

Lodge needs cakes for Easter Holiday

The Masonic Daughters' Lodge is receiving cakes for distribution to various churches through the first hospital. If you would like to donate a cake, bring it to the Masonic Hall on April 1, from 10:30 to 1:00 p.m. Cakes will be distributed to the Shrine's Hospital, the Eastern Star Home, and other worthy recipients.

Bat Jackets open season

The Nicholas County High School Bat Jackets opened their season through the first scheduled game against Lewis County was cancelled. The jackets will be open to Harrison County tonight at 4:30, and will play Mason County April 1, at 4:30. Both games are at home.

April 7 slated as Dental Health Day

April 7 has been proclaimed Oral Health Day, according to the Kentucky Cabinet for Human Resources. Kentucky is recognizing the importance of proper dental care. For more information on how to care for your teeth, call the Nicholas County Health Department at 293-2188.

Area Weather Forecast

Thursday & Friday: Clearing, high in the sixties, lows near forty.
Saturday & Sunday: Continued dry, with highs in the mid-sixties.

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Superintendent defends record with schools; says he cut costs

By Leigh Stone

OF THE Carlisle Mercury Staff
CARLISLE - Cost cutting measures initiated by Nicholas County School Superintendent Colbert Gilbert will leave the Nicholas County Schools in better shape when he leaves than they were before he came, stated Gilbert.

County superintendent for four years, Gilbert's last day in that position is June 30. The board did not renew his contract. "The bottom line is we're doing better. My goal was to turn it around in six years. I did it in less than four."

"This district is better off financially than when I came here four years ago."

Gilbert listed three cost-cutting measures. "The food service system became a revenue generator by serving food more appealing to students. Before 1990, food service was losing money."

"The purchase of 10 new school buses, instead of paying for parts and keeping on old buses that were more than eight years old."

"Better management of the transportation system. Construction of a bus garage enabled the district to receive state facility support money. Instead of \$35,000 spent on bus parts annually, the cost is \$10,000, or a saving of \$25,000 per year."

An additional source of revenue came in the form of KERA, (Kentucky Education Reform Act) which secured the year Gilbert came in 1990. KERA meant tax increases. Besides increased property taxes, a three percent utilities tax, which everyone pays, went into effect.

But within the school system, Gilbert's changes reduced expenditures.

"What really helped this district is the improved food service system. Food service cost \$200,000 when I came here, coming out of the general fund. Food service is a federally audited program, not meant to make money. We serve two meals, breakfast and lunch. And you know we can't really serve a meal for \$14 or \$15.50. With my experience in finance, I knew we should be paying our own way. We were paying cooks with no money coming back. Now, in four years, we've turned that around."

We looked at the free lunch program, looking for getting a better quality of food so children will eat it. If the food's not good, they'll throw it out. We prepare all our meals. We have a salad bar at the high school, lemonade and food tea and a potato bar at the high school. Teenagers like variety. They began to eat."

"It's just like running a restaurant. We spruced it up, gave more variety, drinks and food, so students would eat. We made it more enticing."

Much credit for the program goes to home economics teacher Martha Taylor, whose other job is Food Service director. Gilbert said her ideas and so.

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IN BRIEF

The Hospital Auxiliary Luncheon will be held Tuesday, April 12, at Natural Bridge State Park. The auxiliary will meet behind the Nicholas County Courthouse to leave at 10 a.m.



Nicholas County High School teacher Bonnie Metcalfe distributed "egg babies" to students in her parenting class recently so students can get a taste of what it's like to be a parent. Students were to read the raw eggs as they would a human infant. Students kept a daily log events telling what their "babies" did during each hour. Students were required to have a basket for their "babies," and "grandparents" were told by letter to go overboard on the "babysitting." It was a project just in time for Easter.

With "Egg Babies" Students get a taste of parenting

By Leigh Stone

OF THE Carlisle Mercury Staff
CARLISLE - Child rearing can be "egg-spirating" and "egg-spirous."

So students in Bonnie Metcalfe's parenting class kept their "egg babies" with them for a week to learn what it's like to be a parent.

Student Chrystal Fritts already had a bit of child care experience. She used to babysit her younger brother.

"The best part was when he was asleep. The worst part was when he was awake."

Fritts was joking, but aptly described how a parent or caregiver can feel when the responsibility of an infant's life is put on them.

Metcalfe distributed the egg babies (raw eggs) last Friday. Students were to care for the eggs as if they were real infants.

Treating an egg baby like a real human infant meant 24-hour supervision. Student couldn't put their egg baby in a locker when they didn't want to be bothered. Egg babies went everywhere the parent did or the parent hired a baby sitter, which Metcalfe students could do for \$2 an hour, for up to five hours. A letter sent home to parents of students in the semester long parenting class were asked, "Please do not volunteer to care for your 'grand child' beyond the five hour paid limit. If the parent must be gone longer they will have to take the child along."

Only four "free" hours of babysitting were allowed.

"Can you imagine what one of these would smell like if you dropped it the sixth day?" laughed student Melissa Smith. The egg babies were to have been returned in good condition on Wednesday.

