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ORNL FCU's Jessica Emert cuts the ribbon signifying the beginning of the Dogwood Arts Festival in Fountain City, home of the 2017 featured trail. Emert was joined by city and county leaders.

Ribbon cutting opens Dogwood Arts

By Ken Lay

The City of Knoxville and Dogwood Arts kicked off dogwood season Friday morning with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Griffey Gentry Funeral Home.

In 2017, the featured trail is Historic Fountain City, a trail formed in 1957. The trail covers 16 miles and features 3,200 blooming dogwood trees and an abundant assortment of azaleas. The trail also features a 12-acre walking park that surrounds the Fountain City Community.

Other trails in North Knox County include the Historic North Hills Trail and the Halls-Timberline Trail. Please see this week's Knoxville in Bloom inside for maps of these trails.

Friday's ribbon-cutting ceremony, which was

attended by Knoxville City Mayor Madeline Rogero, County Commissioner Bob Thomas and several city councilmen, marked the beginning of dogwood season and the Dogwood Arts Festival, which is an annual celebration that takes place throughout the month of April.

Dogwood Arts Executive Director Tome Cervone said that dogwood season and the festival are special to the city.

"It's supposed to mark the beginning of spring, although it doesn't feel too much like spring this morning," Cervone said referring to the cool temperatures during Friday's ceremony. "But this kind of a way for East Tennessee to mark the start of spring and that's a wonderful time

of the year."

Cervone encourages residents and tourists to explore the dogwood trails and attend the Dogwood Arts Festival.

"There's something for everybody," he said. "There's something for young and old and there's something for people who have been here for a long time and there's something for people who are new to town."

"We have a tremendous musical culture in East Tennessee and it may not be as highly publicized as the music in Chattanooga or Nashville. But it's good music and we're not trying to compete with anyone. But we want to showcase our musical talent. There's no need to compete."

Cervone noted that one

of his favorite events of the Dogwood Arts Festival is "The Very Special Festival," that is hosted by West High School and showcases art from those afflicted with developmental challenges.

"This is one of the most real parts of the festival," Cervone said. "Here, people create, regardless of their challenges."

Rogero noted that the season and festival are big for Knoxville.

"Knoxville is a beautiful place to live," she said. "You have nature and you have the natural mountains in the backdrop."

"This a wonderful time for East Tennessee because you have neighbors coming together and Knoxville is a good solid community."

Round-up Events Scheduled for Knox County Kindergarten, Pre-K students

It's Round-Up time in Knox County Schools! Round-Ups are registration and application events for kindergarten, pre-kindergarten and pre-school-aged children that will take place between April 4 and April 11 for the 2017-2018 school year.

Applications for pre-kindergarten, Title I pre-schools and Head Start schools are available for download on knoxschools.org or can be picked up in school offices. Completed applications may be turned in during Round-Up events at select school sites beginning April 4. A list of school sites and event times is attached. To attend one of these programs, children must be four years of age on or before Aug. 15, 2017, and meet state-established eligibility guidelines.

Kindergarten Round-Up events will be held Tuesday, April 11, at all

Knox County elementary schools; event times will vary. Parents should register their child at their zoned school, where they will receive important school-specific enrollment information for the upcoming school year at the event. A list of school sites and event times is attached. To enroll in kindergarten, children must be five years of age on or before Aug. 15, 2017.

In order to register a child for kindergarten, parents/guardians should be able to provide proof of birth, verification of up-to-date immunizations, a completed health/physical examination recorded on a Tennessee Child Health Record form completed by a medical provider or the Knox County Health Department and proof of residence. More information about these documents can be found at knoxschools.org.

Dine Out for Education on April 4

Dine Out for Education is perhaps the easiest, and most delicious, way to support Knox County Schools. On Tuesday, April 4, 2017, approximately 43 area restaurants with 72 locations will donate 10 percent of their proceeds from the day's sales to our schools.

To celebrate this special day, Interim Superintendent Buzz Thomas and incoming Superintendent Bob Thomas, along with members of the Board of Education and a few other elected officials, will enjoy lunch together at Brown Bag in the First Tennessee Building at 11:30 a.m. No official school business is expected to be discussed.

Last year, the day-long culinary campaign helped raise just over \$23,000 for Knox County Schools

Continued on page 2

City OKs Behavioral Health Care Center

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

It was short work for the Knoxville City Council to pass the agreement between the city, Knox County and Helen Ross McNabb Center to fund the Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center Tuesday evening.

After hearing from residents who oppose the center and a community activist who was fairly instrumental in promoting the idea, the council voted unanimously to approve the agreement. It authorizes \$200,000 for renovations

to the former church located next to Centerpointe, Helen Ross McNabb's center just off Western Avenue. The council also authorized \$400,000 for the first year of operation in a three-year contact.

Neighbors who oppose the facility have vowed to continue their disapproval in four weeks when the matter comes back for a Use on Review hearing.

Carol Zimmerman pleaded with the council to not pass the agreement.

"Please, please, Please halt this!" she said, adding that she feels the McNabb

Center has not been honest and forthcoming with the project.

The city and county can terminate the contract with a 90-day notice. McNabb Center Director Jerry Vagnier answered questions from the council about the facility and said the entrance drive will come from Ball Camp Road instead of the current entry on the nearby neighborhood street. He pledged the large parking lot will be landscaped and the entrance made attractive. He also pledged to

Continued on page 2



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY.

Councilman Marshall Stair chats with Attorney Arthur Seymour, Jr. and MPC's Dan Kelly prior to Tuesday's City Council meeting.

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What's the difference between a trial and a hearing?

If you have had any interaction with the legal system, there are two terms that you will hear quite often, "trial" and "hearing." What do these two terms really mean? Do they mean the same thing? Yes and no. Although some attorneys will use the terms interchangeably, they do have



By Jedidiah McKeehan
attorneyknoxville@gmail.com

practical differences. When people hear the term, "trial," they usually associate it with 12 jurors sitting in jury box deciding the outcome of a case, and they would be correct. A "jury trial," is one type of trial. Trials can also occur in front of just a judge, when the judge is the final

decision maker of how a case will be decided. A trial will almost always have witnesses testify as to the facts of the case. Trials do not have to be very long, they can last an hour or less if there is only one or two witnesses. There is usually some finality to a trial. At the end of a trial, there will be a ruling or judgment made by the judge or the jury. A hearing, on the other hand, is often you used as

a catch all term to describe any all matter that comes before a judge. Hearings can have testimony from witnesses, or they can be matters that have only arguments by the attorneys involved in a case. Hearings are often thought of as shorter matters than trials, but some hearings can last multiple hours, or in rare instances, all day. The confusion with these terms likely comes from the fact that attorneys

will often call legal proceedings in small claims or juvenile court "hearings," when for all practical purposes, what is actually occurring is a trial. So that matter in small claims court where your attorney got you a judgment for \$5,000.00, was it a hearing or a trial? If there was witnesses, and the judge made a final decision on which party won and which party lost the case, then it was a trial,

even though your attorney might call it a hearing. 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.

Care Center gets Commission approval

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

The eight-year fight for a "Safety Center" may be finally drawing to a close. Despite some comments from commissioners and the vocal objection of several neighborhood residents the contract and lease for a Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center was approved by the Knox County Commission on Monday. Only Vice Chairman Randy Smith voted "No"

Smith questioned future expansion of the proposed facility, at 3343 Dewine Road just off Western Avenue. "Do we have to hurt someone to help others?" he asked. He described the area as "extremely residential where several hundred people use the road each day to and from their homes."

"It's important that we get this right," he said asking that another location be found for the treatment of mentally ill people picked up by police on minor offenses. "I can't support the location," he said.

Several citizens spoke for and against the location including nearby residents. The matter hinged on a "Use on Review" by Knoxville City Council decision Tuesday.

Opponents had asked the commission to postpone or vote down the proposal. Barbara Cooke told the meeting that the agreement doesn't include several items that need addressing and that the sheriff, county mayor

and commission weren't considering the surrounding neighbors. She said that there was no opportunity for community input until a month ago.

She said the agreement with Helen Ross McNabb Center, operators of the facility, is "incomplete and ambiguous."

Joshua Johnson, who lives in the subdivision on the hill above the facility, complained that the number of beds at the proposed center "keeps rising" and said he is concerned about overall safety in the neighborhood.

John Zimmerman said he represented the Northwest Community and that the contract does not address public safety or emergencies. He suggested a better location for such a treatment facility would be near the county jail and asked the commission to deny the resolution until a better location could be found.

Carol Zimmerman told the commission that the neighbors are not opposed to such a facility and said the county's request for a proposal, which the McNabb Center captured, included a part about accepting people with a history of violent behavior.

Speaking for the care center's creation were several citizens including Vivian Shipe, a longtime promoter of such a center. Shipe said the center could be a "standard for the rest of the state and the nation to follow."

