

All Around Kentucky

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HALLOWEEN IS A TREAT AS A YEAR-ROUND BUSINESS

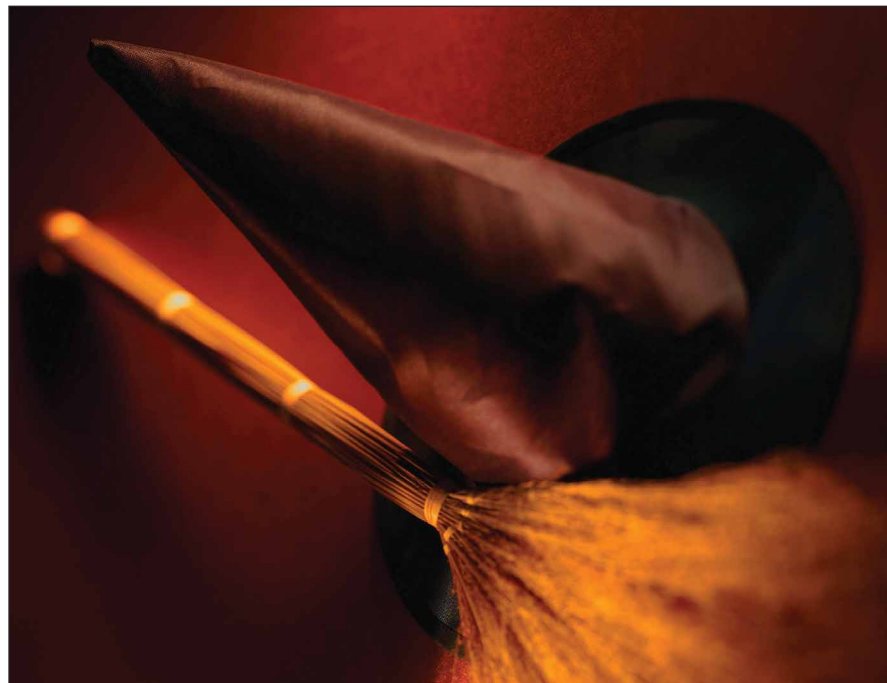


Photo by Brian Steege, courtesy of Donnelly Design

By Rachael Kamuf
KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

It's a ghost — a freaky ghost — costume that you need. Where you going to go?

Any of the 205 Halloween Express outlets in the United States and Great Britain would be the response of company founder Curtis Sigretto.

And if you want to experience the nascent winery industry in Kentucky, Sigretto happily will direct you to his Elk Creek Vineyards outside Owenton. (See related story on Page 22.)

Owenton is a small town, but it is more than a blip on mass retailers' radar as it

where the headquarters of Halloween Express is located.

Sigretto started what is now the second largest Halloween specialty company in the United States and No. 1 in Great Britain, with sales of about \$70 million annually, with three stores in 1991. He moved the headquarters to Owenton in 1995 to be closer to the Cincinnati factory where many of the Halloween Express products are made.

"I didn't want to live in Cincinnati," Sigretto said of the decision instead to relocate from North Carolina to the area where his wife, Debbie, was raised and father-in-law, Tommy Carver, continues to
See HALLOWEEN, page 23

Voters guide addresses KFB issues

By Marshall Coyle and David S. Beck
KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

We take elections seriously at Kentucky Farm Bureau. The voting booth holds the key to the democratic principles that allow each of us — whether we live on farms or the neighborhoods that form communities in small towns and large cities — to maintain a truly democratic form of government that is "for the people and by the people."

Kentuckians will go to the polls on Tuesday,
See ELECTION GUIDE, page 21



Kentucky Farm Bureau stepping up to help cattlemen find feed

Six months ago I could have filled this space with a glowing report about the farm economy. In the early spring, market prices were good for most of our farm commodities and the planting and growing season was beginning with much optimism.

But now, we can only look back on a double-dose of weather extremes that have spelled "disaster" for Kentucky agriculture.

First it was the highly unusual frost and freeze during the Easter holiday that destroyed fruit and vegetable crops and damaged pastures. And then we had one of the hottest, driest summers and early falls in state history.

Many Kentucky farmers, like Kentucky Farm Bureau second vice president John Hendricks, are calling this the worst growing season they've ever seen. I'm inclined to agree.

Hendricks, my good friend and colleague on the executive committee, is especially mindful of the damaging effects on our for-

KENTUCKY grassroots

MARSHALL COYLE | PRESIDENT | KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU



midable cattle industry. He raises cattle on his Clark County farm and also is chairman of our Beef Cattle Advisory Committee.

"There are grave concerns about both feed and water supplies. Hay prices are going up every day while cattle prices go down. I had to sell (cattle) last week and may sell again next week," he said in late September.

He also pointed out that there's a likely long-term effect.

"We've spent a lot of our agricultural development money on cattle genetics to improve our quality. We're probably going

to lose some of those genetics with these forced sales," he said.

The damage, of course, runs much deeper. Thousands of acres of pastureland have been destroyed, crop yields are low in many parts of the state and burley tobacco is not curing well due to the lack of moisture.

The bottom line is a significant loss of farm income that could trickle over into other economic sectors in towns throughout the state.

Kentucky Farm Bureau has joined with other farm groups in doing what it can to assist farmers during this difficult period.

We're working with the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture to make sure cattle producers have access to information as quickly and simply as possible. We have an index feed dealers on the Kentucky Farm Bureau Web site (www.kyfb.com).

Our Beef Cattle Advisory Committee is encouraging producers to utilize that service, as well as information from UK ag specialists on feeding options this winter that is being widely distributed by the university and Farm Bureau.

I also sent letters to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Gov. Ernie Fletcher and Kentucky's congressional delegation outlining the situation and expressing the need for assistance before the state was declared a natural disaster area in early October. And our staff and volunteer leaders are in

continual contact with our lawmakers to express needs and to advocate government assistance programs.

While the Farm Service Agency stands ready to administer whatever is authorized through USDA, farmers also need to make preparations.

The important first step is good record-keeping. In order to qualify for the emergency lending program, farmers must document the yields from both 2006 and 2007. They also should consult with their insurance adjuster to confirm what to leave in the field for inspection and keep in touch with their local FSA officials to check on the status of emergency programs.

It's also important for farmers to make their own management decisions. If you have doubts that it's economically beneficial to harvest your crop, combine an acre or two and make the determination based on that.

If anything positive can be associated with this devastating drought, perhaps it will be providing the impetus for including a catastrophic assistance program in the federal farm bill that currently is under consideration. Farm Bureau is calling for a standing program based on county losses for all crops, including forages and fruits and vegetables.

We are stressing that although the federal farm program is designed to avert economic disaster to our farm families, it has never addressed weather disasters that require emergency funding. The common practice of diverting funds already allocated to specific farm bill provisions only weakens the entire program. And so we're hoping Congress chooses to include emergency titles in the next farm bill.

It's been a tough year for many of Kentucky's farms. Hopefully, our lawmakers will show the wisdom and compassion to assist those in need.

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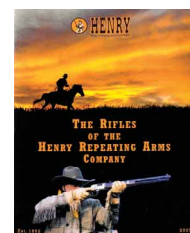
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Ohio River fossil beds offer peek at prehistoric landscape

By Herb Sparrow

SPECIAL TO KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

"This is a 400 million-year-old sea floor we are walking on," said Paul Olliges.

We were on a limestone bed of the Ohio River in the area known as the Falls of the Ohio. A natural barrier to earlier explorers and settlers traveling the waterway, the falls is one of the richest windows into the shallow ocean that covered much of the United States during the Devonian period 400 million years ago.

You can get a fascinating look at the fossil remains of plant-like animals that inhabited the ocean at the Falls of the Ohio State Park in Clarksville, Ind., directly across the river from Louisville, whose 21st Century skyline looms in the background.

"The significant thing is there are more than 600 species of fossils," said Olliges, a volunteer at the park. "There is more diversity here than most places. That's a big deal."

Two-thirds of the fossils were discovered and recorded at the falls for the first time anywhere in the world.

The 116-acre state park is part of the Falls of the Ohio National Wildlife Conservation Area, which covers 1,404 acres on both sides of the river.

An informative interpretative center, whose walls are a series of multicolored bricks and limestone bands, sits on a bank high above the fossil beds. Its wooden outdoor deck gives a sweeping view of the beds, the McAlpin Dam, the first railroad bridge over the Ohio River and the Louisville skyline.

In the lobby, a diorama gives a good overview of the falls area today, and a large mural on the wall shows how it looked hundreds of years ago. There also is a collage of life-like figures that traces the history of the area, with creatures from the Devonian period, a mammoth, a bison, an Indian hunter, a 7th Century Welsh explorer — that's a story for another time — and an early white explorer.

"It represents a little of all the history," said Bett Etenohan, a naturalist at the park.

A 14-minute film in the center's 120-seat theater also gives a good overview of the geological and cultural history of the area. "It puts it all together," Olliges said.

The center also has more than 100 exhibits that give additional details about the falls' geological and human history with



Courtesy of Falls of the Ohio State Park

Fossil beds on the shores of the Ohio River reveal the remains of the ocean that covered Kentucky and Indiana 400 million years ago. The fossilized relics and an interpretive center are part of a national conservation area.

artifacts and interactive videos. There are three small aquariums, including one with fish from today's Ohio River such as gar, bluegill and catfish.

However, the best way to experience the wonder of the fossils at the falls is to get out and walk among them.

