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SOUTHWESTERN'S RED HOT SECOND HALF RESULTS IN WIN | B1

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2023

# Commonwealth Journal

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## PARADING INTO THE HOLIDAY SEASON



COURTESY OF RICH HELMUS

Santa Claus took part in the Burnside Christmas Parade on Friday night.

## Burnside Parade kicks off festive weekend in Pulaski

BY CHRISTOPHER HARRIS  
COMMONWEALTH JOURNAL

The first parade of a parade-packed weekend in Pulaski County was in Burnside on Friday night, and it turned out to be a sweet time — both figuratively and literally.

“It went well,” said acting City of Burnside Tourism Director Jerrica Flynn, who also served as grand marshal

for the Burnside Christmas Parade. “It went very smooth, we went on time, and there was tons and tons of candy.” Flynn estimated that there were close to 40 entries in the parade, which had the theme of “Christmas Movies” this year. It’s an annual tradition in Burnside, with floats, vehicles and all kinds of participants

SEE BURNSIDE, A7



CARLA SLAVEY | CJ  
The crew from Saline Baptist Church prepared for the parade in the parking lot of Meece Middle School.

## Whoville takes over downtown Somerset

Chamber of Commerce Christmas Parade a hit despite rainy weather

BY CARLA SLAVEY  
COMMONWEALTH JOURNAL

Downtown Somerset became a virtual Whoville Saturday night, with an infestation of Grinches taking over the landscape.

But despite their best efforts — as well as the dampness of the De-

cember weather — the Christmas spirit wasn’t stolen away at all. In fact, one could argue that it wasn’t only the Grinch’s heart that grew three sizes.

The Somerset-Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce organizes the Somerset Christmas Parade every year, with

each event having a theme for participants to follow. And with this year’s focus on Whoville, Chamber Executive Director noted that those making the entries for this year followed through with the theme spectacularly.

“I would say that participants gravitated

more toward this theme this year, Christmas in Whoville, than any theme in my tenure,” Clue said. “People loved the theme. So the theme really matters.” And the Chamber took notice, so much so that Clue said

SEE WHOVILLE, A7



SUBMITTED  
On Friday night, the theater at The Center for Rural Development was renamed and dedicated in honor of local arts patron Cornelia Dozier Cooper.

## Center theater renamed in honor of Cornelia Dozier Cooper

BY CHRISTOPHER HARRIS  
COMMONWEALTH JOURNAL

Cornelia Dozier Cooper has long been one of Pulaski County’s greatest supporters of the arts. What better way, then, to honor her than by putting her name on the stage where so

much artistic magic is offered to the public?

On Friday, prior to the annual Nutcracker Ball event held there, The Center for Rural Development announced the dedication of its state-of-the-art 760-seat theater under the new name “Cornelia Dozier Cooper

Theatre.”

A number of notable individuals attended and spoke about Cooper and her philanthropic efforts, particularly to promote arts in the community; that includes a series of \$1,000 grants

SEE COOPER, A8

## City worker struck by vehicle during parade cleanup

BY CARLA SLAVEY  
COMMONWEALTH JOURNAL

A City of Somerset employee was severely injured as he was helping with the cleanup from the Christmas parade held downtown Saturday night.

The Somerset Police Department is investigating the pedestrian accident, in which Bruce Owens, 53, of Somerset, suffered multiple injuries.

The accident took place at the intersection of East Mt. Vernon Street and Barnett Street/Liberty Street. It took place around 10:45 p.m.

According to the SPD report, he was taken to the Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital by Somerset-Pulaski EMS for treatment.

Social media reports from family state that

Owens was then transferred to a Lexington hospital.

SPD reported that Owens was using a backpack-style leaf blower to blow debris from the Christmas Parade off of sidewalks and into the street, where a street sweeper would later be used to pick it up.

Owens was wearing a reflective safety vest, but the report states that the backpack may have been covering the back of the vest.

SPD stated that a 2004 Chevrolet Impala being driven by Daymon Roberts, 20, of Somerset, was traveling eastbound on East. Mt. Vernon. The driver reported that he was going around 35 MPH.

Roberts stated that he did not see Owens until

SEE INJURED, A7

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# COOPER: Has been passionate supporter of the arts in Pulaski County for years

From Page A1

given out in her name every year to worthy artistic projects.

The naming of the theater came as a surprise to Cooper, who preferred to direct attention away from her own accomplishments to recognize what others have done along with her for the same causes.

“It’s quite an honor,” she told the Commonwealth Journal. “It’s a village; all of us have worked bringing children in (to The Center to see artistic performances) for about 20 years.”

Among the speakers was U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers who noted that Cooper — wife of the late Richard Cooper and sister-in-law of the late U.S. Senator John Sherman Cooper — has added her own prestige to the highly respected Cooper name in the Lake Cumberland area.

“Cornelia’s passionate work has not only lifted local talented artists during their journey, but she has inspired adults and children alike to pursue their dreams and believe in their God-given talent,” said Rogers, who was the founder of The Center for Rural Development.

“So, we wanted to do something here at The Center for Rural Development that would give lasting recognition to Cornelia’s legacy of love for the arts. I’m thrilled that The Center’s theater will now be known as the Cornelia Dozier Cooper Theater.”

The dedication of the theatre was the highlight of the Nutcracker Ball, an annual fundraising gala benefiting Lake Cumberland Performing Arts and grants for thriving artists.

“In naming the theatre after Cornelia Dozier Cooper, we pay tribute to a remarkable individual whose dedication to the arts has been nothing short of inspirational,” said Lonnie Lawson, The Center’s President and CEO. “Having had the honor to know and work alongside Cornelia, I’ve witnessed first-hand her profound

impact on fostering the arts in our region. Her legacy is not just in the programs she helped establish or the events she’s supported, but in the countless lives she touched through her lifetime commitment to the arts.”