She said the center can aid "voiceless citizens and restore families," referring

to the mentally ill or addicted people it could help.

Lida Mayer asked the commission to "do the moral thing" and said, "You don't get treated for mental illness in jail."

Tyler Crabtree said the commission was "laying down a foundation for successful recovery" and added, "No one should feel alarmed having this facility next to them."

Sheriff J.J. Jones has said that people taken to the care center would be delivered by law enforcement and would leave the facility after treatment the same way.

McNabb's director, Jerry Vagnier, answered several questions from the commissioners. Commissioner Carson Dailey told Vagnier, "You are a professional, it is a disgrace the way you've been treated."

Vagnier said the Knox County Jail is the third largest facility in the state where the mentally ill reside.

Commissioner Charles Busler asked him about creating a buffer behind the facility for a nearby home and Vagnier said he will "put up whatever she wants."

Commission Chairman Dave Wright noted that money promised by the state would be used before local funds are applied and said the contract calls for 16 beds.

"We're going to get all the issues ironed out tonight," Wright said.

Both commissioners Brad Anders and Evelyn Gill said they are concerned

about the location but approve of the concept.

Commissioner Bob Thomas said he'd like to see the community involved and called for that input. Vagnier said McNabb would include them in the process.

Commissioner Hugh Nystrom asked about law enforcement being trained to recognize mental illness symptoms.

Commissioner John Schoonmaker asked Finance Director Chris Caldwell what would happen if the Use on Review application failed at city council and Caldwell said in that case "everything would end."

Sheriff's department spokesman Randy Nichols said that 16 beds are in the agreement but added that four months later several more beds would be added in a separate section of the former church building from the nearby McNabb treatment facility.

Vagnier said the contract is for 16 beds and noted that the other beds "are already funded" but said those beds could be located back to the nearby facility if expansion should happen at the Urgent Care Center.

During the second part of the discussion of the Care Center, to approve the county leasing the building, Deputy Law Director David Buuck said the facility "cannot be used for any other purpose."

The final vote, to contract with Helen Ross McNabb and to lease the building, passed 10-1.

City OKs Behavioral Health Care Center

Cont. from page 1 work with the nearest neighbor to establish a buffer between the building and her home.

Asked if three days would be enough to treat non-violent, mentally ill offenders of alcoholism and drug abuse, Vagnier said those three days would be for "high level of care." He also said that patients would not be free to leave the facility and roam around outside.

Councilman Marshall Stair voiced the feelings of many of the council members when he said would hate to see the motion fail "after so many years of work."

"Putting people in jail," he said, "doesn't solve it."

Council member Brenda Palmer, who represents the district, "Sometimes change is painful. It's time for us to do something and move forward."

Councilman George Wallace asked Vagnier about other improvements at the now vacant building

and the director said the McNabb Center has \$1.9 million invested the property and described improvements planned there. He also said that while 16 beds would be for the Urgent Care people brought there by the sheriff's department there may also be beds for other addicted patients from the nearby Centerpointe facility be moved there. He said that there would be different doors for the two types of patients.

He said adding the beds would "maximize resources."

Vivian Shipe, a community activist and early promoter of a facility for the mentally ill, said, "The community is ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with you and do its part."

"You are making a wise investment in the preparation of this property. You are also investing in the lives of the citizens who will stop going through the revolving door of hopelessness," she said.

Dine Out for Education on April 4

Cont. from page 1 Beerworks, Barley's Tap Partners in Education programs. This year, KCS hopes to raise \$25,000 and all community members need to do is let one of our many participating restaurants do the cooking (for breakfast, lunch and dinner).

To help you plan your meals in support of Knox County Schools, a complete list of participating restaurants and locations—13 new this year including Balter

and the director said the McNabb Center has \$1.9 million invested the property and described improvements planned there. He also said that while 16 beds would be for the Urgent Care people brought there by the sheriff's department there may also be beds for other addicted patients from the nearby Centerpointe facility be moved there. He said that there would be different doors for the two types of patients.

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Publisher's Position

Tennessee State Republicans Racing to Raise Gas Taxes



By Steve Hunley, Publisher
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Say it ain't so. Republicans raising taxes? Tennessee's Republican governor, Republican-controlled state senate and Republican-entitled house of representatives are moving with lightning speed to raise taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel. As it stands

now, the gasoline tax would increase by 28% while the tax on diesel fuel would increase 65%. This means Tennesseans will very likely be paying more at the pump soon. To make the tax increase more palatable, legislators have changed the original language to make the increases incremental. All of us have been told because the governor has proposed dropping the sales tax .5% on food, as well as small reductions in the taxes on business and stocks and bonds, folks will come out about even. Now that's just plain wrong.

First of all, I'd like to meet the average family who will break even, much less come out ahead under this proposal. The average family owns no stocks and bonds, unless

through retirement accounts. For working families, the miniscule reduction in the sales tax - - - and Tennessee has the second highest sales tax in the nation - - - will not offset the increase in the gasoline tax. One can count on the folks who sell gasoline to add a few pennies to the price of gasoline for their own pockets as the tax kicks in; furthermore, when the price of gasoline begins to rise again, folks are going to be complaining after the fact.

No, the average family isn't going to come out even or ahead and working folks surely are not going to break even. For another thing, the rise in the price of diesel fuel means the cost of goods purchased will rise for consumers. Literally almost

everything delivered to grocery stores for sale arrives by truck and those trucks are powered by diesel fuel. That cost will be passed onto the consumers. Do you suppose the .5% drop in the sales tax on food will help you break even? Of course for those feeding and clothing their families it will mean little, as the sales tax on clothing and necessities will remain the same, but these folks are telling us we will break even.

The notion, advanced by some good government folks, note the gasoline tax hasn't been raised since 1989, which I find to be a very poor argument for raising any tax, especially when the State of Tennessee is projected to have a \$2 billion surplus at the end of this

fiscal year. Do you think you are under-taxed?

Americans pay \$1.4 trillion in income taxes; for those working for an employer, workers pay an additional 7.65% tax for Social Security and Medicare. In 2014, the government collected \$1 trillion in payroll taxes. Americans pay \$560 billion in property taxes annually. The federal government collects \$93.4 billion in excise taxes, covering fuel, alcohol, cigarettes and plane tickets. The federal government get 7.5% of the purchase price for every airline fare sold and 18.4 cents for every gallon of gasoline sold. Yet in one incarnation of Haslam's gas tax hike, the administration opened the door to allow city and county governments to

raise local property and sales taxes by local referendum. Keep in mind Knox Countians already pay almost 10% on every thing a person can purchase.

The hike is going to be felt by those living on fixed incomes, as well as working families. For those who have done pretty well, as usual, they'll feel it less than anyone.

If you have an opinion about the gas tax hike, you better get on the phone or peck out an email in a hurry. Stating your outrage after the fact on your Facebook account isn't going to do a thing, except prove you weren't paying attention when the legislature was getting ready to pick your pocket.

ORNL partners with Vine to promote science, engineering

By Ken Lay

Students from Vine Magnet Middle School got the opportunity to see science in action Thursday morning with the help from scientists from Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

ORNL is a working partner with Vine; one of Knox County's Community Schools and has been active in the school's science classes since the beginning of the 2016-17 academic year.

The lab sponsors and conducts a female STEM academy on Thursdays where some female engineers introduce female students to the field of engineering.

But Thursday, scientists from ORNL were on hand to help the school host a Science Day for Vine's sixth, seventh and eighth graders. Students were given opportunities to work with polymer slime and motorized buggies and conduct physics demonstrations with the help of the school's teachers and ORNL employees. Vine seventh grade science teacher John Swicegood said he was pleased when he discovered that the laboratory wanted to partner with the school.



PHOTO BY KEN LAY.

Vine Middle School teacher John Swicegood works with students Takeis Howard (right) and Samson Brown on a small motors project Thursday at the school's Science Day.

"When they came to us, when they came to me, I was thrilled and I thought it was amazing," Swicegood said. "These students have the opportunity to see people who are in engineering every day and it's great that the engineers come here and work with

our students after they get off work.

"Our students can actually see what engineers do and this is fun for them and it's fun for me. I can teach them about science and engineering but I can't show our kids what engineers do. This is big for

our kids, especially when it will come time for them to make college and career decisions."

Swicegood also noted that the partnership with ORNL goes a little beyond science.

"If there's one thing I can tell you about this, it's that

this is positive," he said. "So often, people only see the negative."

"But I want these people to know about the positive things that our teachers, our kids and our schools are doing."

Community Schools Site Resource Coordinator

Kendra Berry agreed.

"Vine is a community school and it's one of 12 community schools in Knox County," said Berry, who is based at Vine Middle as part of Knox County's Great Schools program. "When people think of community schools, they think about the after school activities."

"They think about the programs that we have and the things that we do after school. But at the community schools, we do so much more and our students benefit from the things that we do with our partners during the school day."

