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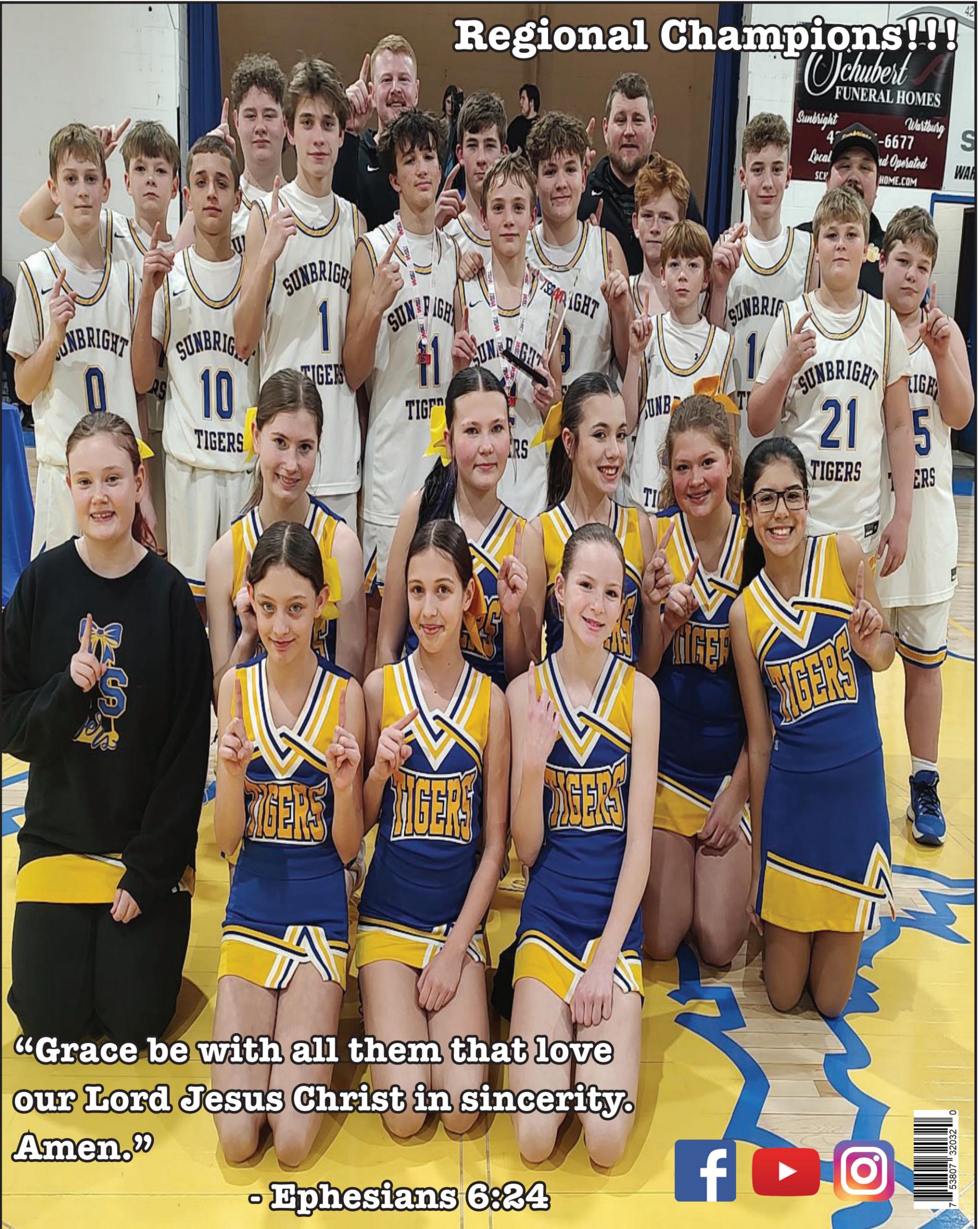
Psalm 100:3

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Volume 12 Number 8

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Regional Champions!!!



**“Grace be with all them that love
our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.
Amen.”**

- Ephesians 6:24



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**Ms. Avery Pearl
Pet Columnist**

Pet Perspective

WUFF WRAPPED IN FUR

Mimi says that Ms Ivory and me are pure wuff, wrapped up in fur.

Unfortunately, it has come to my attention that a certain "religion" wants Americans to get rid of their dogs because we are "unclean."

I beg to differ! Ms Ivory and me are very clean! We get bathed, groomed, and brushed. Our food and water bowls are always clean and they even have a mat under them, to catch any food or water that may spill. We potty outside. If we walk in the neighborhood and do our business in someones yard, Mimi and Pap pick it up with a plastic bag and properly dispose of it.

We certainly, DO NOT wipe our hineys with our left paws, like this "religion" does. Dogs don't hate so much that we randomly explode, either.

Mimi keeps our beds and blankets washed. We don't bother things that aren't ours. We don't even have our toys all over the place.

We have done nothing to deserve such hatefulness and scorn.



I sort of feel sorry for those people. Maybe, they would have less stress in their lives and less hate in their hearts if they had the wuff of a dog.

Maybe, they wouldn't feel the need to cut people's heads off if they didnt worship their god, if they knew the wuff of a dog.

Pap says that hate and wuff can't live in the same heart, one of them has to go. So, they should leave the hate behind and replace it with some wuff wrapped in fur.

For more of my Pet Perspective like and follow me on Facebook at Ms Avery Pearl.

WEEKLY WEATHER

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WED 2/25 56° 48°

THU 2/26 53° 27°

FRI 2/27 56° 32°

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SUN 3/1 61° 36°

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— In Loving Memory —

Billy Ray Gunter, 87



ter Jacqueline Gunter Furney (Tim) of Eaton, Indiana; stepsons Dean Hutchison (Rhonda) of Wartburg and Steve Hutchison (Kandy) of Petros; brother Bacel Gunter (Pam) of Wartburg and sister Sue Russell and friend Jon of Wartburg; several grandchildren, great grandchildren and extended family and friends.

