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**HOLIDAY TIPS**



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**Erwin, Rainey claim Miss UT Martin, Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival titles**

By Emma Bruner

Caleigh Jo Erwin, of Dyersburg, and Karena Rainey, of Adamsville, have been competing in pageants their entire lives. The two University of Tennessee at Martin students were crowned Miss UT Martin and Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival respectively during the combined pageant held Nov. 5 in the Boling University Center's Duncan Ballroom. The Miss UT Martin Scholarship Pageant is in its 59th year, while the Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival title was awarded for the 23rd time.

Completing the Miss UT Martin court are Malea Bigham, of Turtletown, first runner-up, and Sierra Smith, of Newland, North Carolina, second runner-up. The Miss Tennessee Soybean Festival first runner-up is Kailey Duffy,

of Holladay, and second runner-up was Tera Townsend, of Nashville. Bigham and Smith are current UT Martin students, and Duffy is an alum.

Pageant competition includes private interview, fitness and wellness, talent and evening wear. Each contestant is scored individually from one to 10 in each category during the daylong competition. Erwin, a fourth-year fashion merchandise major, believes winning the Miss UT Martin title was the perfect way to finish her collegiate career. "I feel this is an opportunity to give back to the university and community after all it has given me," she said.

Participating in pageants has also given Erwin a platform to spread awareness about lupus, an autoimmune disease she was diagnosed with

at 18 years old. "I strive to be a support system for other young women and men that are diagnosed with any autoimmune disease," she said. "I want to be an example to not let the disease take away from who they are but to embrace it."

Karena Rainey, a health and human performance major, credits pageants for helping turn her into the woman she is today. "Pageants have shaped my life in so many ways, whether it be lending a helping hand to someone in need, gaining public speaking and communication skills, or simply making new friends," said Rainey. She is excited to represent the Tennessee Soybean Festival and the city of Martin in the Miss Tennessee Volunteer pageant next summer. "It is programs like this

**WUTM sweeps categories at TAB awards program**

By Emma Bruner

The University of Tennessee at Martin's student-operated radio station, WUTM 90.3 "The Hawk," was awarded first and second places in both categories offered in the college competitions at the inaugural Tennessee Association of Broadcasters "Excellence in Broadcasting" awards banquet. The event was held Oct. 4 at the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville.

The Radio Horizon award was awarded to the best up-and-coming college radio reporter or personality. Blaine McDonald, a senior broadcasting student from Martin, received this award recognizing the newscasts she has anchored. Dylan Ingram, a senior media design major also from Martin, received second place for his newscasts and spot reporting.

"I was honestly extremely shocked to have won the Radio Horizon award," said McDonald. "To win this award makes me truly grateful for everything I have learned at UTM."

The best radio news,

sports or event coverage award was presented to Shannon Sullivan, a 2022 meteorology graduate from Colorado Springs, Colorado, for her "severe weather coverage" on WUTM. Second place went to Davis Gregory, a senior broadcasting major from Knoxville, McDonald, and Daariq Burton, a senior broadcasting major from Cordova, for their sports talk show, "The Bench."

The Tennessee Association of Broadcasters advocates for and provides support to the broadcast industry in Tennessee through education and creating relationships between broadcasters and citizens.

WUTM 90.3 "The Hawk" is in its 51st year as UT Martin's student radio station. Programming is available over the air and through live streaming. Dr. Richard Robinson, professor in the Department of Mass Media and Strategic Communication, is the station's faculty adviser. For more information about the station, contact Robinson at [rrobins2@utm.edu](mailto:rrobins2@utm.edu).



see TITLES, page 8

## HOLIDAY TIPS

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Personal growth is at the heart of many New Year's resolutions. Few paths to positive personal growth are more noble than resolving to help others through increased acts of generosity and kindness.