One of those opportunities is the chance for the students to work with and be mentored by professional scientists.

And like Swicegood, Berry said that she feels the need to get the word out about the positive things at Vine.

"Our principal, [Cindy] White says that we have the responsibility to get the word out," Berry said. "ORNL has been so good to our kids and to us."

"We have great teachers and a tremendous staff. We have a lot of great things going on here."

Halfway house ruling postponed for 120 days

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

The rezoning request of Joyce Webb for the Mandala House on Ebenezer Road has been postponed 120 days after a long hearing before Knox County Commission last week.

The Mandala House has operated at the location northeast of South Peters Road for a couple of years and Webb was requesting a zoning change from "Transitional" to "Office." The facility has inpatient and outpatient services with a 24-hour staff. The spiritual-based program focuses on women and expectant mothers with addiction problems and offers anger management, parenting and group and individual counseling.

Apparently the Mandala House has been operating outside compliance, as Commissioner Brad Anders noted during the meeting.

Margot Kline, representing West Knox Homeowners, said the neighborhood doesn't object to the use but said the request is "spot zoning" and she added the homeowners would rather see the facility continue to operate under the transitional zone.

Commission Chairman Dave Wright repeatedly told his fellow

commissioners that they can only consider the zoning request and not the actual use of the building.

"MPC has said they have satisfied the request," he said, adding that the commission should not consider code violations.

"Are you telling us how to vote?" Commissioner Anders asked Wright.

Wright repeated that

the commission's duties are "strictly zoning and not use" and he added, "Zoning is what is before us."

The applicant said that the rezoning was needed so they can proceed to a "Use on Review" with the planning commission.

"These aren't criminal women," Commissioner Michele Carringer said but then asked what zone

would be appropriate.

"I'm amazed it's gone on for two years," she said.

On a motion by Commissioner John Schoonmaker all of the commissioners, except Wright, voted to postpone. The matter

apparently places the request back to the planning commission to come up with an appropriate zone for such facilities.



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At the March 24-25 2017 FIRST Robotics Smoky Mountains Regional, Hardin Valley Academy's robotics team won two of FIRST Robotics' most coveted awards. Pictured above, Kaitlin Smith, a junior at Hardin Valley Academy, was named a Dean's List Finalist at the 2017 Smoky Mountains Regional. Here she poses with HVA Team 3824 Mentors Beth Love and John Tilson.

Bob Clement talks about a political dynasty

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

Bob Clement, son of former Tennessee Governor Frank Clement, spoke in Knoxville recently at the Tennessee Historical Museum to promote his book "Presidents, Kings and Convicts." In the book the heir to the Clement dynasty recalls his life from growing up in the governor's house to his own experiences in politics.

Clement is touring the state and the southeast to promote the book and told The Focus that he is impressed by the displays at the museum and plans to return to spend more time there. Cherey Henderson, executive director of the East Tennessee Historical Society, took Clement on a brief tour of the facility prior to the former Tennessee congressman and public service commissioner's speech there.

The address ranged from his childhood during the term of his father, Governor Frank Clement, to his marriage, different offices he held, and elections he won and lost. The events are described in his book, from which he read briefly. "We lived in a very modest home and then, at

age nine, moved into what was a mansion. My mother would never let us refer to it as a 'mansion'—it was referred to as the Governor's Residence," Clement told the audience.

During his childhood there he came to know the state prisoners who were assigned to work at the governor's house and he shared stories about them and, hence, part of the title of the book. "The cooks were murderers," he said.

Clement recalled his father's reaction to the violent opposition to the integration of Clinton High School and he wrestled over the death penalty in the state. He said his father prayed every night over the decisions he had to make as governor.

"Since 1835 no other governor served as long as my father, 10 years, and my brother Frank and I are the only living children to have lived there that long," he said.

Bob Clement, who became the youngest person elected state-wide when he was elected as public service commissioner, also served as president of Cumberland University and unsuccessfully ran for governor and Nashville

mayor.

Clement recalled attending the University of Tennessee and fondly remembered President Andy Holt. He recalled being placed on the TVA Board by President Jimmy Carter and his efforts to have the Ocoee River converted to permit white-water rafting and tried to stop the overbuilding of nuclear plants.

He recalled meetings with foreign kings and the night that "the King" Elvis Presley came to the governor's residence and stayed until 3 a.m. singing with a group of state prisoners called "The Prisonaires."

He also told of his father's friendship with Rev. Billy Graham and how Governor Clement persuaded the evangelist to pull an endorsement of presidential candidate Richard Nixon in the race against John F. Kennedy because it could be seen as "Anti-Catholic."

Clement also complimented his wife, Mary Carson Clement, for her support and called her "my wonderful partner."

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2 Timothy 4:7 (KJV)



By **Ralphine Major**
ralphine3@yahoo.com

My cell phone rang. The caller was letting me know that he would not be able to attend our reunion. As a former teacher and coach at Gibbs High School, Ken Sparks was invited to our 40th class reunion in April 2012. As busy as he was, the college coach was kind enough to send his regrets. For anyone who knew Sparks, that was not surprising.

Ken Sparks passed away March 29, 2017, after a long and valiant battle with cancer. My class was starting high school the year Sparks began his coaching career at Gibbs. (Ken Sparks, More Than a Coach, Focus 4-9-12, 9-17-12). The late Bob Dagley hired young Sparks to coach football. Gibbs had been without a football program for many years. The Carson-Newman graduate's job was to bring football back to Gibbs. Even then, he was an outstanding role model for student athletes. He did not allow bad language from his players, most of whom were bigger than him. Much has been written and reported about Coach Spark's winning record and championships, but I remember him for something else.

At the reunion, I mentioned that Coach Sparks could not come. Beth heard me. Beth Donahue's uncle was the late Ken Donahue, legendary coach at Alabama and Tennessee and friend of Coach Sparks. She shared a touching moment with us. The year Sparks came to Gibbs, the school year had barely started when Beth's father passed away after waging his own battle with cancer. One of Beth's brothers was on the varsity football team, and her mother was a teacher in home economics at Gibbs. Coach



Ken Sparks, Gibbs High School, 1968-69

Sparks had the entire football team attend her father's funeral. What the 22-year-old coach had the team do next was extraordinary. Dressed in their Sunday suits, the team lined both sides of the hall as Beth's family filed into the church. Beth said it reminded her mother of a guard at a military funeral. The gesture of respect touched her family, especially her mother. I thought it spoke highly of Beth's outstanding family and spoke volumes about the young coach, as well. Beth said her mother talked about it for years. Her family sent Coach Sparks a note thanking him for his kindness. (Bama Beth, Focus 4-30-12).

After Gibbs, Ken Sparks went on to achieve great success at other schools and colleges. I cannot imagine anything in the years following where the young coach could have shown more maturity or class than he did that day at a rural church in Corryton. It is my favorite memory of him. He will be missed, but his Christian witness can be an example to all of us. Words from the book of Matthew 25:21 (KJV) come to mind: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . ." Thank you, Coach Sparks. May you rest in peace, for you have now reached your heavenly home.

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Our Neighborhoods

Resident speaks for historic overlay

By Mike Steely
 steelym@knoxfocus.com

"When I first came to Knoxville and drove through the Parkridge neighborhood some 20 years ago I was impressed by the historic fabric that I saw. I could tell that this once was a very vibrant neighborhood in which people loved and cared about the place where they lived and called home," said David Nix, Vice President of the Parkridge Community Organization.

In 1996 Nix negotiated with the city and bought an 1893 Queen Ann Victorian home in the neighborhood, restored it, and over the years purchased and restored three additional condemned homes.

The neighborhood dates back to the 1890s and was the home of many Knoxville elite families. Nix notes that in 1917 the area was annexed into Knoxville and has 27 homes identified as George Barber homes with more being added to the list.

"Our organization was established in 1982 to combat the blight and

neglect in what was once a thriving, beautiful neighborhood," he told The Focus.

"We've made much headway during the 35 years we have existed, saved many homes, helped decrease crime, addressed absentee landlord issues and made Parkridge a very desirable place in which to live," he said.

Nix contends that much of the news coverage during the organization's push to extend the Historic (H-1) designation to cover about 554 properties there has favored opponents to the expansion. The Parkridge community organization and the planning commission have hosted several public hearings on the idea and some opponents have been very vocal.

The Metropolitan Planning Commission will eventually present its recommendations to the city council and Nix told The Focus that the organization and neighborhood residents will appear before the council.

"Our long range goal in



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY.

This George Barber designed home on Washington Avenue is one of the many historic structures within the Parkridge-Edgewood neighborhood. The proposal of expanding the current historic overlay is aimed at protecting the historic structures in the early East Knoxville neighborhood.

requesting this expansion is to save more blighted homes and attract more homeowners to our neighborhood, protect the variety of housing stock large multi-story houses to three-room 'shot-gun' houses. That helps make living in Parkridge affordable for a wide range of economic classes and protect home values," he said.

