

# Daily Edition

Serving Loudon, Monroe and Surrounding Counties

Wednesday-Friday, November 21-23, 2018

## Trio Nabbed At Kenjo McGhee For Drugs



Kelsey Litwin

Tiana Bennett

Jarvis Morgan

see Trio pg. 2

## Loudon Man Assaults Babysitter



Kristopher Pierce

see Assault pg. 3

## Speeding While Under The Influence



Reecesa Bishop-Smith

(see DUI pg. 4)

## Franklin County Woman Indicted for Theft from Booster Club

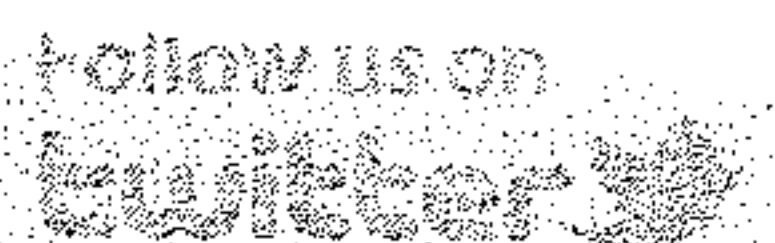
The Tennessee Comptroller's Office, in conjunction with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office, has completed an investigation of Heather Franklin, the former South Middle School Trojan Athletic Booster Club treasurer.

The investigation be- see Theft pg. 3

## Telemarketing Fraudster Sentenced, Maryland Company Defrauded Small Businesses, Non-Profits Out of Millions

The owner of a Maryland-based fraudulent telemarketing company that duped schools, churches, non-profits, small businesses, and government offices out of millions of dollars is now serving a federal prison sentence, thanks to an investigation by the FBI and partner agencies. Eric Epstein, 58, founded Midway Industries in 2003. His employees, who

See Fraud P.4



### Verse of the Day

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. — Psalm 95:1-2

### Wazzup

Have a safe and Happy Thanksgiving! Those of us at the Daily Edition would like to say THANK YOU To our Readers and Advertisers! The staff of the Daily Edition will be off the rest

of this week to enjoy the holidays with out families.. We will have another paper on Monday!

### Weather

Today: Sunny. High of 51F. Tonight: Clean. Low of 31F.

Thursday: Sunny. High of 57F.

Thursday Night: Clear Low of 32F.

### Horoscopes

Scorpio 10/23-11/21 You need to strike a balance between being relaxed and

(Continued on page 6)



**Trio**

Kelsey Litwin, 20, Homeless Lenoir City, was charged with Man/Sell/Del/Resale Sch. VI., Simple Possession, and Poss. Of Drug Para. Tiana Bennett, 18, Industrial Park Drive Lenoir City, was charged with Simple Possession. Jarvis Morgan, 24,

Morelia Avenue Knoxville, was charged with Driving on Revoked Suspended License. Officer Jordan Samuels LCPD, observed a red vehicle fail to stop at the stop sign on Town Creek Road and Old Hwy 95. Officer initiated a traffic stop at the Kenjo on McGhee Blvd. Of-

ficer made contact with the driver Jarvis Morgan, and ask him to step out of the vehicle. While speaking with Morgan Officer advised him why he stopped then. Morgan gave Officer consent to

search the vehicle. Officer ordered the two passengers Kelsey Litwin, and Tiana Bennett out of the vehicle. Officer ask if there anything illegal in the vehicle, Litwin