That is possible only when the river is down, usually during the summer. "The hard part is to talk about the beauty of the fossil beds when they are under water two-thirds of the year," said Etenohan. "July to October is usually best time. You need to call ahead to see if the fossil beds are accessible and visible."

Stairs from the interpretative center lead to the upper and lower fossil beds. There you can see fascinating images in the rocks of crinoids, also called sea lilies, that look like washers or threaded bolts; lacy fan-like bryozoans; horn coral; snails; small clam-like brachiopods; tusk coral; and branching coral that resemble tree branches.

Olliges showed me the trick of splashing water on the limestone, which makes the fossil detail jump out.

"These are all animals, not plants," he said. Although the Devonian was called the

Age of Fish, there are few fish fossils because scavengers ate their remains before they could fossilize.

"Seventy percent are in Kentucky, but the best access is from Indiana," he said.

He said referring to the river topography as a falls "is a misnomer. They are really cascading rapids. From the Louisville pool, they drop 26 feet in about two-and-a-half miles. That is a big, big drop on the Ohio. It was a natural stopping place. It was why the English stopped here."

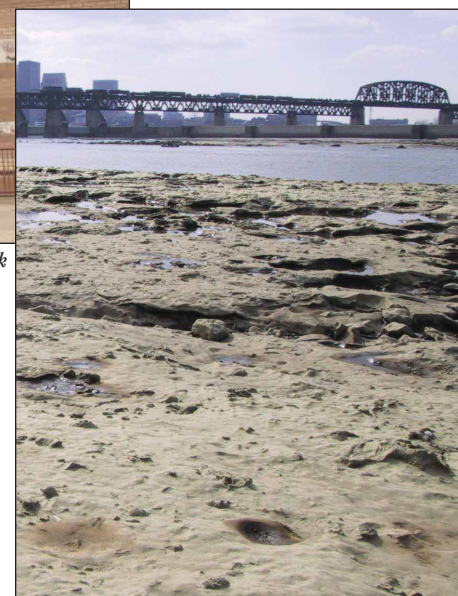
Louisville grew to be a major commercial center in part because goods had to be carried around the falls until the first canals were built in the 1820s.

Also in the state park, about a mile from the interpretative center, is the site of the place where George Rogers Clark, the founder of Louisville, made his home in his later years.

A log cabin from the 1820s to 1830s was brought to the site in 2001 to represent Clark's cabin, which was torn down in the 1850s. It is furnished with items representing things Clark would have had, although none are original to him. One side has museum displays about Clark's life.

"This is a monument to George Rogers Clark," said park naturalist Jeane Burke. "Lewis and Clark get so much publicity. George is largely forgotten."

She did point out that it was at the cabin that Meriwether Lewis met William Clark, George's younger brother, before leading the first American expedition west to the Pacific Ocean and that volunteer members of their Corps of Discovery were sworn into the army before beginning the two-year trip in 1804.



IF YOU GO

The Falls of the Ohio State Park is located at the end of West Riverside Drive, Clarksville, Ind. Take Exit 0 on Interstate 65 and follow the signs. The State Park is open seven days a week, dawn to dusk.

The Interpretive Center hours are Monday-Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Monday-Thursday admission price: \$4 for adults, \$1 for children; Friday-Sunday and legal holidays, \$5 for adults, \$2 for children; student rate is \$2.

There is a \$2 parking fee for visitors not coming into the Interpretive Center. Follow instructions at the "Pay to Park" station.

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Kentucky Farm Bureau looking for a few good people to add to agency force

By Rachael Kamuf
KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

Kentucky Farm Bureau Insurance needs a few good people.

Not content with resting on its reputation as the largest property and casualty insurer in Kentucky, the company has embarked on a recruiting effort to attract more agents to increase business.

"The goal is to bring more agents into the organization to attract new members and policyholders to Kentucky Farm Bureau," said Wendell Pelley, the company's director of Agency Support & Marketing.

Kentucky Farm Bureau began to increase its sales force last year as part of an overall development strategy that included opening more offices, especially in urban areas. "As we expand, we naturally are going to need new agents," Pelley said.

Currently, there are 146 Kentucky Farm Bureau agencies throughout the state's 120 counties, with the number of agents reaching 356 by late September.

The agent recruitment drive began in

2005, with the company reaching its objective of 25 additions to the agency force in 2006 and a net gain of 20 this year. The number of people who have joined Kentucky Farm Bureau each year is actually higher because of openings filled as agents have retired or left for other reasons.

"We have been able to attract many more candidates, and the quality of the prospective agents applying for positions has been very good," Pelley said.

The 2008 goal will be set in November.

The company has used mass media and employment services to promote the search for new agents, listed opportunities on the Internet at www.kyfbcareers.com as well as



Wendell Pelley

taking advantage of the word-of-mouth advertising that spreads whenever a company that dominates an industry — as Kentucky Farm Bureau does in its home state — makes such a major move.

Pelley said the expansion also is counter to what many other insurance companies have done as they have put more emphasis on technology rather than personnel to sign up new customers.

"What has worked for us," Pelley said, "has been our service and relationship with



Bill Cornett

members throughout the state. And you can only do that with people."

He described the ideal candidate as a person with a background in sales. A college degree is preferred as well but is not mandatory either.

Bill Cornett, an agent at the Westport Road office in Jefferson County, is almost a walking advertisement for new agents. After a 25-year career in automotive sales and management (including as a car dealer), he was intrigued by Kentucky Farm Bureau's recruitment campaign and decided to apply as he was considering a career change last year.

"I thought it would be a good fit," Cornett said. "I had insurance with Kentucky Farm Bureau and had met a lot of really nice people in the organization through my business contacts and as a customer."

New agents are guaranteed income for

three years as they build a customer base.

Each year, the compensation decreases as sales increase and they are paid commissions. For the fourth year, their income is based only on commissions from sales they generate.

Cornett, whose father was an insurance salesman with other company for 26 years, said the promise of a stable income is an attractive recruiting tool.

He said: "You don't have to constantly worry about taking care of your family and other living expenses, because you can concentrate on learning the business of insurance. I have been in sales a long time, and people who have been selling cars can be successful selling insurance. But selling cars and selling insurance is totally different."

Cornett said he also appreciates the training, which he described as intense, and assistance he has received from Eddie Cox, the Westport Road agency manager, and the staff at the State Office in Louisville.

"Eddie has been my mentor. We work together on a daily basis," Cornett said. "And I have had very good guidance from any number of people at the State Office. It is very much a team effort throughout the company."

Although he has been associated with the company for a relatively short period of time, Cornett has been called on to talk to other people about career opportunities at Kentucky Farm Bureau. "That is easy for me to do. I can honestly tell them how great it is and what the future can hold for them."

Make no mistake, though, being successful takes effort, Cornett said. "It is a good business to be in, but you must be willing to work hard."

(For more information about Kentucky Farm Bureau's agent recruitment program, contact Pelley at 502-495-5000 or visit www.kyfbcareers.com.)

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Consequences of long drought won't end with first soaking rain

By Jeneen Wiche

SPECIAL TO KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

This year — as anyone who has endured the summer of 2007 knows — is going down in the record books as the hottest and driest; by early September, the entire state was in a severe drought.

Spotty thundershowers have quenched some and left others dry. Excessive and prolonged heat have given new meaning to the dog days of summer, and the consequences of it all remain to be seen for our ornamental plants.

Our lawns are not at issue, tall fescue will recover once agreeable weather returns and it is coaxed out of drought-induced dormancy. Our primary concerns should instead be focused on trees, shrubs and perennials and plants that are showing signs of stress.

Drought stress comes in many forms. Among the most common are scorched leaves, brown leaf margins, wilt and curling of foliage, early fall color and leaf drop. These are all clear indications that a plant needs some water, but the real problems lie with the symptoms of drought that we cannot see.

The last significant drought cycle was in 1999. I remember working hard to keep up with watering at the farm; it was the year after my father died, so Mom and I were particularly anxious about keeping things healthy. We did a good job, overall, but some stress was apparent among the trees, shrubs and perennials.

It wasn't until the following growing season, however, that the most severe symptoms of drought stress become evident.

A sign of the long-term damage cause by a drought is a browning of trees' crowns, which are the first to suffer for established

trees because the roots have the hardest time getting adequate moisture and nutrition to the very top of the canopy.

Early browning of the top leaves indicates the wood itself is damaged and likely will weaken, die and decay. Storm damage becomes more probable and internal decay can result if the dead wood is not properly removed. A dead crown also is an indication of a larger problem — the general weakening of the tree.

Trees that are under significant drought stress also show an increase in sucker growth both at the base of the trunk and along branches and heavy nut or seed production. Both are examples of a plant predicting its own demise and trying to leave something behind to perpetuate the species.

Cankers are also a common sight on trees that have experienced lack of moisture or disease. Insects and disease are waiting in the wings, so to speak, for plants to show signs of stress. Just as we are susceptible to certain illnesses when our

immune systems are compromised, so are our trees and plants.

Many of our landscape plants are already under stress because of conventional gardening habits. "Lawn mower blight" (trunk injuries from lawn equipment); over fertilization; girdled roots; trees planted too deeply and mulched too heavily around and against the base of the trunk; poor drainage; compacted soil; and pollution leave trees vulnerable to the added stress of drought.

To protect trees, concentrate on overall best management practices when caring for your landscape: Don't plant too deep, don't over fertilize or over mulch; don't use automatic sprinkler systems daily and keep that lawn equipment as far from you plants as possible. (This will also help eliminate additional soil compaction around the feeder roots of plants.)

