

Community Life



Scholarship winners

The Gallatin County Historical Society awarded \$17,000 to winners of the Crume and Bogardus Scholarships, last Thursday. The winners were (from left): Jace Epifanio, Grayce Frasure, Brianna Griffin and Kate Thompson. Thompson's winning historical essay about the 1959 explosion that rocked Warsaw and the county is found below. Others will be printed in the weeks ahead. Photo by Kelley Warnick

The Christmas explosion of 1959

By Kate Thompson
Think back to your favorite childhood Christmas. You just finished opening your presents, Mom's making Christmas dinner, Dad's reading the newspaper, and you and your siblings are on the living room floor playing with your new toys.

Santa got you exactly what you wanted, you have no school, you smell freshly baked ham in the air, and everything is perfect. But not every Christmas memory carries such warmth and joy as the 1959 holiday in the small town of Warsaw, Kentucky, would tragically reveal. My grandfather, Denny French, was a child when Smith Distributing Company in Warsaw, Kentucky, had a massive explosion at approximately 3:14 p.m. on Christmas afternoon. The explosion was believed to be caused by a gas leak and a lit cigarette.

He remembers on that Christmas Day that suddenly there was a large bang and the windows of their home were suddenly shattered. This tragedy left one fatality, Jack Smith, owner of the company. In addition, 17 people were hospitalized, and 31 homes were destroyed.

Not one home in the

city was left untouched, according to the January 7th, 1960, *Gallatin County News*.

The impact was so powerful that it was felt far beyond Warsaw, even reaching neighboring counties. This widespread effect is supported by historical accounts, which describe just how far the blast was felt. According to one author, "I was sitting in Glencoe at the moment of the blast, and can personally testify that the blast could be felt across the county. But then, reports of the explosion also came in from Elsmere, Carrollton, and Williamstown, so Glencoe's not such a stretch." (NKYViews).

As the community began to recover, people from all over the state came together to help. According to the January 7th, 1960, *Gallatin County News*, churches opened their doors, the Red Cross provided essential support, and both state police and local firefighters worked tirelessly. The paper also notes, "Relatives in the local area cared for the homeless so thoroughly that not one emergency cot was used by the Red Cross." The small town banded together and supported each other.

This tragedy, though heartbreaking, brought

people closer in a way that only something like the holidays can. In a time that should have been filled with celebration, people instead turned to each other for comfort and support.

My grandpa remembers his mom and grandma making meals for others, and his Dad and the other men helped with repairs and cleaning up rubble.

Families opened their homes, neighbors helped one another without hesitation, and a small community leaned on each other to get through something devastating. Even in

the middle of loss, there was unity that stayed with the town long after the moment had passed. The 1959 Christmas Story of Warsaw, KY, is one that the town would remember for many years to come.

Works Cited

Gallatin County News. "Report on Warsaw Explosion Relief Efforts." 7 Jan. 1960.

French, Denny. *Personal Interview*. 15, April, 2026.

"Christmas, 1959." *NKYViews*, https://www.nkyviews.com/gallatin/gallatin_xmas_1959.htm. Accessed 23 April, 2026.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Gallatin County
Fiscal Court has
announced the
Fiscal Court
Meetings will be
permanently
moving to
Warsaw City Hall,
303 East Main St.,
Warsaw KY 41095.
The first meeting at this
location will be Thursday
July 9th at 6pm.

Senior Center Schedule

•The Senior Center serves breakfast and lunch.

It provides activities only, and is not medically staffed. Many games are available.

Lunch entrees may be beef or turkey, Salisbury steak, beef patties, chili, pork chops, country ham meatloaf, chicken, etc. Activities include Bible study, crafts, and health programs.

To reserve a hot meal, call 859-567-2118. The Center is open to all seniors, and disabled citizens.

The Center is located at 400 Third Street, Warsaw. This week's activities are:

Thursday, July 2:

9 a.m., Word Search
10 a.m., Advisory Meeting

11 a.m., Coloring
12 p.m., Lunch

Friday, July 3:
Closed

Saturday, July 4:

Senior Center will be passing out brochures and will have a basket giveaway and goodies for kids,

Happy 4th of July!