Lawson told the Commonwealth Journal that as long as The Center has been in Somerset, Cooper has partnered with the facility to support its efforts to bring arts to the community.

“Because of her longstanding legacy in the arts, we just felt like we really wanted to honor her by naming (the theater) for her,” he said. Lawson noted the modesty Cooper displayed upon learning of the recognition, but was happy to see that “at the event the other night, she was absolutely thrilled with it. And her family; they were so, so appreciative that we made it happen.

“It was a big deal all the way around,” he added. “It was something that we were very, very happy to do, it was something that Congressman Rogers felt strongly about, so it was the right thing to do.”

Cooper has served as President and a founding member of Lake Cumberland Performing Arts and was a featured artist for the University of Kentucky Art Museum’s “Art in Bloom” annual fundraiser. She was a member of the inaugural Kentucky Arts Council board following the agency’s creation in 1965.

For her efforts, Cooper has received a number of honors and recognitions, including the Master Musicians Festival Lifetime Achievement Award and the state’s esteemed Milner Award, placing her among other Kentucky luminaries, like former Governor Julian Carroll, author Harriet Simpson-Arnow, writer Jesse Stuart, and activist Wendell Berry.

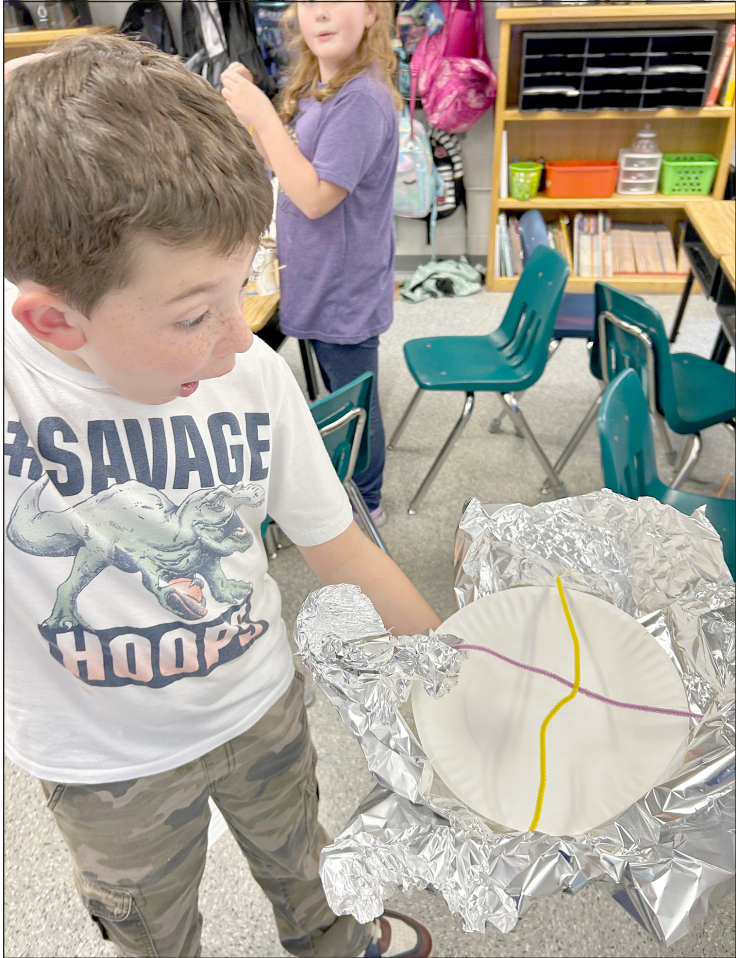
Cooper’s support extends to the Lake Cumberland Children’s Theatre Series, Somerset’s

Master Musicians Festival, and the visual and performing arts programs at Somerset Community College.

“I am deeply honored by The Center for Rural Development’s decision to name their theatre after Cornelia Dozier Cooper. Cornelia’s commitment to the arts, especially her pivotal role in the School Time Theatre program, has opened the doors of imagination and creativity for countless children in our region. Her dedication has been instrumental in exposing young minds to the wonders of the performing arts, fostering a lifelong appreciation for culture and creativity,” said Cecelia Davis Carroll, President of Lake Cumberland Performing Arts. “The naming of the theatre in her honor is not just a tribute to her tireless work but a beacon that will continue to inspire educational and artistic pursuits for generations to come. We are profoundly grateful for Cornelia’s contributions and believe that her spirit will continue to resonate within the walls of the Cornelia Dozier Cooper Theatre.”

Lisa Blakley, President of the Cornelia Dozier Cooper Endowment Fund, said that Cooper isn’t just a patron of the arts but rather “the very foundation” upon which the local artistic community has been built.

“Her visionary support and passionate advocacy have been the foundation for our cultural development. Her tireless efforts and unwavering commitment have created a legacy that transcends generations, inspiring countless children and adults to engage with and appreciate the arts,” said Blakley. “As we celebrate her today, we are reminded that the vibrancy of our artistic landscape owes much to Mrs. Cooper’s foresight and generosity. She is more than a benefactor; she is a true cornerstone of the arts in our community.”



SUBMITTED  
Top:  
Pictured is Gavin Colarusso holding his birdfeeder that he made as a project in Mr. Well's 2nd grade class at Shopville Elementary School.  
Bottom: Pictured is Bella Taylor of Shopville Elementary working on getting holes placed in her cup to make a perch for birds to sit



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The Commonwealth Journal

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