"Some of our older residents may have to depend

on the equity in their homes in order to stay in their homes and be able to afford making needed repairs and maintenance," he said.

"We are also in the process of reviewing the existing guidelines for the present H1 zone, which will also be applied to the extended H1 area. The future guidelines for the Edgewood/Park City Historic zone will be the most lenient in the city.

Also, we are working on a grant process to offset the cost of the H1 COA fees if that added cost may prove to be a hardship," he said.

"We hope the neighborhood will continue to diversify to satisfy the needs of our very diverse residents," Nix commented.

The neighborhood's motto is "At Home with Diversity" and Nix noted that of the 554 total

Continue on page 2



From State Representative
Harry Brooks

Legislation spearheaded by House members to help adults without a degree gain access higher education moved forward last week after getting a positive nod from the House Government Operations Committee. House Bill 531, named the Tennessee Reconnect Act, would make Tennessee the first state in the nation to offer all Tennessee adults without degrees access to community college tuition-free - and at no cost to taxpayers.

Currently, Tennessee adults without a degree or certificate can already attend Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs) tuition-free, and House Bill 531 would add community colleges into that same category. The legislation expands on a program launched in 2015 aimed at attracting approximately 900,000 Tennesseans who have earned some college credit, but not enough to earn a degree.

Supporters of the legislation agree that the new Reconnect program is a tremendous investment in the state's economy. It gives adults new opportunities for career growth while also providing employers with the skills and credentials they are seeking from the workforce. This program will begin with the 2018-19 school year upon approval.

Also last week, lawmakers passed legislation to give school personnel the ability to administer life-saving medical treatment to Tennessee students suffering from adrenal insufficiency caused by conditions like Addison's disease. House Bill 121 permits any properly trained school employee to administer the lifesaving injection as a form of

Continue on page 2

Knox Democrats Elect Younger Leadership

By Mike Steely
 steelym@knoxfocus.com

Knox County Democrats have new leadership and it is much younger than it has been. The Democrats met for their Biennial Reorganization Convention at CWA headquarters recently and 159 delegates from the various districts chose their county officers and district representatives.

Emily Gregg is the new chairperson. She coordinated county efforts three years ago and has been serving as secretary. Gregg replaces Cameron Brooks as chair as he goes to the Knox County Election Commission. There were no opponents to Gregg.

Linda Haney was re-elected as vice chair. Her election came after some confusion over how the votes for the position would be counted because there were two other candidates, Bryan Goldberg and Charles Frazier. After contacting the state party chairwoman about procedure a standing vote was taken. Haney got 90 votes, Goldberg received 26 and Frazier received 26, with Haney declared the winner. All three candidates spoke prior to the vote.

Alli Cohn was elected party secretary. She is a Knox County teacher and volunteered for



PHOTO BY TIM MILLER.

Emily Gregg, candidate for KCDP chair, speaks at the party's district convention, held on March 18 at the Burlington Library. Gregg won the chair seat the following Saturday at the Reorganization Convention.

Gloria Johnson.

Shannon Webb was elected as treasurer. She was treasurer during Jim Berrier's campaign for trustee and is the director of

Marketing Support for Edfinancial Services.

The departing chair spoke of his work during the last two years to recruit candidates, raise

Continue on page 4

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Work begins on City of Knoxville zoning code update

The City of Knoxville has hired a consultant to assist the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) with the City's zoning ordinance update. After releasing a Request for Proposals in June of 2016, a selection committee made up of City and MPC staff and MPC Commissioners selected Camiros, Ltd. from a pool of applicants. Camiros is a full-service planning, zoning, and urban design consultancy located in Chicago, Ill.

Representatives from Camiros visited Knoxville earlier this year to gather information and inform their work. They reviewed the current zoning code, saw examples of its impact on the city, and discussed ideas for the update with City and MPC staff. There will be an official kick off later this spring after the

consultants complete their background review.

In order to give a voice to the diverse interests found within the community, two committees have been created to assist with the overhaul. A staff committee of City and MPC staff will provide local expertise, and a stakeholder committee will represent business, neighborhood, environmental, and other groups from the community. The public stakeholder committee was officially appointed at the Jan. 31 City Council meeting. All committee members will serve for two years.

The stakeholder committee met for the first time last Monday in the Small Assembly Room of the City County Building. The committee will meet next at 10 a.m.

on May 17 in the Small Assembly Room. All meetings of the public stakeholder committee are open to the public.

A request was made last year by Mayor Madeline Rogero, funded by City Council, for MPC to update the ordinance. The existing ordinance was written decades ago and emphasizes single-use zoning that requires tracts to be segregated by land use. That model leads to inefficient use of resources and sprawl. In the decades since the current zoning ordinance was put in place, needs have changed and demand for mixed-use development has increased as residents have become interested in being able to live, work, shop, and eat at restaurants within the same neighborhood. Amendments prioritizing

these changes, such as the South Waterfront and Cumberland Avenue, have fueled demand for similar flexibility elsewhere.

The need for these changes is apparent when considering that Knox County is projected to add 170,000 residents by 2040. An updated ordinance will help protect and enhance Knoxville's sense of place during this growth. The update will help strike a balance between protecting historic characteristics of neighborhoods and creating standards that encourage dynamic growth. It also aims to encourage connectivity among these places.

To achieve these goals, the guiding principles for the update include:

- Promoting development and redevelopment in a manner that

uses resources efficiently;

- Building a strong, sustainable, walkable community; and
- Encouraging and gathering public input from the Knoxville community and business leaders.

MPC encourages the community to stay involved throughout the process. For more information, please contact Gerald Green at 865-215-3758 or Gerald.green@knoxmpc.org.

The Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) was established in 1956 by Knoxville and Knox County as the agency responsible for comprehensive county-wide planning and administration of zoning and land subdivision regulations and remains

so today (except for the town of Farragut). Funding for MPC activities comes primarily from city and county appropriations and from federal grants for specific studies. The Commission prepares and adopts a general plan, reviews subdivision regulations and site

plans, prepares and recommends zoning ordinances and maps to the Knox County Commission and Knoxville City Council, reviews proposed zoning amendments, and prepares a capital improvements plan for the City of Knoxville. For more information, visit our website at www.knoxmpc.org.

Resident speaks for historic overlay

Cont. from page 1

parcels within the proposed expansion, 176 of them are non-contributing structures or empty lots. He said that 357 of the parcels are owned by absentee owners.

Nix said information is being collected in the proposed expansion area about people there by Facebook contacts, going door-to-door, visiting owner-occupied properties, and calling absentee owners. "With this information we have collected thus far 88% of the responses have been in favor," he stressed.

"Based on the facts, I feel the expansion of the H1 zoning is necessary

and an important tool to help regulate the redevelopment of the Parkridge Community," he said.

Nix said that since the original H-1 designation was established that the number of non-white residents in the zone has risen slightly while the same population has decreased in the proposed expansion area. He also said the number of renters in the expansion area in the past five years has climbed or remained level.

The Parkridge Community Organization has been very active in promoting the neighborhood including manning a "water" station during marathon, sponsoring a neighborhood garden, featuring home tours and beautification projects, planting over 8,000 daffodils bulbs and promoting the Magnolia Avenue Open Streets event on May 21st. The organization holds regular monthly meetings.

Nix notes that this is the third time expanding the existing historic zone has been discussed since the establishment of the present zoning and commented, "Now it is the right time."

Should short-term rentals be taxed?

**By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com**

The growing industry of short-term rentals of homes, often from websites like Airbnb, has more or less gone uncontrolled. There's an effort in the state legislature to exempt anyone renting out a room or their home to visitors from local taxes.

There's also a discussion on the local level as the city and county are deciding how to impose some regulations and an occupancy tax or permit on the owners of the homes.

On Tuesday at 6 p.m. the city will hold a public meeting on a proposed ordinance. The event is planned for the Central United Methodist Church at 201 Third Avenue.

According to the city short-term rentals are currently prohibited in Knoxville because they are not covered by existing law. The claim by the city is that an ordinance would make it possible for owners to run them, protect the neighborhoods and maintain the health and safety of visitors to the city.

The ordinance would "ensure a

level playing field for STRs and traditional hotels and motels in terms of occupancy and sales taxes."

A draft ordinance would reflect the input received during several months of public comment. The ordinance is available for review on the City's website at http://knoxvilletn.gov/government/city_departments_offices/plans_review_inspections/short_term_rentals/.

Opponents of an ordinance feel that regulating short-term rentals is not needed and is aimed at producing another source of revenue.

