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Fountain City group asks for help regarding traffic

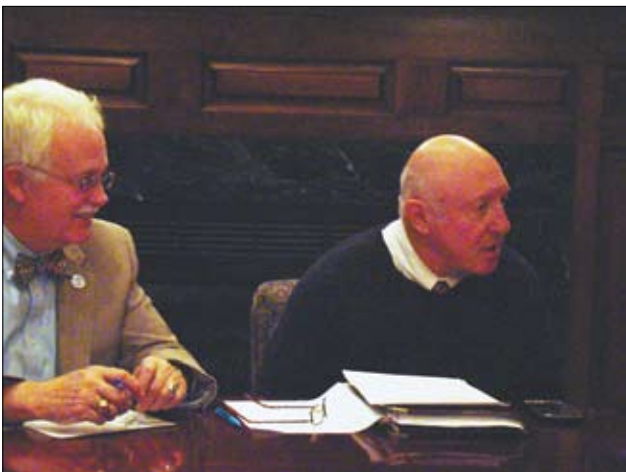


PHOTO BY KEN LAY.

R. Larry Smith and John Fugate discuss ideas at last week's Advocacy for Fountain City meeting.

By Ken Lay

Fountain City leaders and business owners took the first step in accomplishing some of their goals Thursday night at a meeting to discuss some traffic issues on North Broadway, Tazewell Pike and Beverly Road.

Advocacy for Fountain City, a group of Fountain City residents, leaders and business owners, was formed recently to tackle several issues including improving traffic flow and

sidewalk access along North Broadway, connecting traffic patterns along Tazewell Pike and the installation of a traffic signal at Beverly Road.

The activist group has its roots in October, 2016. Advocacy for Fountain City met late last week at Commercial Bank in North Knoxville. The group, led by businessman and banker John Fugate, did exactly what it set out to accomplish.

It got the attention of city, county and state politicians

and the long process to set the projects into motion began.

"We're a growing community and we have needs. We have new businesses coming to the community," said Fugate, the President of Commercial Bank. "We need to set up a meeting to let the mayor [Madeline Rogero] know what we need."

The group was also seeking state funding and guidance and it was informed that the improvements

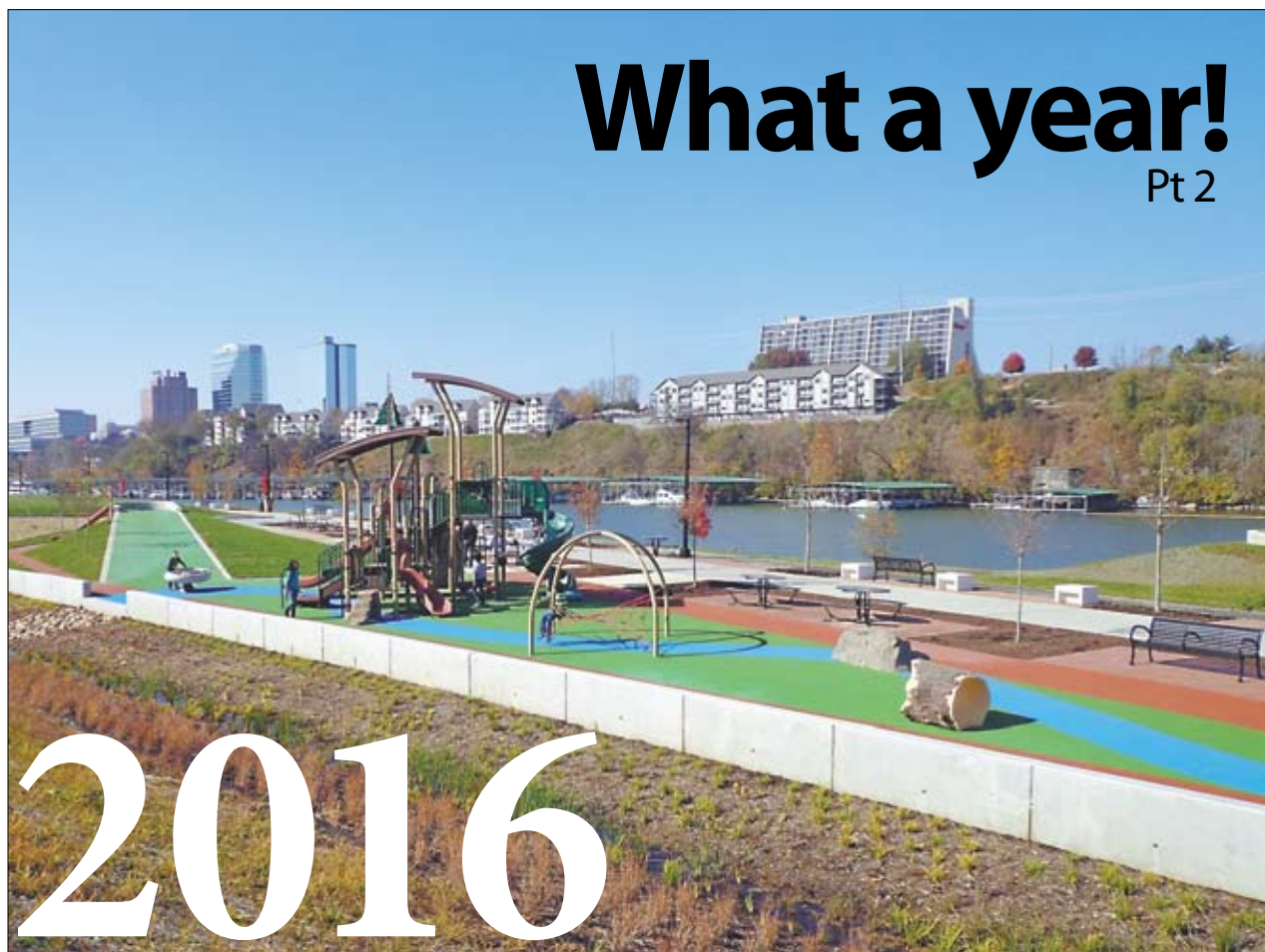
may not come anytime soon. Plans to improve traffic flow in the Fountain City have been discussed before only to be shelved as new politicians came into power.

"I wasn't really looking at this year anyway," Fugate told the group of politicians, which included State Representative Eddie Smith, Knox County Commissioner Michele Carringer and City Council members Nick Della Volpe, Mark Campen,

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What a year!

Pt 2



PHOTOS BY MIKE STEELY.

Suttree Landing Park was dedicated just across the river from downtown in 2016. The park will eventually be part of a Riverwalk stretching from the Henley Street Bridge to Island Home.

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

The second half of 2016 began with the sad news that legendary Women's Basketball Coast Pat Summitt had died. Fans of the most winning coach in basketball history gathered at her statue on the University of Tennessee campus. The last six months also saw movement toward a Safety Center with the city being asked to kick in the same funds as the county.

JUNE

Janice Toucher was selected as vice-chair of the Metropolitan Planning Commission and the Knoxville City Council voted to move its meetings to 6 p.m. and asked for ideas on the future of the former Supreme Court building.

New Harvest Park launched its summer concert series and the Devil's Racetrack Bike Trail opened in South Knoxville.

The county commission discussed issuing a request for bids for a new Safety Center and SMG was hired by the city to manage venues including Chilhowee Park, the Civic Center, Coliseum and Civic Auditorium.

JULY

The old Cal Johnson Building on State Street, built by the former slave and businessman, was designated as a historic site by the city council, preserving it from possible future demolition.

Early Voting started for the general election of county commission, school board, assessor of properties, law director and primary elections to state senate, legislative and national presidential race.

A "Super Stop" opened on Kirkwood Street just off Magnolia Avenue for KAT's bus service and "Try Transit" was begun as a



Members of American Legion Post 2 watch as approval to rezone their former headquarters passes. The post is active locally and sponsors the annual Veterans Day Parade.

campaign to encourage transit riders.

Regal Entertainment got approval to move from Halls to South Knoxville when the City Council as the city bought the former administration building at the former Baptist Hospital.

County Mayor Tim Burchett pushed for bulletproof vests for the Sheriff's Office. Developer Rick Dover voiced an interest in renovating the former Pryor

Brown Parking Garage for apartments.

August

Early voting continued in Knox County and the Planning Commission held meeting about the proposed Southwest Sector Plan.

Interim Superintendent Buzz Thomas laid out his plan for the system during his first 90 days in

Cont. on page 2

KAT begins 2017 with Service Improvements

Knoxville Area Transit (KAT) is pleased to announce that improved service on thirteen bus routes will begin on Monday, January 9, 2017. These improvements include two new Sunday routes, better frequencies on Saturdays, and later service on many neighborhood routes.

These expansions are in response to passenger requests as well as capacity issues on busy Saturday routes and are possible due to the continued support of the City of Knoxville towards improving transit services and mobility options in Knoxville.

"We are very excited to be starting the new year off right by providing these significant service improvements," says Dawn Distler, Director of Transit for the City of Knoxville. "The later service on neighborhood routes will give people more opportunities to get home from jobs, as well as allowing people who take transit to enjoy the many offerings of our downtown and still catch transit home. New Sunday services to Knoxville Center and other commercial locations to the northeast will provide great opportunities for both shopping and employment. We couldn't be more pleased."

The detailed list of changes follows. More information can be obtained by calling 637-3000 or visiting the KAT website, www.katbus.com.

January 2017 service improvements:

Route 11 – Kingston Pike will add an additional inbound trip to reach downtown at 9:15 a.m. on Sundays.

Route 12 – Western Avenue will continue full service to I-640 Plaza for two additional trips on weekdays and will add 30-minute service on Saturdays.

Route 13 – Beaumont will add two additional round-trips at 6:15 and 7:15 p.m. on weekdays.

Route 16 – Cedar Bluff will add a 9:15 p.m. trip on weekdays and Saturdays.

Route 17 – Sutherland will continue 30-minute service for one additional hour; add a 10:15 p.m. trip on weekdays and add a 10:15 p.m. trip on Saturdays.

Route 21 – Lincoln Park will add trips at 7:15 and 8:15 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays.

Route 22 – Broadway will see 30-minute service on Saturdays.

Route 23 – Millertown will add Sunday service.

Route 30 – Parkridge will add a 6:45 p.m. trip on weekdays and Saturdays.

Route 33 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave will add Sunday service.

Route 34 – Burlington will add a 9:15 p.m. trip on weekdays and add trips at 7:15, 8:15 and 9:15 p.m. on Saturdays.

Route 40 – South Knoxville will add a 9:15 p.m. trip on weekdays and add a 7:15, 8:15 and 9:15 p.m. trip on Saturdays.

Route 45 – Vestal will add a 9:15 p.m. trip on weekdays and add a 7:15, 8:15, and 9:15 p.m. trip on Saturdays.



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Expanding the Historic Overlay at Parkridge

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

The Parkridge neighborhood in East Knoxville dates back to the 1880s, but some residents there are focused on the future and trying to get other homeowners involved. The Parkridge Community Organization is busy trying to notify most of the people there of an event coming up on January 19th that may affect them.

