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The Carlisle

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Young arson trial date set

By Charles Mattox
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A young man accused of burning down his teacher's home, as part of a prank gone horribly wrong, will go to trial Sept. 18.

Garrett Young, 19, appeared in Nicholas County Circuit Court, Monday morning with his attorney, Honorable Raymond Bogucki.

The alleged prank involved fireworks, which were placed on Griffith's home and ignited. Investigators believe one of the fireworks projectiles lodged in Griffith's attic and exploded for several hours before starting a fire, which subsequently destroyed the home in the early morning hours of March 19.

Young is charged with committing the offense of arson, third degree, first degree.

Young's charges were the result of an alleged 'prank' that occurred during the evening hours of March 18 at the home of Nicholas County High School teacher Dreauna Griffith, who lives on Walnut Grove Road.

The alleged prank involved fireworks, which were placed on Griffith's home and ignited. Investigators believe one of the fireworks projectiles lodged in Griffith's attic and exploded for several hours before starting a fire, which subsequently destroyed the home in the early morning hours of March 19.

Felony charges against Young, were bound over to the grand jury following a preliminary hearing in Nicholas District Court, April 23.

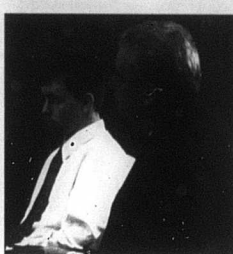
District Judge, Honorable William Probus, bound the charges of arson, third degree, and criminal mischief, first degree, over to Nicholas County Grand Jury following testimony of veteran Kentucky State Police Arson Investigator, Detective Curtis Combs. County Attorney Dawn Letcher called Detective Combs as her only witness and Combs answered all of her questions during direct questioning. He also answered questions from Young's attorney Raymond Bogucki during cross-examination.

Under direct questioning from Letcher, Combs detailed his investigation. His testimony indicated four individuals were at the Griffith home that night in two vehicles. They were Young, Jordan Stewart, a male juvenile and a female juvenile.

"The fire started as a result of the fireworks," Combs said early in his testimony, and later said temperatures inside the house reached 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit. "The fire did not start in the house, it started in the attic area."

Young was later indicted on the above charges by a Nicholas County Grand Jury.

During Monday's court appearance, Young appeared calm and humble.



Garrett Young, left, and his attorney Raymond Bogucki were in Nicholas Circuit Court Monday morning. A September trial is currently scheduled for Young's felony arson charge.



2009 Blackberry Festival Queen Carlotta Paige Barker

Miller appointed to fill role as Commonwealth Attorney

By Charles Mattox
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Cynthiana attorney, honorable Edward Douglas "Doug" Miller, an attorney with the well-established law firm of Swinford & Swinford P.S.C., Attorneys at Law, has been appointed by Governor Steve Beshear to fulfill the duties of Commonwealth Attorney for the 18th Judicial District, which includes Harrison, Pendleton, Nicholas and Robertson County.

Miller will take the helm of the office previously headed by Doug Wright, 48, the former Commonwealth Attorney for the 18th Judicial District, who was killed in a tragic two-vehicle accident

June 8, just north of Butler in Pendleton County. Wright was unopposed during the 2006 election when he came Commonwealth Attorney and had previously left a thriving private law practice to become assistant Commonwealth Attorney under Jack Keith.

He was very well known and respected in the community, especially by those who knew him over the years and worked closely with him.

"I considered Doug a good friend and I had the pleasure of knowing Doug for several years before he was Commonwealth Attorney," Miller said Monday. "Philosophically, I have a lot in common with Doug's approach to the law."

Miller said that he was contacted about filling the position as Assistant Commonwealth Attorney Michael Laws said he was working very closely together and I know Mike always worked tirelessly to help Doug keep the office in good shape. I look forward to working with Mr. Laws and continuing on with Doug's duties."

Laws said he was also looking forward to working with Miller and spoke briefly about his former colleague, Doug Wright.

"Doug was a great attorney and a wonderful friend," he said with a voice loud and heavy with sorrow.

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Rains, location, dampen festival spirits

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Heavy rains led to the cancellation of the fourth of July fireworks as part of the Blackberry Festival, and event organizers say they hope to see the festival moved back downtown to the original location for next year or they fear the entire festival may be washed out.

"As far as atmosphere, the move to the West End Park has killed the Blackberry Festival," said Dorsey Watkins. "Don't get me wrong. The ball field at the park is a wonderful, spacious place for the carnival rides, but it just doesn't have the atmosphere and it's not the same."

Watkins, the adjutant for the local American Legion, the sponsoring organization of the festival, said the rains flooded the possibility of a fireworks display Saturday night, but the dampness was nothing in comparison to the people who he said inundated him with a flood of complaints about the festival location.

"It was very disappointing," he said. "One after another, people were seeking me out to complain about the location."

Watkins said and added that the owner of the carnival rides said the business was about half of what it was the last time he set up rides for the Blackberry Festival, which incidentally was the year before last when the "limb-cutting" controversy occurred, which led members of the Nicholas County Fiscal Court to ban rides in the courthouse yard, which in turn led to the festival being moved.

"I told everyone that complained to talk to their elected officials," Watkins said. "I never sought out anyone about their opinion. They sought me out and they complained in droves."

Watkins said the Blackberry Festival is more than a fair or gathering of carnival rides.

"It's always been a homecoming," he said. "It's a historical event that has survived since 1946 when it was first held as a homecoming. It had a feeling of a homecoming every since until the move to the West End Park. I just don't think you should mess with tradition. We've tried it out at the park and it just doesn't have the same feeling and people aren't responding one bit."

Fid like to see the festival moved back downtown for good. I think there can be improvements made in the downtown location and I think we have a wonderful park, but the festival has traditionally been downtown and people from across the state and nation come home to Carlisle for the Blackberry Festival and to come downtown and visit with family and friends. I'd like to see the Blackberry Festival moved back to downtown Carlisle and I think a lot of Nicholas County folks would like to see that too."

Watkins noted that although he saw several city officials during the festival he only saw one Nicholas County Fiscal Court member, Magistrate Jeff Randolph, at the festival.

"That was disturbing to me," Watkins said. "To know that those partially responsible for moving the festival didn't even come to see it."

Carlisle Mayor Ronnie Clark and Watkins both said the fireworks show would be held tentatively on Labor Day Weekend.

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