Billy Ray Gunter, age 87, of Wartburg went home to be with the Lord on Sunday, January 25, 2026. He was born in Scott County but lived his entire life in Wartburg. He was of the Baptist faith.

He is preceded in death by his father Shelby (Doc) Gunter; mother Clansy Gunter and daughter Anita Lane Gunter; sister Betty Crabtree.

He is survived by his loving wife of 44 years and caregiver, Sue Gunter; son Gregory Allen Gunter of Wartburg; daugh-

He was a member of the Emerald No. 377 Lodge for 66 years.

The family will receive friends Thursday, January 29, 2026 at Schubert Funeral Home from 5:00-7:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 7:00 p.m. with Bro. Keith Kilby officiating. Graveside Services will be Friday at 11:00 a.m. in the Morgan Memorial Gardens in Wartburg.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Billy Ray Gunter.

Denise Weeks, 60



She is preceded in death by her parents Charles and Mary Whitener; brother Rick Whitener.

She leaves behind husband Ricky; daughter Heather (Brad); son Travis (Sandra); grandsons Carson, Damon, KJ, and Brandon; and 3 great grandbabies; siblings Darlene, Allen, and Brenda.

The family has chosen cremation. No services are scheduled at this time.

Denise Weeks age 60, of Louisville, Tn. passed away peacefully on January 26, 2026.

Denise was known for her kind heart, love of animals, and love for her family. She will be deeply missed.

Her memory will forever remain in the hearts of those she touched.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Denise Weeks.

The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

- Lamentations 3:24

Obituaries must come from a funeral home to be in the newspaper.

Ruth F. (Sargent) Hall, 93



Ruth worked as a secretary in New Hampshire until she and her husband moved to Tennessee in the late 70's. In addition, Ruth worked over 10 years at the Morgan County Board of Education and Morgan County Finance Office in Wartburg. Ruth was a founding and faithful member of the Star of Hope Chapel in Wartburg. In the early 2000, roads led Ruth back to New Hampshire and while there she attended the Brentwood First Baptist Church but over the past few years when she was unable to attend church in person, she was dedicated to joining the virtual services held at the Star of Hope Chapel.

Ruth F. (Sargent) Hall, 93, entered into the loving arms of her Savior Jesus Christ on January 15, 2026, while living in New Hampshire. Ruth was the only child of Trueman and Albertine (Collins) Sargent of Plaistow, New Hampshire.

She was preceded in death by her parents and her husband of 31 years, Wesley Q. Hall (of Wartburg, TN) and a host of aunts, uncles, sister-in-laws, brother-in-laws, nieces and nephews. Ruth was deeply loved and will be missed by surviving nieces, nephews, cousins and friends of whom she regularly stayed in contact. Special gratitude to cousins Laurie Leeman, Sharon Turcotte, Linda Daggett (NH), Wayne and Linda Glover (FL), niece Teresa Nichols and husband Jeff and niece Donna Jean Pardue (TN), and special friend Pat Steelman (TN) for their support over the years.

Per her wishes, graveside services will be held at the Flat Fork Cemetery, Wartburg, on Sunday, February 8, 2026 at 2:00 pm. Family and friends are invited to attend. Pastor Darrel Daugherty will officiate. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to the Star of Hope Chapel, Wartburg, TN (mailing address PO 1651, Harriman, TN 37748).

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Ruth Hall.



— In Loving Memory —

Michael Mikey Williams, 49



Michael Mikey Williams, age 49, departed this world on January 22, 2026.

He is preceded in death by father Mike Williams; grandparents Howard and Betty Jones and James and Marjorie Williams; uncle Jimmy Williams; aunts

Sherry Phillips and Diane Swint; cousins Eric Phillips, Jereme Howard, and Stevie Howard; and Waynie Phillips with whom he had a special bond .

Survived by; Mother Brenda Williams; sons Evan Williams and fiancé Skylar Ferretti and Colton Williams; Soul Mate Forever and a Day Debra Barnett and daughter Felicity; and a host of uncles, aunts, cousins and brother by a different mother Ricky Willilams.

One of Mikey's favorite things in life was music. He was a skilled bass player. He would sit and play for hours, escaping ever day life in his music. He enjoyed being outdoors with his beloved

dogs Cate, Vincent and Frankie. He lived his life to the fullest! Going on many adventures, skydiving, rock climbing and repelling. He loved his Harley and would ride every chance he got. Always enjoying a new tattoo every now and then! He was able to turn ordinary moments into stories and would tell everybody with a laugh. He had a huge heart and you could feel that in the way he showed up for the people he loved. If you were his friend you were his family and he had your back! He had a kind soul, big heart never met a stranger and was willing to help anybody.

He will be dearly missed by the people he was the closest too.

Leaving a void behind that will never be filled. But know he is at peace now and his struggles are over.

The family will receive friends Friday, January 30, 2026 at Schubert Funeral Home from 5:00-7:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 7:00 p.m. Grave-side services will be at 12:00 p.m. on Saturday in the McCartt Cemetery in Lancing.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Michael "Mikey" Williams.

Donna Jean Cooper, 64



Donna Jean Cooper, maiden name Green, age 64, passed away peacefully at her home in Wartburg, Tennessee. She was born on July 7, 1961, in North Florida. Donna made Wartburg her home for the past 30 years, where she built a life rooted in love, family, and community.

Donna was preceded in death by her beloved daughter, Christy Cooper Stevens; her mother, Marty Wallace; her father, Art Green; her grandparents; her brother, Art Green; her sister, Tracy Green; her spouse, Jack Armes; and her close friend, Patty Haynes.

She is survived by her children: son Nick Cooper (Katie), daughter Brittany Bond (Griffin), and son-in-law Fritz Stevens. She leaves behind her cherished grandchildren: Shayna McDaniel (Zeke), Raven Stevens (Austin), Cailee Laway, Emmie Nelson, Taylor Bond, Parker Bond, Elijah, Evelyn Bond, her most recent granddaughter and namesake, Hannah Jean Bond, Joel and Trevor. She was also blessed with great-grandchildren Shay and Karson, as well as a slew of unofficially adopted grandchildren whom she loved fiercely as her own.

