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EDITOR Lisa Forsythe

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- WED Oct. 25**  
•Seniors Order Invitations during lunch
- THU Oct. 26**  
•HOSA Disney Day
- FRI Oct. 27**  
•SPIRIT DAY: Camo Day  
•FB Westview (A)
- SAT Oct. 28**  
•ACT 8:00 - 12:00
- TUE Oct. 31**  
•2:00 NTHS Induction @ the Ag Building
- SAT Nov. 4**  
•Band Competition - State
- FRI Nov. 10**  
•SR Superlatives Field Trip to Opryland
- TUE Nov. 14**  
•6:00 Meet the Bobcats (basketball)
- THU Nov. 16**  
•College Road Trip West  
•6:00 BB Milan A
- MON Nov. 20**  
•School dismissed for Thanksgiving
- FRI Dec. 1**  
•Mistletoe Ball 7-11

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## The Price of “Being Connected”

By Lisa Forsythe, Editor

Last weekend, a terrible thing happened.

A group of young people vandalized the football field, spray painting the goal post, play clock and baseball building. These young men spread toilet paper over the football field and spray painted taunts on the endzone checkerboard design that had been just recently completed as a senior project.

But that isn't the terrible thing I'm referring to.

The news of the vandalism was first posted on the school's Facebook page around 10:00 am Saturday morning. Getting the word out quickly was vital to finding information about what happened and who was responsible. By noon, it had been viewed over 3,000 times and had over 100 shares. Within 24 hours, the post had over 20,000 views, our first truly 'viral' post. As of the writing of this article, less the four days after the original post, it has been viewed almost 38,000 times and has nearly 400 shares. THAT is the terrible event that saddens and stuns me.

As a proponent of all things technology, I enjoy seeking out ways to keep students and parents informed. No one asked me to create a school Facebook account, or Twitter or YouTube for that matter. No one asked me to create a school website years ago, and I definitely don't get paid for all the hours I spend, usually late at night, updating and adding content to the

site. I do it because I love MY school, and because I want people to know about the good things happening here.

With that being said, I have grown weary of the social media scene over the past few years. Those close to me have heard me say often I would close my Facebook account if it weren't for the school page. I seriously considered all weekend about just shutting the page down for good.

In the beginning, Facebook was the best way to reach everyone. In recent years, students have migrated to Instagram and Snapchat, but parents and grandparents still use Facebook as a primary source of information. So I keep my account open and post to the school page whenever I have something to share about MCHS. So why do I think it is sad that a post I made went viral?

In the same 24-hour period that those young men spent a few minutes spraying graffiti and spreading toilet paper:

- the football team defeated Fayette-Ware 50-27, after two straight losses that included senior night and the last home game. They spent many hours last week in practice and preparation for that game. Many of those 85 boys were back on the field early Saturday morning picking up toilet paper, despite coming home in the early morning hours from the game.
- the band competed at the UTMartin Skyhawk Invitational, earning 1st place in percussion and color guard, 1st place in their class, 1st place in their divi-

sion and fourth place overall. Those 85 students were at school early Saturday morning, and returned home early Sunday morning, after some 15 hours of travel and hard work. That doesn't include the daily practices until 5:00, or the late practices that usually end around 8:30. •Some 40-50 students and teachers worked on the building and grounds from 8-12 Saturday, cleaning windows, scrubbing corners, painting, weedeating, and a variety of other things that had been neglected. If you visit the building, you should notice a visible difference in how clean it looks. •41 seniors from MCHS and Adamsville got on a bus Sunday to visit colleges in East TN. Each student on that bus had to be eligible for admission to at least one of those schools in order to go on the trip. Each student on that bus is considering their future after they leave MCHS. They spent two days touring UT Knoxville and Chattanooga, and TN Tech. •about 50 students spent their Sunday afternoon performing skits for visitors going through Judgement House at FBC Selmer. Those students played the same part over and over and over again for nearly eight hours, with very few breaks.

Those are just the things I know about. I also witnessed a student at his part-time job Saturday, cleaning windows outside the fast food restaurant when he didn't have any more customers to wait on. I saw several students audition

for parts in a musical at the Latta Building. Undoubtedly, there were many other students doing "good" things all weekend long that I didn't have the chance to see.

But good news doesn't seem to have the same draw as "bad news." I get it. I realize it's reflective of the culture at large, when stories of crime and murder dominate the nightly news. The "feel-good" stories are few and far between in the headlines.

We certainly have our share of problems at MCHS. Finding out the ones who took this action last Saturday night are former and/or current students was not entirely unexpected, but still disappointing. I'm sure the graffiti on the endzone was a devastating blow to the young man who had spent many hours planning and painting the checkerboard pattern in the endzone. I'm just as certain the young parents who are dealing with medical issues were heartbroken to see the damage done to a clock they chose to donate for their child's athletic activity. I would assume the parents of these young men involved are upset that their children let a teenage prank go "too far", and are now reaping the consequences of their actions.

The most disturbing thing of all is how we, as citizens of this county we call home, reacted. The comments on social media sites made me wonder just how truly "advanced" we are as a society. I've seen firsthand how people jump to conclusions when they hear bad news,

and can't wait to tell their friends and neighbors. They don't wait to get all the facts, or even worry if they know the whole truth about a situation before they begin spreading their opinions about what happened. The majority of the time opinions are all they have, but they share it as truth.

Maybe our society is too far gone. Maybe we have become so desensitized to the seedier side of life that we don't realize we are adding to the muck.

I hope not. For the sake of my grandchildren that are growing up in this world, I sincerely hope not. For the sake of the students I see on a daily basis, I sincerely hope not. I hope that somehow we are able to rise above the petty gossip and focus on the positive. Yes, we have problems. Yes, these young men have done a stupid thing and will have to pay for their actions. But more importantly, we have a whole lot of students who are doing GOOD things, and they deserve far more recognition. A simple "congratulations" or "way to go" takes seconds, but means a lot to the students who hear and/or see it on social media or in person.

My parents raised me on the old adage "If you can't say anything good, don't say anything at all." We have plenty of good things to talk about. Can we all try to do better in the future, because we are impacting our children's future by our example? I hope so.

*The viewpoints expressed do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of the MCHS faculty or administration, or of the McNairy County School Board.*