See Trio ctd to pg. 3

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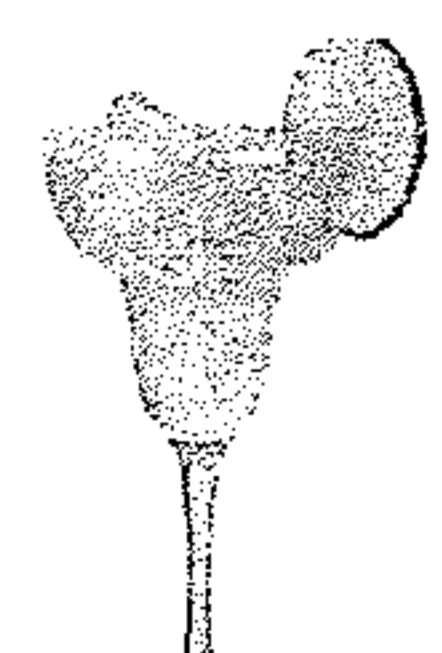
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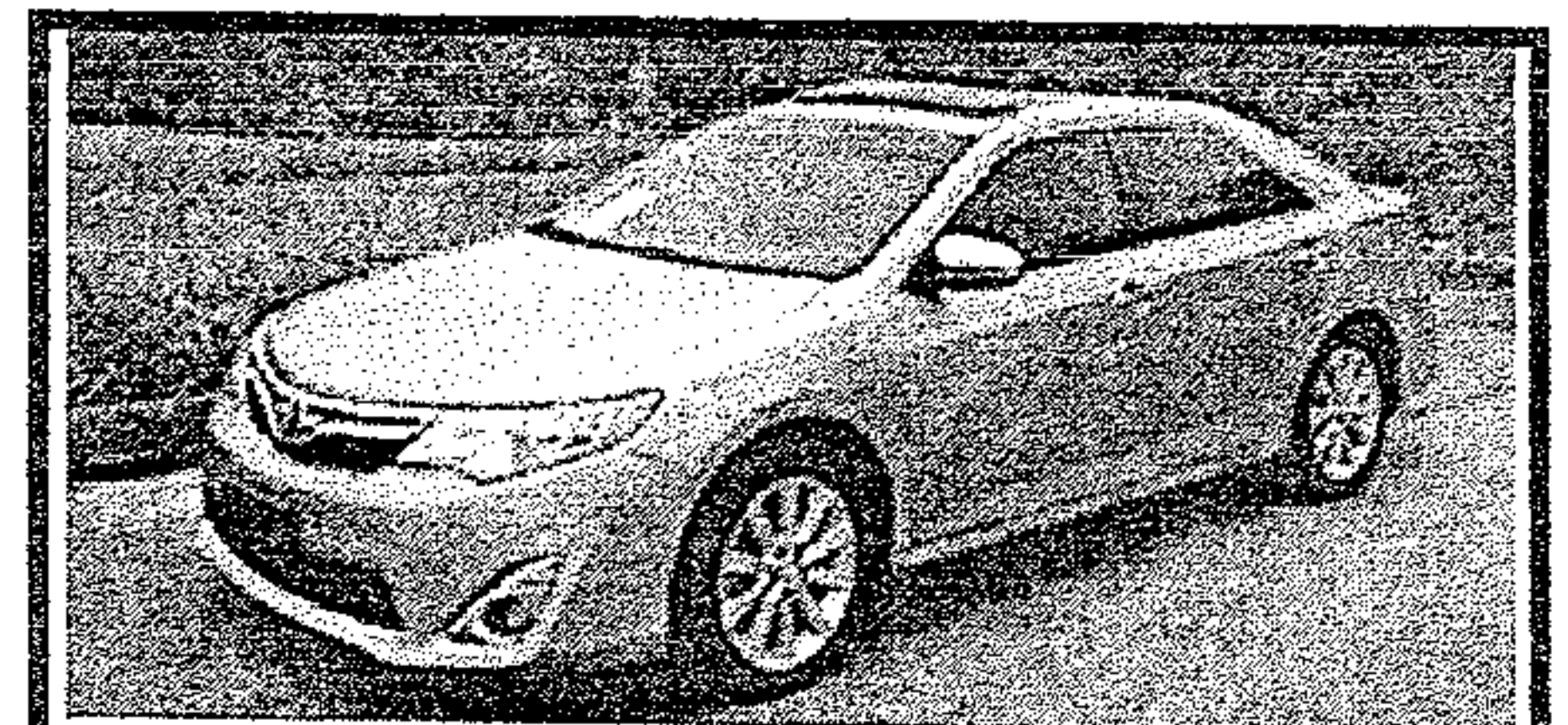