Donna is also survived by her close friend, Brenda Armes and ex-husband Danny Cooper.

Donna was known to many as "Momma Donna" or "Nanny." She had a heart big enough for everyone and opened her home to countless children over the years, loving them unconditionally while never hesitating to set them straight when needed. She was a guiding presence, a safe place, and a steady source of comfort for so many. She was wonderfully crafty and found great joy in crocheting, pouring love into every stitch she made. Her warmth, strength, and unwavering care for others will be deeply missed but never forgotten.

Donna's legacy lives on in the many lives she touched, the family she nurtured, and the love she gave so freely.

The family will receive friends Monday, February 2, 2026 at Schubert Funeral Home from 12:00-1:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 1:00 p.m. Interment will follow in the Petros Cemetery (School House Hill) in Petros.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Donna Jean Cooper.

Charles McMahan, 66



Charles McMahan, age 66 of Oliver Springs passed away January 28, 2026 at Methodist Medical Center of Oak Ridge.

Charles loved working on cars, trikes, and loved fishing. Family knew him best as a "wheeler and dealer" who loved the outdoors as well.

He is preceded in death by his parents Charles Everette McMahan and Nadiene Hunter McMahan; sister Marilyn Elaine McMahan; mother and father-

in-law Naomi Fay and Archie Ray Hutchins.

He is survived by his wife of 25 years Patty McMahan; daughter Billie (Tim) Barnes; sons Brand McMahan, Butch Baker and fiancé Lena, Donnie Baker, and Derek Baker; brothers Danny Clyde McMahan, David Eugene McMahan, Paul Edward McMahan, and Christopher Aaron McMahan; and a host of grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and extended family and friends.

The family will receive friends Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at Schubert Funeral Home from 12:00-2:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 2:00 p.m.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Charles McMahan.



— In Loving Memory —

Abel Joseph Robinson



Baby Abel Joseph Robinson, son of Brandon and Jill Robinson was stillborn on Tuesday, February 10th, 2026 at Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center, Knoxville, TN.

Abel's presence and light will be missed more than his parents have the words to describe. He is a blessing, placed softly into the arms of his parents that changed their hearts forever.

Little Abel is the deeply treasured son of his loving parents Brandon and Jill Robinson. He leaves behind his sweet sister, Kora Robinson; two loving brothers, Jude and Obadiah Robinson; the paternal grandparents, Dustin and Pamela (Bunch) Vought; the maternal grandfather, Jerry Kesterson;

the maternal grandmother, Paula (Reynolds) Kesterson; uncle and aunt, Brett "LJ" and Tara (Tinker) Robinson; uncle, Jacob Kesterson; aunt, Jerrika Kesterson; two sweet cousins, Emery and Zoey Robinson; and many that already loved him.

He is preceded in death by his grandfather, Jon "BJ" Robinson.

We trust that Abel is held safely in the arms of Jesus and will be there until our reunion in heaven when we meet again.

Psalms 63:4 "Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise you."

Visitation will be held from 11:00- 1:00 with a service following afterward on Saturday, February 14th, 2026 at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg, TN. A private graveside service will follow.

Memorial contributions may be made to the family.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Abel Joseph Robinson

Merly Rose Jones



Merly Rose Jones of Sunbright passed away at home Friday, January 30th 2026.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 43 years Eddie Jones; Her parents Virgil and Lula Durham; brothers JP, Russell, Harold D. and Dainel Durham.

She is survived by her son Jason and daughter-in-law Christina Jones; grandchildren Logan and Hannah Jones; sisters Carolyn and Ray Howard, Wanda and J. Harold Johnson, Ger-

aldine and Charlie Young and a host of nieces and nephews.

Merly was a loving mother, a proud wife and dedicated fiercely to her family. She loved going to yard sales, goofing off with her grandkids and striking up a conversation with just about anyone she met. She had missed her husband dearly since his passing. Now, by the grace of God's will, she has been reunited with that lost piece of herself and they are together again.

The family will have a graveside service Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. at Friends Chapel Cemetery in Deer Lodge.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Merly Rose Jones.

Psalm 123:1

**Unto thee lift I up mine eyes,
O thou that dwellest in the heavens.**

Robin Lynn Bertram, 55



Robin Lynn Bertram, age 55 of Jamestown passed away February 15, 2026 at Fort Sanders Regional Hospital. She was born February 5, 1971.

She is preceded in death by her mother Virginia L. Cottrell; sister Brenda Bertram; brothers David and Ricky Bertram; brother-in-law Harold Galloway; niece Jennifer Sue Lyons.

She leaves behind son Joshua (Elizabeth) Scott of Wartburg; brothers Jeff Bertram of Sunbright, Charles (Michelle) Bertram of Lansing; sisters Mary Galloway of Sunbright, Patty (Jerry) Howard of Grimsley and Beverly (Gene) Bertram of Grimsley and a host of nieces, nephews and extended family.

Robin was a very kind, caring, loving, mother, daughter, sister,

aunt and friend to all who knew her. Robin loved hard and tried to take care of everyone. She will be missed by all that knew her. We love you our precious Robin. Gone way to soon! Until we meet again, fly high our Angel.

Robin's wishes are to be cremated and a Celebration of Life will be Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at Schubert Funeral Home from 12:00-1:00 p.m. with a memorial service to follow at 1:00 p.m. with Bro. Russell Jones officiating. Her wishes are to be placed by her brothers David and Ricky and niece Jennifer Sue Lyons at Laurel Dale Cemetery in Rugby.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Robin Lynn Bertram.



— In Loving Memory —

Marcella Petree Darnell, 89



Marcella Petree Darnell, age 89 passed away Thursday, February 12, 2026 peacefully at her home on the hill in Wartburg, Tennessee. She was born July 23, 1936 in Union County, Tennessee. She moved to Wartburg at a very young age where she graduated from Wartburg Central High School and met her future husband Clyde Darnell formerly from Greeneville, Tennessee. She was a member of the Wartburg First Baptist

Church and many other community focused organizations. Clyde and Marcella moved from Greeneville, TN to Wartburg, TN in 1965 where shortly after they opened Darnell Food Market in 1966.