Harry Brooks

Cont. from page 1

medical treatment to students who are suffering from adrenal inefficiency when experiencing an adrenal crisis on campus. Addison's disease is a life-threatening illness that prevents a person's body from creating hormones that help it respond to stress. An adrenal crisis can be triggered by an injury, surgery, infection, or even emotional stress. Death may occur without immediate treatment. When children experience a medical emergency like an adrenal crisis and need treatment, every second counts. The passage of

House Bill 121 paves the way for quicker response times during emergencies by allowing a properly trained staff member to perform a heroic act that will save a life. I believe this a great step in the right direction, and an ultimate solution to these emergencies may very well be accomplished with increased funding for school nurses.

Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam and Economic Community Development Commissioner Bob Rolfe announced Wednesday that 18 communities and local organizations will receive \$6.2 million in Site Development Grants. The Site Development

Grant program, part of the larger Rural Economic Opportunity Act passed in 2016, helps communities prepare industrial sites for businesses. These grants will assist communities in finalizing infrastructure and be used for site improvements for Select Tennessee Certified Sites and sites that will go through the site certification process. New sites mean new business operations and jobs. In total, 33 communities have been awarded Site Development Grants with 15 communities receiving grants in 2016. The newest round of grants awarded includes \$500,000 for the

construction of a wastewater pump station at the Knox County Eastbridge Business Park Lots.

As always, please contact me if I can be of any assistance to you in any way. I love to hear from my constituents, and I value the information and opinions you share. Please email me at rep.harry.brooks@capitol.tn.gov or my office number is (615) 741-6879, and if you would like to reach me on the weekends my home phone number is (865) 687-5987. It is an honor to serve you and the great state of Tennessee in this capacity.

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Tennessee and American Neutrality Part Five

Pages from the Past



By Ray Hill
rayhill865@gmail.com

Neither President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull intended to retreat from their demands that Congress renew the cash and carry provision of the neutrality law, while also removing the arms embargo on belligerent nations. The noninterventionists and isolationists in Congress, having won the fight in the House of Representatives through a coalition of Republicans and Democrats, were ready for a fight. The isolationist bloc in the United States Senate contained some of the Senate's most able members. Both sides were ready for a prolonged brawl.

On July 7, 1939 thirty-four senators issued a statement they would filibuster the neutrality bill, pledging their unified opposition "to the repeal or modification of the present neutrality law prohibiting the sale or exportation of arms, munitions or implements of war to nations engaged in war." The statement also declared their determination to prevent President Roosevelt from enjoying any further discretionary powers. "We are against any discretion being lodged in the hands of any chief executive to determine an aggressor or aggressors during any war abroad." The senators also defined the differences between themselves and the Roosevelt administration. "We believe in real neutrality of our nation in the case of any conflict." In other words, the noninterventionists in the United States Senate believed they were the bulwarks of preserving peace in America; they genuinely believed in the United States being a truly neutral nation. They suspected President Roosevelt and administration allies would risk war to provide aid to Great Britain and France in the event of war with Germany.

The statement was the result of a meeting chaired by Hiram Johnson of California. The seventy-two year old Johnson was a progressive Republican who was so esteemed in his home state that he usually won both the Republican and Democratic nominations. A formidable orator and respected by his colleagues, Johnson had been the running mate of Theodore Roosevelt in 1912 when the two bolted the Republican Party to run on the Progressive or "Bull Moose" label. The meeting in Johnson's office was attended by noninterventionists, both progressives and conservatives, as well as Democrats and Republicans. Those senators who attended included Arthur Capper of Kansas,

immigrants who had been elected from Minnesota as a member of the Farmer-Labor party; John Danaher, a Connecticut Republican noted for his fine legal mind; Wallace H. White, a Republican from Maine, a quiet and gentlemanly man with a shock of white hair; Bennett Champ Clark, an able and articulate senator from Missouri; D. Worth Clark of Idaho, the junior colleague of the famed William E. Borah and just as adamantly isolationist in outlook; Rush D. Holt from West Virginia, mercurial and like Gerald Nye, had an appetite for publicity and a burning desire to embarrass the Roosevelt administration; Borah, the "Lion of Idaho" and a living legend to many of his colleagues and most of his constituents; Clyde M. Reed, a freshman senator and former governor from Kansas, personally irascible with a reputation for being querulous; Homer Bone, an acerbic Democrat from Washington State; and Robert LaFollette, Jr., son of the famed Progressive of the same name from Wisconsin.

The battle inside the Senate Foreign Relations Committee appeared to be close; in fact, it appeared to be evenly divided 11 - 11 with the final member of the committee undecided. That member was reputedly Senator Guy Gillette of Iowa, who had been one of the targets of FDR's unfortunate and wildly unsuccessful purge during the 1938 elections. Other reports indicated the vote stood at 11 - 10 with Walter F. George of Georgia also undecided. Secretary of State Hull was said to be leaning on Senator George, like Gillette, another target of Roosevelt's wrath in the 1938 primary campaigns. Hull and George were friends and long-time associates and there was a persistent worry George seemed to be inclined to side with the noninterventionists, perhaps a residual of his ill treatment at the hands of the President, who had made a point to campaign against him personally. Senator George opined if indeed thirty-four senators had agreed to oppose revision of the neutrality law it was "highly improbable" that any neutrality legislation would pass the Congress.

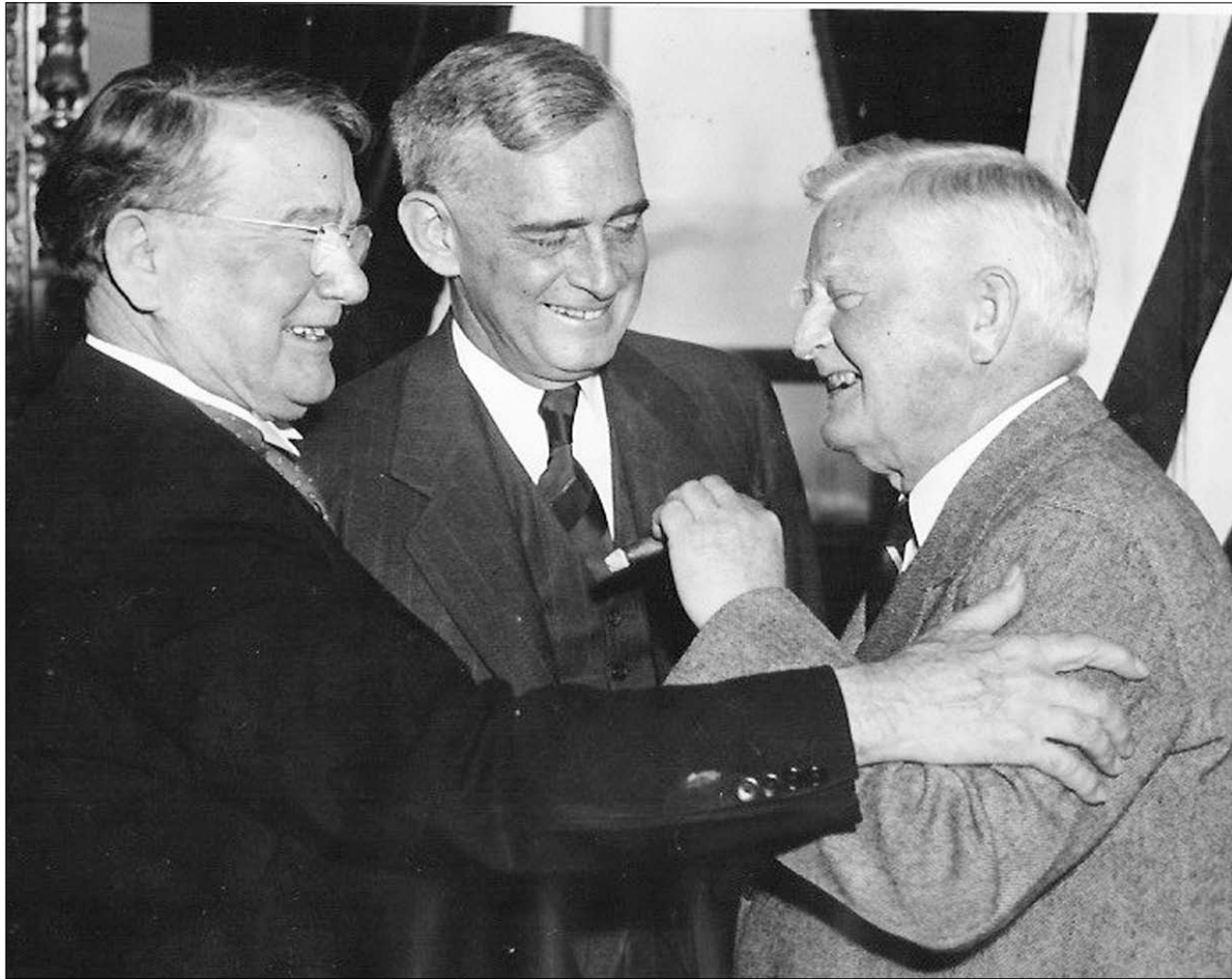
As each day slipped away, it seemed the opposition continued to build. Within days after the statement signed by thirty-four senators had been released, fully forty-two senators had announced their own opposition to repealing the arms embargo, including nineteen Democrats.