According to Psychology Today,

doing good for others, no matter how big or small the deed, feels good but also provides reciprocal benefits. The link between volunteering and lower rates of depression has been well-documented, and there is neural evidence from MRI studies suggesting a link between being generous and signs of happiness in the brain.

The following are several ways to improve oneself by being more mindful of others.

- Be aware of social issues. Read your local newspaper to stay up-to-date on the pulse of your community as well as the world. Educate yourself about current issues that are affecting people



- Learn a new language. North America is a melting pot that's home to people from many different parts of the world. Learning a new language may facilitate interactions with fellow community members who might not speak English as a first language.
- Help someone you know. It's commendable to want to assist a charity or a global cause, but what about people close to you who may need a boost? Whether you're lugging boxes to help a friend move or babysitting a niece or nephew so their parents can enjoy a much-needed night out, when you help someone, those good deeds will return to you in time.

support a cause you believe in and makes it possible for you to collaborate with others who are like-minded, potentially helping you make new friends.

When making resolutions, people should consider goals that involve helping others. While this assistance can benefit the people who are on the receiving end of the care and attention, those who are giving of themselves also reap considerable rewards.

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## HOLIDAY TIPS

# Christmas tidbits to put you in the holiday spirit

The holiday season has arrived, and millions of people across the globe will be celebrating Christmas with their families and friends. The following are some interesting tidbits to share with your loved ones this holiday season.

- Each year, more than three billion Christmas cards are sent in the United States alone.
- Christmas was not declared an official holiday in the United States until June 26, 1870.
- Christmas trees typically grow for 15 years before they're cut and sold. This means the trees sold today were likely planted in 2000.
- Santa Claus' modern look was inspired by writings from The Knickerbockers of New York and imagery from Clement Clarke Moore's "A Visit from St. Nicholas." Moore denied authoring the famous poem for 15 years after it was published anonymously, feeling the poem was beneath his talents.



- Santa has his own official postal code. It's HO HO HO.
- Male reindeer tend to shed their antlers in the winter. This means Santa's reindeer are likely female.

# Give the Gift of Practicality

**(Family Features)**  
Giving the perfect holiday gift to a loved one can add unnecessary stress and pressure, but you don't have to drive far and wide to find presents your friends and family members will love. Some of the best gifts are practical, everyday options that you know will be put to good use.

Look no further than your local hardware store. With 72% of United States households within 15 minutes of an Ace Hardware, you can find a wide variety of gifts to put smiles on loved ones' faces whether you shop conveniently online or in person. As a one-stop shop for grills, power tools, home decor and more, knowledgeable associates are ready to help you find the perfect gifts for those on your list whether you're looking for big ticket

items or one-of-a-kind stocking stuffers.

For example, a new pellet grill may be the solution for the home chef who seems to have everything already, providing a simple way to prepare delicious meals any day of the week. Or, if you're looking to help make outdoor cleanup a cinch, consider an option like a cordless, battery-powered blower to keep the yard, driveway and other spaces neat and tidy.

Find more gift-giving inspiration at [acehardware.com](http://acehardware.com).

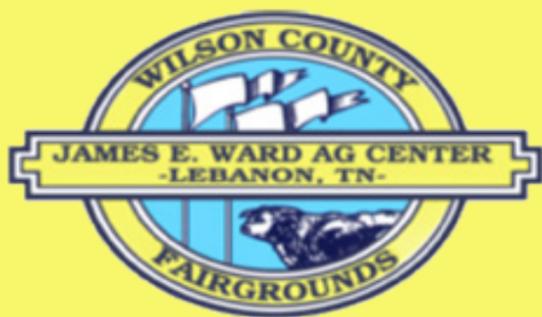
### Cook Up a Crave-Worthy Gift

If you're looking for a unique gift for the grill master in your life, look no further than the Traeger Pro 575 Wood Pellet Grill, a pellet grill that helps make achieving wood-fired flavor easier. The

enhanced WiFIRE technology allows you to monitor and adjust your grill anytime, anywhere directly from an app. Getting that perfect flavor is easier with this grill that starts quicker, heats up faster and puts out better smoke quality with its D2 drivetrain.