When irrigation is necessary the ideal is to deliver moisture to the depth of about

eight inches (most feeder roots exist within this depth). A deep watering about every three weeks is better than shallow weekly watering; the rate of delivery will depend on what type of soil you have. For newly planted material you will likely need to irrigate more frequently during the most severe cases of heat and drought like this year.

Once woody plants have gone dormant (wait until the leaves have dropped and we have experienced a hard frost or two), you can apply some nitrogen fertilizer to drought-stressed plants. Look for an organic source of nitrogen, like using composted manure as mulch or applying some granulated cottonseed meal, which will ultimately benefit the plant better than a processed form of nitrogen.

For the future, track rainfall in your neighborhood. Your records will be more

telling than the National Weather Service reports, which cannot accurately reflect rainfall throughout the total service area. An accurate reading of rain in your own area, can save on your water bill as you will know when there has been enough rainfall for your particular landscape and, conversely, when you should irrigate trees and shrubs.

Jeneen Wiche writes a weekly syndicated garden column and is involved in radio and television gardening shows in Louisville. She lives in Simpsonville, where she and husband Andrew Smart care for Swallow Rail, the home and horticultural farm Jeneen's father, the late Fred Wiche, built and began planting in 1979. Contact her at JWiche@aol.com or write to her at 2340 Connor Station Road, Simpsonville, Ky. 40067



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'Elves' at Nelson County Farm Bureau pack gifts for soldiers in Iraq

By Rachael Kamuf
KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

Halloween still may be on the horizon, but Bryan Alvey had a chance to play Santa Claus on a hot September day, with a little help from "elves" at Nelson County Farm Bureau.

The role fell to Alvey, a platoon sergeant with the Kentucky Army National Guard stationed in Iraq, after the Nelson County Farm Bureau shipped 21 packages loaded with goodies for him to share with the other Kentuckians who make up the C-company 1/138 Field Artillery, also known as "Charlie Battery."

In his civilian life, Alvey is Kentucky Farm Bureau's director of local affairs and policy development. Previously, the Grayson County native was a program director for the area that includes Nelson County. His Charlie Battery unit is based in Bardstown.

"We all just love Bryan," said Holly Bischoff, interim president of Nelson County Farm Bureau. "He is as nice as he can be."

There is another Farm Bureau connection

to the guard unit. Barry Mattingly, a claim adjuster at the Campbellsville District Office, was deployed to Iraq with Alvey earlier this year. Mattingly is a maintenance sergeant supervising vehicle mechanics.

Bischoff said the packages were a way of letting the soldiers know that they were in the thoughts of the people of Nelson County.

"We wanted to do something now," she said. "We are all painfully aware that something could happen. You do something today. You don't wait for tomorrow. Tomorrow might not come."

That awareness comes from the significance that the 138th Field Artillery, Battery C holds for the people of Nelson County and the heart-breaking memories that are a part

of the unit's place in the history of the war in VietNam. They are especially poignant for Bischoff, who was the young wife of a Bardstown guardsman when 105 Nelson

County citizen-soldiers were among 117 men who came under fire at a place called Fire Base Tomahawk on the night of June 19, 1969.

It was a bloody fight remembered in a monument erected in downtown Bardstown; 45 men were injured and five of the 10 casualties were members of Battery C. No other community in the United States suffered such losses in a single battle as the Central Kentucky town, which had a population of about 6,000 at the time.

er to box 115 pounds of candies, cookies, packaged chicken salad and roast beef, toiletry items, Frisbees, Nerf balls and other games for shipment to Iraq.

Alvey was not surprised by the packages he received. He was asked beforehand to draw up a wish list of treats for his unit.

In an e-mail, Alvey said the 21 packages arrived the same day and more than one person took note that all were addressed to him. "That put a big grin on my face," he wrote.

And he shared his presents, with each Charlie Battery platoon receiving four or more boxes each.

Alvey and Mattingly currently are the only Kentucky Farm Bureau employees stationed in Iraq. And they frequently receive nonperishable foods, toiletries, magazines, sunscreen and other reminders of home from their Kentucky Farm Bureau co-workers.

There is no timetable for the packages, which Alvey and Mattingly receive seven to 10 days after mailing, to be sent. Kentucky Farm Bureau's Human Resources depart-



Bryan Alvey



Barry Mattingly



Photo by Rachael Kamuf

Nelson County Farm Bureau bought enough goodies to fill 21 boxes to mail to the Bardstown-based Kentucky Army National Guard now on deployment in Iraq. Packing the boxes were Tommy Hart, Holly Bischoff and Linda Miller.

"We remember that Bardstown lost more people per capita than any other town," said Bischoff, whose husband, Kent, survived.

Happier thoughts were on the minds of Holly Bischoff; Nancy Miller, Nelson County Farm Bureau's office secretary; and board member Tommy Hart when they got togeth-

ment, however, sends shipments at least once a quarter to them and military personnel stationed overseas who are close relatives of any employee throughout the state.

"It is great for all of us to know that the folks back home are thinking of us and praying for us," Alvey said.

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GOLD MARKET EXPLODES

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The United States Rare Coin and Bullion Reserve Vault Facility today announces the final release of 5,000 U.S. Gov't Issued Gold Coins previously held in The West Point Depository/U.S. Mint. For the first time in recent history, U.S. citizens will be able to buy 2006 Gov't Issued \$5 Gold Coins at an incredible no mark-up price of only \$74.00 each. An amazing price because these U.S. Gov't Issued Gold Coins are completely free of dealer mark-up. That's correct, our cost. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to buy U.S. Gov't Issued Gold Coins at cost. The Gold market in May 2006 hit a new high of over \$725 per ounce and is predicted by experts to have the explosive upside potential of reaching up to \$2,000 an ounce. A limit of ten U.S. Gov't Issued Gold Coins per customer will be strictly adhered to. Orders that are not immediately reserved with our order center could be subject to cancellation and your checks returned uncashed. Good luck. We hope that everyone will have a chance to purchase this special U.S. Gov't Issued Gold at cost. Order immediately to avoid disappointment. 2007 coins will be shipped if oversold. Call Toll-Free 1-888-465-3815.

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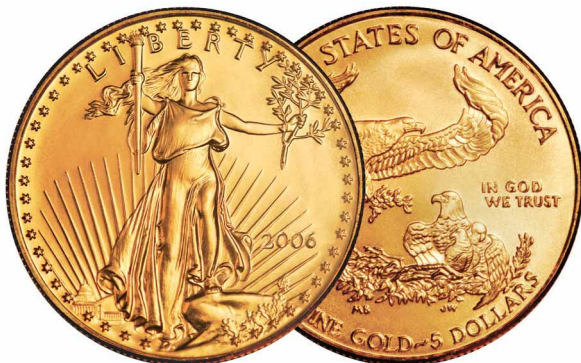
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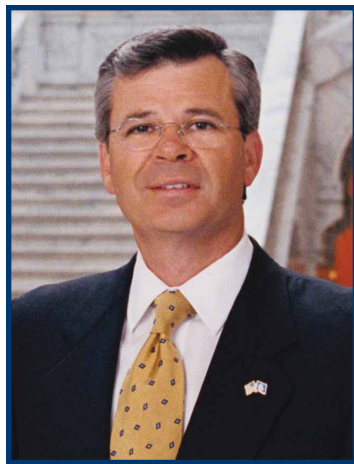
"Voice of Kentucky Agriculture"



A Complete Election Directory



Gubernatorial candidates



Ernie Fletcher, 54
Party affiliation: Republican
Running mate: Robbie Rudolph
Campaign Web site: www.Erniefletcher.com
Residence: Frankfort
Occupation: Governor of Kentucky; physician, former state and U.S. representative, former U.S. Air Force pilot
Education: Bachelors degree and medical degree, University of Kentucky
Family: Wife Glenna; 2 children; and 4 grandchildren



Steve Beshear, 63
Party affiliation: Democrat
Running mate: Dr. Dan Mongiardo
Campaign Web site: www.Stevebeshear.com
Residence: Lexington
Occupation: Attorney; former lieutenant governor, attorney general and state representative
Education: Bachelors degree and law degree, University of Kentucky
Family: Wife Jane; 2 sons; and 1 grandson

AGRICULTURAL APPROPRIATIONS

The 2000 Kentucky General Assembly made a monumental decision of passing House Bill 611, setting aside 50 percent of the Phase One Tobacco Settlement funds to diversify Kentucky agriculture. This created a mechanism for farmers to apply to county councils and the state Agriculture Development Board for funding innovative agricultural practices.

The success of this process relies on close involvement by the governor and the Legislative Oversight Committee. According to HB 611, the governor chairs the board and provides adequate staff resources to aid a project's approval process. If the governor is diligent, Kentucky farmers can make a solid transition into agriculture's new era.

Another essential function of government important to agriculture is maintaining rural roads. Currently, 22.2 percent of the road fund budget is used for maintenance and new construction of rural roads.

How would you ensure that Agricultural Development Funds are being invested to increase net farm income?

Beshear: I will ensure that 50 percent of the Master Settlement Agreement funds are used to increase net farm income and diversify agriculture. I will also ensure that Agriculture Development Board appointments are based on qualifications, not politics, and that the actions of the board are open to the public.