Senator Bennett Clark of Missouri declared, "The Hull plan to repeal the existing arms embargo on export of arms and ammunition would be substantially an alliance of the United States with Great Britain and France and with Soviet Russia if the latter joins the Paris - London axis. That would put us in alliance with the Communists. I believe the Senate would defeat such a plan." Hiram Johnson exuded confidence. "I have no doubt that the Hull bill will be beaten," he said.

The noninterventionists were right to be confident; the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 12 - 11 to shelve any revision of the neutrality act, ending the possibility of action during that session of Congress. Both Guy Gillette and Walter F. George voted to postpone any consideration of the neutrality legislation.

Cordell Hull's Tennessee temper flared and the Secretary of State issued a public statement after meeting with President Roosevelt. Hull said he felt "as I have felt throughout each stage of the consideration of peace and neutrality legislation during this session of congress that the interest of peace and the security of the United States require that we should continue to urge the adoption of the principles of the six-point program" he had originally proposed a few months earlier. Hull reiterated those same six points during a press conference. Reporters noted the Secretary of State looked visibly "disturbed and disappointed." Days later Cordell Hull's disappointment deepened when Congressman Sam D. McReynolds of Chattanooga died. McReynolds had first come to Congress in 1922 when Hull was making his own return to the House of Representatives following a two-year hiatus after having been defeated in 1920. The two men became friends and McReynolds had eventually risen through the ranks to chair the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Congressman McReynolds had been an effective ally to the Roosevelt administration, but he was seriously ailing from advanced heart disease. As Sam McReynolds lingered, Sol Bloom had become Acting Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Congressman McReynolds died on July 11, 1939.

The death of Sam McReynolds was important



FROM THE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL COLLECTION.

Senator K. D. McKellar (left), Senator Tom Stewart (middle) and Vice President John Nance Garner (right), 1939.

in another respect; it left Tennessee with little real influence in the House of Representatives. The two longest serving members of the Tennessee House delegation were J. Will Taylor of the Second District and Carroll Reece of the First District. Both Taylor and Reece had actually arrived in the House of Representatives before Sam McReynolds; Taylor had been elected in 1918 and Reece in 1920. Yet J. Will Taylor and Carroll Reece were Republicans and exercised little clout in the halls of Congress. Jere Cooper, a Democrat from Dyersburg, Tennessee, represented the Eighth District and had been elected in 1928. Clarence W. Turner of the Sixth District had first been elected in 1932; Herron Pearson of the Seventh District arrived following the 1934 election, as did Walter Chandler of the Ninth District, who had come to Congress after E. H. Crump had decided he didn't much care for serving in the House of Representatives. Albert Gore who represented Cordell Hull's old Fourth District was a freshman congressman, as was Joseph W. Byrns, Jr., son of the late Speaker of the House of the same name, who represented the Fifth District. Tennessee's junior U. S. senator, Tom Stewart, was also a freshman legislator with little influence. Fortunately for Tennessee, there was Kenneth D. McKellar. Senator McKellar was one of the more senior Democrats in the United States Senate, ranking member of the powerful Appropriations Committee. In fact, McKellar carried much of the workload for the Appropriations Committee due to the oftentimes-fragile health of the Chairman, brittle little Carter Glass of Virginia. McKellar was a stalwart supporter of the Roosevelt administration and chief dispenser of New Deal patronage in Tennessee. There was hardly a family in Tennessee for whom the senator had not done a favor. A bachelor, McKellar obsessively tended to his duties and despite his seventy years, remained energetic. Senator McKellar had proven he could do more than hold his own during Senate debates

and proved to be a wily and resourceful legislator. McKellar had astutely used his perch on the Appropriations Committee to leverage aid to the Tennessee Valley Authority. Outside of Tennessee, TVA was not universally popular and the fight for continuing appropriations for the Tennessee Valley Authority were frequently hard fought and some won by a single vote. Relentless in pursuit of some advantage for Tennessee, K. D. McKellar had long served with Cordell Hull in both the House and Senate and admired the Secretary of State. Senator McKellar would prove to be a valuable ally to Hull in the fight to revise the neutrality act.

Hull's disappointment and the elation of the isolationists was only temporary as world events rapidly changed the opinion of many congressmen and senators, and more importantly, that of the American people. That change began to occur on September 1, 1939 when German troops and panzer divisions crossed the border into Poland. Adolf Hitler's invasion of Poland changed modern warfare with the "blitzkrieg." Both Great Britain and France had a treaty with Poland and declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939. The Soviet Union invaded Eastern Poland on September 17, yet neither Britain nor France bothered to extend the declaration of war to Russia. Poland was gobbled up by Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union in a matter of weeks. Suddenly there was a pressing need for Congress to reconsider Cordell Hull's neutrality act revisions. Senator McKellar urged President Roosevelt to call Congress back in special session.

Back home in Tennessee, McKellar was touring the state in anticipation of his 1940 reelection campaign, as well as taking the temperature of his constituents about repealing the arms embargo. McKellar's esteem for Cordell Hull was readily apparent when he told reporters the Secretary of State was the "best fitted man in the nation for president in case Roosevelt doesn't run for a third term." McKellar also bluntly dismissed the

notion Adolf Hitler could be appeased. "Hitler would be willing to accept peace terms tomorrow if he gets what he wants in Poland," McKellar speculated. "But if such should occur that man probably would attack little Romania the next day." The frequently crusty McKellar was evidently in good humor as he listened to a tale of Congressman Carroll Reece tangling with a custom's officer, which ended with Reece biting the officer's ear. The senator laughed and said, "Well, I'm glad he didn't bite the officer's ear off."

While in Nashville, McKellar spent some time with reporters following his return from a brief vacation in New England, who naturally quizzed the senator about neutrality legislation. The plainspoken McKellar flatly declared passing the arms embargo in the first place had been a "mistake." Senator McKellar insisted the cash and carry provision "should have been passed last summer" by Congress. The senator summed up his own views concisely, "I believe that by refusing to sell munitions to Britain and France we are morally aiding Germany in this war. If we are not neutral in our feelings— and I cannot believe that we are neutral in our feelings — we should assist the countries whom we feel are in the right."

Once again, the supporters of the Roosevelt administration and the isolationist bloc in Congress would fight over defining American foreign policy with regard to neutrality in a world that had been altered forever.

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Your Words on the Screen

Tom Parkhill, Executive director of the Tennessee Stage Company, and Staci Sweeden, Internationally recognized playwright, screenwriter, and actor, will speak the April program of the Knoxville Writers' Guild.

Tom Parkhill and Staci Sweeden will lead the group in looking at some similarities and differences in writing for page and for screen during the April Monthly Meeting of Knoxville Writers' Guild. The program will take place Thursday, April 6 at 7:00 p.m.

The public is invited to the program, which will be held in the Fellowship Hall of Central United Methodist Church, 201 East Third Avenue, where you will find a large, free parking lot. Admission is a suggested \$2.

Tom Parkhill is the Executive Director of the Tennessee Stage Company as well as the Founding Artistic Director. He is a graduate of the University of Tennessee and has been a full time Theatre artist since 1976. He has worked as an actor, director, producer, designer, technician and stage manager. As an administrator he has worked not only with the Stage Company but also with the Strand Street Theatre in Galveston, Texas which he co-founded. Tom served as the Executive Director of the Arts Council of

Greater Knoxville in 2000 and 2001. He has served on the board of Tennesseans For the Arts, the Southeastern Theatre Conference and currently serves on the board of the Tennessee Theatre Association.

Staci Sweeden is an internationally recognized playwright, screenwriter, and actor. Her work has been performed in theaters from New York to California, in Italy and Spain. She has received a playwriting fellowship from Tennessee, and awards from the Sloan Foundation and New York State Council for the Arts.

The Knoxville Writers' Guild exists to facilitate a broad and inclusive community for area writers, provide a forum for information, support and sharing among writers, help members improve and market their writing skills and promote writing and creativity. Additional information can be found at www.KnoxvilleWritersGuild.org, www.facebook.com/KnoxWritersGuild and Instagram @KnoxvilleWritersGuild.

For more information, contact Lauren Hulse, Publicist and Web Content Coordinator, at Lauren.KnoxvilleWritersGuild@gmail.com.

Am I where I thought I'd be?

Well, my friends and many of my family members are now senior citizens. We don't feel like oldsters, but our years tells us that we are. It doesn't seem that long ago that we ran the halls of elementary school and went on to be the bosses on the high school campuses. At some point, reality stepped in and sent us out into the world. Looking back, are people surprised at how life happened?

In terms of career and employment, many people fell short of their goals. Most of us realized that our first jobs wouldn't be in management. We were ready to start at the bottom and work our ways up. So, our days were spent completing assigned tasks. Many of us trudged to work even when we were sick. That sense of loyalty had been ingrained in us by our parents. Others returned to school in the evenings to acquire more training for advanced jobs.