Formed in 1982 the organization boasts that the diverse neighborhood of about 3,000 residents has a surprising number of homes designed by noted architect George Barber, possibly the

largest concentration of Barber homes in the nation.

Currently they are attempting, with the Metropolitan Planning Commission, to contact as many homeowners as possible for the important upcoming public meeting.

On Thursday, January 19th, residents will have an opportunity to hear Kay Graybeal, the city's Historic Preservation Planner, discuss the possibility of extending the H-1 Historic Overlay beyond the current historic zoning district in Parkridge. The meeting will be at the O'Connor Senior Center and members of the organization

were told last week that the planning commission plans to send out cards to all the neighborhood residents.

Vice President Jennifer Montgomery directed the monthly meeting of the Parkridge group last week and the upcoming Historic Overlay seemed the main topic, with plans by the group to reach out to residents not involved with their organization. The idea is to have a full house at the informative public meeting because many homeowners don't know how the historic designation might affect them.

Officer Chris Burke also spoke

at last week's meeting, reporting about crime in the area and was informed by two members about problems they encountered when trying to call 911. Burke suggested they report the problems to the city's 311 call center.

The Parkridge Organization also discussed the Magnolia Avenue Streetscape Project and the recent approval of the rezoning of a former financial building for student housing. It was suggested that the owner of the building meet with them prior to going to the Planning Commission for improvements and changes there.

The group voted to buy new signs to advertise their meetings and discussed where to post the signs at various entrances to their neighborhood. They also discussed appointing an Events Committee and the possibility of planting a community Christmas tree, a Halloween event and other events during the year in addition to their annual Home Tour

The Parkridge Community Organization meets the first Monday of each month at 6:30 in the Cansler YMCA. They maintain a Facebook page and a website at www.parkridgecommunity.wordpress.com.

2016 What a year! Pt 2

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office. The county commission questioned routinely approving school system funding requests. A renovation of one of the structures at the former city building began.

The school system considered hiring a collection agency for the collection of past-due lunch money. Newly-elected county commissioners included Evelyn Gill, Michelle Carringer, Hugh Nystrom and Carson Dailey. Three new board of education members were elected: Jennifer Owen, Tony Norman and Susan Horn. Along with the election of incumbent Mike McMillan, the control of the school board swung sharply and the majority of members are now former school teachers.

The Safety Center committee.

The month ended with the announcement that the Knoxville Center Mall will revert to "East Towne Mall" and revitalization there began. The iconic Tennessee Theatre sign was restored and once again mounted on the side of the historic building. Some Parkridge residents spoke out against a historic overlay for that neighborhood.

SEPTEMBER

The Knox County Commission re-elected Dave Wright as chairman and selected Randy Smith as vice-chairman. The Board of Education postponed its reorganization following several votes for various members for chair and Lynn Fugate agreed to take the temporary position.

Interim Superintendent suggested hiring a Transportation Expert to deal with continuing school bus problems.

The new Kroger Marketplace opened on Emory Road at the site of the former air field there and Commissioner Charles Busler asked the county to buy the former Heiskell Community Center and allow it to be operated by local volunteers.

Mayor Burchett's 10th Annual Picnic drew a huge crowd at Tarleton Park and a public hearing drew comments on the qualifications of a new School Superintendent. Mike McMillan, recovering from recent surgery, pulled out of the BOE Chairmanship nominations. The City's Parks and Recreation Department relocated into the former Lakeshore Mental Health

administration building and Mayor Madeline Rogero officially opened the renovated building.

The county's external auditor began looking at a grant to the school's nutrition program residents loudly opposed a proposed Verizon Cell Tower in the Burlington community.

OCTOBER

Interim Superintendent Buzz Thomas voiced his opposition to a resolution by Amber Rountree to ask the state not to use TCAP test scores in evaluations of students and teachers. The resolution passed despite his opposition.

The East Knoxville Economic Summit drew lots of ideas from citizens and the Knoxville Area Transit announced bus and trolley route changes.

Patti Bounds was selected as chair of the Board of Education and Amber Rountree was chosen as vice-chair. Edna Weaver Smith celebrated her 100th Birthday with a surprise visit by Mayor Burchett and other elected officials and friends.

Discussions at City Council began focusing on dropping the distance limits between beer retailers and churches and plans for East Towne Mall were announced by the owners, Knoxville Partners, LLC.

The 8th Annual Pink Ribbon Celebration kicked off with an effort to help uninsured women get breast exam for cancer detection. Vet2Vet sponsored a day to honor Vietnam era veterans in a ceremony at the Worlds Fair Park's Veterans Memorial.

A new trash collection

system was announced by the city and some began to wonder if the new large containers might be difficult to handle by elderly and handicapped citizens.

New county commissioners began to speak up during meetings and Central High School named four to the "Wall of Fame" there. The E-911 board learned that a state law now requires members to not miss more than two meetings or be dismissed from that board.

The city began considering a hotel-motel occupancy tax on private homes rented to visitors and the Corryton Apple Festival drew thousands of people. The month ended with a large Trump Rally at the Knoxville Expo Center and an end of trolley service threatened at University Commons. A compromise was eventually worked out to continue service there.

NOVEMBER

A beautiful black granite monument was dedicated at the East Tennessee Veterans Cemetery on Governor John Sevier Highway.

BOE member Jennifer Owen introduced resolutions to take back the duties given to the former school superintendent and return control of much of the administration to the school board.

Angelic Ministries called on the community for help as it prepared to open its doors to local families in need of help.

The local Wreaths Across America sought support and donation in their efforts to decorate every veteran cemetery in our area and Sharps Ridge Memorial



Molly Gilbert and family rest on a rock at the entrance to the William Haste Natural Area in the Forest Lake neighborhood, linking their area to the Gary Underwood Greenway.

ry School celebrated its teachers and improvements there. Residents in the area of the Cavitt Cemetery won their fight to stop a proposed housing development there.

Suttree Landing Park was dedicated, opening up the riverside park in South Knoxville.

The search for a new school superintendent officially began with the first meeting of a committee appointed to seek a new director.

DECEMBER

The city began looking at revising all of the zoning ordinances and the Five Points neighborhood hosted its Third Annual Winter Wonderland. Art teacher Cheryl Burchett received a grant from Farmers Insurance for Beaumont Magnet's playground.

The Teachers Advisory Committee discussed text books and teacher evaluations and the board of education was displeased with teacher evaluations also and passed the first of Owen's policy changes.

The potential rezoning of student populations to make way for the new middle schools in Hardin Valley and Gibbs began being discussed with a series of public forums.

The city council stood fast on its Sign Ordinance,

ainers were distributed throughout the residences in town and complaints began from seniors and handicapped residents about the weight of the containers. The city also activated its new "smart" parking meters and announced that glass will no longer be accepted as trash.

The city council voted to dissolve the Citizens Advisory Committee and three members of the Knoxville Transit Authority were named.

Unpaid school lunches got some attention during a meeting of the commission's Audit Committee. The Knox County School Museum announced its "Honor Roll" and recognized the leadership there of Benna van Vuuren.

The year ended with a New Year's Eve celebration in Market Square and a Cash Mob at Alvin Frye's Exxon, which was scheduled to close December 31st after 60 years of service to the Fountain City area.

The future of the Carter Convenience Center was discussed at the Knox County Commission and the school board continued discussing suggested policy changes and the search for a new superintendent.



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Facts about the United States Supreme Court

The United States Supreme Court is the highest body in the judicial system of the United States. It is made up of nine justices, or judges, who hear cases involving primarily constitutional issues,



By Jedidiah McKeehan
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less than an hour. The Court will often be deciding how to apply a law, or whether a law should be changed. After the Court hears the arguments from the attorneys, they will meet and vote on

how to rule on the case with a simple majority making the decision. So if an attorney can get five justices to vote for their position, then they will win the case.

One of the justices will then write an opinion (meaning, their clerk will write an opinion) that states the ruling of the Court, and it will be published six to eight months after the hearing.

The most recent big decision of the Supreme Court that most people know about is the legalizing gay marriage. As I said at the beginning, many of the Supreme Court decisions have a substantial effect on our country.

Jedidiah McKeehan is an attorney practicing in Knox County and surrounding counties. He works in many areas, including criminal, personal injury, landlord-tenant, probate, and estate planning. Visit attorney-knoxville.com for more information about this legal issue and other legal issues.

Fountain City group

Cont. from page 1

Marshall Stair, Finbarr Saunders and George C. Wallace.

With the city, county and state budgets nearly complete, the funds will likely not be available in 2017 but it was Wallace who broke things down on the simplest terms.

"You have to get the mayor's attention," he said.

The city council members present at last week's meeting agreed to help Advocacy for Fountain City attain its meeting with Rogero.

"This was very positive," Fugate said. "We're going to get our meeting with the mayor in the coming weeks."

Following its meeting with Rogero, Advocacy for Fountain City will convene again. That meeting will likely be on a Friday night according to Fugate.

Planning Commission busy in 2017

The Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission meets Thursday and begins the year with a full plate for the planning staff.

The MPC is tasked with several city and county projects including studying parking lot regulations, considering zoning changes for auction houses, looking at defining rural retreats, creating a possible Entertainment District category, revising zoning regulations, creating mixed-use districts and defining event facilities.

During the meeting this week the MPC will consider several requests from the City of Knoxville, one of which is a request from the Knoxville Police

Department to rezone 2.6 acres for a K-9 Dog Training facility. The lot is located between Howard Baker Jr Drive and Lula Drive. Cynthia Gass, Deputy Chief, is making the request.

The city is also asking the MPC to rezone a piece of property recently annexed to change the site to RP-1 with restrictions. The site, on the west side of Broom Road and Northwest side of Sherill Blvd, is vacant land with a planned commercial use. Parker Properties is the owner.

The tentative agenda for Thursday's meeting has sixty-six different requests. The MPC is celebrating its 60th year as the planning arm of both the city and the county.



Picture of Clayton and Betty Sharp, courtesy of Becky Calfee

Come Celebrate with The Sharps!

She was a schoolteacher; he was a scoutmaster.

"Their contributions to our families, our churches, and in our community have been selfless on their part and rewarding to our community," Becky Calfee said. She is referring to Betty and Clayton Sharp, an outstanding couple of the Gibbs Community. Betty taught at Gibbs Elementary School, and Clayton helped start the first Scout Troop 500 at Clapp's Chapel United Methodist Church in the mid-1950s.

They have been active in several organizations,



By Ralphine Major
ralphine3@yahoo.com

including Gibbs Ruritan Club, Nicholas Gibbs Society, and Clapp's Chapel United Methodist Church. The Sharps have been volunteers at St. Mary's Hospital and St. Mary's Hospice where they have been honored for their many hours of dedicated service. Many former Gibbs students attended school with their sons, Rancy and Monty.

On Sunday, January 22, 2017, from 2 - 5 p.m., Ron and Becky Calfee are helping host a celebration for Betty's 90th birthday and Clayton's 95th!