Marcella enjoyed her family and friends and her work throughout her lifetime. She loved to watch birds, read, and spend time with her family and friends.

She is preceded in death by her husband Clyde E. Darnell, parents, Ed and Della Petree, siblings Leonard Petree, Geneva Newberry, Mary Hendrickson, Ella May Newberry, and James Petree.

Left to cherish her memory is her children, Gary (Karen) Darnell, Debi Darnell Hamby. Grandchildren Nick (Stacy) Hei-

dle; Joshua (Lindsay) Darnell, Daphnie Darnell, Michelle (Damon) Shadden, and Jennifer (Brad) Langley. Great Grandchildren, Jasmine (Dameion) Ranta, McKenzie (Nathan) Leffew, McKayla, Maddison and Morgane Shadden, Jaelynn Whaley, and Parker Heidle. One Great Grandchild Kambree Ranta; one sister, Oma Jean Raines and husband Alan, of North Carolina, one brother Robert Petree of Wartburg, Tennessee, and one sister-in-law Barbara Petree of Alabama.

The family will receive friends Monday, February 16 from 4:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. at Schubert Funeral Home, in Wartburg. Funeral services will be held Tuesday, February 17 starting at 11:00 a.m. at Schubert's Funeral Home followed by the graveside service with Pastor Matthew

Ward of Wartburg First Baptist Church and Pastor Doug White from Knoxville, Tennessee officiating. Interment will follow in the Wartburg City Cemetery of Morgan County, Tennessee.

In Lieu of flowers, donations can be made in her memory to Wartburg First Baptist Church building fund or SHOC (Survivors Helping Others Cope) c/o Debbie Taylor 280 Island Ford Road Lansing, Tennessee 37770.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Marcella Petree Darnell.



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<p>Was: \$16,774 BEST PRICE: \$12,774 19 FORD ESCAPE SEL 4WD, TURBOCHARGED #N663185B</p>	<p>Was: \$16,883 BEST PRICE: \$12,883 15 NISSAN ALTIMA 2.5S ONLY 67K MILES, #R7525A</p>	<p>Was: \$17,777 BEST PRICE: \$13,777 12 HONDA ACCORD EX-L 92K MILES, SUNROOF #R7790A</p>	<p>Was: \$49,992 BEST PRICE: \$15,992 21 SUBARU LEGACY PREMIUM AWD, NAVIGATION #N354189B</p>	<p>Was: \$20,588 BEST PRICE: \$16,588 20 CHEVROLET EQUINOX LT NAVIGATION, SUNROOF, #R7226A</p>
<p>Was: \$21,677 BEST PRICE: \$16,677 19 KIA SORENTO EX SPORT 3RD ROW SEATING, #N497813G</p>	<p>Was: \$20,992 BEST PRICE: \$16,992 20 NISSAN PATHFINDER SL NAVIGATION, 3RD ROW #N549721B</p>	<p>Was: \$21,355 BEST PRICE: \$17,355 23 NISSAN KICKS REARVIEW CAMERA #N348366B</p>	<p>Was: \$21,488 BEST PRICE: \$17,488 21 NISSAN ROGUE S BT, REARVIEW CAM. #R7771A</p>	<p>Was: \$21,557 BEST PRICE: \$17,557 24 NISSAN SENTRA S REARVIEW CAMERA #R7630A</p>
<p>Was: \$21,887 BEST PRICE: \$17,887 20 NISSAN SENTRA SR BT, REARVIEW CAM. #N290579A</p>	<p>Was: \$21,992 BEST PRICE: \$17,992 18 BMW X2 AWD, ENTERTAINMENT #NP76478A</p>	<p>Was: \$22,299 BEST PRICE: \$18,299 23 NISSAN KICKS SV REMOTE START, BT #R7235A</p>	<p>Was: \$22,335 BEST PRICE: \$18,335 20 NISSAN PATHFINDER S 44K MILES, 3RD ROW #R7139B</p>	<p>Was: \$22,488 BEST PRICE: \$18,488 18 JEEP WRANGLER JK SAHARA 4WD, SUNROOF #R7130B</p>
<p>Was: \$22,557 BEST PRICE: \$18,557 22 JEEP COMPASS LATITUDE 4WD, BACKUP CAMERA #R7785A</p>	<p>Was: \$23,455 BEST PRICE: \$19,455 23 KIA SPORTAGE EX NAVIGATION, BLUETOOTH #R7580A</p>	<p>Was: \$23,477 BEST PRICE: \$19,477 24 NISSAN SENTRA SV ONLY 8,921 MI. #R7247A</p>	<p>Was: \$23,887 BEST PRICE: \$19,777 25 NISSAN SENTRA SV 3,918 MI., BLUETOOTH #NA85178B</p>	<p>Was: \$24,355 BEST PRICE: \$20,355 18 SUBARU CROSSTREK LIMITED, AWD, LEATHER #R7805B</p>
<p>Was: \$24,577 BEST PRICE: \$20,577 22 NISSAN ALTIMA 2.0 SR TURBO CHARGED ENGINE #D7840A</p>	<p>Was: \$24,599 BEST PRICE: \$20,599 21 NISSAN ALTIMA 2.0 SR TURBOCHARGED #R7922A</p>	<p>Was: \$24,887 BEST PRICE: \$20,887 23 NISSAN ROGUE SV BT, REARVIEW CAM. #N419010A</p>	<p>Was: \$24,993 BEST PRICE: \$20,993 20 INFINITI QX50 LUXE 4WD, NAVIGATION #R7834A</p>	<p>Was: \$25,774 BEST PRICE: \$21,774 24 MAZDA CX-5 SELECT PKG AWD, NAVIGATION #N440891A</p>
<p>Was: \$25,997 BEST PRICE: \$21,997 21 NISSAN ROGUE PLATINUM NAVIGATION, LOADED #R7910A</p>	<p>Was: \$26,777 BEST PRICE: \$22,777 21 HONDA CR-V EX-L AWD, REARVIEW CAMERA #R7865A</p>	<p>Was: \$26,887 BEST PRICE: \$22,887 21 NISSAN ROGUE SV 30K MI, SUNROOF, BT #D7931A</p>	<p>Was: \$29,992 BEST PRICE: \$25,992 23 NISSAN MURANO SV CERTIFIED, 4WD #D7836A</p>	<p>Was: \$31,155 BEST PRICE: \$27,155 23 NISSAN ROGUE SL CERTIFIED, NAVIGATION #R7569A</p>

HERE ARE SOME TRUCKS!

