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RYAN HERMENS | The Sun

Festival draws crowd

Thousands of people turned out Saturday for the Lower Town Arts & Music Festival in Paducah. Musicians performed throughout the day while vendors lined streets selling art, jewelry and other wares. The festival is in its sixth year.

Retired doctor speaks out about fight with depression

BY GENEVIEVE POSTLETHWAIT

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Dr. Jay Pitman seems like a man in constant motion. Running, biking, swimming — he does it all, triathlons included. If you drive Paducah's roads frequently, you've probably seen him out and active. What you can't see is the reason behind Pitman's runs and rides. Often, he's trying to outpace his depression.



Pitman

said Pitman, who's 58. "I put on my little dog and pony show. I just take it day by day. Some days you're just making it breath to breath, and other days you're kind of OK. But are you ever happy? No. "You have fun, and you're maybe content even, but internal content? That's rare, be-

cause you feel like something's getting ready to happen all the time, even if something good's going on. You think, when's it going to happen again? You're always running from the black dog. You have to keep moving."

The Paducah anesthesiologist was forced into early retirement in 2014 after suffering a brain hemorrhage in a hit-and-run crash while riding his bike in Noble Park. He's always been

Please see **STRUGGLE** | 7A

Tuition plan could boost local program

BY LAUREN P. DUNCAN

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Local education leaders aren't yet sure how a state proposal to give two free years of college tuition to Kentucky high school graduates will affect the local Community Scholarship Program.

program continues to thrive. Paducah and McCracken County have been a trendsetter in Kentucky through the Community Scholarship Program (CSP). It was established at West Kentucky Community & Technical College in 2010, years ahead of the proposal to develop something similar across the state this year.

Gov. Matt Bevin vetoed House Bill 626 this spring, which would have set up the program, but more than \$15 million for it remains in the budget.

Locally, the CSP has been funded through a mix of public and private funds, including \$125,000 each from the city and

Please see **BOOST** | 9A

Local mail carriers benefit food pantries

BY KAYLAN THOMPSON

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As locals drove past the United States Postal Service Annex in Paducah on Saturday afternoon, all may have seemed quiet. A peek behind the building, however, revealed a bustling, countywide campaign called Stamp Out Hun-

ger, the annual food drive of the National Association of Letter Carriers. "It's an organized fiasco," said local drive coordinator and carrier James Cissell, picking up another 40-pound box of canned goods and dropping it on a scale.

Please see **FOOD** | 9A



Richard Hayden (left), of St. Vincent de Paul, places a box of donated food items on a scale for letter carrier James Cissell (second from left) to weigh Saturday during the U.S. Postal Service's Stamp Out Hunger annual food drive. Carriers unloaded the food from their trucks at the USPS Annex off Park Avenue in Paducah, where it was then weighed and distributed to six local food pantries. The drive raised 7,110 pounds of food, with each pantry receiving about 1,300 pounds.

RYAN HERMENS | The Sun

Both Clinton, Sanders seek Kentucky lift

BY JACK BRAMMER

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FRANKFORT — Democratic presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders are in Kentucky today as they battle for bragging rights in the Bluegrass State.

Though Kentucky is a small state in helping a candidate secure delegate votes at this summer's convention, Tuesday's primary is playing a big role this year in the Democratic presidential race.

"We're getting all this attention because Kentucky is a state that should favor Hillary, but Bernie is still around," said University of Kentucky political science professor Stephen Voss.

"The national headlines for Kentucky's primary election are either going to say 'Clinton slows down Sanders in Kentucky' or 'Sanders keeps the momentum,'" Voss said. "They both are seeking the headline they want to try to influence upcoming primary elections in other states that provide many more delegates than Kentucky offers."

Sanders, a U.S. senator from Vermont, kicked off a two-day swing through Kentucky on Saturday with a rally in Bowling Green. He will appear at a 1 p.m. rally today at the Julian Carroll Convention Center in Paducah.

Clinton will attend a Get Out the Vote event at 2:15 p.m. today in Louisville and will stop in Covington later in the day. On Monday, she is to visit Bowling Green and Lexington.

Please see **PRIMARY** | 7A

Facebook executive gives moving address

Associated Press

BERKELEY, Calif. — Facebook Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg encouraged graduating seniors at the University of California, Berkeley to persevere in life's challenging times, speaking publicly for the first time about her husband's death during a commencement speech.

Sandberg, whose husband, Dave Goldberg, died in a treadmill accident while on vacation last year in Mexico, said she was "swallowed up in the deep fog of grief."

"Dave's death changed me in very profound ways," she told 4,700 graduating seniors. "I learned about the depths of sadness and the brutality of loss. But I also learned that when life sucks you under, you can kick against the bottom, break the surface and breathe again."

Losing her husband helped her find deeper gratitude for the kindness of her friends, the love of her family



Sandberg

Please see **SANDBERG** | 9A

LOCAL

UPCOMING KICK-A-THON

Nearly 100 young karate students will be throwing a collective 10,000 kicks in support of local children.

