



[TOP](#)

Nixon Orders Flags Flown At Half-Staff

MAY 31ST 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Nixon Orders Flags Flown At Half-Staff

By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports

Governor Jay Nixon has declared that all flags at all government buildings will be flown at half-staff today (Tuesday, May 31) in honor of a fallen Missourian.

Specialist Bradley Louis Melton, of Rolla, Mo., was a soldier in the US Army (25th Infantry Division). Melton was deployed to Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom, and was killed on May 16, 2011, due to injuries received from an improvised explosive device.

Melton was a highly decorated member of the Army, with awards including the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star, and the Iraq Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star (two awards).

Also by order of the Governor, all flags at all State and government offices will be flown at half-staff, in Phelps County only, from Tuesday, May 31, 2011, until dusk on Monday, June 6, 2011.

[Go to post](#)



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TOP

Choir Alumni Remember, Honor, Sing!

MAY 30TH 2011 BY NEWS

Choir Alumni Remember, Honor, Sing!

*By Annabeth Miller,
ShowMe Times Editor*

They came from across the country – Washington, D.C. to Birmingham; Paducah to Columbia. There were teachers and those studying to be teachers; an attorney and a public health educator; salespeople, managers and small business owners. But they all had something important in common: they all sang in MaryRuth Boone’s choirs at Dexter High School.

The first-ever DHS Choir Alumni Weekend was held this weekend in tribute to Boone and her three decades as a music educator in the Dexter schools. Her former students came back together for a weekend of fun, rehearsal, remembering and most of all – music. They practiced hard, sang beautifully, laughed much, remembered good times and made

new memories. They literally brought two audiences to their feet with enthusiastic applause and appreciation.

The weekend was spearheaded by Eric Mathis, who is now teaching music at Stamford university in Birmingham. Along the way, Mathis was joined by a local planning committee and together they have worked since December 2010 to plan and prepare for the event.

Mathis felt the choral music tradition established in the Dexter community by Boone needed to be celebrated, so last year he began developing plans, talking to friends, and working toward a goal.

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“Given the decline of music and arts education programs in public school systems across the country, Dexter is fortunate to have a music educator like Mrs. Boone who has maintained a choral program in the junior and senior high schools for nearly thirty years,” Mathis said at the onset of the project.

This past weekend was the culmination of that project.

As alumni began arriving for a day of rehearsal at the First United Methodist church Saturday morning, there was a festive atmosphere. Friends were seeing friends with plenty of hugs and hand shakes in the line to register. It was a diverse group – young and not-so-young, folks who had been singing in church choirs or in college, and others who hadn’t sung since high school.

The group included a father who was a freshman Boone’s first year in Dexter, and his son who was a senior in her final year at DHS. There was a mother who was an early student and her two daughters who sang together in Chamber Choir this year. There was a man who was a senior that first year Boone taught who is now a colleague at Dexter Middle School. One young man is now a member of the Washington Chorus, a choir in our nation's capitol that performs at the Kennedy center for Performing Arts; others who sang in collegiate choirs; many who sing in church choirs today. And Boone’s own two children – Andrew and Afton – who many in the choir remembered as small children.

Throughout the day on Saturday the choir rehearsed together and in sectionals. During the morning large group rehearsal, Boone arrived and slipped into a pew in the back of the church sanctuary. Occasionally a student would turn around and see her – and wave; some slipped out of their seat to go give her a hug. All, though, broke out into applause when

Mathis announced her arrival.

Mathis directed the large choir and was helped in sectional rehearsals by Maria Chamberlain (sopranos), Jessica Moore (altos) and Jeff Huffman (tenors). Pianists for the day included Delisa Stize, Brandy Mouser, and Gail Clippard.

Boone directed this year's Chamber Choir in two selections as well as the mass choir on one number. On Sunday morning many of the mass choir members gathered at the first United Methodist Church to sing in the congregation's worship service. Boone has been the music director at the church for 30 years.

Then, that afternoon, everyone regrouped for a dress rehearsal and afternoon concert at First Baptist Church.