### Make Gift-Giving a Breeze

For the person in your life who loves taking care of the yard and other outdoor spaces, give the gift that keeps on giving by making cleanup a breeze with the EGO Power+ 530 CFM Blower, a step up in power and convenience for the line of cordless blowers. Inspired by advanced aeronautics technology and equipped with turbine fan engineering, this compact and lightweight blower can run for 75 minutes on a single charge.



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# UT Martin student chosen to serve on 2023 AFA Student Advisory team

University of Tennessee at Martin student Jordan Stringfield was selected as a member of the 2023 Agriculture Future of America Student Advisory team at the AFA Leaders Conference on Nov. 10-13. Only ten members were selected to serve on the advisory team out of 792 delegates that attended from 103 colleges.

The AFA student advisory team helps plan and facilitate the AFA Leaders Conference and AFA Leader Institute. To be eligible for the team, students must be an undergraduate student majoring in agriculture, food or

natural resources, have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0, be 17-25 years old, and have attended at least one track of AFA leaders conference.

As a member of the AFA student advisory team, Stringfield will have the opportunity to travel to different locations for meetings and professional development. She will have a role in planning and facilitating the annual conference and other agriculturally-based institutes located across the country while working alongside her teammates, staff and students.

Preparation for this moment began as early as Stringfield's freshman year in high



Jordan Stringfield

school when she chose to heavily pursue agriculture. Some four years later, she was chosen to represent UT Martin at the AFA Conference as a delegate. Stringfield loved this opportunity and with some help from her advisor, Dr. Ross Pruitt, professor of agriculture, geoscience,

and natural resources, chose to apply for the advisory team.

"After I submitted the application, it was reviewed, and the AFA staff reached out to me for an interview. I was nervous and doubted myself the entire time," said Stringfield. "To my surprise, I received a call a few weeks later letting me know that I had been selected. I truly couldn't believe it."

Stringfield is a sophomore agriculture business major from McEwen. After graduation, she hopes to earn her master's degree in agriculture communications and then pursue a career in that field.

"Agriculture is an industry that people often forget the importance of, and I hope that I can do my part to make a difference," said Stringfield. "I love everything about AFA and I am forever grateful and honored to have this opportunity."

For more information about the AFA Leaders Conference or advisory teams, go to [www.agfuture.org](http://www.agfuture.org).



## UT Martin students to serve as legislative interns in 2023

Six University of Tennessee at Martin students will spend the spring semester in Nashville as legislative interns. Five students interviewed and accepted positions with the Tennessee Legislative Internship Program for the spring 2023 session of the Tennessee General Assembly, and one student will intern with the UT System's Office of Government Relations and Advocacy.

Iman Ahmed, of Memphis; Ethan Bledsoe, of Jamestown; Patrick Davis, of Jackson; Cindy Solis, of Shelbyville; and Dezarai White, of Bradford, will be legislative interns for the Tennessee General Assembly. Ahmed and Solis are political science majors, Davis and White are criminal justice majors, and Bledsoe is majoring in agricultural business. Julia Law, a political science major from Memphis, will be interning with the UT System.

As legislative interns,

these students will assist in tracking legislation, keeping records of committee meetings, researching policy issues and communicating with constituents. UT Martin has been represented through internships in Tennessee state government since 1973 when the late Dr. Ted Mosch, UT Martin professor of political science, helped start the Legislative Internship Program.

"These interns work hard, and leaders in state government will recognize their talents and potential and will support them in obtaining jobs," said Dr. Chris Baxter, UT Martin professor of political science. "The most immediate benefits (from the internship) are enjoyed by the students who use the experience as a launching pad for their careers."

For more information about the Legislative Internship Program, contact Baxter at [cbaxter@utm.edu](mailto:cbaxter@utm.edu).