Fletcher: In 2003 I pledged to dedicate 50 percent of the tobacco settlement money to agriculture; I have kept that commitment and will continue to do so. By doing this, we made investments in value-added processing, market development and other innovative proposals that have increased net farm income throughout the commonwealth.

Would you diligently oppose any legislative effort to restructure the funding mechanism originally created in House Bill 611?

Beshear: It is critical to the future of our agriculture economy that 50 percent of the funding of the Master Settlement Agreement goes to increase net farm income. I will oppose any change in this funding.

Fletcher: I will diligently oppose any efforts to change the funding structure of HB 611 that lowers the available funds to agriculture.

How would you work with groups, like Kentucky Farm Bureau, to ensure that agriculture research and development is a priority for the state legislature?

Beshear: Agriculture has been and always will be a driving force behind Kentucky's economy. As governor, I will work with Farm Bureau and its members to ensure agriculture R&D is a priority. Not only is this important to the future of Kentucky farmers, but it is vital to the future of all Kentuckians.

Gubernatorial candidates

Fletcher: The profitability and growth of agriculture strongly depends on research and implementation of research and new technologies. By providing a strong budget proposal to the General Assembly, I have and will continue to establish the benchmark to maintain a strong commitment to agriculture research at our land-grant and regional universities.

Would you urge lawmakers to maintain the 22.2-percent rural road fund when they discuss the state's budget?

Beshear: Yes. Kentucky roads provide the physical connection between our farms and the marketplace.

Fletcher: Yes. We have worked to run government efficiently, which has allowed us to deliver record funding to all roads and reach \$1 billion in construction for first time in state history. Now all areas of the state, rural and urban, are receiving their fair share of funding.

Do you support funding for renovation and expansion of the University of Kentucky Livestock Disease Diagnostic Center and the Murray State University Breathitt Veterinary Center?

Beshear: As a Kentuckian and as the father of a veterinarian, I support funding to renovate and expand the Murray State University Breathitt Veterinary Center and the University of the Kentucky Livestock Disease Diagnostic Center. I share the disappointment felt by many when Gov. Ernie Fletcher vetoed this vital University of Kentucky project.

Fletcher: Both centers are important links in a strong and profitable livestock industry. I support funding for both facilities and included them in the special session I called in July. Although there appears to be strong support for both projects, the House of Representatives choose not to take up the request.

AGRICULTURAL MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Kentucky has a very diverse, and robust, agricultural industry. Cash receipts for agriculture in Kentucky for 2006 totaled \$4.1 billion, the second highest on record. Since 2001, the Agriculture Development Fund has assisted producers with on-farm investment to enhance their production, but now Kentucky agriculture needs access to new markets to grow net farm income for Kentucky farmers.

How will you maintain existing agriculture markets while creating new market opportunities for Kentucky agricultural commodities?

Beshear: We need to better market the tremendous natural resources we are blessed with by investing in Kentucky businesses, entrepreneurs and farmers through the Agriculture Development Fund and the Cabinet for Economic Development. We will support existing marketing initiatives and promote value-added agricultural endeavors, including processing and renewable fuel facilities.

Fletcher: My administration has made market development its top priority of Agricultural Development Board investments. Working with the agriculture commissioner, Richie Farmer, and Economic Development Cabinet, we have and will continue to entice new companies to the commonwealth, while growing Kentucky based businesses that will maintain and create new markets for agricultural commodities.

What policies will you put into place to assist in recruitment of agricultural-based processing facilities?

Beshear: Kentucky produces vital products for Kentuckians, Americans and the world. However, many of these products travel to processing plants in other states. As governor, working with our Department of Agriculture, the Cabinet for Economic Development and the Kentucky Farm Bureau, I will work to bring these processing plants to Kentucky.

Fletcher: My comprehensive tax reform made it more attractive for companies such as Sister Shubert's, Marzetti's and Land O'Frost to locate in the commonwealth. My administration has an outstanding record in the growth of agricultural value-added processing. We have built a foundation to propel new growth in the next four years.

Would you support, and fund, a program to educate farmers on marketing skills and market initiatives?

Beshear: Many Kentucky farmers grow high quality products that deserve wider distribution. As governor, I will support the Office of Agricultural Marketing and Product Promotion and entrepreneurship centers in their efforts to assist farmers in marketing skills and initiatives.

Fletcher: I have already supported the expanded investments through the Kentucky Beef Network, Kentucky Dairy Development Council, Horticulture Council and many others. We have an outstanding Cooperative Extension Service, linked to the resources of our universities. I will continue to support the expansion and development of these and new education opportunities.

HEALTH CARE

In 1994, the Kentucky General Assembly passed House Bill 250, which requires guaranteed coverage from health care providers to all Kentuckians regardless of their health status. Since it pooled citizens of Kentucky into a single plan, many health care providers could not afford this new policy and exited the state. The lack of competition caused the cost of health insurance in Kentucky to skyrocket.

What solutions do you have to alleviate the burden of expensive health insurance and recruit providers in rural Kentucky and how will you use the governor's office to achieve these goals?

Beshear: Families and businesses struggle to keep up with health costs. About 550,000 Kentuckians – 81,000 of them children – have no health coverage. My Keeping Kentucky Healthy plan proposes expanded health coverage – starting with covering all children – and address rising health costs. I invite you to view the plan at www.stevebeshear.com.

Fletcher: Thanks to reforming Medicaid and initiatives, like ICARE, Kentucky led the nation in the growth of people having employer-sponsored health insurance in 2005. I will expand on ICARE to help pool purchasing, help small businesses and individuals to find more affordable options and get better discounts on their insurance coverage.

If changes are made in federal law, such as Association Health Plans, how would you ensure that the appropriate agencies in state government work diligently to provide these increased opportunities to Kentuckians?

Beshear: Expanding coverage to all Kentuckians is a priority, which is why I will explore options to create a one-stop resource for individuals and small businesses to shop for health care coverage, compare plans and prices, and design a comprehensive health care plan offered by private insurers.

Fletcher: I have long been a champion of AHPs and would work expeditiously to implement federal legislation in Kentucky. Even without federal action, we will create an ICARExchange that will be an information clearinghouse, offer tax advantages and discounts, offer tailored plans and allow associations and others to do group purchasing.

FISCAL AFFAIRS

Kentucky's tax policy should be based on public need and sound economic principles with tax dollars apportioned equitably among Kentucky citizens. We are a staunch supporter and guardian of the original intent of House Bill 44, created in 1979. That law limits a county and state government to collect only a 4-percent increase in property taxes each year, or be subject to a recall referendum. Voters can decide to approve an increase above that amount on the county level. We also are protectors of the sales tax exemptions on production agriculture items.

With regard to property taxes, will you commit to protecting the original intent of House Bill 44?

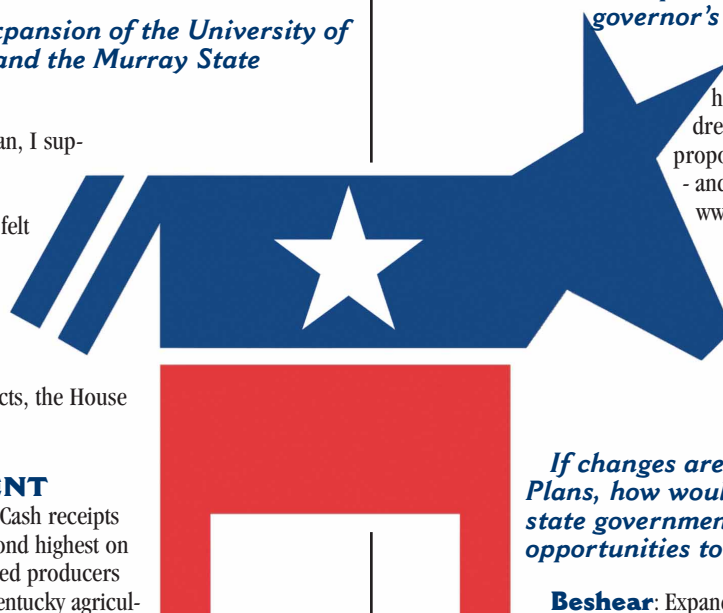
Beshear: Yes. I believe Kentuckians are taxed enough, and I do not support any tax increases at this time.

Fletcher: Yes. My record shows my commitment to protecting the intent of HB 44, and I will continue to do so.

Under your administration, will agriculture exemptions remain safe?

Beshear: Yes. I do not support changing sales tax exemptions on agricultural items. I do support creating a sales and use tax exemption for the equine industry.

Fletcher: Yes, these exemptions provide our farmers a competitive advantage over neighboring states and are safe in a Fletcher-Rudolph administration. I believe that there is also opportunity to use exemptions to support our equine industry, which has become Kentucky's No. 1 agricultural commodity.



ENVIRONMENTAL AND WILDLIFE ISSUES

Complying with environmental regulations is something farmers face daily whether it is in their livestock operations, or crop production practices involving pesticides or fertilizers. Regulations in Kentucky must be based on sound science and not create undue financial burdens on typical farming operations.

It is becoming more common to hear county or municipal governments expressing different opinions on agricultural regulations within their jurisdictions. Farmers often operate in multiple areas, and coming under inconsistent regulatory guidelines would be not only confusing but impractical.

Deer and turkey populations continue to grow and with them have come increased crop damage and loss, as well as more contact with humans. Just increasing bag limits will not alleviate the problem. We need an overall change in the way wildlife populations are managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Are you going to utilize the Ag Water Quality Act, as intended, to protect the environment without subjecting farmers to overly restrictive regulations?