<p>Was: \$39,488 BEST PRICE: \$35,488 21 CHEVROLET SILVERADO RST 4WD, TURBOCHARGED #D7312B</p>	<p>Was: \$45,993 BEST PRICE: \$41,993 25 CHEVROLET SILVERADO LT 4WD, NAVIGATION #N146386A</p>	<p>Was: \$33,955 BEST PRICE: \$29,955 22 NISSAN FRONTIER S 4WD, BT, 3.6L 6CYL #R7555E</p>	<p>Was: \$38,777 BEST PRICE: \$34,777 24 NISSAN FRONTIER SV 13K MI., 4WD, 6CYL #R7558A</p>	<p>Was: \$43,577 BEST PRICE: \$39,577 16 FORD F-350 XLT 6.7L, POWERSTROKE DIESEL #NA00653A</p>
<p>Was: \$48,488 BEST PRICE: \$44,488 22 FORD F-150 XLT 4WD, NAVIGATION #NB40540A</p>	<p>Was: \$31,922 BEST PRICE: \$27,922 19 DODGE RAM 1500 BIG HORN LONESTAR, 4WD, 51K MI #R7720A</p>	<p>Was: \$36,377 BEST PRICE: \$40,377 24 FORD RANGER XLT 4WD, NAVIGATION, 9K MI #NE67371A</p>	<p>Was: \$34,577 BEST PRICE: \$25,922 20 CHEVROLET SILVERADO LT 4WD, BLUETOOTH #NA03793B</p>	<p>Was: \$51,555 BEST PRICE: \$41,555 23 DODGE RAM 1500 LARAMIE 4WD, NAVIGATION, LOADED #R7904A</p>
<p>Was: \$39,755 BEST PRICE: \$35,755 23 NISSAN FRONTIER SV 4WD, REARVIEW CAM. #N605685A</p>	<p>Was: \$27,755 BEST PRICE: \$23,755 20 NISSAN FRONTIER SV 6CYL, BLUETOOTH #R7757A</p>	<p>Was: \$43,887 BEST PRICE: \$39,887 24 TOYOTA TACOMA SR5 4WD, TURBOCHARGED #R7906A</p>	<p>Was: \$32,777 BEST PRICE: \$28,777 23 FORD MAVERICK XLT ONLY 10K MI, BLUETOOTH #NA16613A</p>	<p>Was: \$35,277 BEST PRICE: \$31,277 23 NISSAN FRONTIER 6CYL, 4WD, BLUETOOTH #R7743A</p>

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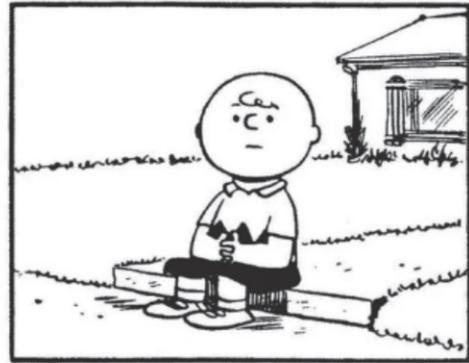
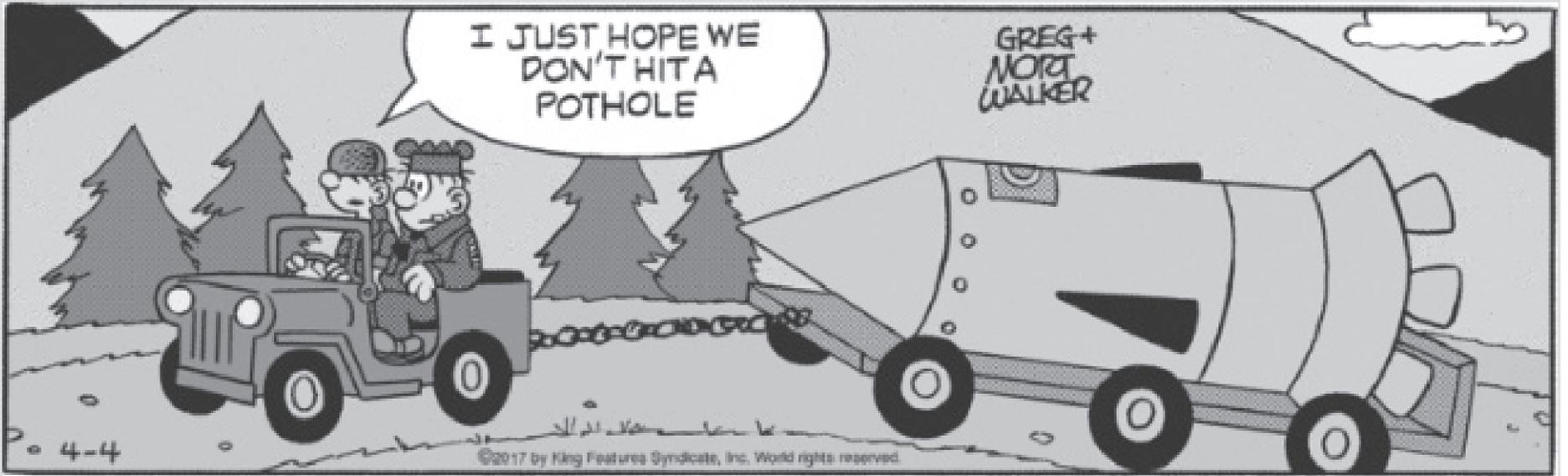
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BEETLE BAILEY





Historically Speaking Touring Oak Ridge's future nuclear energy hub (part 3): TRISO-X, Standard Nuclear, Radiant Nuclear

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

Carolyn Krause is exploring what's happening in Oak Ridge. She has read that new companies are investing in building facilities on Oak Ridge land partly for creating tomorrow's nuclear reactors and making the special fuels they need to power future data centers for advancing artificial intelligence.