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## STATE NEWS

## Middle Tennessee to play San Diego State in Hawaii Bowl

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. (AP) — Middle Tennessee will play San Diego State in the Hawaii Bowl on Dec. 24 on the campus of the University of Hawaii after the bowl game was canceled in 2020 and 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Blue Raiders (7-5) announced Monday they have accepted an invitation to play in the game after winning four of their last five to become bowl eligible. Middle Tennessee will be playing in its sixth bowl in eight seasons and 10th overall under coach Rick Stockstill.

San Diego State (7-5) of the Mountain West Conference won five of its final seven to become bowl eligible.

This is the second trip to this bowl for both programs. Middle Tennessee lost 52-35 to Hawaii in 2016, while San Diego State beat Cincinnati 42-7 in 2015. Conference USA teams are 8-4 in the Hawaii Bowl overall.

— AP college football: <https://apnews.com/hub/college-football> and [https://twitter.com/ap\\_top25](https://twitter.com/ap_top25). Sign up for the AP's college football newsletter: <https://tinyurl.com/mrxhe6f2>

## Two Tennessee women found dead in car after crash, shooting

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP) — Two Tennessee women found dead after a car crash and police shooting in suburban Detroit include one who was reported missing days earlier, authorities said Monday.

Detectives working with the Wayne County Medical Examiner identified the driver as Dominique Hardwick, 36, of Lebanon, Tennessee, and a woman found in the trunk of the car as Eleni Kassa, 31, of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Michigan State Police said in a series of tweets Monday evening.

Kassa was reported missing to the Murfreesboro Police Department on Nov. 18, police said. She had failed to pick up her daughter from school the previous day.

Autopsy results for Hardwick were consistent with a self-inflicted gunshot wound, police said.

The circumstances surrounding Kassa's death have not been determined, police said.

Detectives are still interviewing witnesses, including a 34-year-old woman who was a passenger in the front seat and was injured, police said.

## \$40 Tennessee incentive for battery cathode plant approved

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A Tennessee panel on Monday approved a \$40 million state economic incentive for a company that plans to invest \$3.2 billion to develop a cathode materials plant for electric vehicle batteries.

The State Funding Board cast the vote

to sign off on the FastTrack grant for LG Chem.

The manufacturing facility will be built in Clarksville, Tennessee, and create 860 jobs. The new Tennessee positions for the Seoul, South Korea-based company will pay about \$33 an hour on average.

Construction will

begin next year, with the goal to start mass production in 2025.

Once operational, the goal is to produce 120,000 tons of cathode battery materials annually — or enough to power 1.2 million electric vehicle batteries.

The state incentives will support construction costs,

among other expenses, for the facility.

The company has committed to create the new jobs and make the \$3.2 billion investment within eight years.

Across Tennessee, companies have invested \$12.7 billion in the state through EV-related projects since 2017.

## US nuclear waste repository begins filling new disposal area

By Susan Montoya Bryan

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Workers at the nation's only underground nuclear waste repository have started using a newly mined disposal area at the underground facility in southern New Mexico.

Officials at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant made the announcement this week, saying the first containers of waste to be entombed in the new area came from Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee — one of the many labs and government sites across the country that package up waste and ship it to WIPP.

Known as Panel 8, the new area consists of seven separate rooms for placing special boxes and barrels packed with lab coats, rubber gloves, tools and debris contaminated with plutonium and other radioactive elements.



iStock photo

Each room measures 33 feet (10 meters) wide, 16 feet (4.9 meters) high and runs the length of a football field minus the end zones.

Carved out of an ancient salt formation about half a mile (0.8 kilometers) deep, the subterranean landfill located outside of Carlsbad received its first shipment in 1999. The idea is that the shifting salt will eventually entomb the radioactive waste left from decades of bomb-making and nuclear weapons research.