We can look back and



By Joe Rector
joerector@comcast.net

see that, in many cases, loyalty and continuing education in no ways improved our job status. Too often, promotions were passed out according to who kissed up the most or who played politics

most adeptly. Companies sometimes disregarded employee loyalty as they laid off workers or cut positions to improve profits.

Still, some of us stuck with the jobs we'd chosen throughout the time. We were where we were meant to be. Teaching school was a job, but it was also a calling. Working at the plants in Oak Ridge provided a good life for us and our families. Being doctors brought satisfaction as we helped others. Developing a business and watching it grow was exhilarating.

Some of us planned to marry and have families. We wanted to settle down and put in roots deeply where we were. Our goals were for our children to succeed

and do better than we had done. None of us ever consider that marriages might become rocky and end in divorce. No one gave a passing thought to the possibilities of marrying twice and putting two different families together. Others looked back with surprise that they managed to stay with their partners for nearly 50 years. How can that be? We aren't old enough to have been married that long.

Now we knock on the door of retirement, or do we? Some of us old folks had children late in life for one reason or another. They might still be in high school, or they are attending college. For a few unlucky individuals, the children are all grown up, but they still live with parents. The moms and dads have no chance of retiring since they must continue to support the entire family. In other instances, situations occur that requires some folks to work even after retirement age arrives. Also, retirement income isn't enough on which to live, so people either continue to work full time or at least

work on a part time basis. All of us hoped that by this time our coffers would be filled and that we'd want for nothing. In reality, wealth is problematic. Some of us saved throughout the years, but the amount might not have been enough. We lived from paycheck to paycheck during those early years, and stashing away cash was difficult when the children had grown accustom to eating and wearing clothes. Our dreams of escaping to the beaches during cold months or of traveling through country and around the world disappeared.

Lest you think I'm a pessimist, let me say that life has been good. I am blessed with a wonderful wife who has put up with me for 43 years. My two children are loving people who have set out on their own paths. I have few regrets in this life, and for the most part, I don't worry about them since doing so would change nothing. As we grow older, we sometimes reflect on our time here. It's a question we all ask: am I where I thought I'd be?

Knox Democrats Elect Younger Leadership

Cont. from page 1

funds, build the volunteer base, strengthen the infrastructure, develop a media plan and provide candidate training. "I'm not disappearing," Brooks told the delegates. He also said that as an election commissioner he will push to have the early voting hours extended to run from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. and will continue to advocate for

voting rights.

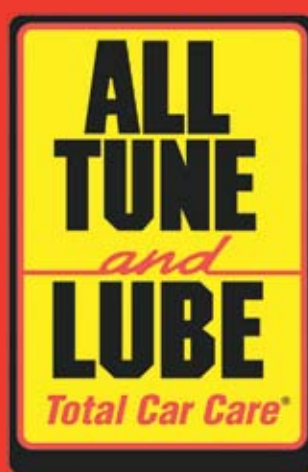
Each district also elected two delegates to serve on the Board of Governors. They included from District 1, Harold Middlebrook and Nancy Mott; District 2, Michael Davis and Laura Kildare; District 3, Liz Key and Cody Biggs; District 4, Rosina Guerra and Chris Foell; District 5, Brad Duckett and Lisa Plawchan; District 6, Mike Knapp and

Kellie May; District 7, Mary Ann Page and Dan Haney; District 8, Kathryn Aycock and William Troutt; and District 9, Sylvia Woods and Robert Bratton.

District 1 of the Knox County Democratic Party will gather for its regular monthly meeting at the Burlington Branch Library tonight at 6:00 p.m. The big draw will be a presentation by Reverend Gordon

Gibson. Recently featured in a WATE segment, Gibson participated in many Civil Rights actions of the 1960s, spending seven days in jail in Dallas County, Alabama, and today sits on the MLK Commission.

He will talk about Martin Luther King's famed "Beyond Vietnam: Breaking the Silence" speech which King delivered 50 years ago on April 4, 1967.



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PHOTO BY STEVE WILLIAMS

City of Knoxville employees replace light bulbs and do other maintenance work Thursday on the lighting system at Inskip-Norwood Ball Park. The Central Youth Athletic Association recently began painting dugouts and buildings at the park red and black. At the right is the back of a dugout on one of the five baseball and softball fields and in the background is the football building and concession stand.

DeMarini/ Diamond Classic brings top teams to Knoxville

By Ken Lay

Elite high school baseball teams will compete in this week's DeMarini/Diamond Classic.

Action begins Thursday as six area schools will host tournament games. The host teams include Farragut, Bearden, Christian Academy of Knoxville, Grace Christian Academy, Catholic and Maryville.

Thursday's games at Farragut will feature the Admirals taking on Larue County (Ky.) at 5:30. Grace Christian will tangle with Larue County at 8 p.m.

On Thursday at Bearden: The Bulldogs will entertain Moore (Ky.) at 5:30 p.m. The Warriors will be at home against Bowling Green (Ky.) at 6:30.

The Rams will host Catholic at 4:30 p.m. before closing the night's action at Farragut. Maryville will entertain Christian County Thursday night at 6.

On Friday at Farragut, the Admirals will play Smyrna at 5 p.m. and Smyrna will tangle with Moore at 8 p.m.

At Bearden, the Bulldogs will play East Hamilton at 5 p.m. and East Hamilton will play Christian County at 8 p.m.

CAK will entertain Starrs Mill (Ga.) at home at 4:30. At Grace Christian, the Rams will host Bowling Green at 5 p.m. And Bowling Green will face Starrs Mill at 8 p.m.

Catholic hosts Christian County at 4:30. Maryville will entertain Warren County at 5 p.m. and action concludes in Blount County Friday with Larue playing Warren County at 7:30.

Tournament play ends Saturday with a full slate of games.

Farragut will host Bowling Green at 10 a.m. The Admirals will take on Starrs Mill at 12:30. Action concludes in Farragut when Starrs Mill takes on Moore at 3 p.m.

The Bulldogs will have a pair of home games Saturday as they play Warren County at 10 a.m. Bearden will entertain Christian County at 12:30.

At CAK, the Warriors will entertain Larue County at noon and they'll play Smyrna at 3 p.m.

Grace Christian will host East Hamilton at 10 a.m.

At Catholic, the Irish will host Moore at 11 a.m. Catholic will also entertain Warren County at 2 p.m.

At Maryville, the Rebels will tangle with Smyrna at 10:30 a.m. Maryville will play East Hamilton at 2:30 p.m.

CYAA trying to get Inskip-Norwood Park back in playing shape

By Steve Williams

Dile Brown, who coached Little League baseball at Inskip-Norwood Park for 24 years until the mid-1990s, was glad to hear steps were being taken to restore the park and bring back the kids for fun and recreation.

There's not been much going on lately at the old ball park, which is nestled between Clinton Highway and Central Avenue and just south of Merchants Drive.

"It's been at least five or six years," said Brown, estimating the inactivity at the park. "It started going downhill when they got away from Little League baseball in the early 1990s."

Jared Coker, who once played on one of Brown's teams - the Eagles - is president of the Central Youth Athletic Association, which

has begun restoration of the park.

"We got all our ducks in a row the past year before we actually went in and made this a public deal," said Coker, now 38. "We wanted to have our 501c3 (tax exempt status for non-profit organization) and a structured plan. We reengineered it like a 10-year type deal."

"We started out small and we're looking for major backers now. The city and county are helping us a lot, but there's just so much to be done, they just don't have the time or funds to do it."

"The main thing we are looking for are people who want to make a difference in our community with us. And we're going to support them too with advertisements for them, banners for them and recognize them all over social media."

Changes can now be seen at the park when passing by on Inskip Road.

"We are starting by cleaning it up and have begun to paint the whole park Red and Black," said Coker, a 1997 Central High graduate. "There will be some cool art work in weeks to come that's going to be neat to let our Central Bobcat 'Pride and Tradition' show!"

Coker said the CYAA program eventually hopes to have football, baseball and softball at the park and soccer could possibly be added in the future.

"We are thankful for the many great partnerships we have with various groups and organizations who not only use City parks, but groups who are also devoted to improving spaces for all to enjoy, now and in the future," said Aaron Browning, Deputy Director of

Knoxville Parks & Recreation Department.

"We are excited to partner with Central Youth Athletic Association as they have a great vision to improve the Inskip-Norwood ball fields as well as develop youth through recreational sports."

Football teams of the past that played out of I-N Park were the Inskip-Norwood Eagles. Now and in the future it will be the Central Bobcats. Both organizations have primarily been feeder programs for Central High School, so that hasn't changed.