The companies will help to meet the goals of the Department of Energy's Manhattan Project 2.0. DOE is aiming to ensure that the United States maintains its global leadership in AI and its competitiveness in national security, economic prosperity, and scientific discovery through supercomputing and quantum computing. AI data centers require electricity 24/7, and of all the energy sources, nuclear power is the most reliable, generating electricity more than 90% of the time.

Past accomplishments can lay a path for future achievements. As this Historically Speaking column has often mentioned, researchers in Oak Ridge and elsewhere learned in the past century how to make nuclear fuel and nuclear reactors, on land and sea, that have used the fuel for decades to produce electricity worldwide. Oak Ridge helped chart the way for developing advanced nuclear fuels and for designing easier-to-build, safer, more efficient and less expensive small modular reactors that will require the new fuels to meet 21st century needs for power.

On Tuesday, Oct. 21, 2026, during Nuclear Science Week sponsored by the American Museum of Science and Energy in Oak Ridge, Carolyn took the New Nuclear "Dirt Tour" on a luxury bus paid for by Kairos Power. It helped her find out more about how and why Oak Ridge is becoming the "core of America's nuclear renaissance." The tour "guides," lunch speaker, and passengers were well-educated on nuclear companies' plans for Oak Ridge, as well as her internet searches using AI chatbots, which provided excellent information, much of which she presents in this five-part series.

A new type of fuel for advanced reactors that will operate at high temperatures was partly pioneered by Oak Ridge National Laboratory, which advanced the development and qualification of this fuel, called TRISO, in the United States. It plays an important part in the nuclear energy ecosystem in Oak Ridge.

TRISO-X and X-energy. The bus passengers first had a chance to survey the Horizon Center Industrial Park on the way to the first stop at the edge of a 110-acre plot purchased in 2022 by TRISO-X, a wholly owned subsidiary of X-energy, which plans to build small modular reactors. TRISO-X will produce fuel for the reactors based on an ORNL innovation.

After the speaker on the bus introduced us to TRISO-X, I began thinking about the importance of three acronyms – SMR, HALEU, and TRISO.

An SMR is a compact nuclear reactor that, compared with traditional nuclear power plants, will generate one-third as much electricity (e.g., 300 megawatts electric) and take up less land. The goal is to build the SMR faster at lower cost onsite using standardized, factory-fabricated components and to equip it with passive systems to enhance its safety.

Many SMRs will run at high temperature

and low pressure, enabling more efficient and safer operation. They will cost less because a huge pressure vessel won't be required. The preferred fuel for increasing efficiency is High Assay Low Enriched Uranium, or HALEU. That's uranium enriched in fissionable uranium-235 at a level between 5% and 20%, but often at 19.75%.

By comparison, the light-water reactors that produce almost 20% of the electricity consumed in the United States use uranium with only

minimizing radiation releases to outside of the reactor core.

Some 19,000 of these particles are pressed together in a graphite matrix to make a pebble, the size of a golf ball. More than 200,000 pebbles are cycled multiple times through the core through which the coolant passes until analysis indicates no energy is left.

The higher enrichment of HALEU allows an SMR using it to have a smaller reactor



Triso-X construction site in Horizon Center
(Courtesy of Ray Smith)

a 3 to 5% concentration of uranium-235. But in what form will the HALEU fuel take?

In many cases, the HALEU produced in the future by Centrus Energy and Orano USA centrifuges will be encapsulated in TRISO (TRi-structural ISOTropic) particle fuel. HALEU will be at the heart of the thousands of particles in each of the TRISO fuel pebbles in each SMR's core. Thanks to nuclear fission (splitting of the nuclei of atoms) occurring in the innermost part of each particle, SMRs' cores will release massive amounts of heat that is used to make steam to spin a turbine that generates electricity.

Although this fuel form was first developed in Germany and the UK in the 1950s, ORNL's research has been central to modernizing and proving the fuel's performance for the current generation of advanced reactors (except for Oklo's Aurora reactors mentioned in the previous article that may use recycled HALEU fuel in metal form). ORNL's research was originally intended for high-temperature, gas-cooled reactors that were never built and commercialized.

DOE calls TRISO the most robust nuclear fuel on Earth. It will likely be the chosen fuel for most SMRs and other next-generation reactors. The reason: these low-pressure reactors will operate at high temperatures, making them more efficient than traditional reactors. TRISO fuel will remain stable and not melt when exposed to these advanced reactors' high temperatures.

In TRISO fuel, the entire particle, consisting of a uranium oxycarbide kernel surrounded by multiple protective ceramic and carbon layers, is about the size of a poppy seed. The coatings include a silicon carbide layer that retains the radioactive fission products of the uranium fuel,

core. The HALEU fuel can remain in the reactor longer, increasing efficiency and reducing downtime.

The manager of construction for the TRISO-X site told the bus passengers that TRISO-X is a wholly owned subsidiary of X-energy, an advanced nuclear reactor and fuel design engineering company based in Maryland. X-energy is planning to build Xe-100 small modular reactors that will use TRISO fuel.

The TRISO-X operation started at ORNL in 2016, where a pilot plant is fabricating and producing TRISO-X fuel. Some of the TRISO fuel from ORNL is undergoing irradiation testing at DOE's Idaho National Laboratory.

The transition from ORNL to the TRISO-X site at the Horizon Center Industrial Park will take place over the next three years. Vertical construction on a concrete foundation had begun in October on the \$300 million TX-1, the TRISO fuel production facility of X-energy. By the end of the year, 135 employees will be building it.

