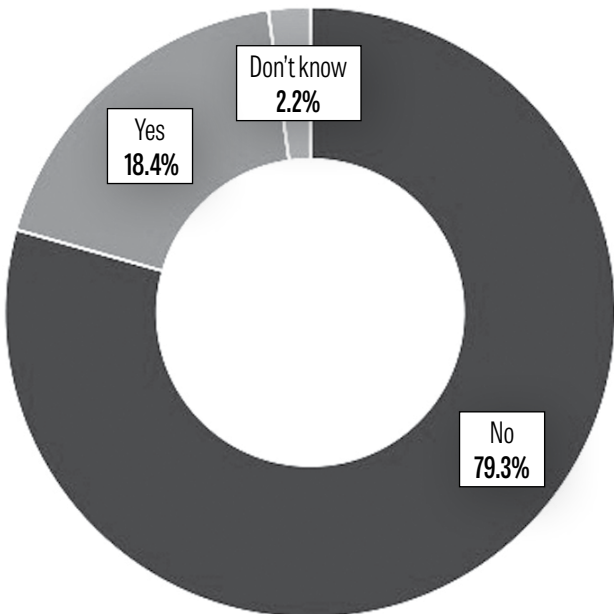


ONLINE POLL:

Do you agree with the Frankfort/Franklin County Planning Commission's decision to recommend the rezoning of land on U.S. 127 South for the proposed industrial park?



This poll reflects the opinions of 1,573 respondents. Visit www.state-journal.com to take part in today's poll.

EDITORIAL

Sexy or not, progress at FCRJ worth bragging about

Franklin County Judge-Executive Michael Mueller is fond of saying that a jail is “not a sexy thing to talk about.” However, we must give credit when it’s due and the fact that Franklin County Regional Jailer Tracy Hopper and her staff have saved the county and its taxpayers more than \$1.5 million in services during the first full year of her tenure is worth bragging about.

The jailer said inmates provided community services such as shoveling snow during the winter, picking up litter and helping with last spring’s flood recovery efforts both at the courthouse and laying sandbags with the road department.

Other cost-saving measures taken at FCRJ in the last year include the privatization of the commissary on June 1 that resulted in a significant profit; a vegetable garden tended to by the female incarcerated population in the substance abuse program (SAP) which has netted roughly 400 pounds of produce that can be used in the kitchen; and the certification of five deputies to facilitate programs that were previously taught by a third-party provider.

But perhaps the biggest accomplishment has been the increase in the number of female SAP and Supporting Others in Active Recovery (SOAR) participants, who are housed separately from the jail’s general population in order to promote responsibility and accountability through peer support and a focus on recovery. The program started out with 20 participants in October and even though the current population is 67, FCRJ has accommodations for 80 participants. According to Hopper, revenue for participation in programs over the past fiscal year was \$67,000 — which exceeds the last three years combined.

“I just want to say thank you to you and your team because it is making a difference that you are helping this community,” Mueller told the jailer. “I always say a jail is not a sexy thing to talk about, but I think it needs to be talked about when good things are happening there and we’re rehabbing people to get back into society, into our workforce and I think that needs to be talked about.”

We couldn’t have said it better.

Friends are the best gifts

Daughter Charlsie Pearl called Thursday asking what I wanted for my 77th birthday on Sunday. “A one-way ticket to Myrtle Beach and a ticket to ‘Rumours: The Ultimate



Charles W. Pearl
Guest columnist

On June 26, Charlsie’s mother, Karen Pearl, accompanied me by plane to Myrtle Beach to visit our longtime friend, Larry Timbs, and his wife, Patsy.

Larry, Karen and I met in the mid-1970s when he was news editor of the Central Kentucky News-Journal in Campbellsville, and I was sports editor. It was my first full-time job in community journalism. I loved working at the semiweekly newspaper, 20 miles from my hometown of Lebanon. Down-to-earth Larry Timbs quickly became a close friend. He was a great reporter who had a wonderful sense of humor, loved dogs and appreciated sports.

Although we were both born in the summer of 1948, Larry was much more mature and prepared for a long career in journalism than I was. Right out of high school in Elizabethton, Tennessee, he joined the U.S. Air Force at age 17 in 1966 and served four years in aircraft control and warning — “a fancy schmancy name for radar,” Larry says.

Then he earned a bachelor’s degree in English from Christopher Newport College in Newport News, Virginia; and a master’s in journalism from the University of South Carolina.

Larry also worked as managing editor of The Casey County News in Liberty, and was soon promoted to general manager at a larger newspaper in Illinois. When he left Kentucky, I replaced him at The Casey County News. We stayed in touch through phone conversations until he left Landmark Community Newspapers Inc. in 1980 to pursue a doctorate in mass communications from the University of Iowa.

He joined the faculty at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina, in 1985 and taught 27 years until he retired.