2A



NATION

CLINTON'S IMAGE ISSUES

Whether Hillary Clinton is competing against rival Bernie Sanders or GOP candidate Donald Trump, the concern is the same: They're seen as populist leaders while she is viewed as part of the establishment.

8A

Forecast

Today

67°



Mostly sunny.

10A

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STRUGGLE

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advocate for helmets and bike safety, and he became even more outspoken on the subject following the accident.

After hearing news in recent months of several area young people taking their own lives, Pitman felt he had to say something about this, too. He wanted to share his own experience “at the bottom of the cup” to let people know they’re not alone.

He’s not a writer, he said, but he wrote an essay to share with Sun readers. It appears below.

“The main reason I want to do this is not to be some hero, but to encourage people to get help,” Pitman said. “Get help. Don’t be ashamed. Don’t think there’s something wrong with you because you’re a big macho man and you’re depressed. You could be Arnold Schwarzenegger and still be depressed. It doesn’t matter.”

Pitman: Every day can be a struggle

BY DR. JAY PITMAN

You wake up behind a sleep mask you have worn for a very long time. You pull it from your head and wonder, is there sleep in my eyes? Did I sleep last night?

You brush yourself off and shake your head, as if you’ve just been in an accident. Then you wonder... is this going to be one of those days where you’re just trying to make it to your next breath, or will it be a “good” day?

Then you force yourself up and start your day. You put your feet to the floor thinking, if you could just crawl back into bed no one would know... ah, safety. Although it is a beautiful day outside, it just seems overwhelming and impossible.

This is my morning, waking up with depression. With depression, you can certainly dread the day.

While others may see you perhaps as the “Wizard of Oz,” you feel more like the “man behind the curtain.” You put on a smile, your “act.”

No matter what others tell you, your mind is telling you “You’re worthless and no one really cares.”

You hide your disease, smile and joke knowing that even an innocent word or look can cut you to the core. You want to burst into tears, but you can’t. You stuff it down, smile and go about your day. Inside you feel undeserving of life or the gifts you have been given and wishing people could understand.

Many famous men and women have suffered like you. Abraham Lincoln took strychnine, and other “medications” to try to relieve his “melancholia.” Winston Churchill, who led Great Britain during the horror of World War II, called it “the black dog who comes and lays at my feet.”

The list is long: Sheryl Crow, Agatha Christie, Halle Berry, Andre Waters, Barbara Bush, John Hamm, Owen Wilson, Ashley Judd, Princess Diana and numerous comedians who cover up their depression by being funny, a technique I know so well.

Some days even the smallest tasks, such as taking a shower or brushing your teeth, can seem overwhelming. You’re drowning at the bottom of a cup and can’t swim your way out,

For Pitman, depression tore into his life in the winter of 1995, settled in and never left.

He remembers a Wednesday morning that year riding his bike from his home on Buckner Lane to work at Baptist Health and just not feeling right. Something was wrong, “an eerie feeling.” By the following Saturday he was hospitalized. He remembers being locked in his room with an orderly watching him shave and thinking, “This is my low.”

Since that winter Pitman’s tried several methods to manage his depression — prayer, therapy, medications, supplements, retreats. He said he has every self-help book imaginable at his house. His colleagues at the hospital were understanding and helpful. His family has been very supportive and kept him going. But the depression never left.

Pitman said he’s thought about suicide, but never tried to kill himself. He resolved years ago that suicide’s not an option.

no matter how hard you try. Sometimes you feel that if you could just get back in bed it would be better; with responsibilities and people depending on you, however, this isn’t an option.

So you keep going. Others seem to like you, even love you, but you can’t always feel or truly enjoy it. You wonder how they could possibly love someone who that fights a demon with every breath. You feel shame, and nothing helps completely.

The disease of depression has a stigma attached. A psychiatrist or therapist typically doesn’t have an office sign that indicates what type of physician they are or services they offer. The phones are typically answered in a generic greeting, such as “Doctor’s office.”

Entering a waiting room where heads are buried into magazines, you attempt to make eye contact or speak a friendly word, but no one looks up. Patients rush in and rush out in an effort to be invisible. Depression can make you feel alone in a crowd, even with friends and family. It can make you feel “weak” or “de-

fective.”

Depression is an illness; it is not a weakness or a defect.

Depression can be as lethal as a heart attack and as serious as other diseases. When a person is diagnosed with a terminal illness, there is typically an outpouring of sympathy. Those with serious depression usually suffer in silence with a smile that takes a tremendous effort.

No one wants to hear about your disease. Words such as, “What’s wrong with you?” “You have so much to be thankful for” or “How can you feel that way?” are things heard constantly by someone with depression, but would rarely be spoken to someone suffering another type of serious illnesses.