In 2014, a fire and separate radiation

release forced a nearly three-year closure of the repository and a costly overhaul of the policies and procedures that govern WIPP and the nation's multibillion-dollar cleanup program for Cold War-era waste.

Operations had to be reduced after the repository reopened because areas of the facility were contaminated and airflow needed for mining and disposal operations was limited. Now, a multimillion-dollar project is underway to install a new ventilation system,

and state regulators are considering a permit change that some critics have said could lead to expanded operations.

The state Environment Department's Hazardous Waste Bureau issued a plan this month aimed at ensuring the public has opportunities to comment on modifications or permit renewal applications.

Sean Dunagan, president and project manager of Nuclear Waste Partnership, the contractor that manages the repository, said in a statement that operations already have become more efficient with the new panel.

Creating a panel requires mining nearly 160,000 tons of salt, and it takes about 2 1/2 years to fill it with waste. For example, Panel 7 is filled with 20,056 containers, with most of them being 55-gallon (208-litre) drums.

## Tennessee judges uphold contentious school voucher law

By Leah Willingham

A Tennessee judicial panel has upheld the state's school voucher law, which allows public tax dollars to be given to families to pay for private schooling.

Critics of vouchers argue that the law will weaken the state's public education system, but the three-judge panel said counties and families who sued couldn't prove how students would be

immediately harmed by the program. They concluded that any concerns raised now are "speculative and representative of (opponents') disapproval of policy."

Plaintiffs are "simply asking the court to wade into a policy debate, something we cannot do," the panel said Wednesday.

The ruling comes after a yearslong legal battle over the contentious voucher program,

known as education savings accounts. Under the law, eligible families are given around \$8,100 in public tax dollars to help pay for private school tuition and other preapproved expenses.

While the Republican-controlled Legislature approved the voucher program in 2019, the state has only been recently allowed to begin implementing the law this summer after the Tennessee Supreme Court lifted a key legal

obstacle.

Opponents, which include Nashville, Shelby County and a handful of families, maintained that schools and students would be hurt by the voucher program because school districts lose money for every student that participates in the voucher program.

But the three-judge panel said in their ruling that opponents' claims "lack ripeness" because the voucher law includes a provision that replaces

the diverted funds for at least three years through "a school improvement fund." Money for the improvement fund is subject to legislative appropriation.

"The loss of money has already been remedied by the ESA Act itself," the judges wrote. "Such an injury, if it occurs, is entirely speculative because the legislature has accounted for the funding gap that is the source of harm."

The decision was lauded by supporters of the vouchers, including Republican Gov. Bill Lee, who was named in the lawsuit.

"Through our ESA Program, TN families can finally choose the best school for their child," Lee tweeted shortly after the decision was released. "Hundreds of students have already enrolled in this life changing opportunity to receive the high-quality education they deserve."



INSPIRATION

# VICTORIOUS *Living* in a troubled world

## Home Country

By Slim Randles

“I took Duckworth to the dog show up in the city last weekend,” Dud said.

The other members of the Mule Barn truck stop’s world dilemma think tank and philosophy counter just looked at him.

Doc put it gently. “Dud, was this so he could get some inspiration on looking good?”

Duckworth was a medium-sized dog that found Dud while Dud was walking and thinking about the novel he’s writing. No one answered the ad he put in the Valley Weekly Miracle, so he was henceforth known as Duckworth, for some reason Dud seemed to want to keep to himself. To be honest, Duckworth looked like he fell out of the ugly tree and hit every branch on the way down.

“No, I was going to enter him in the dog show,” Dud said. “Took him right up to the registration table and tried to get him in a class. The lady there looked at ol’ Duck and asked to see his papers.”

Dud grinned. “I told her they were back home on the floor of the laundry room. She didn’t think it was funny.”

Now Duckworth had been introduced to the other dogs in the group at the sale barn, as is the custom, and Dud’s pals

had been hesitant to ask much about him. Duckworth looked like something put together by a committee with a sense of humor. Oh, he was a dog ... no doubt about that. But what kind of dog was he? It made for interesting coffee speculation, that’s for sure.