Beshear: Yes. Water quality is an important issue not only farmers, but all Kentuckians, and we will utilize the Act appropriately.

Fletcher: The Agriculture Water Quality Authority is a good resource to help us ensure that we enact sound but reasonable environmental policies the let livestock producers expand. I will continue to work to bring the authority to where it will be the effective sounding board that it should.

Should local governments be able to enact local regulations affecting agriculture that are more restrictive than state regulations?

Beshear: No. State government has the qualified personnel authorized to regulate agriculture practices fairly.

Fletcher: No. I am committed, as governor, to reducing hassle and making Kentucky an attractive place to farm and do business. In order to ensure a level playing field, it is important that environmental regulations remain a function of state government.

What plans would you implement to control excessive wildlife populations to help lessen agricultural losses?

Beshear: As a small farm owner, I have seen deer overpopulation on my land, and I recognize the need to control wildlife populations. I will work with the Kentucky Farm Bureau and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop additional ways to control excessive wildlife populations and lessen agricultural losses.

Fletcher: We need a policy that focuses on creating sustainable, healthy populations that improves Kentucky's ecological diversity, creates recreational opportunities but does not become a nuisance to our farmers. We must protect the rights of farmers and landowners to protect their property from loss.

Will you support continued funding of the Soil Erosion & Water Quality Cost Share Program?

Beshear: Protecting surface and groundwater resources from pollution is important to all Kentuckians and I support this program.

Fletcher: Yes. This program is an important element of HB 611. As we continue to implement Kentucky's Long-Term Plan for Agricultural Development, we will support efforts to assist farmers in taking care of their land and work to recommit to its funding out of the General Fund.

ENERGY

Renewable fuels are domestically produced, cleaner-burning alternatives to imported oil. The production of ethanol and soydiesel from corn and soybeans expands the demand for these commodities and allows farmers to receive higher prices. In order to help this industry progress, many state legislatures are mandating that oil companies blend the petroleum sold in their state with renewable fuels.

How will you utilize the Governor's office to promote the use of renewable, cleaner-burning alternatives in an effort to reduce our dependence on foreign oil?

Beshear: Fueling Kentucky First is my plan to achieve energy independence, create jobs and promote national security. The creation of new clean coal technologies, renewable fuels, alternative fuels and other "Clean Technology" jobs will be a top priority. We will encourage investment, reform regulation and target financial and training resources, to create jobs.

Fletcher: I have developed the commonwealth's first comprehensive energy plan and established the Governor's Office of Energy policy to enact it. I called the General

Assembly into special session to enact an energy plan, including incentives for alternative fuels, to make Kentucky a leader in sustainable fuel production.

Would you support passage of a biofuels mandate by the General Assembly?

Beshear: My Fueling Kentucky First plan will create a \$60 million Kentucky Energy Fund to jump start the development of renewable and alternative fuels, and clean coal technology. The Kentucky Energy Fund will provide new investment opportunities and new jobs through \$15 million in incentive grants and research funding each year.

Fletcher: I have endorsed the 25 x 25 Initiative, and the governor's offices of Agriculture Policy and Energy Policy are working to finalize a roadmap to get us there. We must also support biofuels by developing the infrastructure to make biofuels available across commonwealth.

Do you support the use of tax incentives to encourage the expanded production and use of renewable fuels?

Beshear: What energy we use to power our homes, businesses, industries, and vehicles and how efficiently we use it affects the competitiveness of our businesses, our family budgets and the environment we cherish. I have a plan to achieve energy independence, and tax incentives are one of the tools I will use in the development of this industry.

Fletcher: Yes. My tax modernization package included tax credits for biodiesel, and I called a special session to pass an energy bill that will expand incentives for wind power, biodiesel and ethanol, including cellulosic ethanol made from everything from timber to switchgrass.

EDUCATION

Career and Technical Education (formerly referred to as vocational agriculture) is a building block for a strong agricultural industry providing valuable leadership skills and experience to students. Extended employment for Career and Technical Education teachers allows them to maintain salaries throughout the summer months as they provide instruction for students involved in activities such as judging teams and skills contests. During times of tight budgets, the legislature often considers removing extended employment for these personnel or denying them equitable raises.

Would you make it a priority in your budget proposals to continue the extended employment for career and technical education instructors and allow them to receive the same proportion of salary increases as other educators?

Beshear: Yes. While a college education will be important for many 21st Century jobs, a significant number of those jobs will require the skills provided by Career and Technical Education. Our administration will place a high priority on developing such skills.

Fletcher: My administration has been an avid supporter of all areas of career and technical education. With the Education Cabinet, we crafted legislation that funded 38 new vocational programs in 19 school districts. Valuing diverse career pathways for students, we recognize the need for uniform salary increases and extended employment.

How would you assess the current education system in Kentucky, and what ideas do you have to make it a stronger, more effective, results-oriented system?

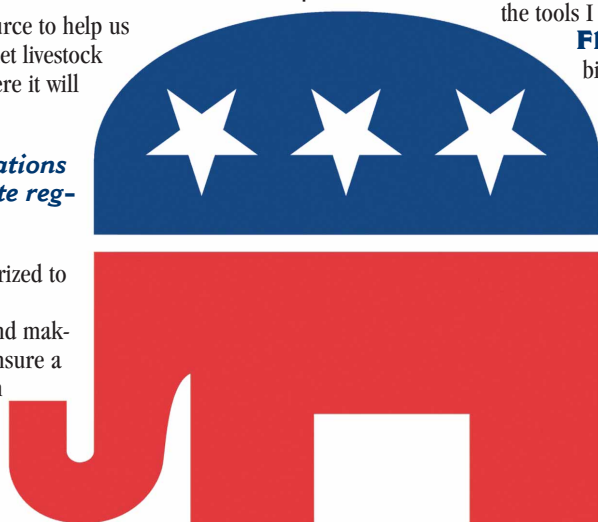
Beshear: During the last four years Kentucky has fallen further behind the rest of the nation. We need to provide a world-class education in order for our children to compete in the world economy and to bring good jobs to Kentucky. I invite you to read my comprehensive education plan at www.stevebeshear.com.

Fletcher: While we have made progress in education, successfully raising reading and math scores, there is always room for more progress. Our 25-percent increase in funding has improved teacher salaries, built new classrooms and invested in technology that will track students' progress and identify problems early so students don't fall behind.

Will funds to renovate and improve the FFA Leadership Training Center located in Hardinsburg, Ky., be included in your 2008 budget?

Beshear: Every summer, the Kentucky Future Farmers of America Leadership Training Center provides thousands of children, the future of Kentucky, with the skills and training they need. Students deserve this to be a quality, professional environment. As governor, I will include this funding request in my 2008 budget absent unforeseen circumstance.

Fletcher: The state has responsibility for the center, and we should make it a priority for improvement. I have instructed my staff to evaluate the facility so we can determine what the appropriate next steps are to begin the process of renovation as soon as possible.



Democrats



AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER

David Lynn Williams, 69
Residence: Glasgow
Occupation: Retired telephone construction executive
Education: Hiseville High School
Family: Five children; 2 step-sons; and 6 grandchildren



ATTORNEY GENERAL

Jack Conway, 38
Residence: Louisville
Occupation: Attorney
Education: Bachelors degree, Duke University; law degree, George Washington University
Family: Wife Elizabeth



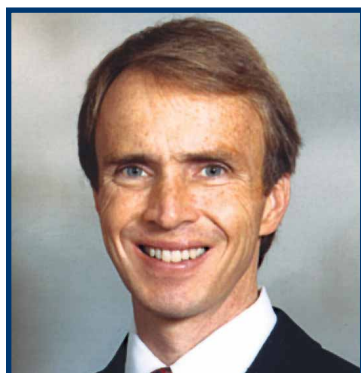
AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

* Crit Luallen, 55
Residence: Frankfort
Occupation: Auditor of Public Accounts
Education: Bachelors degree, Centre College
Family: Husband Lynn



SECRETARY OF STATE

S. Bruce Hendrickson, 56
Residence: Pineville
Occupation: Retired teacher; former mayor of Pineville
Education: Bachelors degree, Lincoln Memorial University; masters degree, Union College
Family: Wife Sheila Jan; 2 children (eldest son deceased); and 3 grandchildren



STATE TREASURER

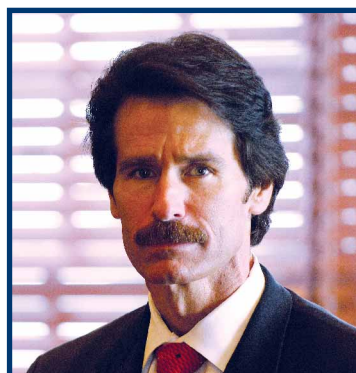
L.J. "Todd" Hollenbach IV, 47
Residence: Louisville
Occupation: Attorney
Education: Bachelors degree, University of Kentucky; law degree, University of Louisville
Family: Wife Rosemarie; and 2 sons

Republicans



AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER

* Richie Farmer, 39
Residence: Frankfort
Occupation: Commissioner of Agriculture
Education: Bachelors degree in agricultural economics and agribusiness management, University of Kentucky
Family: Wife Rebecca; and 3 sons



ATTORNEY GENERAL

Stan Lee, 45
Residence: Lexington
Occupation: Partner of Bowles, Rice, McDavid, Graff & Love and state representative (45th District)
Education: Bachelors degree and law degree, University of Kentucky
Family: Wife Tami; and 1 daughter



AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Linda Greenwell, 58
Residence: Taylorsville
Occupation: Retired United Parcel Service operations management specialist
Education: Bachelors degree in police administration, University of Louisville
Family: Husband Bill; 4 children; 5 grandchildren; and 1 great-grandchild



SECRETARY OF STATE

* C.M. "Trey" Grayson, 35
Residence: Walton
Occupation: Secretary of State
Education: Bachelors degree in government, Harvard University; law degree and masters in business administration, University of Kentucky
Family: Wife Nancy; and 2 daughters



STATE TREASURER

Melinda Wheeler, 58
Residence: Georgetown
Occupation: Retired, director of Administrative Office of the Courts
Education: Bachelors degree in business, Pikeville College
Family: Husband Ed Crockett; 2 daughters; and 3 grandchildren

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Ag veteran heading state Farm Bureau's marketing division

Staff report
KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

Sandra Gardner has taken over responsibility for Kentucky Farm Bureau's Certified Roadside Market program as the organization's new director of marketing.