Becky said they request

no gifts, but she asks everyone to write about their favorite memory of the Sharps in a card or letter and place in a mailbox that will be at the entrance of the fellowship hall. If you are unable to come, please mail to Ron and Becky Calfee, 7917 Emory Road, Corryton, TN 37721. For more information, call 865-

313-5033. The event will not be canceled should there be inclement weather.

Former scouts, former students, teachers who taught with Betty, and friends of the Sharps, come and celebrate with this special couple and make another memory for the schoolteacher and the scoutmaster!

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The Craighead-Jackson House, built in 1818 by John Craighead, was one of the places to get a preservation grant from the city. The house was given to the Blount Mansion Association in 1957 by the city and state and opened to the public in 1966.

Historic renovation money available

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

If you own a historic home or commercial building the city may have some money for you for renovations. You have to ask for some of the \$500,000 set aside in the Historic Preservation Fund. The city's Department of Community Development is accepting applications now with one additional requirement.

Applicants must attend a pre-proposal meeting set for 10 a.m. Wednesday in Room 511 in the City-County Building. The deadline for written questions to be submitted to the Assistant Purchasing Agent is Tuesday, February 7th and the proposal deadline is Tuesday, February 14th.

Requests for grants cannot be considered unless the applicant attends the meeting this week.

Since 2014, \$500,000 of the city budget has been allocated to help owners preserve historic structure each year.

Some of the 14 structures receiving

funds in the past include the Mabry-Hazen House, Historic Riverside, the Tennessee Theatre, Craighead-Jackson House, Branson House, First Christian Church, Keener Building, Bijou Theatre, Kerns Bakery building and the Park City Church.

Becky Wade, Director of Community Development, said the grants have led to repairs and renovations at several significant and historic structures that might have otherwise languished. She said the goal is to bring back the buildings so they can be utilized and enjoyed by the community.

The RFP for "Funding for Improvements of Historic Buildings" can be found at www.knoxvilletn.gov/bids. Applicants must own the property and funding will be secured by a deed of trust of that property. More information is available from Janice McClelland by calling (865) 215-2063 or by emailing her at jmcclelland@knoxvilletn.gov.

Family arguments

When people are together for any length of time, they are bound to argue. If they are family members, the spats are worse, sometimes even leading to fights. To be honest, most of those family quarrels begin over rather ridiculous things.

Husbands and wives sometimes have disagreements. When Amy and I first married, those times came quite often. We were learning to live together, something that is difficult for two individuals who have never been in such a close relationship. Each of us made messes that irked the other. Sometimes the arguments began over what television show we would watch.

Most of the time, I wound up in trouble with my wife for being "insensitive." I'd say or do something that Amy considered thoughtless. Did I know that I had hurt her feelings by my comments or actions? No, I was oblivious to the faux pas, but I knew that something I did had landed me in trouble. Any attempts at discussion usually led to my wife's going silent and my growing frustrated and angry. The resolution to the situation arrived when I uttered, "I'm sorry" although I had no idea what sin I had committed.

Brothers and sisters constantly argue. The older child has an intense dislike for younger family



By Joe Rector
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members. Life was so much better when the older one was the only one. Fights occur everywhere; that includes at home and in cars, motel rooms, and restaurants. A younger child invades the space of the older one, and screams of "get out of my room" echo throughout the house.

In cars, the wars start in the back seat. One child squalls, "Stop touching me" That only serves to up the ante as the offending small person holds a finger just above the complainer's arm. "Stop! STOP! STOP!" the volume goes up with each successive command until the sound is close to piercing adult eardrums. At that point, the parent chimes in with his own demanding barks that tell both sides to cease and desist. The command is usually followed by a demand that begins with "Or else." Only the bravest children dare to tempt fate then; they know that the wrath of a stressed parent can lead to painful consequences.

Teens and their parents engage in the most ridiculous arguments. The younger person punches the buttons of the parent, and the fight is on. My daughter Lacey was a master button pusher. She would complain about home, and on one occasion commented that she wished she could leave and never come

back. I replied that I wished I could help her pack her bags. That wasn't the best way to handle the situation, but she had managed to push the right buttons to lead to the answer.

One evening the family traveled to West Town Mall. I noticed that Lacey was sporting a thumb ring. For the life of me, I didn't understand it, so I commented that "The demise of the Egyptian civilization was in part due to the preoccupation with personal appearance. For a minute the entire family sat silent, somewhat dumbfounded by the comment. Then my loving wife, who should have supported me, spewed out laughter that was followed by raucous yuks from my children. I fumed the rest of the evening, and when we arrived home, Amy and I spent more than a few minutes arguing about her outburst. Years later, I see why she found my words so humorous perfectly.

Over the years, my family has engaged in some ridiculous arguments. Most of the time, they were based on raw moods or inability to adapt to situations. In the end, however, we still love each other and have survived those disagreements with little or no lasting repercussions. The best thing about those battles is that they bring back memories that are always followed by laughter. Yes, families engage in absurd arguments, but they give a bit of spice and color to life. They also teach folks to develop thicker skins.

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Our Neighborhoods

Baker Creek Preserve adds seven miles to Urban Wilderness

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

Who would have imagined a few years ago that you could bike or walk 42 miles of trails in South Knoxville? Knoxville's Urban Wilderness has grown to become a praised and noticed regional greenway system.

Knoxville's Urban Wilderness now has three main areas: The South Loop Trails, the Battlefield Loop, and the newer Baker Creek Preserve. The Urban Wilderness will eventually join Alcoa Highway and Ijams Nature Center with connections to downtown.

Five new trails and about 100 acres were added to the combined Wilderness with the opening of the Red Bud Bridge last summer. This bridge connected Baker Creek Preserve to the South Loop, adding seven miles of trails, a bike pump track and an adventure playground for children. The Baker Creek playground is located just behind the former Sevier Heights Baptist Church. The playground features



The Red Bud pedestrian bridge crosses Red Bud Road and the span links up the new Baker Creek Preserve with Knoxville's South Loop Urban Wilderness trails system for walkers and bikers.

natural, interactive and bike features for kids of all ages. There's a hanging bamboo chime for kids to run through and make music, log rounds for balancing, a miniature climbing wall, slides and a

climbing play net. The Baker Creek Preserve features five multi-use, two-way trails and three mountain bike downhill trails, providing more than 7 miles of adventure. The South

Loop has more than 12 miles and connects with Ijams Nature Center, Forks of the River Wildlife Area, Anderson School Trails, William Hastee Natural Area and Marie Myers Park. There're also

more than 30 miles of secondary trails. The Preserve was created by Legacy Parks thanks to the donation from the Wood Family Foundation in honor of Hobson Patrick (Pat)

Wood who died at age 83 in 2012. Wood was a noted real estate developer, founder of the Wood Agency, Wood Properties and Lawler Wood, LLC. He was an Army veteran, chairman of the Knox County Development Corporation, a member of the MPC, and a member of the Knox County Court. Wood was involved with bringing the 1982 World's Fair to Knoxville and is remembered as a community leader and philanthropist.

More recently the Wood family donated four acres to Legacy Parks to be used by the Police Department for a canine unit just across from the Public Safety Building on Howard Baker Jr. Avenue.

Trail names in the Preserve were chosen for the terrain and history of the property. "Pappy's Way" and "Pappy's Point" were named in honor of Pat Wood.

The Red Bud Bridge was built by private donations to Legacy Parks and the Appalachian Mountain Bike Club.

Get involved as an Emergency Contact

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

The recent disastrous fires in the Gatlinburg area have prompted a push in Knoxville to engage citizens in getting involved during local disasters. Relying on new outlets for quick information isn't reliable enough and citizens at the scene can contribute directly to the Emergency Contact Network.

The Office of Neighborhoods is pairing with the Knoxville-Knox County Emergency Management Agency (KEMA) to involve communities and citizens in becoming the eyes and ears of the Emergency Operations Center.

During an emergency,

which could include fires, storms, wind damage, or other natural or man-made catastrophes, someone from the Emergency Operation Center uses texts or emails to ask network volunteers to report on their immediate surroundings. The information is compiled with other reports to give the center a better picture of a crisis. Communications can be very effective when disaster strikes and it is important for the Center to get as much information as possible. The Emergency Operation Center gives citizens a way to help their community in a meaningful way.



What would you do if disaster like this Gatlinburg scene took place in Knox County? The Emergency Operations Center needs volunteers to respond with information about local catastrophes.

Continue on page 2

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Charles Busler talks about Powell

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

Powell is a unique community near the northern Knox County line, with its very own zip code and "downtown" that developed along the railroad there. Now bypassed by the new Powell Drive, historic downtown Powell looks forward to a thriving future.

Commissioner Charles Busler represents North Knox County's 7th District which contains Powell, where he has lived for more than 40 years. Last year Busler led the county commissioners into funding the purchase of the former Heiskell Community Center there and with the approval of local citizens operating the facility. As an active member of his community he shared his knowledge of Powell with The Focus.

"Powell was originally named Powell Station because of the rail line that runs through the community. There is another

story for the term Powell Station— that it was a northern look out for Indians," Busler said.

"Powell Station was established in 1789, two years before Knoxville in 1791. The area that is inside the 37849 zip code has a population that larger than the city of Oak Ridge and the city of Clinton," he continued.

"Why the term 'community' is used so often with Powell is because of the local businesses like Weigel's. It is still family-owned," he said. The convenience store chain, founded in 1935 as a dairy, now has more than 64 stores in our region.

"Powell High School is one of the oldest schools in Knox County and the school has one of the oldest alumni associations in the south, started in 1917. The Powell High School band is one of the largest, if not the largest, in the county," Busler said.

"The principal, Chad



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY.

Although Powell Station grew up around the railroad there it actually predates the tracks and even the city of Knoxville. The downtown area continues to reflect that railroad history.

Smith, is an alumnus of Powell," he added.

"There is the Powell Playhouse, started by and run by the community. Even though there is a large population you have the feeling of a small community,"

he said, attributing the area's tight-knit identity to "Powell Pride."

The greater Powell community stretches from Callahan Road and I-75 north to the Anderson County line. The area's

business growth has included the Walmart Complex at Clinton Highway and Callahan, as well as the Target Shopping Center and related stores. More recently the opening of the Kroger Super Center on

Emory Road, just west of I-75 at the former air field, and the opening of Food City and Kroger on Clinton Highway are adding to the local economy.

Get involved as an Emergency Contact

Cont. from page 1

The Office of Neighborhood's Emergency Preparedness Plan is available and can be adapted to the need of any city neighborhood. The idea is for the neighbors to work together and to think about how their community can survive if emergency responders are unable to respond in the first two to four days.

The Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Speaker Series can help obtain officials to attend neighborhood meetings and present information or conduct a training session.

Participating agencies in the speaker series include the American Red Cross, the Knox County Health Department, the Emergency Management Agency, the Knoxville Utilities Board and City of Knoxville Fire and Police Departments.

