

From the porch Of Jacob, and life in a small place

By BRADLEY A. MARTIN

I know it can be easier in larger places, where you likely do not know many who live around you and therefore won't know when tragedy befalls.

But we don't live in a place like that, and most of us in this almost-a-suburb community like being familiar with many of those we see at the grocery, even though their names may escape us at any given moment.

Instead, we watch our kids grow up, marry and move off — or move off and marry — and hope we can figure out a way for them to come back. Nowadays, we also are seeing a slowly increasing number of older folks decide to retire here, because it is easier here than in the cities.

Plus, Hickman County is, despite its concerned citizens, a fairly quiet and orderly place.

All of that falls short of comforting thoughts when we are jerked up by an occurrence that cannot be well anticipated.

Jacob William Hetherington is one of the boys who, simply by youthful exuberance, has kept me signed up as an adult leader in the Boy Scouts of America. He and his twin brother, Joshua, were 11 when they signed on; their dad, David, told us back then that he had been a Scout and wanted that experience for his boys.

So they began learning how to camp and cook and tie knots and, more importantly, fit in and cooperate with a group.

Scouting is an inexact science. Sometimes all goes smoothly and the experience is joyous beyond belief; sometimes it rains a lot and you replace discouragement by learning how to cook a tasty hot meal under a dry dining fly.

Mostly, our Scouts gradually learn the routines and, before they know it, are advancing toward the challenging goal of Eagle Scout at the very same time that they are helping a newly arrived younger Scout learn how to put up a tent, wash a pot and assemble the fuel for a campfire.

Jacob did all of that, at his own pace, and — like the rest of the Scouts I have worked with over 25 years — began to understand that he was preparing to make his way.

We leaders were a little surprised, and a little disappointed, when the twins decided a couple of years

ago to forego Scouting. Jacob had become enamored with the opportunities of the JROTC program at Hickman County High. My recollection is that he could not get enough of it.

Most boys do not become Eagle Scouts, but they learn more than they think (some of it unrealized for quite awhile), which made it a pleasure for me to take the measure of the Hetherington twins from time to time.

Most recently, they were serving the meal at the Shelter Friends dinner a few weeks ago. The line had eased up by the time Alice and I grabbed plates, and I had a few moments to ask how Joshua and Jacob were doing.

Don't we inevitably do that in a small town?

Fine, they said; planning for graduation and their next steps.

"Good to see you," I said, naturally, knowing I likely would encounter them elsewhere.

But then came the news, that Jacob had died. It was shocking to hear that it was by suicide, only because I know how close their dad was to them.

What had we missed? That's the question for all who knew him. Jacob was a social being, a talker. I've learned through my observation of suicide — fewer die by murder or wreck, for example — that one of the ways to prevent such tragedy is to create environments that allow difficult thoughts to be expressed. Get it out; talk it through.

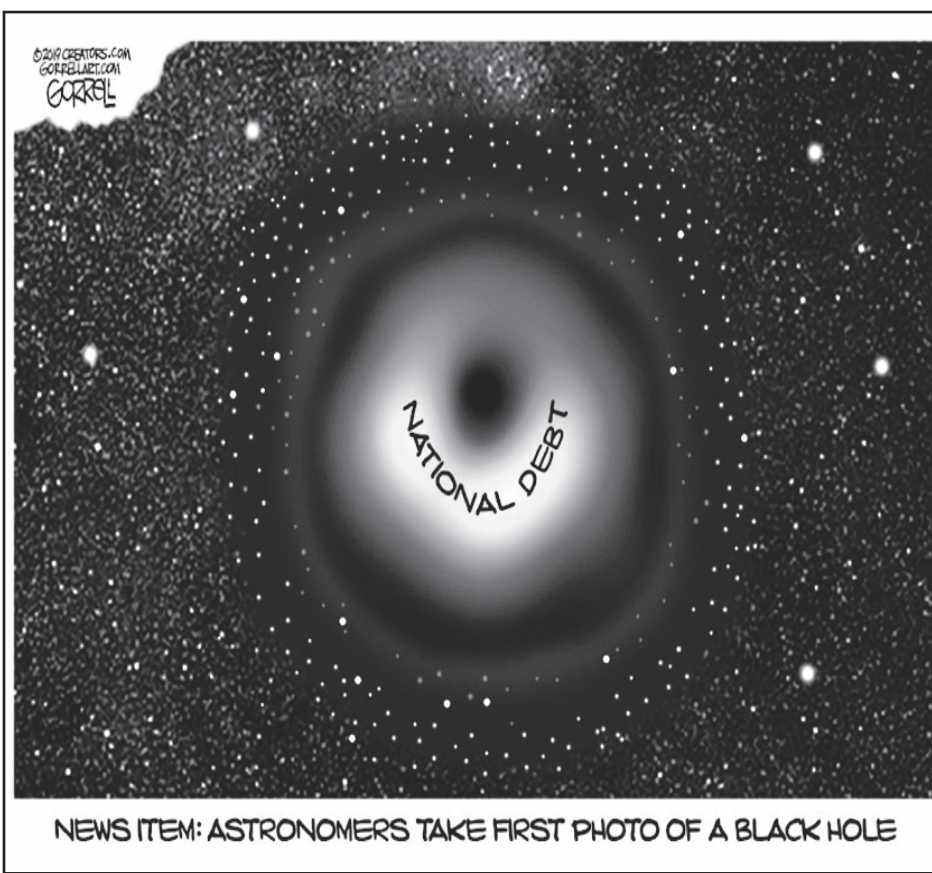
But it's an inexact science. If a person can escape into his or her head and apart from others, convincing and devastating arguments can be made.