Students were to keep a diary of events, telling their feelings about being a parent. They were also to keep a log, telling how the baby felt, how the "baby" spent each day. "The babies sleep a lot, but don't just write about that," Metcalfe advised.

Student Jennifer Sapp said

an elaborate blue, pink and white bed for her "egg babies." Continued on Page 3



Foks lined up for good food and good fellowship during the Nicholas County Ministerial Association's Holy Week Lunch Fast held annually as a pre-Easter activity. Here, the Rev. Steve Smith, center left, was joined by several participants on Tuesday.

Screening committee to recommend candidate

By Leigh Stone

OF THE Carlisle Mercury Staff
CARLISLE - The screening committee responsible for helping the board of education select the next superintendent of Nicholas County has six weeks to recommend candidates for the position.

The Nicholas County Board of Education charged the screening committee with a mission during Monday's special board meeting to help the superintendent selection process.

The applications process would be closed May 1. The screening committee was asked to recommend three to seven candidates, so the board will not have to select a candidate later than May 15.

The tentative schedule is for the board to begin interviews of the selected candidates not later than June 1 and to finalize selection and appointment not later than June 30.

Nicholas County Superintendent Colbert Gilbert's contract was not renewed by the board in February. His contract ends June 30.

Nicholas County Board Chairman Louise Zachary read the mission, made by Sammie Dale and seconded by Jimmy Dale, that committed the board and screening committee to a plan of action in the selection process.

It is not law that the board accept screening committee recommendations, however, School Board Attorney Dawn Letcher stated during the meeting that the groups will work together.

"The board does not have to accept the recommendations. It's very clear the board is working with this screening committee and appreciates its help in giving its opinion," stated Letcher.

Members of the screening committee were announced at the March 14 board meeting. The members include Greg Reid, principal of Nicholas County High School, selected as school principal representative; John Simons, high school industrial arts teacher and Brenda Lawrence, elementary school teacher, both selected by district certified personnel; and Sue Dalton, appointed by the Parent Teacher Association.

All board members, John Cleaver Jr., Sammie Dale, David Simons, Jimmy Dale and chairman Louise Zachary were in attendance along with Superintendent Colbert Gilbert.

All members of the board except David Simons, who was out of town, were present for a five and a half hour screening committee workshop held Sunday, March 20, at the Central School Office. Dr. Tim Holt of the Kentucky Department of Education hosted the workshop.

Reid, selected by the screening committee as media spokesperson, said Holt's workshop informed the committee what its role is in the selection process. "He basically got us to thinking and working together in a progressive spirit of cooperation," Reid said.

The selection committee will review and review applicants. Continued on Page 6

Non-renewal leaves Gilbert seeking position

By Leigh Stone

OF THE Carlisle Mercury Staff
CARLISLE - Nicholas County Superintendent Colbert Gilbert is looking for another superintendent job.

The school board failed to renew Gilbert's contract in February. The last day of the superintendent's job in Kentucky is June 30.

Gilbert has 24 years in education. Four years were spent as an industrial arts teacher in Pikeville. In 1974 he became a Powell County middle school principal. He helped set up the building of a new high school and became the new high school principal for three years then

became assistant superintendent 11 years.

He was hired by anonymous vote by board members James D. Anderson, Cecil Durran, Louise Zachary, John Cleaver and David Simons in 1990.

Gilbert moved his family to Nicholas County and bought a home still maintaining a Powell County residence. His mother also resides in Powell County.

Gilbert's wife, Karen, teaches and has 18 years experience. Their son, John, is a senior. Their daughter Candace will be a senior this fall.

At this point, Gilbert doesn't know if his wife will try to stay

in her current position or go with him to his new position. Nor does he know if Candace will complete high school education at Nicholas County High School.

According to Kentucky law, Mrs. Gilbert cannot be employed in the same school district as her husband. The law's intent was to keep positions from being an issue in school districts. The law was amended June 23, 1990, a week after Gilbert and his family came to Nicholas County.

Both Gilbert and his wife were employed in the Powell County school district, prior to coming to Nicholas County.

"There are several superintendents retiring with several openings across the state. One

district had 91 applicants. Only nine (applicant) were from Kentucky."

Superintendents are required to complete a superintendent assessment program, mandated by the Ky. Dept. of Education.

The test covers curriculum development, site based learning, finance, law and management. Gilbert passed his assessment test at Eastern Kentucky University last December. The assessment training process takes about a week. If an applicant does not pass, they are required to take the test again.

Nicholas County has a population of approximately 6,500. There are approximately 1,300 students. The superintendent's

salary is \$7,000 less than the average superintendent pay in Ky. Average pay throughout the state is \$68,000 per year. With just the required assessment and pay scale, Gilbert hopes the district will receive a healthy number of qualified applicants. "I'll go on with my business. I hope the children will not suffer. The students must come first."

Gilbert has as message for the next Nicholas County superintendent. "It's what's best for this county. Don't fall behind so we lose our population and our young people. They deserve the education available to everyone else has in the state. You can do this if everyone works together."