“You know,” Dud said, “Anita was against me getting any kind of dog until Duckworth came along. When I explained to her that Duckworth was a bird dog ... a duck dog, actually, and that he’d help me bring more birds home, she finally gave in.”

“He’s a bird dog?” Steve said.

“What kind?”

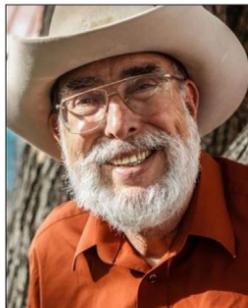
“Now that’s what that dog show lady asked me, you know? I had to explain to her about canardly terriers, because she wasn’t familiar with them.”

“Canar...”

“Canardly terriers, you betcha,” Dud said, grinning, “why, I’ll bet you canardly tell what kind of terrier he is!”

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By Gary Miller  
[gary@outdoortruths.org](mailto:gary@outdoortruths.org)

November is undoubtedly the best month for seeing big deer in most states. The bucks are either cruising for a doe that is ready to breed, or they are already hot on the heels of one that is in sight. Depending on where you live, the action is at its best.

Many of the southern states will have to wait until December and even January; but that’s okay because you can’t be everywhere in a thirty-day period. And that is the dilemma. You see when it comes to hunting the big-bodied deer of the Midwest and the north, there is a relatively small window for the best opportunities. Again, even if you take the whole month of November, there are only thirty days.

That is not a lot

of time when you consider the number of days that one’s responsibilities will let him hunt, and also if you are perhaps planning to take a trip to another state. All in all, the days are few for an opportunity to hunt during the best time of the year. It is crucial to make the most of each opportunity.

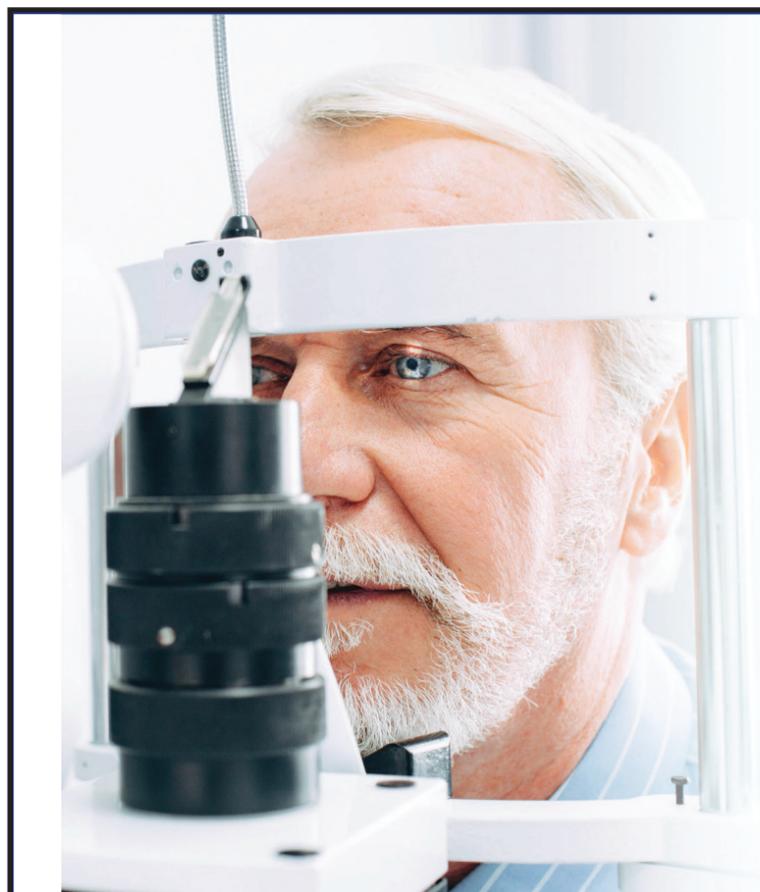
There are many times in life that we must take a renewed look at what we are doing. We need to reevaluate to see if we are spending our time doing the things that fit into our particular area of calling. God has placed each one of us in a certain area of ministry. It might be as a bulldozer operator or as a stay-at-home mom, but both are important to God. It is when we move outside of our calling that we get frustrated and overwhelmed. There are many good things