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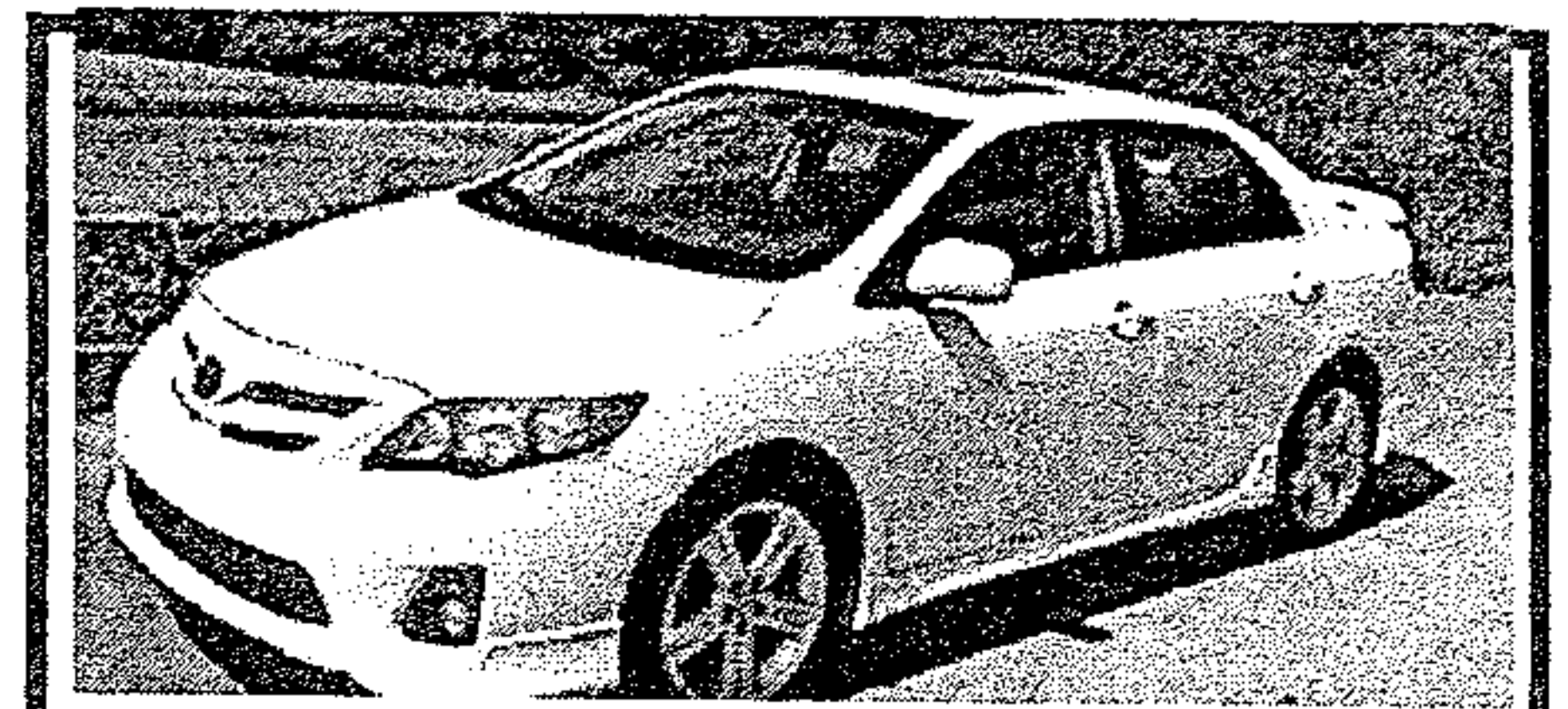
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Trio ctd from Pg.2

