count of "child abuse and child neglect or endangerment" Wednesday about noon and were released from the Hawkins County Jail on bond shortly after 7 p.m.

# Driver accused of trying to hit KPD officers turns himself in

■ **Ronnie Dale Johnson** faces several charges including two counts of attempted murder of a law enforcement officer.

By **KACIE DINGUS BREEDING**  
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KINGSPORT — A Kingsport man accused of trying to run over police Sunday when he was stopped for performing burnouts in his truck has turned himself in



JOHNSON

Drive, was brought to the Kingsport jail about 4:30 p.m. Thursday

to face attempted murder and other charges.

Kingsport Police Department Lt. Bud Hulsey said Ronnie Dale Johnson, 34, 912 Colfax

after initially turning himself in at the Sullivan County Detention Center.

"We are happy," said Hulsey. Johnson is charged with two counts each of attempted murder of a law enforcement officer and aggravated assault, and one count each of felony evading arrest, failure to maintain proper control, and violation of the habitual traffic offender law. A warrant for his arrest had been issued Tuesday.

According to an affidavit filed by KPD Officer Bryan Carter, Johnson drove at him and Officer Kellen Steele when they stopped him for "doing burnouts" in his truck, identified as a white 1988 GMC, on Sunday.

The alleged incident occurred on the ramp from West Stone Drive to Lynn Garden Drive just after 8 p.m.

Carter said he stopped the truck after he heard the sound of

someone doing burnouts and observed smoke coming from the truck's tires while he had another vehicle stopped nearby. Carter said he motioned for the pickup to stop when it turned onto the ramp to Lynn Garden Drive.

The affidavit states the truck stopped approximately 12 to 15 feet away from him. Carter started toward it, with Steele following a few feet behind. He was about 4 or 5 feet away from the

front of it when the driver, later identified as Johnson, allegedly pointed his right first finger at him, "grabbed the steering wheel" and turned the truck, then "accelerated very quickly" toward them both.

Carter said he jumped to the left, and the pickup missed him by only 2 or 3 feet. It missed Steele by 5 or 6 feet.

"We thought we were going to

Please see **DRIVER**, page 2A

## FRUGAL FOCUS

### Frugal fun with children

Create critters and things from edible clay. To make the clay, you'll need 1/2 cup peanut butter, 1/2 cup honey, 1 cup dry non-fat milk solids, and 1 1/4 cup graham cracker crumbs. Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix well. For eyes, ears, tails, hair and other finishing touches, try using grated coconut, chocolate chips, banana or apple slices, carrot curls, celery slices, etc. For easy cleanup, eat the results!

—www.mommysavers.com

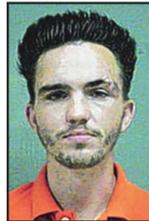
Send your tips to Sharon Caskey Hayes at shayes@timesnews.net

# Man charged in drag racing wreck rejects plea deal

■ **Kingsport** police still do not know who was driving a Corvette that fled after the wreck.

By **KACIE DINGUS BREEDING**  
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BLOUNTVILLE — A Kingsport man facing a laundry list of charges in a 2008 drag racing wreck on Stone Drive has been set for trial after rejecting plea negotiations in a Blountville court on Thursday.



CORNELL

Drive, according to police.

Cornell lost control of his Mustang, went airborne and rolled

through the parking lot of Nard's Automotive, 3225 E. Stone Drive. The Mustang damaged 10 parked vehicles — flipping one onto its top — before coming to rest outside the repair shop.

The driver of the Corvette fled the scene.

In February, Cornell was arraigned on charges of DUI, drag racing, drag racing resulting in serious bodily injury, felony reckless endangerment, possession of methadone, possession of alprazolam, vandalism over \$10,000, four

counts of vandalism over \$1,000, and one count of vandalism of \$500 or less.

At that time his attorney, Tony Lee, withdrew a pretrial diversion request and announced Cornell's intent to seek judicial diversion instead.

Upon hearing Thursday that Cornell had rejected the state's negotiated plea offer, Sullivan County Criminal Court Judge Robert Montgomery set Cornell's

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### Good morning from:

Drew Byerley of Mount Carmel.



### Weather

Mostly cloudy today with a 60% chance of showers and a high of 87.

Complete weather report on 8A.



### 'The dangedest wreck you've ever seen'

Growing up in the '50s, Mike Warner had to share his first bike with his older sister. He decided to take a job as a paperboy so he could buy a bike of his own. His new three-speed was so nice he was able to "double-head" his little brother on the handlebars. You know where this is going. **Page 1B.**



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