Following the concert Boone, her husband, Bill and her children were escorted from the Worship Center to a reception in their honor in the Atrium. Friends filed through the receiving line, and choir members introduced their children to Boone, and stories were told.

Planning committee members who worked on the event included Mathis, LaVeda Banken, Julie Lancaster, Lisa Mathis, Melisa Mayo, Annabeth Miller, Brandy Mouser, Toni Pyle, Patti Shell, and Mark Snider. Snider served as the master of ceremonies at the Sunday concert.

Photos Above: Top photo - a portion of the DHS Alumni Choir in concert on Sunday; Bottom photo - Jon Hessling and MaryRuth Boone at the reunion rehearsal on Saturday. (Photos by Annabeth Miller)

Additional photos of the weekend are available at www.gregmathisphotos.com. Thanks, Greg!

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Holiday Weekend Filled With Local Activities

MAY 27TH 2011 BY NEWS

Holiday Weekend Filled With Local Activities

*By Annabeth Miller,
ShowMe Times Editor*

The summer season unofficially kicks off this weekend, and there are a number of activities to keep families busy between the picnics and outings.

While Memorial Day is a day to honor those who have died while fighting the nation's wars, the holiday weekend has developed into a time for family gatherings, special events, and starting the "summer style" of living.

100-mile Yard Sale

It's a bargain-hunter's drea – 100 miles of yard sale bargans!

Begun 13 years ago, the event stretches from Jackson down Highway 25 all the way to Kennett. And along the way are yard sales featuring mustache cups, dogged-eared books, and treasures waiting to be discovered.

The 100-Mile Yard Sale stretches through the weekend.

The water is clear and ready for swimmers, and at 1 p.m. Saturday the gates of the Dexter Aquatic Center will open for swimmers of all ages.

The Aquatic Center is in the East City Park, and access to the parking lot is available both through East City Park or on Fairgrounds Road.

Admission to the Aquatic Center is \$6 per person. The pool will be open from 1 – 5 p.m., seven days a week, beginning with Saturday's season opener. An individual pass for the entire summer is \$85; a family pass is \$225.

Flood Relief Benefit

This is a benefit for the flood victims in Southeast Missouri at the Dexter Eagles on Saturday. There will be a Karaoke Contest from 12 noon till 2 pm, local entertainment, bake sale, jewelry, donations to raffle. Some of the entertainment includes recently DHS graduate Lauren Elizabeth Powers, Sean Bowmar, Chris Welch Band, and Keith Morrison Band will close the evening out.

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DHS Choir Alumni Reunion and Concert

More than 100 alumni of the Dexter High School Choirs will gather this weekend and present a special concert in honor of retiring DHS Choral Music Educator MaryRuth Boone. The concert will be held at 4 p.m., Sunday, May 29 at the First Baptist Church in Dexter. The choir will also present the special music during the 10:30 a.m. worship service at the First United Methodist Church in Dexter, where Boone is the director of music. The 4 o'clock concert is free and the public is invited to attend. A reception honoring Boone and her family will follow the concert.

Memorial Day Observance Program

The Missouri Veterans Cemetery south of Bloomfield will hold its annual Memorial Day Program at 1 p.m., May 30, at the Committal Shelter Plaza. This is always a stirring tribute to the men and women who have served our country and defended liberty and freedom in our world.

At 12 noon the flags at the cemetery will be raised at full staff, and the program will begin with the posting of the colors by the Farmington Correction Center Honor Guard Team.

Featured in the service will be the oving POW/MIA Table Ceremony.

Guest speaker will be LSCS Jeffrey Colyer, Us. Navy. Colyer enlisted in the Navy in 1989, serving with the Navy SEABEES and was deployed in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

He was awarded the designation of Seabee Combat Warfare Specialist in 1993, and served in various Navy units until his transfer to Southwest Asia Security Det. Bravo in 2000.

He served as the small arms instructor for the Security Detachment, gaining numerous weapons instructor certifications. After the attacks of September 11, members of his unit were mobilized in support of Noble Eagle and Iraqi Freedom. Senior Chief remained on station in the US and qualified other reserve units prior to their deployment. He gained his Scoped Precision Rifle Instructor certification, prior to his own deployment to the Middle East in 2002.