stated there was a grinder in her bag. Officer ask Bennett if she had anything she stated some roaches in her bag. During the search Officer located a black bag that was claimed by Bennett, inside the bag was a green leafy substance that weighed 1.4

grams and 5 brown wrappers with green leafy substance inside that weighed 1.6 grams combined. Officer then located a black yellow and red bag that was claimed by Litwin. Located inside the bag a green leafy substance weighing 9.2 grams, digital scales, and a blue grinder. Officer Cook

was then called to the scene for a pat down on the females. Officer Cook located 2 individually packaged bags with a green leafy substance that weighed 4.9 grams and 3.9 grams in Litwin bra, as well a brown wrapper with green leafy substance weighing 1 gram. A check through dispatch on all 3 revealed Morgan license were suspended for failure to pay fines and cost. All three were placed under arrest.

later date and placed under arrest.

### Theft

gan after booster club and school officials reported questionable transactions in the booster club bank records.

Investigators determined that Heather Franklin, who subsequent to her tenure as treasurer changed her name to Heather Harris after marriage, stole at least \$4,927 from the booster club between November 2016 and March 2017.

Franklin stole the money by keeping at least \$4,087 in cash that was collected from concession sales at basketball games. She also wrote a booster club check for \$840 that was used to pay loans for her personal vehicles.

Franklin covered up her misappropriation by making false entries in the booster club's records. She later admitted to investigators that she took the booster club's money to pay personal expenses. In November 2018, Heather (Franklin) Harris was indicted by the Franklin County Grand Jury on one count of theft over \$2,500.

"Tennessee booster clubs are required by law to establish procedures to ensure that money is safeguarded," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "In this case, booster club officials failed to separate financial responsibilities, review bank statements, and ensure that two signatures were required and included on all checks."

### Assault

Kristopher Pierce, 24, Steekee Road Loudon, was charged with Domestic Assault, and Violation of Probation. Cpl. Chris Jenkins along with Deputy Mike Williams responded to Steekee Road to a possible domestic. Upon arrival Deputy was advised that Kristopher Pierce had left the residence before Deputies arrived. Deputy spoke with victim who gave verbal and written statement, that Kristopher Pierce had dropped off his kids for her to baby sit. The victim stated that an argument ensued over the kids being in the kitchen. Victim stated Pierce then began yelling and cursing the victim. The victim stated that she ask him to leave and she was going to call 911. The victim stated Pierce grabbed her and slammed her up against the refrigerator and pushed a hole in the wall. Victim attempted to call 911 and pierce grabbed it to prevent the victim from calling. Deputy noticed contents all over the floor and a hole in the wall. Pierce was deemed the primary aggressor. Pierce was located at a

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## Meth

Reecesa Bishop-Smith, 26, Edge-wood Avenue Knoxville, was charged with Speeding 21 mph over, and DUI. Trooper Woody THP, stopped a vehicle for speeding 98 in a 70 mph zone. Trooper made contact with the driver Reecesa Bishop, the driver. During Trooper investigation he observed some indicators of DUI. Trooper Walker arrived to assist with the traffic stop. Trooper had Bishop perform field sobriety test which she failed. Bishop was placed under arrest. Trooper was placing Bishop in his patrol vehicle she stated she had taken a hydro 10 and wanted to be honest. Bishop was transported to FT. Loudon ER for blood draw then to the Loudon County Jail.

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## Fraud

worked on commission, cold-called thousands of victims and used deceptive techniques to sell them items like lightbulbs and cleaning supplies at wildly inflated prices. Midway did not actually manufacture these products; the company simply bought and re-sold them at markups as high as 8,000 percent.