You can join the Emergency Contact Network by contacting Wyatt Pless of the Office of Neighborhoods at wpless@knoxvilletn.gov or call at (865) 215-3456. One or more people from the following neighborhoods are already members: Anteeleh Trail, Brittany Place, Curtis Lane, Deane

Hill, Downtown, Eastport, Edgewood, Whittle Springs, Fairmont Emoriland, Fourth and Gill, Fountain City, Glenview, Highland Hills, Island Home Park, Jackson Gray Central, Kingston Woods, Montgomery Village, Moss Creek Pleasant Ridge School, Murray Drive, Old City, Old North Knoxville, Old Westmoreland, Parkridge, Riverside, Sequoyah Hills, South Knoxville, Bearden Village, Timbercrest, Vestal, View Park, West Haven, West Hills and West View.

Even if you live in one of the neighborhood that already has a member you should join also.

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Ray Blanton PART THREE

Pages from the Past



By Ray Hill
rayhill865@gmail.com

After having lost the 1972 race for the U. S. Senate to incumbent Howard Baker by a wide margin, Ray Blanton found himself out of Congress. Blanton returned to Tennessee and immediately began planting the seeds for an expected bid for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in 1974.

Democrats were shocked by the extent of Howard Baker's victory and began to worry regaining the governor's office might not be as easy as they had imagined. Governor Winfield Dunn was constitutionally prohibited from running for a second term in 1974 and there were any number of ambitious Democrats who longed to be governor. For that matter, there were more than a few Republicans who harbored gubernatorial ambitions.

The one thing Ray Blanton had accomplished during his senatorial bid was unifying the fractured Democratic Party in Tennessee. Warring factions were hardly new in either Tennessee or the Democratic Party; yet for fifty years, the Volunteer State had been almost entirely a one-party state. Bitter fights mattered little when they were settled with finality in the primary. With the Republicans a real threat, factionalism had led to a series of stunning defeats for Tennessee Democrats. The sudden death of Senator Estes Kefauver had sparked a fierce primary contest between Governor Frank Clement and Congressman Ross Bass. Bass had gone on to win the special election over Howard Baker in 1964, but the race was uncomfortably close.

Memphis Republican Dan Kuykendall had won more than 46% of the vote in the 1964 general election against Albert Gore for Tennessee's other Senate seat. By 1973, Republicans occupied the governorship, both Senate seats, and five out of eight congressional seats. Some Democrats worried that if Ray Blanton had indeed unified the Democratic Party and still lost by almost 275,000, what were the prospects for victory against a similarly united Republican Party in 1974?

Blanton's senatorial candidacy had been endorsed by Alabama governor George Wallace just before the election and Senator Baker won somewhere between 35% - 40% of the black vote. While Blanton did win a healthy majority of the African-American vote in Tennessee, it was hardly enough to carry him to victory.

Ray Blanton, along with a host of other prospective candidates for governor attended a Democratic rally in upper East Tennessee near Thanksgiving in 1973. Stan Snodgrass, who had run for governor

in 1970, was present, along with State Treasurer Tom Wiseman and state Attorney General David Pack. Lieutenant Governor John Wilder was seen shaking hands with anyone and everyone. Jim McKinney was there, but his own gubernatorial ambitions had suffered a major setback when he was deposed as Speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives by Ned McWherter. The mayor of Waverly, Tennessee, Jimmy Powers, worked the crowd, as did a newcomer, Jake Butcher.

All of the would-be candidates were introduced, save for Butcher, yet the banker worked the crowd like an expert. The newly elected Chairman of the Tennessee Democratic Party, Jim Sasser, was on hand as well.

In January of 1974, Ellis Binkley, the political reporter for the Kingsport Times, wrote that he had recently ridden with Senator Howard Baker from Johnson City to Kingsport. During the ride, they naturally talked politics. Senator Baker felt the GOP could retain the governorship and believed the Republicans could field a superlative candidate. Baker worried that Congressman Dan Kuykendall might have some trouble being reelected. Kuykendall, a loquacious man, was often referred to as "Tennessee's Talking Horse." Senator Baker also expressed some concern for newly elected Congressman Robin Beard if Ray Blanton opted to run for his old seat in the House of Representatives.

It was soon readily apparent Blanton had no interest in returning to Congress.

Baker was then a member of the Senate's special Watergate Committee and he had not assessed the potential damage to the party of Richard Nixon. Watergate and the fall of Richard Nixon was to have serious political repercussions for the Republican Party nationally and in Tennessee.

Ray Blanton announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomination for governor on May 7, 1974 with a media splash, holding news conferences all across Tennessee.

Citing the fact he had traveled extensively across the Volunteer State, Blanton said, "The people of Tennessee have asked me to seek the high office of Governor."

Blanton naturally reminded voters of his legislative experience, having been a member of both the Tennessee House of Representatives and the U. S. House of Representatives. The former congressman also pointed to his business experience as further qualification for holding the governorship.

It was clear Ray Blanton intended to wage a populist campaign, noting his



FROM THE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL COLLECTION.

Former Congressman Ray Blanton (left) and GOP gubernatorial nominee Lamar Alexander (right) shake hands during the 1974 governor's race.

concern about "high prices getting higher" and said he had always had kept an open line of communication with the people he represented. Blanton promised "that policy will never change when I am elected governor, because I am absolutely convinced that person-to-person communication is the only source of true representation for the people of this state."

That was a particularly ironic pledge considering the imperial nature of Ray Blanton's governorship.

Blanton was the sixth Democrat to officially enter the gubernatorial contest and had to share headlines with Republican Nat Winston who said he would contest the GOP nomination for governor.

Soon the Democratic candidates were bickering about the need to disclose campaign contributions. Hudley Crockett, a former newscaster, noted the legislature, not the news media, formulated and passed state law. Ray Blanton commented on the need to limit campaign contributions.

Blanton said, "Right now we're getting to the point that we put public offices up for sale."

The former congressman admitted all politicians were suspect in the eyes of the public, but declared that it would be futile for Democrats to attempt to use the Watergate issue as it would be "whipping a horse after the horse is dead."

Blanton would change his mind in the general election contest with Lamar Alexander.

By the time the filing deadline closed for the Democratic primary, there were at least twelve candidates competing for the governorship. The final candidates included not only Ray Blanton, but banker Jake Butcher, State Treasurer Tom Wiseman, Hudley Crockett, Stan Snodgrass, Chattanooga businessman Franklin Haney, former U. S. senator Ross Bass, and Tennessee Attorney General David Pack.

The primary campaign produced some campaign jingles by country music legends. Tammy Wynette sang a version of her famous Stand By Your Man on behalf of Tom Wiseman. Yet it was Dottie West's song

for Ray Blanton that is still remembered today. West adapted Country Sunshine to Ray of Blanton Sunshine. A later song, Pardon Me Ray had Tennesseans laughing just a few later.

The primary campaign soon became heated. Former Attorney General David Pack charged that he possessed evidence that at least one of his opponents was engaging in vote buying.

Former Senator Ross Bass's brother, Horace, complained the Bass campaign's lack of money was due to the fact they had "conducted an honest 'take it to the people' campaign. There has been no vulgar display of wild money splurges, no liquor parties, no big steak dinners. We have spent our money in a very responsible fashion by not trying to buy 'political endorsements'. 'Nor have we invaded the sanctity of churches to make a pitch for votes.'"

Stan Snodgrass reminded voters one candidate had been accused of having accepted illegal contributions. Snodgrass also noted that Tom Wiseman was "under a cloud of suspicion for the way he ran the state Treasurer's office."

Blanton stressed his intention to "make Tennessee an invitation for industry" if elected governor and yes, Blanton regularly mangled the English language something Knoxville's own Victor Ashe once offered to help him with.

One of the few issues in the primary that generated interest and debate amongst the contenders was the death penalty while attending the West Tennessee Mayor's Association. When queried about supporting the death penalty, Ross Bass replied, "I had rather not be governor than have to kill anybody."

The moderator had asked any of the six candidates attending the meeting if he opposed the death penalty to stand up. After a few moments of silence, Bass slowly came to his feet. Wearing a seersucker suit in the sweltering West Tennessee summer, Bass sorrowfully said, "If ever I had you, I'm about to lose you."

Bass was forthright in his opposition to the death penalty, saying, "If the

state of Tennessee were to pass a law that would meet Supreme Court requirements and would require capital punishment, this man could not pull the lever."

"If I had the power to save that life, I'd have to save it," Bass confessed.

The reception to Senator Bass's honesty was icy silence from the mayors. The only person who literally applauded Bass's comments was attorney Jim Emison of Alamo.

The former senator added, "I have had dreams occasionally because I had to drop a few bombs during World War II. I don't know where the bombs hit, but I hope to God they didn't hit anybody."

Ray Blanton told the mayors he was opposed to the way capital punishment had been employed in the past, but felt some form of capital punishment was necessary, if for no other reason as a deterrent to crime. Blanton's view was echoed by Hudley Crockett and Jimmy Powers. Jake Butcher had already left the meeting before the question was posed and Stan Snodgrass said nothing at all.

Blanton used the opportunity to declare his dislike of revenue sharing (which had been sponsored by Senator Howard Baker). The former congressman believed his views had been proven over time, growling, "Tennessee is 50th out of the 50 states in the amount of revenue that is being shared."

Powers, the mayor of Waverly, Tennessee, sharply disagreed with Blanton.

"Revenue sharing has been a wonderful thing for Tennessee," he said. "The thing that has hurt the municipalities in Tennessee is the impoundment of funds by the President."

Jake Butcher, in his comments before leaving, admitted he had no record on which to campaign, but promised that were he to be elected governor, he would "work with all my efforts to insure that state government will work with all municipalities in the state."

By July Ray Blanton was ahead in the polls, but the former congressman admitted that might only be the result of his having run a statewide race two years previously and boosted

his name recognition. Jake Butcher and Franklin Haney poured money into the campaign, concentrating on media. According to official campaign disclosures, Haney outspent all of his competitors.

Just about everybody thought the primary election would be very close and each of the candidates worked hard to squeeze out every vote possible. Ross Bass was interviewed on a handshaking tour and the reporter noticed the former senator's right hand was swollen.

Bass immediately recalled that John F. Kennedy's hand had swollen to twice its normal size from shaking hands.

"It got so bad sometimes he'd have to pack it in ice," Bass said. "So I'm not complaining. People instinctively reach out and we automatically respond. The personal touch means a lot."

Bass noted his name came first on the ballot among twelve candidates and his advertising pointedly mentioned he was the only candidate running who had won a statewide race.

"So a name like Ross Bass should be worth a few votes," he chuckled.

As it turned out, it was worth far fewer than he might have imagined. At fifty-eight, Bass was past his political prime and those speculating on the closeness of the Democratic primary were not disappointed.

Ray Blanton won by an eyelash with less than 23% of the vote. Jake Butcher was close behind with just over 20% of the vote. Franklin Haney, the biggest spender in the primary campaign ran fifth, winning slightly less than 13% of the vote. Former senator Ross Bass won only 26,091 votes, running seventh in a field of twelve candidates.