Senior Chief Colyer served in support of Operation Noble Eagle with NSA Bahrain, and Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, with Combined Task Force 53, and the U.S. Navy Central Command, prior to his demobilization in late 2004. He now serves as Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Commander, NR Navy Recruiting Command in Millington, TN.

He is currently the Commander of VFW Post 3838 in Cape Girardeau, and is set to retire from the Navy after 23 years of service in 2012. He is married to his lovely wife Laila, and has three children Stacey, Jeremy, and Jessica.

The Memorial Day program will end with the sounding of Taps and the retiring of the colors.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

MEMIC & Wilson: History Indicates Strength

MAY 27TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

MEMIC & Wilson: History Indicates Strength

For more than 15 years, Missouri Employers Mutual Insurance Co. has grown into the state's largest workers compensation carrier. During that same time, the company has been under the leadership of two strong, reputable leaders in Dennis Smith until 2009 and most recently by Roger Wilson.

Established in 1993 by the Missouri State Legislature, MEMIC was created in a time when workers compensation premiums were soaring and availability was limited. MEMIC was given a strict charge to provide work comp insurance for Missouri small business and provide training and assistance in creating safe worksites throughout the state.

MEM began business in 1995 with a \$5 million loan from the state. At the end of 2009, it had \$154.4 million in assets. As a mutual company, ownership of MEMIC belongs to the policyholders of the company. .

Unfortunately, all the greatness and financial stability they have created in the insurance industry, Missouri Employers Mutual has entered into the media spotlight receiving unwanted publicity last week when former Gov. Roger Wilson and current president of MEM was put on administrative leave.

In June of 2009, Wilson was hired as the acting president to replace Dennis Smith, who

led MEM from its infancy to the number one workers' comp writer in the state. A worthy replacement, Wilson had established a stellar career in a political life with over 20 years in state government. Wilson served Missourians with 14 years in the State Senate, 8 years as lieutenant governor and filled the unexpired term as governor following the death of Gov. Mel Carnahan. Wilson became president at MEMIC permanently in January 2010.

Without an insurance background, Wilson's leadership continued the stellar growth in 2010 as total premiums written fell from \$109.7 million from \$110.1 million while market share grew to 16.13 percent from 14.8 percent. With more market share than its seven closest competitors combined, MEMIC enjoys a position of dominance in the marketplace.

That begs the question how the incredible performance of a strong Missouri-based corporation and the impeccable reputation of a good man and public servant can automatically be brought into the light of controversy so quickly.

The scandal began in March of this year as a MEMIC board member, Karen Pletz of Kansas City, was indicted with 24-counts of federal charges of embezzlement and tax fraud. The second dose of scandal began in April as Doug Morgan of St. Louis was indicted on a federal count of bank fraud.

The improprieties of the board members remained under the radar of the general public until Wilson was put on administrative leave. At that point, a frenzy of accusation, doubt and concern began to unravel on both MEMIC and Wilson.

The tight corporate mum that has been given to the action by MEM has placed upon Wilson further fuels this frenzy. Chairman Jim Owen, a St. Louis attorney who replaced Morgan, has not offered a corporate position or reason for the board's action.

The facts remain that the reputations of both Missouri Employers Mutual and Roger Wilson deserve a degree of honor until which point the mystery has been disclosed.

The strength of MEM is found in its past performance, strong financial position and the people that represent the company.

MEM was a leveling force in the workers' comp marketplace, bringing lower costs to Missouri Small business, said Larry Case, executive vice president of the Missouri Association of Insurance Agents. Historically, they have not only met but also exceeded all expectations of customers, agents and general public.

“It wasn’t an accident that MEM has grown into the largest writer of workers compensation insurance in Missouri,” Case said. “Its past leadership has been proven by their successes.”

The strength of Wilson remains in his own performance. Under Wilson’s leadership at MEM, Missouri small business has seen a significant drop in insurance premiums in 2010. He has also expanded the scope of MEM subsidiary, Missouri Employers General Agency for Missouri businesses that perform work outside the state.