TX-1 will be built by 2026, but it will not go into operation with a staff of 500, including former ORNL employees, until 2027. The company has stated that the TX-1 facility could meet the fuel needs of 11 Xe-100 reactors. Early next year at the Horizon Center, X-energy may start building TX-L, which will provide lab space for additional research on developing improved TRISO fuel and possibly other types of nuclear fuel. If X-energy chooses to build TX-2, the construction and operation of that facility will provide 1,200 jobs.

- Continued on Page 13

Historically Speaking Touring Oak Ridge's future nuclear energy hub (part 3): TRISO-X, Standard Nuclear, Radiant Nuclear

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

X-energy executives hope that by May 2026, TX-1 will be the first Category II fuel fabrication facility licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the first-in-the-nation facility to exclusively manufacture five metric tons a year of TRISO fuel for SMRs in the United States. If X-energy chooses to build TX-2 in Oak Ridge, more than 1,200 people will be employed at the Horizon Center site.

X-energy, which recently entered a partnership with the AI company Amazon, plans to build Xe-100 small modular reactors of a particular type: pebble-bed, high-temperature, gas-cooled (HTGR) reactors. The Xe-100 SMR will be fueled by X-energy's proprietary TRISO-X fuel. Each Xe-100 module will generate about 80 megawatts-electric (MWe) and 200 megawatts-thermal (MWt). The standard plant design consists of a four-pack configuration, producing a total of about 320 MWe.

X-energy has formed a significant partnership with Dow Inc. to build a four-unit Xe-100 plant at Dow's site on the Texas Gulf Coast, where it makes a wide variety of chemical and plastic products. The goal is to provide Dow with cost-competitive, low-carbon process heat and power to reduce its carbon emissions.

Standard Nuclear. In October 2024, Ultra Safe Nuclear Corporation (USNC), which had been operating in the Heritage Center Industrial Park since 2021, filed for bankruptcy due to financial difficulties exacerbated by the passing of its principal investor. This advanced nuclear energy company had been focused on developing microreactors and capabilities for producing TRISO fuel for these advanced reactors.

Standard Nuclear emerged when it purchased USNC's fuel-related assets for \$32.5 million through a bankruptcy auction. Its acquisition included the commercial-scale technology and production capabilities in Tennessee to manufacture TRISO nuclear fuel.

Standard Nuclear today has more than 50 employees and three operating facilities in Tennessee that house TRISO production capabilities along with other advanced manufacturing capabilities. The company is deploying commercial-scale production facilities along multiple fronts including deployment of a new facility in Oak Ridge under DOE Authorization as part of the DOE Pilot Fuel Line dedicated to production of TRISO-based fuels.

One key difference between X-energy (including its TRISO-X subsidiary) and other companies with plans to produce TRISO nuclear fuel is that Standard Nuclear is truly a reactor-agnostic fuel producer. It is the only fuel manufacturer not designing and deploying its own reactor as well. Standard Nuclear is solely focused on providing fuel for advanced reactors and the operators that will eventually own and operate nuclear power plants housing these reactors. Standard Nuclear's goal is to ensure that a competitive fuel supply, at large scale and at low cost, is available for advanced reactors coming to the market.

Radiant Nuclear. One confirmed customer for Standard Nuclear's TRISO fuel is Radiant Nuclear (<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260107671491/en/Standard-Nuclear-First-to-Receive-HALEU-Feedstock-for-Production-of-TRISO-Fuel-to-Support-2026-Reactor->



Standard Nuclear building in Heritage Center (Courtesy of Ray Smith)



Radiant Nuclear site in Heritage Center located on the former K-27 site (Courtesy of Ray Smith)

Demonstration), which purchased property at the end of Enrichment Street on Oct. 13, 2025, from the Oak Ridge Industrial Development Board. The company stated it would invest \$280 million in the mass production of nuclear generators, also known as Kaleidos microreactors. The state said that in return for Radiant's investment, it would give the company \$2 million from the Tennessee Nuclear Energy Fund. Each of these portable HTGRs will generate one megawatt of electricity (1 MWe) and, with its shielding and power conversion system, fit inside a single shipping container for easy transport by truck, ship or air.

Kaleidos microreactors, which will be cooled by helium, are intended to serve as clean alternatives to diesel generators for providing backup power for rural hospitals and data centers, and off-grid power for remote villages and military installations.

Doug Bernauer, the company founder, once worked for Elon Musk at SpaceX. There, he

was inspired to consider making nuclear devices that might be able to sustain life on Mars and other planets. Then he conceived of microreactors that would have uses on Earth.

Not far from Radiant's property is land owned by Kairos Power, which plans to use TRISO fuel in its two Hermes reactors. The first reactor will use TRISO fuel that the company developed with DOE's Los Alamos National Laboratory, and Hermes 2 will make electricity by consuming TRISO fuel jointly made by BWXT and Kairos Power.

Next: BWXT and LIS Technologies offer different approaches to making enriched uranium for nuclear reactors.

Thank you, Carolyn, for continuing your review of the nuclear companies featured on the Nuclear Science Week's "Dirt Tour." This is the third of a five-part series being published in Historically Speaking.

Romans 7



Melvin Howard

Romans 7:1-6 dead to the law; alive to God: Paul now speaks to a fundamental principle. The law has a claim on people while they are living. Here is an example. A woman is bound to her husband only while he is alive. If the husband dies, she is discharged from his law. If she joins herself to another man while her husband is alive, she is rightly labeled as an adulteress. However, if the husband dies, she is free to wed again without

the stigma of adultery. What is the point of the illustration? (This analogy is limited; it does not consider a potential divorce for marital infidelity (Mt. 19:9); such would serve no purpose in this example.)

Here is the point. The Jewish Christians were made “dead” (separated) to the law of Moses by means of the death of Christ (Eph. 2:13-15; Col. 2:14) so that they might be joined to another. (The death of Christ terminated the law of Moses.) Phasing into a new stage of the imagery, there is the reference to Jesus, who was raised from the dead. By implication, Jewish converts were joined to him through the gospel that “fruit” (spiritual offspring) might be brought forth to God (v.4). Clearly the death of Christ was the “continental divide” between the two covenant systems.

