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FOUNDED IN 1877 — WALKER COUNTY'S OLDEST CONTINUOUS BUSINESS

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Battling Baptists Church family feuds over “dismemberment” and \$\$

By Josh O'Bryant
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Since its founding in 1942, Fellowship Baptist Church and its congregation was an active part of the Chickamauga community.

But that recently changed. The church's sign has been taken down and its doors locked, after 15 members were ousted after questioning financial decisions made by its former minister.

Troubles began in 2016 after a \$42,000 bequest from the late Mary Dengler, a long-time member of Fellowship, was received.

According to the dismissed members, preacher Tim Owens, of Journey On Ministries, told the congregation during a May 10 service that God had come to him in a “vision” on how to spend Dengler's money and that the “Lord was leading him” on what to do with it.

Owens had been minister for the three years.

Owens' announcement alarmed some of the congregation — many of whom had attended Fellowship since childhood



Fellowship Baptist Church in Chickamauga locked its doors and removed its sign after members questioned their minister's financial “vision from God.” (Messenger photo/Josh O'Bryant)

— to question their minister's recent financial transactions.

Don't ask questions?

Fellowship Baptist had about 60 members when the recent ruckus began.

According to the (at that time) church financial director and former school teacher Leann Mize, Owens received a salary of about

\$3,000 per month, which included his family's housing.

The church had three separate bank accounts: a general account, a designated account and a reserve account. Dengler's money was placed in the reserve account.

The designated account was designed to pay for mission trips, Vacation Bible

School and other church programs.

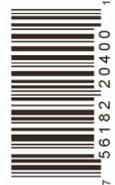
The reserve account was established to fund any unforeseen problems with church facilities such as wear-and-tear on the building, air-conditioning repairs and so on.

Mize said the church operated with a line-item budget that detailed how the money was spent. But, she said, Owens told her that the utilities did not need to be itemized any more and to just leave a total sum of the utility expenses.

On April 30, Owens turned in his resignation, effective May 14 (Mother's Day), and preached only once during May. He had a guest speaker for the next Wednesday service and canceled the Mother's Day service, instead advising the congregation to stay home with their mothers.

Owens' reasoning for resigning, according to those 15 dismissed members, was that he did not want to cause another church split, similar to what had occurred in the

Fellowship, page A6



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Local swimmers compete in 2017 CASL Bill Caulkins City Meet

Sports/B2

Walker County Messenger

More states are serious about sunscreen Bill to allow students using sunscreen stalled in Georgia

By Martha T. Moore
Stataline, an initiative for the Pew Charitable Trusts

State Rep. Craig Hall of Utah has four redheaded school-age children, lives in the state with the highest rate of melanoma in the country, and buys sunscreen “in the Costco size.” He is an unabashed proponent of sun protection.

But when Hall, a Republican, introduced legislation this year to allow kids to bring sunscreen to school — which starts Aug. 21 in his district — he said his fellow state lawmakers were a little less enthusiastic. “My colleagues' first reaction to this bill was mostly, ‘Seriously? We need a bill for this?’ “



A boy sprays sunscreen in Scottsdale, Ariz. which, like several other states recently enacted laws declaring that students may use sunscreen in school and at after-school activities without a doctor's note. (The Associated Press)

Like ibuprofen or hay fever medication, sunscreen is considered an over-the-counter drug by

the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and therefore by almost all schools. That means kids can't bring

it to school without a doctor's note, and even then must see the school nurse in order to use it.

The result: Teachers leading a sunny field trip are free to cover themselves in a thick protective layer of sunscreen. But in most states, children can't follow suit. In Indianapolis, for instance, kids go back to school July 31 — the height of summer — but they must have a doctor's note to bring sunscreen to school, and visit the school nurse to put it on.

That is beginning to change. In the past four months, Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Utah and Washington have enacted laws declaring students may use sunscreen in school

Sunscreen, page A8

Closer to home: Sunscreen use in local schools

Schools in Walker and Catoosa counties follow a much more common sense approach to the use of protective sunscreens.

Chickamauga Schools Superintendent Melody Day said, “We do not have a policy concerning the use of sunscreen, nor do we monitor use of sunscreen.

“Older students know if they need it, and we are fine if they do use it.

“If younger students' parents request it be used on their

child, they provide the product to the teacher, and we comply. This is not an issue of concern in our system and certainly not one which would involve our school nurse.”

Similar comments were made by the superintendents of the countywide systems.

“Walker County Schools does not have a policy regarding the use of sun screen,” Superintendent Damon Raines said.”

And Denia Reese, Catoosa County's superintendent, said she has seen no need to regulate sunscreen for students.

Check out CatoosaWalkerNews' Facebook page. It's a great place for you to post items of interest (such as upcoming events), discuss what's happening in our community and in the news, or just send us a message. And don't forget to “Like” us!



Football teams prep with 7-on-7's.

Sports/B1

Local drone service taking flight



By Mike O'Neal
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Affordable aerial photography is being offered by a recently launched company, SkyVision Drone Service,

As its name suggests, this Rossville-based company can provide still or video images from the perspective of standing atop a 30-story building.

The brain child of Lamar Gillespie, an FAA-licensed drone pilot, SkyVision offers high resolution — 28 mgb still and 4K video — from a remotely controlled four-rotor

drone.

Though “we're open to anything,” Gillespie said his service focuses on commercial clients needing to advertise or document their work or property within the tri-state area.

With the drone, Gillespie aims to provide visuals for real estate developers, coverage of special events and festivals, construction projects, virtual tours and films to enhance websites.

And while their new undertaking may be “up in the

Drone, page A12



Brooks Thomas punches his ticket to the U.S. Amateur.

Sports/B1