Blanton owed his victory to his showing in his native West Tennessee. A beaming Ray Blanton was greeted by his mother and wife as he arrived at his campaign headquarters. Blanton was photographed receiving a kiss from both his wife and mother.

Ray Blanton was ready to embark on his second statewide race in two years.

Hall's Red Devil CrossFit is a workout!

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

"After my first day of CrossFit I knew I wanted to be a coach," said Laurie Hensley.

The owner of Red Devil CrossFit says that for several years her husband encouraged her to open her own "box."

In September she found the ideal place for a CrossFit gym and opened Red Devil CrossFit at 6970 Maynardville Pike in Halls. Her husband James Hensley owns Cars Etc.

"I wanted to make a difference and be here in Halls," she explained. The Halls High Red Devil alumna said her name ties her into her community.

"CrossFit is a constantly varied functional fitness

workout program done in a class setting for one hour a day with certified CrossFit coaches. All movements are scalable to anyone's fitness level from teens to grandparents," Hensley said. Classes are held Monday to Friday from 6-9 a.m. in the mornings and 4-7 p.m. in the afternoons and a free class for the community is held every Saturday at 9 a.m. They offer a free week trial and all memberships are month to month with no contracts!

Each CrossFit gym is independently owned and operated. You will see Laurie coaching during the mornings and in afternoons she is joined by Coach Tristan Smith.

"It's the only workout

you can do and say, 'That was terrible, I can't wait to come back tomorrow!'" she said. "CrossFitters are super excited and its a great community to be a part of!"

"You don't need a lot of equipment. You'd be surprised how much you can do with what's available," she said.

Nutrition help is also available and a strong, supportive community effort is the goal.

Red Devil CrossFit information is available by calling (865-)603-3223. It's located near ACE Hardware on Maynardville Pike in Halls. You can also get information on their Facebook page.



Red Devil CrossFit is now open at 6970 Maynardville Pike in Halls and ready to help you keep your resolutions to be healthy!

Restraining Your Dog

Hobo the Wonder Dog lost a friend on Christmas Day when the car she was traveling in was involved in an accident. Losing a pet is especially difficult when knowing there was something you could have done differently to have prevented the tragedy. Learning from the loss of Hobo's friend may help save you and your trusted friend from the same fate. Restraining your pet not only protects Fido but it also protects you.

Statistics estimate there are 34.4 million households in the United States that travel with their pets and 80% of those animals are estimated to be unrestrained. I could not find statistics on the number of dogs injured or killed in motor vehicle accidents. According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration's 2013 statistics, there were 5.7 million automobile crashes with 1.6 million injuries and 32,719 fatalities. Without statistical data, it is difficult to estimate the number of



By Howard Baker, RN BSN

pets involved in motor vehicle accidents.

The importance of restraining your dog can be illustrated by using Hobo's weight of 50 pounds. If the car he is traveling in crashes at a speed of 25mph, it can project him forward with a force equal to 40 times his weight. In this example Hobo the Wonder Dog would become a 2,000 pound impact force. This force would more than likely be fatal to him and could prove fatal to occupants in the vehicle as well.

So how do we protect ourselves and our pets when traveling? With many types of restraining devices on the market there is one to fit your dog and budget. Hobo the Wonder Dog is restrained by a Kurgo harness and seat belt attachment—cost about \$30. These products are available locally at River Dog Bakery on Kingston Pike, Chewy.com, and about anywhere pet supplies are sold. This is not an endorsement of any one product. There

are many safety products to choose from on the market today. We recommend before you purchase any safety restraint device, you do your due diligence.

What if you are involved in an accident and Fido is injured will your automobile insurance cover your veterinarian expenses? I called my State Farm Insurance Agent to inquire. State Farm Insurance will not cover veterinarian expenses of a pet as a result of an accident. I have heard some insurance companies do cover pets as part of their comprehensive coverage. Checking with your insurance company on your coverage is always a good idea. Hobo the Wonder dog has health insurance to cover accidents and illness wherever he is and when he travels.

Hobo the Wonder Dog loves to travel and keeping him happy and safe is a top priority. Restrain your pet for the safety of everyone traveling with you. Safety harnesses cost about \$30 to \$75 which is a small cost when considering safety, peace of mind, and the health of your pet.

Life is better with a well restrained dog—woof!



Rosie's World

Closing the old year

It is a sad time, the end of an old year, yet we try to liven it up by making resolutions, which we invariably don't keep. A few days before January 1st, I saw in my little book, "My Daily Psalms and Prayers" a remarkable prayer that helped me cross from the old year to the next. Let me share it with you.

"Dear Lord, as each year draws to a close, I begin to take a long look at myself. Where is my life headed? What am I accomplishing? And what will I leave behind when my time on Earth is up? I'm grateful for the way you've worked in my life, but now I look to the next generation. Have I passed on any faith or wisdom to the younger set? Have I mentored anyone to take my place--whatever that place might be? Have I inspired the next generation to praise you? Lord, let this be the focus of the coming year for me. Let me pass forward your praises."

A lot of questions in that little short paragraph: What a grand gesture to be able to have 365 new days to

supply the answers. If you do make resolutions, try to keep them up for a change. You'll be surprised how different life will be this year because of your determination to do better.

Remember, God will be there to help you along the way. Which reminds me of one of my favorite hymns.

Abide with me--fast falls the eventide.

The darkness deepens--Lord, with me abide.

When other helpers fail and comforts flee,

Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

- Written by Henry F. Lyte, an English hymn writer and poet.

Send comments to rosemerrie@att.net. Thank you.

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Hockey becomes fun for rivals Bearden, Farragut

By Ken Lay

The Bearden-Farragut sports rivalry is one of Knox County's most intense. The two communities get behind their teams and no matter the sport; the action is always heated and competitive.

And the Knoxville Amateur Hockey Association series is no exception as the Ice Dawgs and the Admirals always play for bragging rights on the ice.

But that rivalry took a back seat in the New Year's Eve Hockey Shoot-out recently as both teams were eliminated from championship contention by the time they collided in their final game of the event on Saturday, Dec. 31 at the Icearium.

This game was fun for all. For the record, the Admirals prevailed 10-4. But nobody in the game cared much about that.

Bearden's Jake Foard scored the game's first goal and Farragut sophomore Christian Callahan had a hat trick.

But other than that, things were crazy. Players switched teams. Goalenders James Brinkley (the Admirals) and Mathieu Senechal of the Ice Dawgs took the faceoff at center ice to open the third period. They later staged a fight at the end of the contest.

"We decided to do this because these teams didn't want to kill each other with the season left to play," said Farragut coach Jeff Lindsay, who wasn't behind the bench for the game, leaving his assistants in charge while he stood outside the bench area and conversed with a couple of buddies. "We knew that this game didn't really mean anything and I'm taking the day off. "We decided to do this

and let the kids have some fun.

Bearden coach Aaron Barnes didn't spend much time behind his bench either, calling this game a chance to give his team a bit of a break.

"These kids are having the time of their lives," he said. "Sometimes, it's really fun to do this. "It's a game.

"It's supposed to be fun and sometimes, this is what

it's all about."

Lindsay noted that "the heated rivalry went away for a while" but the two teams collide when KAHAA High School League play resumes on Wednesday, Jan. 11 and you can bet that things won't be as friendly as the two teams will pick up the intensity.



PHOTO BY LEXIE GILLAND / FULCOM

DaShaun McKinney, Fulton wide receiver, looks for yardage against Austin-East in the 2016 matchup at Bob Black Field.

Fulton's DaShaun McKinney chooses football over basketball

By Steve Williams

When hearing about a talented high school athlete committing, one usually figures it's about a prospect picking the future college he or she will be attending on scholarship.

But DaShaun McKinney, a two-sport standout at Fulton High, made a different kind of commitment about three months ago. He committed to the sport

of football.

That commitment also included the decision to not play basketball, a sport he had played and excelled at since he was 3 years old.

"Other than choosing the high school I was going to go to, this is the hardest decision I've ever made by myself," said McKinney, who turned 16 in November.

McKinney, whose older

sister KeKe signed a basketball scholarship with the University of Kentucky this past fall, also first arrived at Fulton known more for his basketball game.

At Northwest Middle School he was the tourney MVP on a team that crushed West Valley 70-49 in February of 2015 for its second straight unbeaten season and Knox County tournament championship. After

stretching the school's winning streak to 46 games, the Northwest Rangers earned consideration as the county's best-ever middle school team.

After playing football as a freshman at Fulton later that year, McKinney debuted in basketball for the Falcons, earned a starting position as a wing guard and helped Fulton capture

Continued on page 2

Irish come back to edge Alcoa in key league showdown

By Ken Lay

It may not have garnered any style points but Catholic High School boys basketball coach Mike Hutchens wasn't about to throw his team's recent District 4-AA victory against Alcoa.

"It was an ugly game but I think that was because there was some tenacious defense being played," Hutchens said after his squad notched a 64-59 victory over the Tornadoes Wednesday night at Catholic High School. "This was a good defensive game and we did what we had to do.

"That's a good basketball team over there. They gave us a fight and we didn't expect anything less. We won this game at home. We defended our home court and you have to do that in this league when you play against [Christian Academy of Knoxville] and Alcoa."

The Irish (11-1 overall, 2-0 in District 4-AA) may have ultimately notched a big comeback win at home against Alcoa (10-4, 2-1) but the Tornadoes held the upper hand throughout much of the contest partly due to the fact that Catholic was saddled with foul trouble.

Chase Kuerschen and Tony Scott sat out much of the first half after picking up two early fouls and Brock Jancek was also whistled for a pair of infractions in the first half.

"Brock was in foul trouble. Tony was in foul trouble and Chase was in foul trouble," Hutchens said. "We got in foul trouble and we had our two starting post players in foul trouble and had to sit out almost all of the first half."

While those key players sat, the Tornadoes opened a 32-29 halftime lead. Alcoa surged ahead 17-16 when Garrett Rodgers knocked down a 2-point shot as time expired in the opening frame.

From there, the Tornadoes were up most of the game and held a 50-46 advantage heading to the final frame.

Alcoa scored first in the fourth quarter when Donte Harris hit a pair of free throws with 7 minutes, 17 seconds remaining in the contest. Kuerschen picked up his fourth foul on the play. He would sit for most of the stanza but return late to make an impact play.

Continued on page 4



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Fulton's DaShaun McKinney chooses football over basketball

Cont. from page 1

the Class 4A state title with a 59-50 win over Chattanooga Brainerd.

As a sophomore this past football season, McKinney started for Fulton as a wide receiver and safety.

"I made the decision in the middle of the football season," said DaShaun. "The reason why I stopped playing basketball is because I saw my future going further in football than I did in basketball. And I've heard a lot of people say, 'If you want to do something, you have to put your all into it.'"

So instead of being in the gym and playing hoops this winter, DaShaun says he's been "lifting weights and running track" to get bigger, stronger and faster for football.