Here is the application. Before Jewish Christians were converted, those sinful urges, revealed by the law, worked through their body members, leading them to death (v. 5). But now (having become Christians), they are “discharged” from Moses’ law. Paul argues: “We have died to the bondage of that system. We now serve with a new disposition, not in the former legalistic fashion.”

(Romans 7:7-13) the law and sin: are we to conclude that the law itself was sinful? Certainly not. It was very good for its intended purpose. The law was designed to teach the Jew the nature of sin, which he could not have known without it. For example, one could not have defined “coveting” if the law had not prohibited such and illustrated it. (Paul quotes from the Ten Commandments; this negates the Sabbatarian quibble that though the “ceremonial” law was cancelled by Jesus’ death, the Decalogue was not.)

The law is personified as an agent of complicity in generating sin (since there would be no sin without law). It frequently is the case that when one is forbidden to do something, his evil impulses encourage him to yield all the more (v. 8). Paul, using himself as an illustration, suggests that apart from law (and thus the knowledge of sin), one feels alive. But when he is exposed to the law, sin (which has lain dormant as a result of ignorance) comes to life with all its ugliness, and one learns he is spiritually dead (v. 9). The commandment (law) which was assumed to produce life, in reality produced nothing but death--for it had no power to impart life (v. 10). Sin is then personified. “Sin, working through the law (without which there would be no sin), deceived me, and provided me with the vain hope of life by means of the law.” Paul says, “The law became a tool to take my life” (v. 11).

Is the fault to be found in the law itself? Not at all! For the law, as given by God, is holy, righteous, and good---for the purpose it was designed to accomplish. How then could that which is good produce death? When the law was trusted to provide life, which it never could do, it produced only disappointment. The law, by furnishing the opportunity for violation, hence sin, ultimately became an instrument of death. Such should have driven one to grace and the Lord Jesus Christ--another important purpose of the law. The apostle now returns to a discussion of the aim of Moses’ law. It was intended to show sin as sin and to highlight it as “exceeding sinful” (v. 13).

(Romans 7:14-25) the limitation of the law: in this segment of the chapter, Paul appears to use his own frustration to illustrate the ineptness of the law as a source of comfort in dealing with sin. The law was a spiritual instrument intended to reveal to the Jew his hopeless condition under Hebrew law. The problem was not with the law; it was with fleshly man, who, hard as he tries, sells out to sin, and his sinfulness is reflected by the law’s condemnation. (When one is less-than-attractive---to express the matter courteously---there is no virtue in blaming the mirror.)

Paul’s anxiety is summarized as follows: (a) In hyperbolic fashion, he feels like he has sold out to sin. (b) He does not understand why he does what he does on occasion. (c) He is conscious of things he should do---and wants to do---but is not doing. (d) He finds himself doing what he knows he ought not---even things he hates. It is a distressing situation. To employ a further dramatic description: at times it feels like he has lost his will power and that sin has taken up residence in him (14-17).

A source of much controversy is whether Paul is speaking of his pre-Christian life or his present struggle. The present tense verbs would appear to argue in favor of the latter view (for an excellent discussion see Jack Cottrell’s commentary). He therefore appears to be emphasizing that while his soul has been saved from sin, he still resides in a fleshly body, long trained by habit (Eph. 2:1-3), and that his life is one of constant warfare---without and within (v. 18-19). The humble apostle does not deny personal responsibility; he does concede a tremendous struggle within him (v. 20-21). If such was true in Paul’s case, what shall be said for those of us of weaker constitution?

The brutally honest, conflicted apostle describes the emotional turmoil that is common to devout Christians of every age. There is a delight for the principle of law that puts man under obligation to the Creator and helps restrain him, appealing to his mind with evidence and reason. There is, however, a different law that wars in one’s body members. Such leaves us in a state of wretchedness at times, and causes us to long for deliverance (v. 24). There is a fresh breeze across this confusing terrain; it is the hope we have through our Lord Jesus Christ, the dispenser of grace (v. 25). Paul therefore pledges to continue serving God with his mind and within the framework of divine restraint, though he understands that sin will always be a problem as long as he is in the flesh.

(1 John 1:5-10) Walk in the Light: John declares that the divine message, received from Christ and announced to his readers, is that “God is light” and is void of any semblance of darkness---a proposition applicable to Jesus as well (Jn. 1:4-9; 8:12). If a person claims to enjoy “fellowship” with God while he continues to “walk” (live in an unrestrained fashion) within the domain of spiritual “darkness,” his life is a “lie,” and he is not practicing a life of truth (v.6). On the other hand, if one “walk” (as a consistent mode of existence) in the light (of divine revelation via the Scriptures), then he shares a relationship with other Christians, and the cleansing effect of Jesus’ shed blood constantly works on his behalf, effecting pardon from sin (v.7). If a person claims to live above sin (which some ancient heretics did), he is self-deceived and truth is not resident in him (v.8). Some modern sectarians claim they have risen to live above sin; others allege they sin with the body but not with the soul---a theological impossibility.

“If” (a condition) we make it a practice to “confess” (to acknowledge consistent with divine revelation) our sins (whether to God alone or to others, as the case may require), the Lord will be faithful, operating in harmony with his system of righteousness, to forgive our sins and to cleanse (Heb. 9:14) us from all wrongs (v.9). If one claims he has not committed “sin” (specific sins being in view) he is implying that Christ is a liar (because Jesus claimed to have died for our sins), and the Lord’s word is not operating within him. The one who claims sinless perfection is both arrogant and ignorant!

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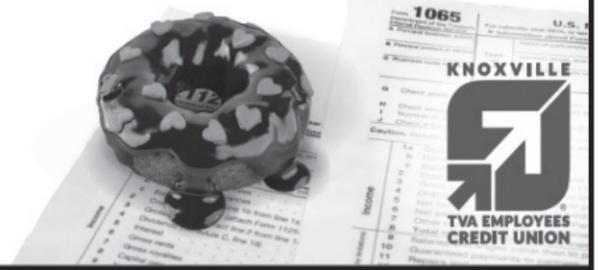
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