Monday, July 6:

9 a.m., Word Search
10 a.m., Bible Study
12 p.m., Lunch

Tuesday, July 7:

Wal-Mart

Wednesday, July 8:

9 a.m., Word Search
10 a.m., Chair Volleyball
11 a.m., Cards
12 p.m., Lunch

Bulletin Board

Thursday, July 2

•6 p.m., Glencoe Recreation Committee Meeting, Glencoe Church of Christ, Collins St., Glencoe.

•7:30 p.m., Tadmor Lodge #108 F&AM Meeting, Tadmor Lodge Hall, Warsaw.

Friday, July 3

•The Offices of the Gallatin County Judge/Executive, Gallatin County Circuit and District Courts, Gallatin County Clerk's Office, Gallatin County PVA Office, the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office, and the Gallatin County Public Library will be closed.

•The *Gallatin County News* will be open and all deadlines apply.

•7 p.m., Stand with Us AA Meetings, Gallatin County Public Library, 209 West Market St., Warsaw. Please enter through small meeting room door in back parking lot.

Saturday, July 4



•The Warsaw Post Office, Truist Bank, German American Bank, First National Bank of Kentucky, and the Gallatin County Public Library will be closed.



•1 p.m., Tadmor Masonic Lodge Independence Day Parade, Main St., Warsaw.

•Nightfall, Fireworks over the River, Warsaw Riverfront Park.

Monday, July 6

•The Warsaw City Building will be closed.

•5 p.m., Gallatin County Tourism Meeting, Gallatin County Extension Office, 395 U.S. 42 West, Warsaw.

•7 p.m., Gallatin County Farm Bureau Directors Meeting, Farm Bureau Office, Warsaw.

•7-8 p.m., Celebrate Recovery Curriculum, Pleasant Home Baptist Church, 1695 Pettit Pike, Glencoe. Reaching ones suffering with addictions.

Tuesday, July 7

•6 p.m., Hartig Property Park Meeting, Hartig Park Shelter House, 5660 Hwy. 1992, Warsaw.

•7 p.m., Gallatin County Planning Commission Meeting, Gallatin County Extension Office, 395 U.S. 42 West, Warsaw.

Wednesday, July 8

•10 a.m., Gallatin County Airport Board Meeting, Gallatin County Public Library, 209 West Market St., Warsaw.

•3-5 p.m., Warsaw Baptist Church Food Pantry, West High Street, Warsaw.

•6:30 p.m., Gallatin County Youth Sports Association Board Meeting, City Building, Warsaw.

•7 p.m., NA Meeting, Gallatin County Public Library, 209 West Market St., Warsaw. Please enter through small meeting room door in back parking lot.

The Gallatin County News

This week's weather
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This Week's Local Forecast						
WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Sunny 96/73	Sunny 95/74	Isolated T-storms 93/72	Isolated T-storms 92/73	Scattered T-storms 90/70	Scattered T-storms 89/71	Few Showers 84/63
Precip Chance: 5%	Precip Chance: 5%	Precip Chance: 30%	Precip Chance: 35%	Precip Chance: 45%	Precip Chance: 40%	Precip Chance: 50%

In-Depth Local Forecast for GALLATIN COUNTY

Today we will see sunny skies with a near record high temperature of 96°, humidity of 55%. Light winds. The heat index for today could reach up to 109°. The record high temperature for today is 98° set in 1970. Expect clear skies tonight with an overnight low of 73°. Light winds. The record low for tonight is 47° set in 2008. Thursday, skies will be sunny with a high temperature of 95°, humidity of 56%. Light winds. Thursday night, skies will be mostly clear with a slight chance of showers, overnight low of 74°. Light winds.

www.WhatsOurWeather.com

Weather Trivia

What was the greatest amount of snowfall in one day?

15.121.
Answer: 75.8 inches in Silver Lake, Colorado on April 14-15, 1921.

Weather History

July 1, 1987 - Lake Charles, La. was drenched with a month's worth of rain during the early morning. More than five inches of rain soaked the city. A thunderstorm in the southern Yakima Valley of Washington state produced high winds that downed large trees.