

Hometown Ramblings

By **Bobbie Smith Bryant**
Contributing Columnist



Summer in the Black Patch

Author's note: This article was previously published in "Passions of the Black Patch: Cooking and Quilting in Western Kentucky" in 2012.

Sultry, hot and sun-baked; summer bustles with activity in the Black Patch. The pastures are filled with Timothy and fescue, waving in the breeze, ready for harvesting. Beginning each day at sun-up, the farmer combines wheat, followed by the planting of no-till soybeans – getting two crops in one year. The corn crop is side-dressed. Stalks fill out with tasseled ears, eagerly reaching towards the sun.

As each day swelters, warmer than the last, the workers plow the bright green tobacco plants, now almost a foot in height. Carefully, they spray chemicals on the endless rows of tobacco, targeting insects and tobacco worms. In the intense heat of the afternoon, occasional thunderstorms may emerge. Every drop of rain is a welcome relief as tender shoots become hardy plants. The tobacco, as well as other crops, is susceptible to the elements, particularly strong winds.

School is out and children dash to the swimming hole behind the house. They splash, lie in the sun, and go frog gigging as favorite pastimes. Little boys

use an old blue mason jar dipped into the muddy water, finding tadpoles for afternoon fishing. The girls weave chain necklaces out of stems of clover and bake mud pies, whiling away the days in lazy fun.

Farmland paints its finest portrait during this bountiful growing season. Fence rows and ditches are vibrant with luscious blackberries, clustered in the overgrown brush, awaiting a crusty, homemade cobbler. Green beans cling to stick trellises in country gardens. Vines are laden with squash and melon. Fresh zucchini, cabbage and hearty carrots supply the supper table with delicious favorites. Tiger lilies display their spectacular orange blooms. At the back of the tobacco barn a row of red, pink and yellow hollyhock stands at attention. The pathways to the fields are filled with the sweet fragrance of wild honeysuckle.

An iron dinner bell clangs across the fields, calling the workers in for the noon-time meal. A frosty glass of sweetened iced tea is welcome refreshment, served alongside ham sandwiches. A cold salad of cucumbers, onions and tomatoes, marinated in vinaigrette dressing completes the meal.

Thousands of cicadas create a unique backdrop of noise on these sizzling hot days. As the



Photo provided

Above, rows of Black Patch tobacco plants soak up the summer sun. Below is the cover for Bobbie Smith Bryant's 2012 book "Passions of the Black Patch: Cooking and Quilting in Western Kentucky," where this column originally ran.

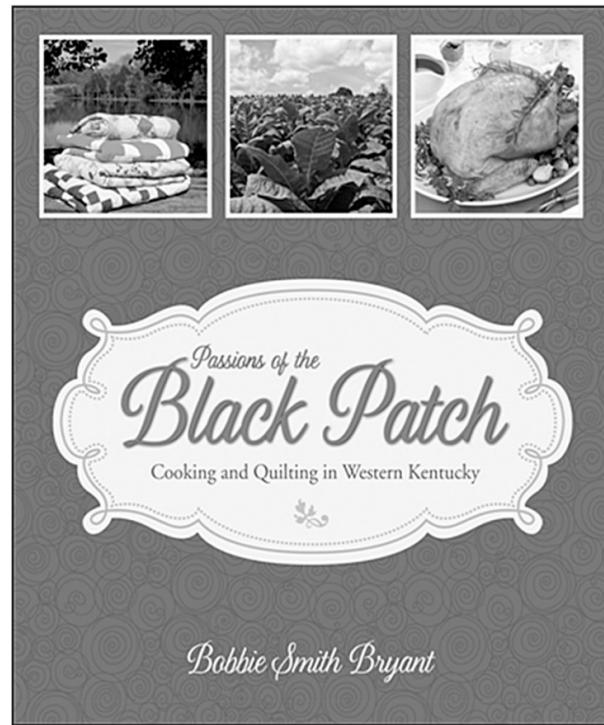
tobacco grows taller, it is topped and suckered at least once and sometimes twice. Spraying continues over the bean crop with insecticide, fungicide and liquid fertilizer. On the days when outdoor work is caught up, the workers clean and repair equipment, preparing for the next round of plowing and harvesting.

For a taste of good old-fashioned political debate, the Fancy Farm Picnic will provide an opportunity to catch up with friends and neighbors and hear the rhetoric of the day. The day-long event features activities for all ages, and there is always enough barbecue to feed an army.

Most evenings, when the

farm is at rest and the dark of night arrives, the sound of nature erupts. The pond is alive with the croaking of bull frogs. Crickets rub their wings together, singing a love song to their mate. Lightning bugs sparkle against the black sky, as the stars illuminate the heavens.

Bobbie Smith Bryant is a native of Calloway County. She currently serves as a Community and Economic Development Advisor for the Kentucky League of Cities. She is passionate about western Kentucky and is currently working on a commemorative history to celebrate the 2022 Calloway County Bicentennial. For more information about the author, visit bobbie-smithbryant.com.