For example, sometimes a Midway employee would call a business and pretend to have an existing relationship with the company, then simply tell them they were sending more of what had been previously ordered. In reality, there was no prior business relationship or prior orders.

Midway salespeople also tracked down employees who were not eligible to purchase items on behalf of

their organizations, such as maintenance workers, and tell them Midway would send half of a box, often throwing in a gift card for the employee. In reality, that order meant the organization would continuously be sent more supplies and increasing bills for those supplies.

Even if the company representative declined to purchase the products, Midway often sent them anyway. Each time, Midway raised the price and pressured the organization's accounting department to pay the invoice—as much as \$6,000 for a box of lightbulbs that cost Midway about \$70 to purchase from a supplier. The goal was to get as many invoices paid before the victim business caught on and eventually refused to pay or filed a complaint against Midway.

“Once they reeled

a victim business in, they just kept calling and sending more supplies. They did not disclose the price,” said FBI Special Agent Jason Bender, who worked this case out of the FBI's Baltimore Field Office. “For many victims, the supplies are being shipped to the maintenance department, and the bill is going to accounts payable. The left hand doesn't necessarily know what the right is doing.”

The company's fraudulent practices got more egregious over time, but Epstein also took defensive steps to avoid getting caught. If a victim business complained to its state's attorney general, he would stop targeting that state. The company changed names a few times to hide the true nature of its practices from customers.

“We seized two box trucks full of documentation from the company's offices,” Bender said. “Employees' hand-written notes, when matched up with voice recordings on the calls, showed that the company was deliberately sending products to customers who didn't want them.”

“There was a treasure trove of information, and it really helped us to understand the scheme and realize that it was more than deceptive or unfair trade practices—people were being scammed into paying for products they never ordered. It was outright fraud,” said Postal Inspector Bryan Hanlon of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, who worked the case with Bender and investigators from the Internal see Fraud ctd. pg. 5

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Fraud ctd from p.4

Revenue Service.

Epstein's company defrauded victims out of an estimated \$58 million. Unfortunately, some employees at the victim organizations lost their jobs for being duped by Midway.

Epstein eventually sold his majority share of the company for \$15 million but kept an ownership stake, received a regular paycheck, and continued to advise and supervise Midway employees. And he used his ill-gotten gains to live a lavish lifestyle, including a second home in Florida, high-end jewelry, and luxury cars. He had two luxury cars that were each worth more than \$300,000.

"Eric Epstein's conspiracy was a scheme motivated by pure greed. Through false and fraudulent business practices, Epstein not only personally enriched himself but he also cheated several businesses out of more than \$50 million in the process," said Kelly R. Jackson, acting special agent in charge of the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation's field office in Washington, D.C.

In May, Epstein pleaded guilty to

conspiracy to commit mail fraud and conspiracy to defraud the Internal Revenue Service. In September, he was sentenced to more than 11 years in prison. Eight other company officials have pleaded guilty and received prison terms of between four months and six years.

"Our biggest goal in a case like this is to deter companies from engaging in these fraudulent practices," Bender said. "We've seen similar companies either cleaning up their practices or shutting down."

### The Good News

The Rev. Dr. Julius McCarter  
Scripture: Daniel 7:9-14

Our society knows about Power. In the USA we've just spent billions of dollars to obtain or keep Power. This month we have lived through elections and all kinds of bending of Truth. Some are happy, some are not; some have sold their souls. Now the ever-present ads have shifted from politics to economics as "Black Friday" looms. Both Power and Wealth beckon, entice, unsettle us -- like powerful, present, in-our-face gods.

Daniel speaks to a people without power or wealth. He pulls back the curtain on those things which are only limited, dying facades

and invites us to bow and breathe beyond them. For Christians it becomes a wild glimpse of the Trinity, with a smoky taste. There is more, and we are rooted in the more. You are rooted in the more. This One is the Truth. Prayer: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, wrap me into your warm dominion. Amen.

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