Moreover, Wilson deserves the respect for his integrities and service to Missouri. A good indicator of the future is past performance. Just like MEM, Wilson’s track record is strong.

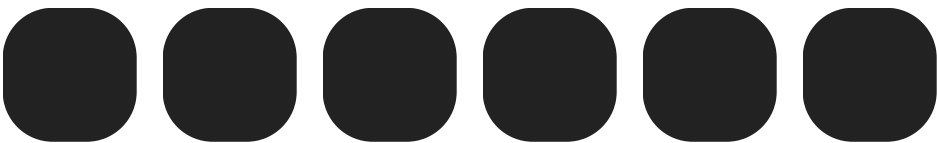
Putting Wilson on leave is difficult to understand when, “they refuse to indicate what is going on,” said Case.

“These actions are confusing,” Case said, adding that Wilson “has always been a solid professional and straightforward in his actions. I can’t imagine what would have prompted this action at this time.”

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TOP

Bargain Hunters Alert: 100-Mile Sale Begins!

MAY 26TH 2011 BY NEWS

Bargain Hunters Alert: 100-Mile Sale Begins!

*By Annabeth Miller,
ShowMe Times Editor*

Bargain hunters on full alert: The annual 100-Mile Yard Sale is ready to begin!!

The Memorial Weekend tradition stretches from Jackson in the north, and follows Highway 25 through Delta, Advance, Bloomfield, and Dexter and continues south through Bernie, Malden, and Holcomb and finally ends in Kennett.

Along the way shoppers will find card tables set up in yards, tents full of “stuff” along the side of roads, and groups of folks selling everything from family treasures to treasured junk.

Chambers of Commerce directors along the sale route say those driving the 100-mile route will often find vendors at church parking lots, grouped together and that many often have their yard sales off the highway in communities along the way.

In Dexter the Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring space for yard sale vendors at the Stoddard County Fairgrounds, just east of Highway 25. Restrooms, concessions, inside and outside booth space, with plenty of parking are all available through the Chamber.

According to the Dexter Chamber, vendors can rent a space at the Fairgrounds for just \$20 a day; all three days of the sale is just \$50. Persons interested should contact the Dexter Chamber at 573.624.7458.

Use Caution Along 25

The 100-Mile Yard Sale can be a fun time for those hunt for treasures and collectables,

but drivers should all remember that the greatest savings of the event could be a life.

"It's a fun weekend that people look forward to each year," says Traffic Engineer Craig Compas, "but we want people to remember that there's more traffic and more congestion along Route 25 this weekend than any other and drivers need to keep that in mind."

MoDOT will do its part to bring the safety message to the forefront. Message boards will be in place along the route to alert drivers of the unusual traffic patterns and promote safe driving.

"We really want drivers to be alert-to be aware of their surroundings, to be aware of sudden stops and to look for pedestrian traffic," Compas says. "It's a big event locally, and we want everyone to enjoy themselves and be as safe as possible."

For more information, contact Compas at (573) 472-5310 or call MoDOT's Customer Service Center toll-free at 1-888-ASK-MODOT (1-888-275-6636).

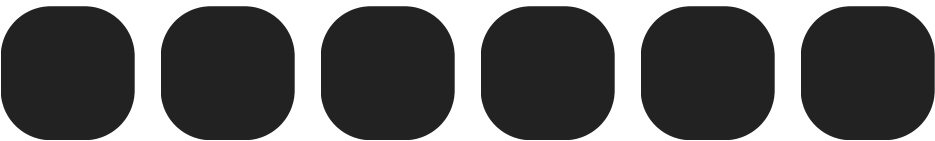
The sale begins in earnest on Friday, with folks checking out the bargains throughout the holiday weekend. It's highly recommended that buyers bring cash, since many "yard sale merchants" will not accept personal checks or credit and debit cards.

Photo Above: A MoDOT urging roadway safety along Highway 25 south of Dexter is visible for all the 100-Mile Yard Sale and others on the busy highway.

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