"It just benefitted me more," he added.

McKinney said he has gained six pounds since the

end of football season and is now 6-2, 191.

In addition to being in the weight room every day, DaShaun said, "I've been out with some of the guys running routes and catching balls. Just staying in shape."

"I'm starting to look a little bit bigger up top and down low."

This past weekend, instead of being at Fulton's scheduled basketball games against rival Austin-East, McKinney had plans to be in Atlanta to try out for Epic 7, a 7-on-7 football team.

Shauna McKinney thinks the decision her son made was a "mature move" on his part. "He's looking to the future," she said.

"With his frame and height he would be a guard in basketball (not his ideal position)."

However, he projects to have "perfect height and

size for wide receiver.

"I'm glad he made this decision, because now I know he's thinking about college," added Shauna. "He knows what it takes to get there."

McKinney, who received a football scholarship offer from Austin Peay State after his freshman season, still goes to Fulton basketball games, but as a fan to watch his sister and the boys team play.

"Cheering on the boys and girls," he said. "It's been pretty fun."

McKinney admits he dreams of playing in the NFL 10 years from now, "but my backup plan is I want to be a wildlife biologist, so I want to finish school before my (pro) football seasons ... I want to do all four years of school."

It sounds like he's committed to academics, too.



PHOTO BY LEXIE GILLAND/ FULCOM

DaShaun McKinney soars high to put up a shot as a freshman basketball player at Fulton in 2015-16 season. McKinney, a two-sport standout, has committed to football and is not playing basketball this season.

An Open Letter to the University of Tennessee

By Alex Norman

Dear Sirs/Madams,
Good day to you and yours on The Hill. I am a proud graduate of the University of Tennessee but I do not make donations to the college or the athletic programs so my connection to those in powerful positions is limited.

Thus, the generic greeting. Please take this letter for what it is. A desperate plea that you do the right thing and you do it today.

Hire David Blackburn as the next Athletic Director at the University of Tennessee. This is not a difficult decision. You don't have to hire a search firm. You don't have to have a panel vote on the selection. You don't have to ask the boosters.

Just make the call and bring David Blackburn home.

Hey, I get it. You want to do your due diligence. In the recent past your vettings of football coach Lane Kiffin, athletic director Dave Hart and basketball coach Donnie Tyndall were, oh how can I put thi?

Awful. Simply awful.

You couldn't get a phone number for the Oakland Raiders and find out that Lane Kiffin was a self-centered back stabbing egomaniac? You chose to ignore the news that Florida State's

athletic department mishandled a sexual assault allegation when Dave Hart was in charge. You didn't care that Donnie Tyndall was already under NCAA investigation when you brought him to Knoxville?

Those are all guys that had no connection to the University of Tennessee. You were starting at square one and never got to square two.

No such worries when it comes to David Blackburn. You know this guy already! Heck, you can still find his bio on UT's website! From that bio you will learn that Blackburn "Began his career at Tennessee in 1993 working with then-head football coach Phillip Fulmer and the football program in a variety of roles culminating in Tennessee winning the first-ever BCS national championship in 1998."

He was Tennessee's assistant director of compliance, director of football operations, and assistant AD for football operations. Tennessee went 99-24 during that 10-year span.

Starting in 2003 he became the assistant AD for development at Tennessee. In 2007 he was promoted to associate AD for administration. The next year he received the title of senior associate AD for

administration. This gave him direct oversight over football operations. A few months later this would become a huge deal when Phillip Fulmer was fired and Lane Kiffin was hired. For those tumultuous 14 months, Blackburn camped out in the football complex and severely limited the damage that Kiffin and his staff did in terms of NCAA violations. According to many in and around the program, without Blackburn, Tennessee might have been in "death penalty" range.

In 2013 Blackburn left Knoxville but not Tennessee, taking the athletic director job at UT-Chattanooga. Since then the football program has flourished with multiple NCAA playoff appearances. Men's basketball and women's basketball have had success as well. Heck, the Mocs beat the Vols soundly at Thompson Boling Arena earlier this season.

Blackburn has more than enough experience now in hiring coaches as well.

All too often in recent years Tennessee has hired people in positions of power that have no past dealings with the University of Tennessee. Wouldn't it be nice to finally have a Tennessee guy back in charge of the athletic department?

Dave Hart did some good

things at Tennessee, but his tenure will be remembered for Title IX issues, the Lady Vols name deletion debacle, the mishandling of the Pat Summitt retirement, the Tyndall hiring, letting Derek Dooley stick around after the 2011 Kentucky loss, the Nike contract which pays Tennessee well below its peers, and a general lack of awareness when it came to how Tennessee looks in the national landscape. Public relations were a serious problem under Hart since his hiring in 2011.

To many Tennessee fans, Dave Hart will always be an Alabama guy. On the other hand, Blackburn is from Loudon. He is a UT graduate. Heck, he even was a student assistant in football under Johnny Majors.

Seriously, University of Tennessee. What on earth are you waiting for? Dave Hart announced his retirement back in August!

Hire David Blackburn as the next Athletic Director at the University of Tennessee. Do it now.

Sometimes the obvious choice is the correct choice.

Sincerely,

Tennessee fans everywhere

Bean steps up to boost Alcoa to victory

By Ken Lay

Alcoa High School girls basketball coach David Baumann said he and his staff issued a challenge to center Katie Bean.

And on Wednesday night, she answered the bell and responded by scoring inside, blocking shots and grabbing big rebounds.

The result was a 52-29 victory for the Lady Tornadoes, who were dominant against Catholic in a crucial District 4-AA road game.

"We had some time to practice during the break and we challenged Katie Bean to play bigger and she did that tonight," Baumann said after his center scored a game-high 20 points against the Lady Irish. She can shoot the ball. She can shoot it from outside but we challenged her to play inside.

"She did what we challenged her to do. She played defense, she rebounded. She scored and she blocked shots. She's a skilled player and she can step outside and make shots. But during the break, we've been working on keeping her inside and around the basket."

Alcoa (5-8 overall, 3-0 in District 4-AA) played a

stingy brand of defense. The Lady Tornadoes shut out the Lady Irish over the first eight minutes of the contest and held a 9-0 lead by first quarter's end.

Catholic finally got on the board and trimmed Alcoa's advantage to 12-2 when Rachel DeBaar scored 25 seconds into the second stanza.

"We came out and got after them defensively and it was nice to come out and pitch a shutout in the first quarter," Baumann said. "We knew who their scorers were and we wanted to make the other players try to beat us and we were able to do that."

Alcoa never trailed in the contest and was able to extend its advantage to 25-9 by halftime.

Bean received plenty of help from her supporting cast as Madison McClurg scored eight points. Lauren Herring and Riley Hicks finished with five points each.

For Catholic (3-9, 0-2), Mary Iverson finished with 11 points. She pulled the Lady Irish to within 31-18 with 2 minutes, 10 seconds remaining in the third quarter. DeBaar scored six points. Alanah Story added five and Carlee Hart finished with four.

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Courtney's Panthers on the prowl again in Knox County MS basketball

By Steve Williams

Powell's boys basketball team has a slim lead in the Knox County Middle School League as play resumes this week after the holiday break.

Darin Courtney, in his 15th season as head coach, knows his Panthers can't afford to have any slipups down the homestretch if they want to capture the 2016-17 regular season title.

"We've been fortunate to pull out some big wins and we've got to keep working hard and improving to achieve our goal of a regular season championship, which would give us the best opportunity in the tournament," said Courtney.

"With the top eight to 10 teams, there's not a whole lot of separation. There's been a lot of close games played this season. There's a lot of parity."

Powell and Vine both have 8-1 league records, but the Panthers currently own the tie-breaker over the Golden Bears by virtue of their 50-43 win at Vine on Dec. 19.

"Vine was a game of runs, and very competitive down to the last minute or so," said Courtney.

Other close games for Powell have included a one-point win over Karns and a three-point win over Bearden.

South-Doyle, which is tied with West Valley for third place, handed the Panthers their only loss early in the season, a 12-point setback at Powell.

The Panthers will take a 17-1 overall record into their next game Thursday at rival Halls. Girls action starts at 4:30 and the boys contest at 5:30.

Powell's other remaining games will be against

Cedar Bluff, Carter and Whittle Springs.

The Panthers' starters are all eighth graders. J.R. Jones is the point guard. Parker Haley and Logen Sutton play on the wings. Noah Chapman fills the No. 4 spot as a wing/forward. Cole Koltenburg and Coltin Reynolds share playing time at the No. 5 center position.

"We've really been balanced in scoring throughout the season with J.R. being the leading scorer at times and also the floor general," said Courtney.

The Powell coach likes his team's chemistry.

"They're normal kids in the locker room and have a lot of fun," pointed out Courtney. "When it comes time to practice, there's no nonsense . . . They come to work."

"We also have the best support group off the bench I can remember . . . they're all in it for the team. They're ultra positive on a daily basis, which helps give us great chemistry."

Courtney has guided four teams to regular season titles and three to post-season tournament crowns. His 2002-03 and 2011-12 teams swept both.

Powell opened the season by winning the Tommy Bettis Memorial Tournament at Maury Middle School in Dandridge. The Panthers also were champions of the recent Halls Christmas Tournament, defeating Gresham in the finals and LaFollette in the semifinals.

Farragut tops the girls standings with an 8-1 league record. Carter and West Valley are tied in second at 7-1. Powell and Karns are each 7-2, with the Lady Panthers having the tie-breaker



KNOX COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL BASKETBALL STANDINGS

(League records through Jan. 8)

Ranking |Team |Wins Losses

BOYS

1—Powell	8-1
2—Vine	8-1
3—South-Doyle	7-2
3—West Valley	6-2
5—Carter	5-3
6—Bearden	5-4
6—Farragut	5-4
6—Karns	5-4
9—Northwest	4-5
10—Gresham	4-5
11—Holston	2-7
11—Whittle Springs	2-7
13—Halls	1-8
14—Cedar Bluff	0-9

GIRLS

1—Farragut	8-1
2—West Valley	7-1
2—Carter	7-1
4—Powell	7-2
5—Karns	7-2
6—Halls	5-4
7—Gresham	5-4
8—Bearden	4-5
8—Vine	4-5
10—Holston	3-6
11—South-Doyle	3-6
12—Cedar Bluff	1-8
12—Northwest	1-8
14—Whittle Springs	0-9

Powell Middle School's Noah Chapman goes hard to the hole in the Halls Christmas Tournament. He's one of the starters for the 17-1 Panthers.

advantage with their win over the Lady Beavers.

The top two finishing boys and girls teams earn first-round byes in the post-season tournament, which starts Feb. 2. Karns Middle School will host the finals on Feb. 9.

The host school swept top honors in the West Valley Christmas Classic. Tourney MVP Zneyah McLaughlin, her team trailing by one with 6.1 seconds remaining, sank both ends of a 1-and-1 to lift West Valley girls to a 31-29 win over South Cumberland. After her two clutch foul shots, she stole the ball and made one more free throw for the final margin.