So, you do your best. You listen to what your psychiatrist tells you to do; take your medication, exercise every day, train your thoughts, all in an effort to “climb out.” There are times I could ride my bike, run, or swim for hours, while crying most of the time. Why? Because I’m trying to get out of the bottom of the cup.

You see your psychia-

It makes him angry to hear people speak of depression or mental illness like it’s a joke, like it’s not real. Most people understand it or can at least empathize, he said, but some just don’t.

You never know what other people are suffering through, Pitman said, but he knows there are others out there suffering too.

“It’s not like I have a secret answer,” he continued. “If I did, I’d give it to myself. Just keep going. That’s all you can do. Don’t let it get too far, and keep doing the things you have to do to keep yourself healthy, even though they’re hard. When the alarm goes off, get up. Brush your teeth. Go on. Try. Even if you have to cry all day long, at least get through the day, you know?”

“Hopefully tomorrow will be better.”

Pitman said he would try to be helpful to anyone who contacts him. He can be reached at Sirjaymundpitman@gmail.com.

trist more often, talk to a trusted therapist or minister, email your feelings to friends, hoping that someone has the magic remedy or perfect words that will “fix” you or cure your disease.

There are many caring people who want to help. There are those you can text at 2 a.m. when you are desperate. You pray you sleep well tonight, or tomorrow will be worse. Many days you dread or even fear going to bed. What if I can’t sleep? ... What if? What if?

The pattern can repeat itself, like the movie “Groundhog Day,” except it is real life.

There are good days, where you laugh and have fun, but “it” still lurks and you try to fight it off. On the bad days, you just try to “make it,” going on with your day and keeping your mind as busy as possible.

So many people fight depression, as well as an assortment of other mental illnesses. Some can’t mask it, yet others disguise it very well. It could be your neighbor, your co-worker, your classmate or your friend.

They may have a supportive spouse, wonderful children, a loving

family and successful career. They could be the straight-A student, tremendous athlete, talented artist or the “funny kid” in class — appearing to “have it all” but feeling as if they have nothing.

Depression is becoming a more open topic of discussion. Unfortunately, it has been at the expense of the lives of many well-known celebrities, successful professionals and young adults. Depression, and other mental illnesses are tough to explain and even more difficult to understand; therefore most suffer in silence.

I have fought depression since the winter of 1995-96. Since my bike accident in 2014, it has become more profound and at times feels smothering.

There are talented professionals and services available to those who suffer. My hope is that those who suffer will seek help and talk openly about their disease without feeling ashamed or embarrassed.

Today I will swim laps, tomorrow I’ll run. Each and every day I hope to escape from the “black dog” that is chasing me.

PRIMARY

CONTINUED FROM 1A

At stake in Kentucky’s Democratic presidential primary election Tuesday are 55 pledged delegates to the July 25-28 Democratic convention in Philadelphia. (Kentucky Republicans held their presidential caucus on March 5, which was won by Donald Trump.)

Kentucky’s delegates will be apportioned to the candidates according to the percentage of votes each person wins, said Daniel Lowry, spokesman for the Kentucky Democratic Party. A presidential candidate must get at least 15 percent of the total vote to earn delegates.

Kentucky Democrats will have 60 total delegates to the convention — including five “unpledged” delegates, also known as “super-delegates,” said Lowry. Five alternates also will be elected.

An unpledged delegate is a delegate to the convention that is seated automatically, based on their status as a current or former party leader or elected official. They may vote for any candidate.

All the pledged delegates, which must support a candidate based on primary election results, will be elected on June 4 at the state convention in Louisville.

According to the Associated Press, Clinton

is leading Sanders in the national delegate count, 2,240 to 1,473. A total of 2,383 are needed to win the nomination. Still available are 1,052.

Of Clinton’s totals, 1,716 are pledged and 524 unpledged. Sanders has 1,433 pledged and 40 unpledged.

Tuesday’s presidential primary elections in Kentucky, with its 55 pledged delegates, and Oregon, with its 61 delegates, will not enable any candidate to clinch the nomination.

That is likely to come June 7 when 694 delegates are up for grabs in six states, including 475 in California and 126 in New Jersey.

The last primary will be June 14 for 20 delegates in the District of Columbia.

Theoretically, Clinton should do well in Louisville and Lexington, and among conservative Democrats in Western Kentucky, Voss said.

“The only place that may be really hard for her is Eastern Kentucky, but even there, she has a lot of friends with her strong ties to the Democratic establishment,” he said.

He noted that former Democratic Gov. Steve Beshear endorsed her this week, and the Clintons have close ties to former Democratic Party chairman Jerry Lundergan of Lexington and his daughter, Kentucky

Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes.

“But yet there is a golden opportunity for

Sanders to get good publicity out of Kentucky,” said Voss.

If Sanders does well in

Kentucky, said Voss, “it would give him bragging rights to continue his campaign.”

He said Sanders should win easily in Oregon “because it mainly is white, male liberals.”

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