that we can spend our time Doing – even religious things. And we can say yes to everything under the sun because of our desire to do these good things. But if we are not careful we will spend our time doing so many good things that we neglect the one particular thing God has called us to do.

Just as this special time of the year for hunting deer is limited, so are our days on earth.

We all need to make sure we are spending them doing what God has called each of us to do. Not only will we be fulfilled, but others will also be blessed.

Gary has written the Outdoor Truths article for 20 years. He has also written four books which include compilations of his articles and a father/son devotional. He also speaks at wild-game dinners and men.



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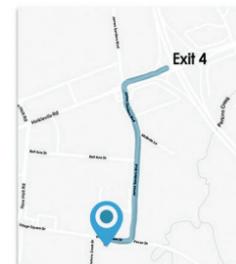
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## Gift wrap tricks to save time

### • TITLES from page one

that give young women like me the opportunity to better themselves while continuing their education.”

“We are very excited to have **Caleigh Jo** and **Karena** represent **UT Martin** and the **Tennessee Soybean Festival** this year,” said **Katrina Cobb**, interim general manager for **West TN PBS** and pageant executive director. “This is the first time in several years that we have **UTM**

students holding both titles, so this is a special honor.”

**Erwin** and **Rainey** will compete in the statewide **Miss Tennessee Volunteer Scholarship Pageant** Wednesday-Saturday, July 26-29, 2023, at the **Carl Perkins Civic Center** in **Jackson**. The winner of the crown will serve as the governor’s spokesperson for character education and receive \$25,000 in scholarship money.

For more information on either title, contact **Katrina Cobb** at [kcobb@wljt.org](mailto:kcobb@wljt.org) or 731-881-7561.

Holiday shopping may be done, but that enormous pile of presents still needs to be wrapped.

Fortunately, there are a few tricks of the trade wrappers can lean on to make the process of wrapping gifts go as quickly and as smoothly as possible.

- Stock up on double-sided tape. Wrapping with double-sided tape helps you avoid unsightly tape lines and creates a neat finished product.

- Use a toilet paper tube to preserve wrapping paper rolls and keep them from unravelling. Simply cut the tube lengthwise and snap it over the open roll of paper to serve as a handy clip to keep the paper tidy.

- When you lose the edge of the tape on a roll, it can take precious time trying to find it again and then lift a piece of tape off the roll. Use a plastic bread clip to hold the place of the edge of the tape to prevent this from happening.

- Turn snack containers into handy



gift wrap options. Empty potato chip cannisters can be wrapped and used to hold other food gifts or smaller stocking stuffers.

- Wooden spoons or popsicle sticks can make clever gift tags. Poke a hole in the end and tie onto your gift.

- Use a piece of fabric to wrap a present if you’re not too skilled with traditional paper. Fabric can be reused

and is more durable, and you won’t run the risk of tearing an edge or poking a hole through it. This can be especially useful for oddly shaped gifts.

- Newsprint tied with natural cord and some pine boughs is an inexpensive, classic-looking gift wrap.

- Kraft butcher paper or brown mailing paper can be used in a pinch. Stamp images on the

paper to customize the gift wrap and use ribbons and bows to further dress things up.

- Always work on a hard, flat surface, as working on the floor or a soft surface makes it more difficult to control wrapping paper and you’re more likely to tear the paper.

- Use a gift box or cardboard to create a firm container to wrap soft gifts.

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