That's one reason that this newspaper publishes the national suicide prevention hotline telephone number, which is always answered by someone willing to speak with you, regardless of everything else: 1-800-681-7444.

I remain in Scouting because I want to have influence on young men as they become adults; to help them make friendships that will support them for the long run; to teach them to be prepared; to realize that they can do the same thing for the younger men they will come across.

Yes, it is an inexact science. But in a small place, where we know most of our neighbors, our job is to try, and to keep trying, isn't it?

Opinions



NEWS ITEM: ASTRONOMERS TAKE FIRST PHOTO OF A BLACK HOLE

Coping with the illegal drug flow

Drug overdose is now the leading cause of accidental death in the United States.

Those with loved ones who are using opiates or heroin need to be aware that opiates are the main contributors to this problem. With drug dealers across the United States mixing new and powerful synthetic drugs into street opiates such as heroin, the chance of accidental overdose has exponentially increased.

The drug Fentanyl, U-47700, and Furanyl can be 50 to 100 times more powerful than heroin, making the risk of a fatal overdose much higher. Drug dealers have been using this drug to increase the potency of their heroin at a lower cost.

These new drugs are increasing the risk to anyone who abuse drugs as drug dealers press drugs into pills and sell them under the guise of being something else.

Today, those who abuse drugs truly are at risk as there is no telling what drugs they are taking. This is why drug rehab for heroin addiction is so important.

It is essential to help those you know who are addicted to alcohol or drugs. Trying to help someone with an addiction can be more than frustrating. And although you just want to help, many times they fight against you as if you were the enemy.

Don't be surprised if your loved one even accuses you of contributing to their addiction. Hear them out and take their words into consideration but at the end of the day realize getting them sober and continuing to live is the most important thing.

These drugs have made it potentially life threatening to be an abuser of any types of drugs. Get yourself educated. If one of your loved ones is struggling with addiction, get them into treatment. Don't wait until it is too late.

There are many different approaches to the challenge of how to help a substance abuser. For free information, learn the steps of how to get someone into treatment for heroin addiction. Call 1-800-431-1754 to get help for your loved ones.
LUKE NICHOLS
Narcotics Anonymous
Denham Springs LA

Head to town for May 11 fun

Get your calendar and mark May 11 as the day to go to Centerville! Why, you may ask? Because we have a great day in store for you!

Start your morning with the Garden Club at their annual Plant Sale, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the corner of North Central Avenue and East Swan Street. The club's variety of plants will include herbs, lemon grass and hanging baskets.

Next, come to the Centerville Public Square, where the Hickman County Arts and Crafts Guild is hosting the second Keg County Arts and Crafts Fair. From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., shop among vendors who will sell handmade and handcrafted items only.

We have vendors who will sell candles and bath products, crochet, knitting and sewing. Find a nice variety of jewelry, wood items and quilling, plus one-of-a-kind art in watercolor, oil or acrylic. Homemade bread, local honey, pies, jams and jellies also will be available.

We know shopping can

zap the energy right out of you, so here's our solution: Check out the food vendors. Sit a spell, grab some lunch and get re-energized for more shopping! While you are on the square, be sure to check out the local businesses! They would love to meet you!

Now don't pack up and leave just yet. Take a break from shopping by going to one of our restaurants. But be sure to watch the time so you can head toward the Hickman County Ag Pavilion and Fairgrounds for the final treat of the day:

The Hickman County Public Library will present the third concert in the Hickman Heritage Music Series. Marty Crum and the Dixieland Band will make a special appearance at 7 p.m. You might recognize Marty's name from the "Jazz is Here" events held at Molly's Place.

Wow! What a day! Shopping, eating and music! What a great combination!

So, come and spend the day with us! We would love to have you!

Letters To The Editor

Letters to the Editor should contain a valid signature, mailing address and a daytime telephone number where the writer may be reached. Names of persons writing letters will not be withheld from publication. Unsigned letters will not be published. Only one letter per person per 14-day period. Letters endorsing or opposing political candidates are political advertising and should be taken to the advertising department. All letters are subject to editing. Letters of complaint about private businesses will be forwarded to the business and will not be published.

Deadline for submission is Wed. at 5 p.m.

JANET PIERCE
Vice President
Hickman County Arts and Crafts Guild

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"I may disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." -- VOLTAIRE

THE LORD'S PRAYER
Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory forever.

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Reading aloud is widely recognized as the single most important activity leading to literacy acquisition.

Contribute to Hickman County Imagination Library at the Hickman County Public Library

To keep up with what's going on in the community, read the Hickman County Times every week!