In her new position, Gardner also will oversee a variety of other farm marketing endeavors, with a focus on identifying and researching new and emerging agricultural enterprises.



Gardner

"With her background, Sandra is a good fit as we look into new ways to help Kentucky producers take advantage of consumers' growing demand for fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers,"

said David S. Beck, executive vice president of Kentucky Farm Bureau. "She also has the talent to help take the state's relatively new agritourism industry to the next level."

Gardner is a University of Kentucky graduate with a degree in biology and a minor in agriculture. She has experience as a researcher in the agriculture economics department at the UK College of Agriculture. For the last six years, she has been with the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy as a compliance and outreach specialist, market analyst and Web coordinator.

Gardner, who also has worked in retail, said the position appealed to her because Kentucky Farm Bureau "is well respected" in many circles. "There is an expectation of quality and service."

Gardner said she will be calling on market operators – currently there are 77 – to solicit ideas on how Kentucky Farm Bureau can help them expand their customer bases.

Her priorities also include expanding the number of certified markets statewide and searching out products that could be considered for a new Kentucky Farm Bureau label and sold exclusively at the participating outlets.

Gardner lives in Lawrenceburg with husband Travis and their two children: Tyler, 6, and 2-year-old Shelby.

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In fact, apple cider vinegar's biggest fans believe this golden liquid can help solve the most troublesome of human afflictions.

Since even the earliest of times a daily vinegar cocktail was used to help control appetite to lose weight and continue good health.

And now after years of continued research all across the globe, over 1000 new vinegar super-remedies and tonics are available in the brand new 232-page *Vinegar Anniversary Book* by famed natural health author, Emily Thacker.

Author of the very first book of its kind since the 1950's, Ms. Thacker brings her unique wisdom, experience and down-home flavor to this complete collection.

From the Bible to Cleopatra to the fierce Samurai warriors of Japan, vinegar has been documented as a powerful tonic to ensure strength, power and long life.

In China, the health system that has been in place for thousands of years recognizes the value of vinegar. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) oversees the health of millions of Chinese – not with modern drugs – but with proven remedies that include vinegar.

Today's research studies and scientific reports continue to praise the healing powers of vinegar to maintain good health and well being.

Even grandma knew that her old remedies worked even if she wasn't able to explain why. And scientific research confirms this.

For instance, grandma said putting diluted vinegar in the ears would ward off infections. The American Academy of Otolaryngology's doctors – who specialize in treating infections like swimmer's ear - now recommend using a vinegar mixture as a preventative.

The Yale-New Haven hospital uses vinegar as a hospital disinfectant. When after-surgery eye infections became a problem, their Department of Bacteriology solved it with vinegar.

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The 232-page *Vinegar Anniversary Book* will amaze you with its over 1000 natural remedies, secrets, tonics and cure-alls for a healthier, happier life. You'll get easy recipes that mix vinegar with other common household items to help:

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- Soothe sore feet
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- Replace many household cleaners

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50 years ago a daily dose of an apple cider vinegar and honey tonic was used to ease arthritis. During the last 30 years or so, many wonder drugs have replaced this time-tested home remedy. Now vinegar, along with countless other old-time tonics, have new supporters including many medical professionals. *The reason?* Almost everybody has experienced the negative side of some of the powerful new drugs.

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Join readers like L.S. of Monroe, N.C. who says "*Thanks, this book is wonderful. A real life saver for me!*"

Find different ways to combine vinegar with common foods like lemon juice, blueberries, onion, strawberries, garlic, honey, ginger and more to create recipes to help improve health and quality of life.

All new ideas to put vinegar to work around the home to clean, disinfect and eliminate mold and mildew. Great for those with allergies or asthma!

Save money as you put Emily's latest discoveries to the test!

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To get your copy of the *Vinegar Anniversary Book* direct from the publisher at the special introductory price of \$19.95 plus 3.98 shipping and handling (total of \$23.93) simply do this:

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Despite name, Widow's Creek is a place of hope

By Lalie Dick

SPECIAL TO KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

Firebrick is as much a beautiful idea as it is a hidden place, reaching for heaven in eastern Lewis County on the edge of Greenup County, a stone's throw from the Ohio River.

It's the place Carolyn Salisbury walked around one day, up and down, and spoke directly to God.

"Help me to find just the right place," said 51-year-old Salisbury, or words pretty close to that.

"I'll bless you in your field," she remembers a voice saying in reply. Salisbury said God told her, "I've got you a place, now go look for it."

So she did. What she found was a little more than 100 acres, with a falling-down house, a barn that'd seen better days, a slope leveling out in front - just the place to build the home of a lifetime.

Carolyn's husband, Barry, tore down and cleared away the old house, and they built a new log cabin with 16-foot poplar wood

cut and hauled from the surrounding woods. Barry Salisbury had a special talent for imagining the true fit of dovetailed logs.

"You want a window here?" he'd ask.

There would be a window. "Door right about here?" If Carolyn agreed, there would be a door. "Sunken living space?" Done. "Bedroom and bath?" Why, sure.

The couple's times there was to be short and the words of English poet William Cowper wrote two centuries ago — describe how she has coped with a heart-wrenching loss.

The poem that begins "God moves in a mysterious way; His wonders to perform ... He treasures up his bright designs; And works his sovereign will," came to her on what had started as a routine day in August 2001 but turned out to be anything but normal for the Salisbury family.

"That morning Barry left for work and as he was walking to his car, I yelled at him and said, 'I still love to watch you walk.' He didn't hear me and yelled back, 'What?'"

"I told him again but he still didn't hear me. Then I said, 'Never mind,' thinking I could tell him when he got home that night. Then as he was leaving to drive down the lane, the words that came to my mind were: 'Look at him long because this will be the last time you will see him alive.'"

And it was; he was killed car wreck on his way home from work.

For the past six years, Salisbury has worked hard to find peace in a place she came to call "Widow's Creek."

She supplements her late husband's U.S. Marine Corps pension check with regular house cleaning jobs where she will cook, do laundry and throw in a free peanut butter pie for first-time customers. Oh, did I mention the candy baskets she makes for sale?

And now she's building a stage down the slope a ways from the cabin, where she wants to host music festivals where people can come to find "family, food, and fun." She wants there to be joy in this place on the side of a steep hill.

Salisbury said she likes the idea of "bringing people home." In her smooth, soft-spo-

ken way she suggests the importance of knowing "how to stand on your own two feet. ... All about timing. ... Need to relax, pull back, look for opportunities and use those opportunities until you get ahead again. ... Keep everything simple. ... In a rat race, there's nothing but rats."

Her plans for Widow's Creek are to not only have a stage for musicians to perform, but to let others enjoy the beauty and serenity of her farm for picnics and camping.

While Firebrick may be off the beaten path, it is just five "country" miles from South Shore, which is promoted as the "Gateway to the Country Music Highway."

On maps, it is officially U.S. 23, a national Scenic Byway that stretches through most of eastern Kentucky. The 144-mile Country Music Highway section takes travelers through eight counties where music legends, ranging from Loretta Lynn to Dwight Yokum to The Judds, at one time called home.

(Firebrick has its own link to music fame; the parents of Bill Haley — the lead singer of Bill Haley and the Comets — moved to Detroit from Firebrick

before the birth of their son, who became one of the first stars of rock 'n roll.)

The dream that Salisbury - a talented singer in her own right — has of sharing the joy she and her husband found at what is now Widow's Creek is still a work in progress. But the stage is taking shape, and she is undaunted by any roadblocks that challenge her goals.

After all, she has two life-long heavenly partners.

"Commitment is what it is all about," she said.

Down the slope, between the log cabin and the stage under construction, is a monument to her late husband.

Etched on the stone are words that warm Salisbury's heart and remind her of the reasons she wants to share Widow's Creek with the outside world:

"Barry Salisbury left his wife Carolyn of 32 years, Daughters Dusti and Mandi, Sons-in-law Doug and Paul, His parents, Charlotte and Wayne, 5 brothers and 10 sisters. He loved his girls, family, friends, God, and his truck."