Editor's Note: Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the editorial opinion of the Murray Ledger & Times.

Bobbie Smith Bryant

Kentucky State Police investigating discovery of human remains in Trigg County

Staff Report

CADIZ – Detectives with Kentucky State Police Post 1 are investigating the discovery of human remains that were located early Sunday morning in Trigg County.

In a news release, Post 1 Public Affairs Officer Adam Jones said that, around 3:40 a.m. Sunday, Post 1 dispatch received a call from Stewart County, Tennessee requesting assistance regarding the possible discovery of human remains. Jones said that initial investigation shows the remains were located in the waters of Lake Barkley north of

the US 68/KY 80 Lake Barkley Bridge at Canton.

KSP is no stranger to this type of investigation. Last year, in fact, it was called to another scene in Trigg County, this time along Kentucky Lake. This was a little downstream from The Breakers Marina in northeastern Henry County, Tennessee, where authorities said Jeffrey Rogers of Arlington, Texas launched a boat that carried a container. Inside the container was the body of Traci Jones, 41, of Dublin, Texas.

Texas authorities say that Rogers strangled Jones on June 15, two days before he and his

wife, Tammy, traveled from Texas to visit family in Calloway County. It was the next morning that authorities say Jeffrey then rented the boat at The Breakers and deposited the container with Jones' body into the lake.

Jeffrey's case is still in the Texas court system.

Jones asks anyone with details that may be related to the discovery in Lake Barkley to contact Post 1 at 270-856-3721. The investigation is ongoing at this time and is being conducted by Detective Nate Moore. More information will be released as details become available. ■

Impaired

From front

of this, other drivers on the road should be aware of them and pay extra attention as they make their way to and from parties and other gatherings, he said.

Knight said CCSO gets federal grants to participate in various highway safety campaigns, such as "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" with Kentucky State Police and law enforcement agencies. There are usually safety campaigns and checkpoints going on Memorial Day, July 4 and Labor Day, as well as one around Christmas.

Although KSP's "Click It or Ticket" campaign recently concluded, he expects all agencies to be out in full force.

"If you see a bunch of blue lights, it could be a road check looking for impaired driving, so be cautious of that," Knight said.

Trooper Adam Jones, spokesman for Kentucky State Police Post 1, said that besides avoiding driving impaired, the increased amount of traffic on the road is another reason drivers should be vigilant.

"The Fourth of July holiday always brings out more travelers on the roadway, so it's important for motorists to remain aware to drive defensively and pay attention to the roadway – especially during this time, but always," Jones said. "It's a good practice just to watch the road and make sure that you're paying attention. Keep your phone down and buckle up, but definitely don't

drive impaired. If you need to call someone, we have plenty of taxi services in the Post 1 district that can take you where you need to go, but if not a taxi, get a friend or a relative to drive for you, and always have a designated driver.

"Post 1 will continue to be doing their regular enforcement. We will ramp up traffic enforcement, especially during the Fourth of July weekend, and you're likely to see some traffic safety checkpoints pop up. Don't be alarmed at those; those are just to make sure motorists are abiding by traffic laws, and it shouldn't take more than a few seconds to get you through if everything is good to go."

"The Murray Police Department always works to keep our community safe, and we will continue that over this holiday weekend to make sure our community is safe," said MPD spokesman Sgt. Andrew Wiggins in an email.

According to the Kentucky Department of Highway Safety, there were 62 crashes last year in Kentucky due to a drunken and/or drugged driver over the Fourth of July holiday period, resulting in 39 injuries and two deaths.

"Impaired driving is 100% preventable," said KYTC Secretary Jim Gray in the news release. "Drivers must understand that drugs and/or alcohol not only hinder your ability to drive, but also affect your judgment about whether you can or should drive. You may think you're fine, but impairment slows judg-

ment, coordination and reaction times."

According to NHTSA, impaired driving fatalities typically spike during holidays. To prevent tragedies from occurring, the KYTC recommends the following:

- Before the festivities begin, plan a way to get home at the end of the night safely.

- If you're impaired, use a ride-sharing company, taxi, call a sober friend or family member or use public transportation to get home safely.

- If you see an impaired driver, safely pull over and contact law enforcement. You may dial the KSP toll-free line directly at 1-800-222-5555 or call 911.

- If you know people who are about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to their destination safely.

- Wear a seat belt. It is not only the law, it is the best defense against an impaired driver. Buckling up helps prevent injury and death if involved in a crash.

"If you are under the influence of any substance and choose to get behind the wheel, you put everyone on the road in danger, including yourself," Gray added. "Remember – buzzed driving is drunk driving."

For more information on drunken driving, visit <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunk-driving>. For more information on drug-impaired driving visit <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drug-impaired-driving>. ■



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