The Wolves edged Bearden 30-27 in the boys' finals.

Walker, Knights put up valiant effort in loss to Owensboro

By Ken Lay

Knoxville Knights coach Greg Maine didn't have too many complaints after his team's finale in the Knoxville New Year's Eve Hockey Shootout.

Maine, the longtime Knights coach, saw his team drop a 5-1 decision to the Owensboro Rampage, a top squad from Kentucky on Saturday, Dec. 31 at the Icearium.

"They're basically a travel team and we have a team

with both travel players and house league players and we were in a close game going into the third period," Maine said. "I'm really proud of our whole team."

Knoxville goaltender Bradley Walker posted a stellar performance between the pipes against the Rampage, who won the 2016 Hockey Hoe Down in Knoxville and closed out the calendar year with an appearance in the championship

game.

But the Knights played their best game of the season against Owensboro, according to Walker.

"You can't look at them [the Rampage] as the best team and you can't look at them as the team that won this tournament last year. You have to look at them as just another team and go play the game," said Walker, who made 27 saves against the defending champions from the

Bluegrass State. "My team played great."

"We played as a team. We played together and we played our best game of the season."

The Rampage tallied the first two markers of the contest. Owensboro got on the board when Garrett Baker scored a power play goal with 7 minutes, 19 seconds remaining in the first period. Keegan Hughes and Grayson McFarland were each credited with an assist on

the game's first score.

Hughes gave the Rampage a 2-0 lead with another power play goal 8:18 into the frame.

Knoxville scored its goal midway through the first period when Gus Rightmyer took a pass from Isaiah Maine and promptly banged it into the back of the net, making the score 2-1.

Owensboro added another power play goal late in the second period from Bret Bocianoski and held

a 3-1 lead heading to the final frame.

Baker and Bocianoski each scored late in the third period.

The Knights return to Knoxville Amateur Hockey Association High School League play when they take on the Knoxville Warriors on Wednesday, Jan. 11.



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Barnett, Dobbs and Vols make the best of Music City Bowl

Tennessee's 38-24 win over Nebraska in the Music City Bowl amounted to putting a Band-Aid over its scratched up 2016 football season.



By Steve Williams

It hid a little bit of the Vanderbilt beating, but the overall pain resulting from the scarred and injury-riddled campaign hasn't completely gone away.

It'll take time and some big wins for many UT fans to really start feeling good again about this football program.

One very happy moment in the return to Nashville saw Tennessee defensive end Derek Barnett get his 33rd career sack to break the late great Reggie White's school record. After coming close a dozen times, the determined No. 9 was credited with the record sack when Nebraska quarterback Ryker Fyfe went down under heavy pressure with a little less than four minutes remaining in the game.

Teammates poured out on the field to congratulate Barnett as Tennessee head coach Butch Jones took a timeout for the special occasion.

I only wish senior Joshua Dobbs, who racked up 409 yards of total offense and four touchdowns, could have walked off to a final standing ovation. But he probably wouldn't have been comfortable with it ... being the team player that he's been throughout his career.

The highlight of a scoreless first quarter was Trevor Daniel's punt inside Nebraska's 1-yard line. The Vols didn't take advantage of that field position but took a 7-0 lead in the second quarter when running back John Kelly scored on a sweep.

Later in the quarter, with receivers covered, Dobbs pulled it down and scored from the 11 to make it 14-0. Brandon Reilly's good route and catch of a long pass allowed the Cornhuskers to cut the gap to 14-7.

Tennessee came back before the half ended. A TD catch by Juan Jennings was ruled incomplete, but Nebraska had committed pass interference on the play. Dobbs scored on the next play from the 2 to give the Vols a 21-7 halftime margin.

Early in the third quarter, Tennessee went for it on fourth-and-one at the Nebraska 36, but Kelly was stopped short. And no

wonder – Kelly was lined up on Dobbs' hip when he got the ball. Sorry, but I can't stand that formation in short-yardage situations.

Barrett appeared to have made a strip sack shortly afterward, but the loose ball was ruled an incomplete pass on the field and also on the replay review to my surprise.

Aaron Medley's 46-yard field goal increased the Vols' lead to 24-7, but Reilly's second touchdown catch made it 24-14. What made this odd was the fact that Reilly did not have any TD catches this season coming into the game.

The normally sure-handed Jennings whiffed on a bomb, but tight end Jason Croom broke a tackle after making a catch to get to the Nebraska 9-yard line as time expired in the third quarter. Dobbs, bottled up in the pocket, pulled one of his Houdini acts and scored from the 3 to make it 31-14.

The Cornhuskers refused to go away quietly, kicking a 45-yard field goal and recovering a fumble on the ensuing kickoff. Fyfe (pronounced Fife as in Barney) scored on a keeper from nine yards out to make it 31-24. Nebraska had the momentum with 10:02 remaining.

But Tennessee had Dobbs.

Josh converted a key first down on third-and-three. Then the quarterback, whose critics have often said couldn't throw, perfectly dropped a 59-yard bomb into the hands of Josh Malone for six points with 8:45 left. And it was good to see Dobbs share a congratulatory body bump with offensive lineman Coleman Thomas.

Many UT fans like myself spent the remainder of the game pulling for Barnett to get that elusive sack. With time running down, we even pulled for Nebraska to make a first down so Barnett could stay on the field. For once, we were glad to see the Vols' defense flagged for pass interference on fourth down.

Barnett was asked about that penalty in the post-game interview.

"I think Reggie probably helped out on that," said Derek, sparking laughter. "I think he was looking down. I think he probably tossed a little (flag) for me."

Irish come back to edge Alcoa in key league showdown

Cont. from page 1

He put the Irish ahead for good when he hit a layup with 53 seconds to go. His shot made the score 61-59. Luke Smith and Jancek then combined to convert three free throws down the stretch to provide the final margin. Jancek had four key rebounds to help Catholic seal its win.

"Brock was big on the boards for us and Luke came up big," Hutchens said. "But defense kept us in this game."

Smith, the Irish's all-state caliber senior point guard scored 14 points. Kuer-schen also finished with 14 points and Jack Sompayrac led the way with 16. Jancek

added 13.

Harris led all scorers with 17 points. Nick Roberts added 15 for Alcoa and Tykee Ogle-Kellogg finished with 10.

Alcoa coach Joel Kirk said that his squad will see the Irish again and he's looking forward to some future meetings between the two district rivals.

"I think we played well enough to win against a great team," Kirk said. "I think we held our own against them."

"The best think about this is that we will see them again. We may see them two, three or four more times."



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY.

Debbie Anders of Embroidery to Go and Donna Jardret of The Sports Locker invite you to their shops on Merchant's Drive.

Sports Locker joins Embroidery to Go

By Mile Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

Two women with a talent for imprinting, silk screening and embroidering have joined forces to create one business that does it all. Debbie Anders of Embroidery to Go and Donna Jardret of The Sports Locker are ready to serve you at 314 Merchant Drive in the Outback Shopping Center behind McDonald's Restaurant.

Donna's Sports Locker has relocated from Powell and is ready to customize your letterman jacket and keeps plenty in stock for all the local schools. Just call for a quote or come in a get fitted. She can customize via screen printing or embroidery just about anything including team jerseys, backpacks, footwear and apparel.

Debbie's Embroidery to Go specializes in monogramming names and company logos, as well as vinyl decals and heat press vinyl. You'll find fashion, key chains, hats, tote bags and tee shirts to buy as well.

"Almost everything you purchase includes a free personalization and everything cost less than \$50. Yes, you can bring in items you already have in your closet or home that needs an extra personal touch," Debbie said, adding that customization starts at \$12 per item.

The back of Sports Locker and Embroidery To Go's shared space is busy as the staff operates the various machines, customizing items for local customers, companies out of the area, and even for other stores that turn to them for the service. UT Hospital and various corporate

accounts add to the success of the business.

Both women are now preparing for spring and anticipating the needs for new imprinted and embroidered styles. They usually work a season ahead. There's only about a one-week wait between the time an order is placed and is delivered.

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The Doctor is in

a weekly column by
Dr. Jim Ferguson

Drugs, Diets and Doctors

It's that time of the year when resolutions fly. No, not Congressional resolutions, but vows to exercise more, eat better and lose the bounty of the Holidays preventing buttoning of pants and skirts. We live in a land of plenty, and without some restraint won't be able to fit into an airline coach seat.

Since this is not a tabloid column I'm not going to talk about the Kim Kardashian diet. Actually, Ms. K's diet has been around since the 1950s and is known as the Atkin's Diet. It is a diet low in carbohydrates and, if rigorously adhered to, promotes a change in metabolism and the production of mild ketosis as fats are converted to glucose to fuel the brain and vital systems.

I tried the low carb/high fat diet once just to see what it was like. Actually, I love bacon and consider it one of the food groups along with bread, cheese, olives and wine. However,

I only lasted three days on a steady diet of fatty foods. The French have a saying, "You are what you eat." I felt like a grease ball on the Atkins diet. Entrepreneur that she is, Ms. Kardashian is being paid by the Atkin's Company, I assume, for her name.

I've written before on various diets including the paleo diet. However, a recent review of the low-fat diet in JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association) caught my eye. The author chronicles the low fat diet craze that swept America beginning in the 1960s and 70s. The author blames research done by the sugar industry which duped our government and nutritional societies to recommend diets low in fat, and making up calorie deficits with a high intake of carbohydrates and starches. Apparently, no one is responsible for independent thinking or common sense and the big bad corporations duped our noble

"gub-ment" officials and nutritional "experts." As a result, our country now suffers from an epidemic of obesity and diabetes. Who would have thought a diet of Cheetos and Twinkies would be harmful?

There are three energy components in food: protein, fats and carbohydrates/starch. Examples of each are animal flesh, butter and potatoes. When metabolized (burned), fats have twice the calories (energy) as proteins and carbohydrates. Sixty years ago Americans got 40% of their calories from fat and we used whole milk. Today, experts recommend 30% of our calories come from fat. Unfortunately, the calorie loss is too often made up with potato chips since these are more affordable and palatable than many of the items on the food pyramid proffered in 1992. The real lesson here is: eat sensibly and less, walk/exercise daily and be wary of politicians who know very little and experts who think they know more than everyone else.

I'm often asked about Tylenol, Motrin and Aleve for the treatment of fever or aches and pains. Tylenol is the brand name acetaminophen (paracetamol) and lowers fever by altering the brain's heat-regulating center. And it lessens pain by blocking pain impulse generation.

Motrin is brand name ibuprofen, and Aleve is the

brand name for naproxen. Like aspirin, these drugs are known as NSAIDs (non steroid antiinflammatory drugs), and work by inhibiting prostaglandin production. Prostaglandins are produced when there is tissue injury or inflammation, and modulate the injury and healing process. Prostaglandins also regulate blood flow in the intestinal lining and the kidney.