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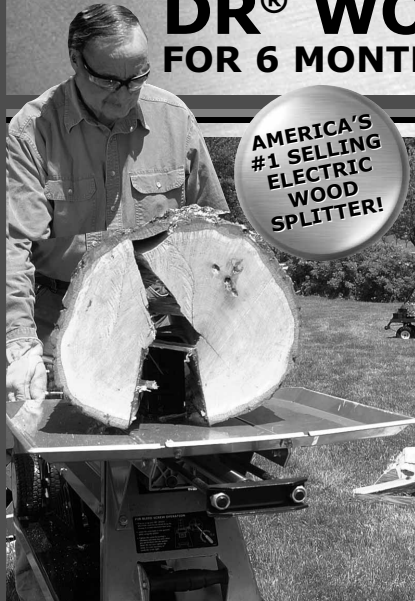
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Everman winner living dream of earning college degree

By Rachael Kamuf
KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

Rebecca Tracy was salutarian of her high school graduating class in 1973 and the recipient of scholarships to help her pursue a college degree.

Although she married her high school sweetheart, James, after they graduated, she did enroll in Western Kentucky University. But after completing only nine hours of college credits, the Barren County native decided that she should work fulltime and help her husband with the family dairy farm they also had purchased in 1973.

"I pulled out with the intention of going back (to school) some day," Tracy said. "Some how, the years just slipped away."

Fast forward to the spring of 2006, and Tracy is again walking the hills of Western as a student, carrying 17 hours her first semester back.

Since then, she has earned credits for about 30 more hours toward a business degree and has full-time status this semester (12 hours) while also working fulltime

as an executive assistant to Glasgow attorney James W. Chambers.

Tracy is attending Western, in part, as the recipient of the 2007 Paul D. Everman Fund for Lifetime Learning Scholarship.

The \$3,000 scholarship is awarded annually to a Kentucky Farm Bureau member who has returned to college, after an absence, to pursue a four-year degree. The scholarship grant was set up to honor the late Everman.

Since returning to school, Tracy has earned numerous scholastic honors, including being named as a 2006 President's Scholar induction in 2007 National Society of Collegiate Scholars.

Her progress towards college graduation hasn't been easy, but Tracy is the first to encourage people — young, middle age and old alike — to pursue learning beyond high school, whether at the college level or through adult education classes.

"Technology has changed everything."

And should not be a factor in the decision, she said. "Look at me. I am 52. Learning is so much fun, even at 52."

Tracy acknowledged that returning to college after more than 30 years has not been

easy, but it has been worth every agonizing moment to her. She has had her doubts and considered quitting, almost before she really started, but was persuaded to take it "one step at a time" by a Western teacher, Cindy Westmoreland, who also happened to have taught Tracy in high school.

Although she regrets not finishing college when she was younger, Tracy is happy with

the rural lifestyle that she and husband James were able to provide for their children, Betsy Ann and James Curtis.

James Tracy was employed in the meat department of a Houchens food store for 20 years and she was a stay-at-home mom when her children were younger. The Tracys also operated a dairy and raised

tobacco. "It was hard," she said.

The couple fulfilled their dream of helping their children through college. Betsy Ann, who overcame ovarian cancer that was diagnosed her junior year at Western, is now the Warren County Family & Consumer Science Extension Agent. Son John Curtis graduated from Eastern Kentucky University and is now a state wildlife technician in Barren County and helps on the family farm.

It was an illness that forced James Tracy to sell off his dairy herd that prompted his wife to enroll in Western again. "I knew I would have to go back to work. It hit me ... that it would be a good idea to go back to college for a semester or two and update my skills."

James Tracy's health has improved and he is farming again and encouraging his wife to fulfill her dreams.

Whatever happens in the future, she is having a great time now, despite the hours she puts in for classes, studying and working fulltime.

The Everman grant is one of 59 college scholarships worth about \$90,000 awarded

Continued on page 20



Tracy

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Everman

Continued from page 19

this year by the Kentucky Farm Bureau Education Foundation to students from throughout the state, bringing the total presented since 1953 to \$1.4 million.

And Tracy is an advocate for the program, telling people of all ages the financial assistance available through Kentucky Farm Bureau that can help ease the financial burden of higher education.

"Look at me," Tracy said. "The college experience has been a gift to me. It's not always easy, but I would encourage anyone to try. ... I tell people it makes you feel younger."

Excellence in Agriculture entry deadline is near

Staff report

KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

Young part-time farmers still have time to enter the annual Excellence in Agriculture competition, which puts the state winner in line to earn national honors.

The contest, sponsored by Kentucky Farm Bureau, is designed to recognize men and women who have full-time jobs and also are involved in agriculture.

Anyone between the ages of 18 and 35 who are active in farming, agriculture education, extension service or ag-related businesses are eligible to enter.

Judging is based on the entrants' involvement in agriculture, leadership skills and participation in Farm Bureau and civic organizations.

The deadline for applying is Oct. 31.

The state winner, who will be announced at Kentucky Farm Bureau's annual meeting in December, will receive prizes — including a John Deere Gator courtesy of Farm Credit Services of Mid America — and an all-expense paid trip compete against other state's winners at the American Farm Bureau annual meeting that will be held in New Orleans in early January.

The top prize for the national Excellence in Agriculture Award will be a 2008 Dodge Ram 1500 pickup truck.

More details on the competition are available at each county Farm Bureau office statewide. Or contact Jay McCants, Kentucky Farm Bureau's director of young farmer programs, by calling 502-495-5000 or by e-mail at jmccants@kyfb.com.

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Voters

Continued from page 1

Nov. 6, to determine who will guide our state as governor over the next four years. Also on the ballot are the candidates for the statewide constitutional offices that are part of the checks-and-balances system that the framers of the Kentucky Constitution determined were necessary to keep the executive branch independent of control by any single group.

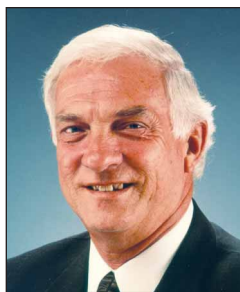
To help inform voters on matters that our members have determined to be important in 2007, Kentucky Farm Bureau — a bipartisan organization that does not endorse candidates — has again produced an election guide, *Decision 2007*. The insert is enclosed in this issue of All

Around Kentucky.

The four-page section is the result of questionnaires sent this summer to incumbent Gov. Ernie Fletcher and his Democratic



Beck



Coyle

challenger, former Lt. Gov. Steve Beshear. They also addressed the same questions in a joint appearance at a "Measure the Candidates" forum held at the Kentucky

Farm Bureau State Office in July.

For the written responses, they were given a 50-word limit. It is our hope that the coverage will give you fresh perspectives on the candidates and their positions on topics that affect all Kentuckians. At the same time, we realize that many issues are too complex to answer in so few words, therefore, we have included the address of each candidate's campaign Web site to learn more details about their positions and these and other points of interest to voters.

The Election Guide also includes listings and biographical sketches of the Republican and Democratic candidates for the constitutional offices that will be on the November ballot.

We encourage everyone to learn as much as they can about the people who will be elected to lead Kentucky into the second decade of the 21st Century. The world has

changed since Kentucky became a part of a new nation that has been the model for self-governance since its founding more than 200 years ago.

There has been one constant throughout that time: Voting is the privilege that keeps us free.

Blood has been and continues to be spilled to safeguard the freedoms — and the responsibilities that go with them — that make us the envy of millions of people worldwide.

Taking the time and effort to be informed and to vote are the linchpins that keep intact the freedoms that we are lucky to enjoy.

The responsibility is yours.

(Marshall Coyle is president of the board of Kentucky Farm Bureau and David S. Beck is executive vice president of Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation.)

State finalists are named for OYFF, Discussion Meet

Staff report

KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

Finalists have been named for the Outstanding Young Farm Family and Discussion Meet competitions that are concluded at Kentucky Farm Bureau's the annual meeting in December.

The farm family finalists are: Ryan and Brooke White, Morganfield; Bart and Sarah Jones, Scottsville; and Scott and Mary Ann Porter, Maysville.

The couples will be judged on their farm management skills, Farm Bureau and community involvement, as well as financial growth. The winnings will represent Kentucky in the national finals in January.

Ryan White and his brothers purchased their first farm when he was 13 years old. Ryan and Brooke White and his three broth-

ers now farm 9,500 acres of corn, soybean, wheat, hay and cattle in Union County.

Bart and Sarah Jones' farming operation consists of 120 purebred sows, 180 Red Angus and Simmental cows and 80 acres of burley tobacco in Allen County.

The Porter family raises a large herd of Holstein heifers on their 1,028-acre farming operation in Fleming County. They also produce alfalfa and native grasses.

The four finalists for the Discussion Meet contest are Brad Brammell of Ashland; Rob Cole of Lexington; Roger Miller of Lancaster; and Jay McElwain of Benton.

The event is designed to simulate committee meetings where discussion and active participation are expected from each participant. Performance is evaluated on an exchange of ideas and information on a pre-determined topic. Judges look for the contestant that

offers constructive criticism, cooperation and communication while analyzing agricultural problems and developing solutions.

Topics of discussion this year included: What role will U.S. agriculture play in responding to global issues? What steps

should be taken to secure the rights of property owners? What is the public perception of the family farm and how does it impact agricultural policy discussion? With the increasing demand for water, how does rural America maintain a strong voice among competitors?

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I certify that the statements above made by me are correct and complete.

Rachael Kamuf, Director of Publications

Unlikely farmer attracts tourists to Owen winery

By Rachael Kamuf
KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

Curtis Sigretto and farming are not words that most people in his New Jersey hometown would have ever used in the same breath.