We reconnected in 2022 when Larry Googled me and noticed I had written a nonfiction book on interfaith spirituality in 2020. He bought a copy, read it and we started having frequent phone conversations.

I received numerous invitations and encouragement to come visit him and Patsy at their home in Surfside Beach, a part of the 60-mile Myrtle Beach Grand Strand. I kept saying I would, but in mid-October 2023, I found out I have a serious heart disease. Then, in early 2024, not long after my 16-year-old black Lab, Lily, died of cancer, a young black Lab, Roxie, needing a new home, rescued me from a deep depression.

Larry, who also has health issues, understands the grief of losing dogs. Since we reconnected, he’s lost Michael Jackson, a Bichon frisé who died at age 15;



PHOTO SUBMITTED

MYRTLE BEACH: Retired journalist Charles Pearl and Larry Timbs at Myrtle Beach.

and Joe, a sheltie, who lived to be 13. Framed pictures of both dogs are on a dining/reading room wall of their home. “I miss them every day and night,” Larry says.

Thinking I may never make it to Myrtle Beach, Larry decided to return to Kentucky to see me last August. His first full day here, Karen volunteered to drive us to Liberty to visit The Casey County News and see a few friends from the past. It brought back a flood of good memories.

And this past year, our phone conversations and text messages have increased tremendously, along with Larry’s pressure to get me to Myrtle Beach for the first time ever. He also insisted, with my heart condition, that I bring someone with me, and he recommended Karen. Daughters, Charlsie and Kathryn Pearl, agreed with the journalism professor and author. Larry has a new part-time job now working at the VIP gate at the Myrtle Beach Pelicans minor league baseball games. The Pelicans were on the road the long weekend his Kentucky friends came to town.

I had plenty of anxiety about the upcoming trip, especially leaving 2-year-old Roxie for the first time. But she had a wonderful vacation too, staying with canine kinfolks — Koda, Luxy and Felix — in the Capitol neighborhood where my son, Kevin, daughter-in-law, Maria, and grandson, Dawson Pearl, live.

The nonstop Allegiant flight from Lexington’s Bluegrass Airport to Myrtle Beach International Airport took 63 minutes. When Larry picked us up, I said, “You didn’t think I would ever get here, did you?” He smiled, saying, “You’re right. I didn’t. I hope we don’t bore you.”

“That’s impossible,” I assured him.

We had wonderful seafood dinners Thursday at the Dead Dog Saloon — think Buddy’s Pizza on Broadway in Frankfort times a thousand, where photos of beloved dogs who have transitioned to the spirit world are pictured on the walls; and Flamingo Seafood Grill on Saturday to celebrate Larry’s 77th birthday two days early.

Early Friday morning, we headed to the Atlantic Ocean at Myrtle Beach State Park, carrying our chairs and a splendid picnic lunch prepared by Patsy to a good spot under the fishing pier. A half-hour later, I took a long solo walk along the water’s edge, getting my feet and ankles wet. It felt so relaxing, healing and perfect. When

I returned to my chair under the pier, Larry said, “I’ve decided we’re going to a concert tonight. They’re going to be playing our 1960s and 1970s music.”

The live concert at the Greg Rowles Legacy Theatre was great. I had never heard of Greg Rowles. But Larry, a contributing writer for the Myrtle Beach Edition of the Charleston Post and Courier, has written a feature story on him.

Rowles and his team of musicians were awesome entertainers. Before the show started, the audience was treated to fun trivia questions on two big screens, and Karen got most of them right. The one that got the biggest laugh, however, and no right answer from our group, was that “a law in Kentucky requires citizens to bathe at least once a year.”

Patsy, a native of the mountains of East Tennessee, laughed the loudest. I Googled it later, and it’s true. It says, “While this law is still on the books, it’s generally considered a historical oddity and not actively enforced.”

When we first entered the lobby, a friendly volunteer worker, told me the performing arts venue was previously the Eddie Miles Theatre. I love all the interconnections of life. Miles, well-known for his Elvis Presley tribute show, is from Holy Cross in Central Kentucky and a 1973 graduate of Marion County High School in Lebanon, my hometown. He now does a series of shows in Lebanon billed as the Eddie Miles Salute to Music Legends.

Early Saturday morning at the Timbs’ residence, I sat alone in the hot tub on the back porch and listened to beautiful bluegrass music while Patsy prepared a breakfast of bacon, eggs and pancakes on the grill. The CD was the Clint Howard Band: “Live Times 2.” Clint Howard is Patsy’s late father, whose mountain music will live on long after we’re gone.

Karen said she “immediately felt at home with Larry and Patsy, who will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary later this year. They are both very genuine people who anyone would be lucky to have as friends.”

Charles W. Pearl is a retired State Journal staff writer, an author, a member of the Frankfort Interfaith Council, Focus on Race Relations — Frankfort and the Bluegrass Writers Coalition; and the founder of the Pearl Center for World Peace. He can be emailed at charleswpearl@gmail.com.