Ideally, you'd like a medication that safely relieves aches and pains, and cools a feverish brow. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) doesn't cause stomach ulcers or impair kidney function, and is therefore safer, unless you're getting liquored up every evening! Acetaminophen (Tylenol) has the potential for liver toxicity which increases markedly with the concomitant use of alcohol. I often advise patients that if their joints are stiff and sore, but aren't red, hot or inflamed, acetaminophen (Tylenol) may work just fine and is generally safer than NSAIDs, especially in older folks. However, NSAIDs are generally superior for broken bones, injuries and swollen joints.

The reason NSAIDs seem better in injury and inflammation is because these agents inhibit the production of inflammatory prostaglandins which are released from injured cells or rheumatoid joints. Short courses of aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin) or

naproxen (Aleve) are helpful with booboos and are generally safe. However, with continued use of NSAIDs the risk of complications increases.

An important clinical study (PRECISION) was recently published in the NEJM (New England Journal of Medicine) comparing the long term toxicity of ibuprofen, naproxen and another NSAID celecoxib or Celebrex. Science has shown that prostaglandin production is mediated by two isoforms of the cyclooxygenase (COX) enzyme. COX-1 is associated with local blood flow in the intestinal lining and kidneys, whereas COX-2 seems preferentially activated in inflammation. Aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen inhibit both COX systems, whereas celecoxib (Celebrex) seems to preferentially work to inhibit COX-2. It was hoped celecoxib would cause less side effects and work as well as the older NSAIDs. This large study helps to assure doctors that celecoxib is as effective as the other drugs and seems safer for long term use, sometimes justifying prescription cost.

Life is complicated and so is medicine. We doctors think of ourselves as experts who advise our patients from science, compassion and experience. For years we've advised folks with heart disease to use a baby

aspirin a day because this drug binds to platelets and keeps platelets from sticking to ragged plaques in vessel walls. Unfortunately, medications like ibuprofen (Motrin) may hinder aspirin's platelet effects, and have been associated with an increased risk of heart attacks in heart patients. Interestingly, studies have not shown increased cardiovascular risk with naproxen (Aleve). Now, the PRECISION study has shown cardiovascular safety with celecoxib (Celebrex).

Science is a methodical system of observation reality. Individual doctors might eventually figure out that patients do better on some medications through trial and error, but clinical trials with large numbers of patients using rigorous statistical analysis is a more powerful observational tool.

They say nothing is for sure except death and taxes. This goes for medications as well. One of my axioms is "any medicine can do anything to anybody." However, be wary of any expert who challenges your common sense. Remember the consequences of low fat diets recommended by experts. And beware of blindly following so-called "experts" - persons fifty miles from their home with a powerpoint presentation!

You may email Dr. Ferguson at fergusonj@knoxfocus.com

Using Time Wisely

As we enter into a new year, I can't help but reflect on the past and the future. Too often we allow time to fly by without considering if we are making the most of the seconds, minutes, hours, and days that God has given us. Each moment is a gift from God, and should be planned out to make the most of it. We do not want to be time wasters.

I recently read a book by Mitch Albom called "The



By Mark Brackney,
Minister of the
Arlington Church
of Christ

Time Keeper." The book intersects the stories of two individuals; one who wants to end time/hasten death, and the other who doesn't want time to end/fears death. Their stories are brought together by the inventor

of the world's first clock, Father Time, who is being punished for trying to measure God's gift of time. He teaches these two lost souls the true meaning of time. I highly recommend

this book as it will not be a waste of your time. It caused me to reflect on the true gift of life and examples from the Bible about people who made the most of days God had given them to live on planet Earth.

A great lie of the enemy, Satan, is that the most admirable use of time is to be busy. In our culture, if you are not busy, you are lazy. But "doing" is different from "being." Being is focused on the internal. Doing is focused on the external. It is not that doing things is bad, it may

just not be the best thing at the moment.

For example, Psalm 90 is a great passage that reminds us about valuing each moment God has given us. Each of our days have been numbered. No one is going to last forever, no matter what diet you preach or exercise program you endure. These fleshly bodies will wear out, some at a faster pace than others, depending on lifestyle choices or genetics. But the fact is, we are temporal beings. The sands of time are passing through the hour glass of the life

you have been given. How will you choose to live each moment?

The Psalm writer, Moses, encourages: "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12). To embrace your mortality is a good thing. It reminds you that each second is sacred. Each moment is an opportunity to glorify God, or not.

For some reading this article, 2017 will be your last year of physical life. While that may sound depressing to many people, for the follower of

God, it should help you stay focused on your mission, the plan God has for you, both now and into eternity. No matter how long you live, time is a vapor. Soon we will all pass from this life and into our spiritual inheritance. What a day that will be! But until then, may we each make every moment count. Love more. Pray more. Give toward things of eternal merit. Focus on what really matters. Don't allow the trivial to wear you down. Be more focused on "being" the child of God you are, than "doing" stuff that is temporal and a waste.



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January's Gardening Considerations

I was gifted a most beautiful calendar by my friend (who by the way is a very talented landscape photographer) who had taken photographs from my garden of various flowers in bloom, I began thinking of the new year. At the beginning of the new year most people begin setting new goals... making New Year's Resolutions, if you will. Most of us want to lose weight, exercise more, take better care of ourselves, be healthier, more fit, have better control of our finances, travel more, embark on a new career, be kinder, more patient, the list goes on and on.

So, I thought, I need to take better care of my lawn and garden... perhaps put a new garden plan, new design in place, change up a flower bed,

take out some plantings, add some new plantings. Therefore, my thoughts turned to what I need to do... should do right now... right now in January. If you haven't already, this is a good time to mulch. Mulch can moderate soil temperature and buffer plants from the freeze/thaw cycles in winter which can uproot plants (called heaving) or injuring plants.

This is also a good time to examine the bones of your garden. With the leaves on deciduous plants gone, you can see where you need structure, where you need evergreens, where you need to prune. Consider what you would like to keep and what isn't working. Envision what you want your garden to look like. Draw a plan for how to build what your mind's eye sees. Start the New Year with a new plan.

As January moves forward... near the end of

January or first to middle February, it is time to trim your Knock-Out Roses while they are still dormant. You will want to prune knock out roses by reducing their height by half to two-thirds. You will want to end up with a knockout rose that is around 12 to 18 inches high after pruning. Knock outs are fast growing shrubs and a hard pruning aids better growth and blossoms. Always make a cut at an angle of 45 degrees and use sharp shears or blades to do the job. A blunt tool causes more harm than good.

Another consideration in January is the plants (the tender young plants) that you brought indoors to overwinter. At this point, you may be noticing that many of your plants are dropping many of their leaves. If your plants struggle due to the lack of bright, natural light you may need to supplement the light with fluorescent

lighting.

These are just a few things to do in January and to take into consideration as you plan ahead

for your spring garden and beyond.

"Anyone who thinks that gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall

is missing the best part of the whole year. For gardening begins in January with the dream." -Josephine Nuese

UT Gardens January 2017 Plant of the Month:

Japanese Maple

Submitted by Sue Hamilton, Director of the University of Tennessee Gardens

Japanese maples, *Acer palmatum*, are at the top of my list of favorite trees. This group of trees has such diversity in growth habit, foliage color, leaf-type, form and even bark color that there really is an ideal selection for every garden. At last count, I have 18 different cultivars in my home landscape and my garden is only a half-acre!

You might be wondering why I've chosen to highlight them in January? For one, as long as the ground is not frozen, this is a great time to plant a Japanese maple or any tree or shrub. Woody plants have gone dormant and with the cooler temperatures and rainfall, it's an ideal time to get such plants in the ground. Such plants typically outperform those planted in the spring. Secondly, I want to focus on the group of Japanese maples that make quite a show in the winter landscape. If you have space, don't overlook adding this great winter-interest tree to your landscape.

Several Japanese maple selections are valued for the brilliant bark color they exhibit once temperatures turn cold. Each has an upright growth habit, and, depending on cultivar, can grow between 6 and 25 feet tall. Foliage is a lime green in spring darkening in color as summer approaches. Fall foliage is either a bright, showy shade of yellow or a fusion of red, orange and yellow. They perform best in a slightly acidic (pH 5.5-6.5) and moist but well-drained soil in full-sun to partial shade. Bark coloration will always be best when the tree is grown in full-sun and young twigs and branches will typically be more color intensive than the tree trunk itself. Coloration can almost be absent in summer. Some selections of this group of Japanese maples can lose their color intensity in the main trunk of the tree as they age.

Japanese maples really are easy trees to maintain. They are not heavy feeders, and using compost or a well-aged mulch well away from the base of the tree and about three to four inches deep will provide enough nutrition for your maple, making commercial fertilizers unnecessary. You may find that you would like to prune or shape your Japanese maple. This is a matter of preference. Remove crossing branches and thin out twigs that are bunched together. This will reveal and accentuate the beauty of the tree's framework. The best time to prune Japanese maples in our region of the country is late February to early March. It's recommended to use selective pruning practices,

removing no more than one-third of the branches at one time or during one season.

I recommend siting your tree where it can be a focal point in your landscape. You can make it a single specimen planted in an open lawn. Night-time landscape up-lighting is a fabulous way to showcase the beauty of the colorful bark and the architecture of the tree. Another effective way to distinguish this tree is to pay careful attention to the angle-of-view from which the tree will be seen in your garden and provide it a contrasting-color backdrop. It could be the background color of your home or utility shed or the contrasting color of an evergreen. Planting in a decorative container in a color matching the tree's bark can be incredibly striking. Add to the winter color of this combination by planting pansies and violas with matching or contrasting flowers around the base of the tree. And Japanese maples, because they are not large trees, can always be used in mixed planting borders and in foundation plantings.

Outstanding Selections for Winter Appeal:

'Aka kawa hime' has bright red bark in winter and is one of the more dwarf in this unique group of maples. Grows 6'-8' tall and 4'-6' wide.

'Beni kawa' also has bright salmon-red bark in winter. Grows 10' tall and 8'-10' wide.

'Bihou' has bark that turns orange in the winter. Grows 15' tall and 8'-10' wide, and can be viewed in the UT Gardens, Jackson.

'Dixie Delight' has bark that changes in the winter first to orange and then to yellow as temperatures get colder. Grows 10'-12' tall and 6'-8' wide.

'Japanese Sunrise' has multi-colored winter bark. One side of the tree will be bright red while the other side is a bright yellow. And in between these two colors, the bark is a fusion of yellow, orange and red. Can grow up to 25' tall x 20' wide. A specimen is on display in the UT Gardens, Knoxville.

'Red Wood' has coral-pink bark much like that of 'Sango Kaku'. Known to keep good bark coloration in the old wood as well. Grows up to 12' tall and 4'-8' wide.

'Sango kaku' is known for its showy coral-pink coloration in the winter landscape. Grows up to 25' tall and 20' wide. Specimens are on display at both the UT Gardens sites in Knoxville and Jackson.

'Winter Flame' has showy red winter bark. Grows 8'-10' tall and 6'-8' wide. You can also see this tree in the UT Gardens, Knoxville.

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