Even his own father was surprised when Sigretto told him of his plans to raise grapes and produce wine in Kentucky. As the owner of Elk Creek Vineyards, he is now a farmer. "My dad just laughs every time he hears that."

Sigretto moved to Kentucky in 1995 when he relocated the headquarters of Halloween Express, a \$70 million annual business, to Owenton from North Carolina to be near a company factory in Cincinnati.



He and his wife, who is a native of Owen County, bought a small farm outside Owenton. He had a tobacco base that was eliminated with the end of tobacco price supports, prompting him to look for other farm-related products to generate income.

He was fascinated by the idea of being a vintner, not only because of his Italian heritage but as a result of his experience operating a wine shop and gourmet deli in New Jersey before he got into Halloween costumes. "I've always been around wine."

He already had taken one chance on investing in the culture and natural beauty of Owen County, opening Elk Creek Hunting Club in 1995.

The hunting operation features sport clay shooting as well as scheduled hunts for deer, turkey, quail, pheasants and chukar. There also is an 11-room lodge that is available to visitors to the winery located next door on Kentucky 330, a little more than 2.5 miles outside Owenton.

The Elk Creek complex is about 18 miles from the Sparta-Owenton exit of Interstate 71. It also is the exit that drivers take to reach the main gate of Kentucky Speedway, which hosts NASCAR Busch Series and NASCAR Craftsman Series races on a multimillion track outside Sparta.

Reaching the Elk Creek ventures, which are advertised on a billboard near Kentucky Speedway, means driving a two-lane road – with traffic sometimes slowed by farm vehicles – that goes through Owenton and miles of rolling landscape.

To Sigretto that means the Elk Creek Vineyards is in a great spot for an agritourism attraction – much like the California wine country that is popular with tourists and wine connoisseurs alike – and the \$4 million investment he made in the winery's startup.

"We are exactly in the center of the Louisville, Lexington and Cincinnati triangle."

He said "thousands of people – more than I would have ever dreamed this soon" have stopped for a visit since the winery's opening. "People enjoy the scenery and atmosphere," said Sigretto, a member of the Kentucky Grape Council and other viticulturist trade groups. "It

Continued on page 23

FARMERS Market

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Farmer Sigretto

Continued from page 22

only seems out of the way.”

Sigretto started with 4,000 grape vines. There now are 18,000 on 36 acres, and 6,000 to 8,000 more plants will be added annually to sustain growth at Elk Creek. About 250 tons of fruit were crushed this year to produce more than 200,000 bottles of red and wines that will eventually make their way to consumers, despite less than ideal conditions.

First there was the frost-freeze of April, then a historic drought that continues to grip much of the state. Sigretto said workers also have battled powdery mildew, Japanese beetles, deer and birds. The dry weather has been of special concern and required hauling water for irrigation.

If the drought persists, Sigretto said he may have to invest in mechanical watering systems similar to what some producers in California arid wine districts have installed.

Elk Creek wines that were first available only outside Owen County through distributors now are displayed and sold at the scenic winery that includes a restaurant, an art gallery featuring regional artists and outdoor entertainment during warm weather months. Visitors also have the option of tours through the fields of grapes.

Elk Creek wines, which have won a number of awards, also are available at kiosks at Mall St. Matthews in Louisville, Florence Mall, Fayette Mall in Lexington, Kroger grocery stores with liquor licenses and most liquor stores in the

state. Elk Creek also ships bottles to customers who place Internet orders through its Web site.

Sigretto has great hopes for Elk Creek Vineyards and the state's burgeoning wine-making industry, noting that various wines produced here have become popular with enthusiasts. There are now 44 licensed wine producers in Kentucky. Elk Creek, which sells 22 different wines, was the 12th one issued when Kentucky law was rewritten to again allow vintners to sell wines on the site where they were produced.

In a sense, the legislation allowed farmers to return to the state's agricultural roots. The first commercial vineyard in the United States was established in Kentucky in 1860. The same soil and climate that create perfect conditions for the burley tobacco for which Kentucky is known benefit grape production, Sigretto said. Sigretto thinks his winery will show a profit within two years, but he acknowledges that he could not have undertaken such a large operation in a relatively short period time without the success of his other full-time business.

And he knows that sets him apart from other Kentucky wine producers, especially those who have expanded traditional farming operations.

“The Halloween company pays the bills,” he said. “This is my passion. But I still have to wake up every day and make sure we sell Halloween costumes.”

(Elk Creek Vineyard photos by Brian Steege; Curtis Sigretto photo by Rachael Kamuf.)



CURTIS SIGRETTO

Halloween

Continued from page 1

farm. The couple even bought 165 acres – “the most we could afford” – he said, and “like every other farmer in the area,” had tobacco and cattle on the land.

There is a direct correlation between the costume business and the winery that the New Jersey native started about four years ago. “Without Halloween Express, there would be no Elk Creek,” Sigretto said.

He left the farming initially to others, keeping his attention on building Halloween Express, which started as three stores in Asheville, N.C., and trails behind only retailer Spencer Gifts' Spirit Halloween shops in Halloween costumes and accessory sales.

Halloween has erupted into a major segment of the retail industry. Only the Christmas holiday season is bigger as Americans' spending on Halloween costumes, decorations, candy and party foods is expected to be in the \$7 billion to \$8 billion range this year.

The growth has been generated by adults, who have taken over the trick-or-treat season from children.

Sigretto set up the business as a franchise operation; just a handful of the outlets, which are open only during the weeks leading up to Halloween, are company owned. The rest are operated by individuals, including about 40 Owen County residents, who pay \$10,000 for a franchise and a percentage of annual sales. Sigretto owns six Holiday Express stores and is a partner in another 30.

The company also has an Internet component. Web sales are handled by a fulfillment company that provides next-day delivery service from merchandise stocked in warehouses in Atlanta and Charlotte, N.C.

Sigretto said the Saturday before Halloween is the busiest day overall for Halloween Express. Parents might give in and buy their children's costumes early, he said, “but adults wait until the last minute to shop for themselves.”

There is one year-round Halloween Express and it belongs to the parent company. Located on New Circle Road in Lexington, the fully stocked store is operated as a training center for new franchise holders. There is a second location in Lexington and two in Louisville. Other Kentucky cities with Halloween Express outlets are Florence, Bowling Green, Paducah and Owensboro.

Sales are strongest at the store in Houston, one of the few large metropolitan areas with a Halloween Express. Because of interest from potential franchises in major cities and current franchisees who want to expand, Sigretto is predicting more growth.

And with the backing of new investors from England he is expanding into the Christmas business, following much of the model set by Halloween Express. Named Christmas Express, the stores will offer indoor and outdoor decorations, trees, lights and gift wrapping. Plans call for starting with 30 stores that will open in November and close following an inventory liquidation sale soon after New Year's Day.

In Kentucky, the Christmas Express concept will be tested at the former Dillard's Home Store at The Mall in Louisville.



Photos by Brian Steege, courtesy of Donnelly Design

HALLOWEEN EXPRESS

“The Hidden Power of Blueberries!”



(By Frank K. Wood)

If you'd like to prevent — even help defeat — many common ailments including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and arthritis with delicious foods you already love, you need *Eat and Heal*.

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- ▶ This one substance fights type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, impotence, and cancer. Get the details.
- ▶ Sprinkle a few of these berries on your cereal in the morning, and you could help lower your blood sugar and sharpen your memory.
- ▶ Lose weight without even trying! That's what these men did — even while consuming the same total calories — when they ate this 50¢ meal each day. And they lowered their cholesterol, too!
- ▶ Fight Father Time with this humble dried fruit. Research shows it could help stave off the diseases of aging, including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.
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- ▶ A glassful of this with your meals can fight

heart-damaging free radicals.

- ▶ Joint pain? Foods rich in this vitamin may slow the damage of osteoarthritis, and even repair damaged cartilage! Get the facts.
- ▶ Eat away arthritis! Ease your pain with this scarlet fruit.
- ▶ Nutrient Super-Hero! This one sweet little fruit acts like a multivitamin — providing beta carotene, iron, vitamins C, B vitamins, lycopene, magnesium, and copper!
- ▶ Seniors, look at this!!! According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, almost everyone over age 75 has cataracts. To prevent this sneaky condition from stealing your eyesight in your golden years, read this to find out how to protect your vision with vegetables and other delicious foods.
- ▶ Wow! This inexpensive, ultra low-calorie vegetable has ultra high cancer-fighting nutrients. Researchers say it prevents cancer of the colon, brain, breast, stomach, bladder and lung!
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- ▶ Delicious nutty side dish is a nice change from potatoes — and cuts your risk of stroke, cancer, type 2 diabetes and heart disease.
- ▶ Just two servings of this each week will bolster your body against heart attack, stroke, type 2 diabetes, depression, and cancer!

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“What You Should Never Drink If You're Taking High Blood Pressure Medicine!”



(By Frank K. Wood)

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- ▶ Women who eat more of this food are less likely to develop type 2 diabetes.
- ▶ If your home's foundation crumbles and sags, so will your home. As your body's foundation, your skeleton works the same way. Just 4 diet secrets can

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- ▶ Vitamins and minerals may keep you from getting colon cancer, even if this awful killer runs in your family. Good news!
- ▶ Fight cancer, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, flu ... even bad breath — just by sipping a steaming cup of this pleasant beverage.
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- ▶ How the multivitamin you take every day can keep your vision keen.
- ▶ The 2¢ colon cleanser! It may help prevent cancer!

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(By Frank K. Wood)

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