



## Happy Father's Day!

Courier-Tribune salutes dads with features throughout this edition

## Weekend celebrates history, summer

Check out all the fun ways cities and the county are celebrating summer and Juneteenth | Page B1

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# Child exploitation stings result in 6 area arrests

BY AMANDA LUBINSKI  
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CLAY COUNTY — The sheriff's office, in conjunction with Homeland Security Investigations Kansas City, arrested six area men for child sexual exploitation as part of Operation Blue Ghost. Specifics of local arrests in Clay County come after Courier-Tribune detailed last week 32 arrests made in the overall Kansas City metro operation.

"This operation showed what we already knew: Child predators are looking for your kids online," Sheriff Will Akin said. "We will do everything we can to keep children safe, and we encourage parents to monitor their kids' social media use closely."

From May 31 to June 2, six men allegedly traveled to Clay County from as far as Springfield to engage in illicit sexual conduct with what they believed to be a 14-year-old girl they met through social media, states a release from Clay County Sheriff's Office.

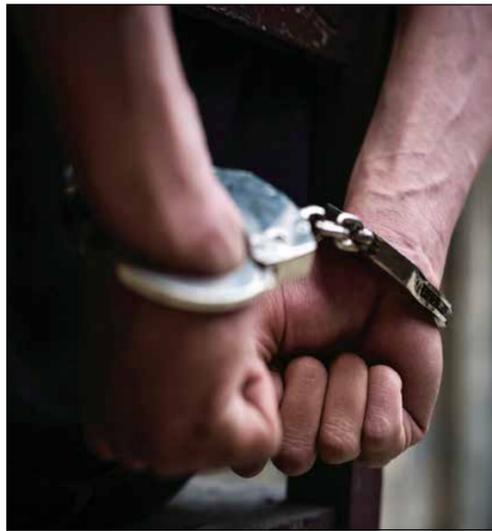
"The social media profiles were, in fact, managed by members of the Sheriff's Office's Investigations Division. Several of the men shared explicit photos prior to arranging a meeting with the purported 14-year-old. When the suspects arrived at various meet-up locations set up throughout the county, patrol deputies arrested them," states a Clay County Sheriff's office release.

One man allegedly hit a patrol deputy and fled during the attempted arrest.

"When deputies moved in to make a child enticement arrest the night of June 2, Robert B. Koester, 32, of Springfield, backed into a deputy, pinning the deputy between two vehicles and causing minor injuries to his knee," states the release. "Koester also struck multiple patrol vehicles and a mailbox before fleeing. Deputies pursued him until he crashed and struck a light pole on 210 Highway near Interstate 435. Deputies were able to take him into custody after a struggle. He was evaluated at a nearby hospital and determined not to have any substantial injuries from the crash."

Koester was charged with enticement of a child, assault on a law enforcement officer, armed criminal action, resisting arrest by fleeing and drug possession. He remains in custody in the Clay County Detention Center, according to a Monday, June 13 release by the sheriff's office.

The following were also arrested and charged in the course of the Blue Ghost operation,



METRO CREATIVE

During Operation Blue Ghost stings in Missouri, including in Clay and Platte counties, law enforcement agencies targeted adults "willing to travel for the sexual exploitation of a child," states an ICE release.

according to Clay County Sheriff's Office:

- Jackie S. Sedgwick, 59, of Kansas City – charged with sexual misconduct with a child under 15;
- Wilfredo Sanabria-Recinos, 38, of Kansas City – charged with sexual misconduct with a child under 15 and enticement of a child;
- Omar O. Lopez-Calderon, 26, of Kansas City – charged with enticement of a child and endangering the welfare of a child; and
- Jacob R. Miller, 31, of Gallatin – charged with enticement of a child.

A sixth man allegedly crossed state lines from Kansas to meet with a purported 14-year-old girl during the course of the operation, states the local sheriff's office release. HSI Kansas City is handling his case at the federal level.

Prior to Operation Blue Ghost, the Clay County Sheriff's Office Investigations Division conducted a smaller sting operation in March, which led to Russell P. McGinnis, 43, of Independence, being charged with enticement of a child and furnishing pornographic material to a minor, states a sheriff's office release.



FILE PHOTO

Martika Daniels, a one-woman stunt show artist, will provide entertainment for the Juneteenth celebration.

# Clay County celebrates Juneteenth

BY KELLIE HOUX  
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LIBERTY — For 21 years, there has been an effort to mark Juneteenth in Clay County. This year, the celebration includes unveiling a piece of art and a piece of history. In Liberty, celebrating the holiday honors the contributions of Black residents current and past.

The two-day celebration begins at 6 p.m. Friday, June 17, with a parade that will snake up Main Street toward Garrison School Cultural Center in Liberty.

Clay County African American Legacy Inc.

historian Cecelia Robinson said the parade will include a float, cars, marching units and drummers from Liberty North along with Rosa Patterson, the grand marshal.

After the parade, a Sankofa bird sculpture by Kansas City artist Lucky Easterwood will be unveiled. In addition, Robinson will share the history of Juneteenth. Guests will receive a plastic egg that includes the name of a person buried in the potter's field in Fairview cemetery, a location where hundreds of

residents current and past.

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# Father of 2 sets of twins raises kids with humor, support

BY KELLIE HOUX  
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PARADISE — Seth Wald may be known around town as the patriarch that owns Captain's Corner along with his wife Katherine, who has now opened Paradise Ice Cream Parlor, but on Instagram, Seth is @watermelondad.official.

The description on his page is "I wore a watermelon shirt to a Harry Styles concert and now I made it my entire personality."

The shirt is meant to be homage to Harry Styles' song "Watermelon Sugar," but it has taken on a life of its own, being seen at homecoming, a cruise and graduation.

His four kids have differing opinions on the shirt. Helania is the daughter who wanted to see Styles in concert and applauded her dad's choice.

"Everyone loved the shirt," she said. "Some photos from the concert made it to Harry

**"In raising the four of them, I always see their strengths and challenges. It's about guiding each of them on their own path so they can be their own person."**

Seth Wald  
father of 4

Styles' websites. It became official."

Sidney said her dad thinks the shirt is fancy, while sibling Tristan thinks it's funny.

Seth and Katherine are open about their fertility struggles and that their two sets of twins are blessings, thanks to medicine and science.

Sidney and Tristan, the oldest of two sets of twins of the parents, stayed in the NICU for six weeks after birth. Tristan came home first and then Sidney a few

days later.

Two and half years later, the Walds had another set of twins. This time it was the birth of Helaina and Izabelle.

"There were all those diapers and sleeplessness along with the activity of toddlers. It was exhausting," he said.

The four kids are all unique, Seth said, and he saw their personalities within weeks.

"As a twin father, you sometimes think that the



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Helania Wald and her father Seth started a trend for Seth to wear this watermelon shirt to important events. The first was a Harry Styles concert.

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