Jess Hodge, a longtime coach who also headed up the I-N recreation commission for years, didn't seem to mind the name change when he heard of CYAA's involvement,

"We know what we did in our time at Inskip-Norwood, and that won't be forgotten,"

Continued on page 2



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Bulldogs snap skid against Green Wave in soccer tourney

By Ken Lay

Bearden High School's boys soccer team picked up a much-needed win Thursday night. The Bulldogs snapped a two-game losing streak in the opening round of the Bearden Invitational.

"We're still struggling to score goals," Bearden coach Ryan Radcliffe said after his defending Class AAA State Champion Bulldogs notched a 2-0 victory on a breezy evening at Bruce Allender Field.

"But at least it wasn't like we got a lot of shots and couldn't score tonight. "But we're still trying to find goals. I think this team may be able to outperform last year's team but you have to score goals. I can't say that I'm absolutely surprised by this because we lost 75 goals from three guys up top who graduated last year."

The victory against the Greenback came on the heels of a home loss to Science Hill on Monday, March 27, when the Bulldogs (2-2)

lost 1-0 despite having 14 corner kicks and outshooting the Hilltoppers 19-9.

"We played well [against Science Hill] but it was just one of those games," Radcliffe said. "But we just couldn't score and that was extremely frustrating. We had 14 corners. They had zero and we had 19 shots to their nine."

"When you have shots going in, it builds your confidence. But if the shots aren't going in, then we lose confidence. And, I guess, when you have a bunch of freshmen and sophomores, that's to be expected."

Bearden, which opened the 2017 campaign with 5-3 victory over Class AAA semifinalist Cookeville last month before losing consecutive matches to Greeneville (5-3) and Science Hill, found its shooting touch against the Green Wave Thursday night as Will Lewis and his younger brother Collin each tallied for the Bulldogs.

Will Lewis was a

key player on last season's state championship team and Radcliffe said that he provided a calming influence for Bearden's back line.

"Our defense was more confident tonight and that was great to see," Radcliffe said.

"That's why it's so important for us to have Will."

"He's a stabilizing force back there for us."

Despite a victory over a tough Gallatin squad, Radcliffe is still looking for the 2017 edition of the Bulldogs to continue to improve.

"We keep progressing and we just have to keep improving," he said. "The important thing is that you continue to improve because you're not going to have everything come together all at once."

The Bearden Invitational continued through Sunday but further results were not available at press time.

Lady Admirals off to hot diamond start

By Ken Lay

The high school season is less than a month old and Farragut is already emerging as the one of the area's top teams. The Lady Admirals are terrorizing opposing pitchers.

Farragut (10-1 overall, 3-0 in District 4-AAA) concluded a six-game homestand Wednesday at Bellamy Field with a 20-1 district victory over West High.

Against the Lady Rebels, all-state standout Lexee Lamoree, who plays catcher and third base for Farragut, had a double, triple and home run. Shortstop Kelsie Tuggle and Callie Moore doubled, Center fielder Andrea Sarhatt, another returner, doubled and tripled.

The offense has been potent early but the Lady Admirals have also gotten some solid performances from their pitchers.

Lakyn Moore tossed a no-hitter against the Lady Rebels.

Before routing the Lady Rebels Wednesday, the Lady Admirals downed rival Bearden 11-1 in another game where the 10-run mercy rule went into effect.

The Lady Admirals fell behind early when Bearden's leadoff hitter, Shakira Goodloe. Hit an inside-the-park home run.

Farragut, however, didn't stay down long.

The Lady Admirals, who pounded out 12 hits, got another offensive outburst from Lamoree, who went 4-for-4 with two home runs, two doubles and seven runs batted in.

Sarhatt and Tugglet also had a pair of hits each in the game.

Pitcher Callie Moore surrendered a run and five hits while striking out six.

Farragut opened the week with an 11-1 non-league victory over South Doyle, on Monday, March 27, and coach David Moore said he was pleased with the way his squad responded after

when three tough games over the previous weekend against defending Class AAA State Champion Dickson County, Waverly and Gibbs.

The Lady Admirals notched comeback wins over the Lady Tigers (8-7) and the Lady Eagles (4-3).

Farragut beat the Lady Tigers on the strength of a walk-off single by leadoff hitter Tori West.

"I told the kids that the hardest thing to do is come back on a Monday after a tournament where you play three tough games and I feel like our kids did a good job."

"Lakyn pitched pretty well and today it was Kelsie that got things started with a sacrifice fly."

Tuggle did drive in Farragut's first run with a deep fly ball to right field.

The Lady Admirals went on to score two more runs in the frame on Bailey Young's two-run triple.

Farragut added single runs in the second and third thanks to an RBI double by Sarhatt and a solo home run by Tuggle.

Tuggle, the Lady Admirals senior shortstop, hit a two-run blast in the fifth. Young had another scoring triple in the frame and Bailey Myers tacked on an RBI single.

The Lady Admirals ended the game early with two runs in the sixth as Lamoree had a scoring single and Young knocked in the game's final run with a double.

Coach Moore said this Farragut team has a chance to accomplish great things.

"Kelsie swung the bat well," he said. "This team can really be special because in every game, somebody different is stepping us for us."

"We just have to find a way to keep this momentum going. We have to find a way to keep this mojo going."

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PHOTO BY STEVE WILLIAMS

Jared Coker, CYAA president, plans to have an indoor training room on one end of the football facility at Inskip-Norwood Park.

CYAA trying to get Inskip-Norwood Park back in playing shape

Cont. from page 1

said Hodge.

In its heyday, Inskip-Norwood Park had 12 Little League teams, said Brown, and once hosted the Little League state tournament, with the I-N all-stars taking second place.

Coker said some of the coaches in the Bobcats' program played at Inskip-Norwood growing up.

"Our hope is to get the park back to having kids playing in it," said Coker. "But we still want everyone who has ever played here or been a part of the park when it was home of the Inskip Eagles to know that there are (CYAA) coaches that played at Inskip in their youth - one being me personally, and we plan on having a wall decorated with some of the old team pictures from those days."

In fact, Coker said pictures of former Inskip-Norwood teams were found inside the football building at the park when CYAA came in.

Coker has plans to turn the football building on the north end of the park into an indoor training facility for the CYAA program and other kids in the community. He said it would also house a board room and media room for watching game film and coaches' training.

One of the issues to getting the park useable is fixing the water drainage,

with some of the fields taking three to four days to dry, said Coker.

"We have an engineer working on what we can do to help that," he added.

Coker said it's going to take time to get the park back in shape.

"It's not rundown to have to bulldoze it," he said. "It just needs a lot of TLC."

In addition to financial donations, Coker said businesses can help, particularly those that could donate waste management dumpsters, heavy machinery, dump trucks, building materials, scoreboards, lights, fencing or security monitoring devices.

CYAA teams will continue to practice at the old Central High football field next to Gresham Middle School, said Coker. The Bobcats have been using the Inskip-Norwood facility for about five years, with some of its teams practicing there when additional field space has been needed in the pre-season.

As for baseball and softball this season at I-N Park, some "travel teams" are renting field practice time through CYAA, said Coker.

For more information about helping restore Inskip-Norwood Park or to contact the CYAA organization, call Coker at 865-566-5144.

Giving back to Carter kids is ‘close to my heart,’ says Witt

By Steve Williams

Derek Witt is glad to be home and giving back.

“I’m just honored to be back,” said the 1994 Carter High School graduate and the Hornets’ new head football coach last week. “I’ve been giving to other communities for years. The opportunity to come back here and give back to the kids of Carter is very close to my heart.”

Witt was selected to take over the head post after Jeff McMillan retired following last season.

Witt was an assistant on McMillan’s staff the past two seasons, helping coach offensive linemen in 2015 and serving as linebackers coach last fall.

While teaching at Jefferson County High, Witt also was the Hornets’ offensive coordinator in 2013 – Heath Woods’ last season as head coach at Carter. Witt got a teaching position at Carter in 2015.

He has reached a couple of milestones in football, one as a player at Carter and one as a former head coach at Karns.

An All-Stater as a senior offensive and defensive tackle in 1993, Witt helped lead the Hornets to the second round of the playoffs, the first time a Carter team had made it that far in school history.

Bobby Kimball was the head coach that season. The Hornets, a Class 4A team out of the five classifications at that time, defeated Elizabethton in the first round before falling to Cleveland in the second round.

Witt also played under head coach Terry Carter earlier in his prep career.

Derek went on to graduate from East Tennessee State University, majoring in education.

His coaching milestone occurred as Karns’ head coach



PHOTO BY STEVE WILLIAMS

Derek Witt is Carter High’s new head football coach and preliminary work on a new artificial field for the school can be seen behind him last week.

in 2011 when he guided the Beavers to a 6-4 record – the school’s first winning season in 37 years. The historic sixth win was recorded against Anderson County. Karns lost a high-scoring game at Science Hill in the playoffs.

Witt was Karns’ head coach for three seasons (2010 through 2012) before taking a new teaching position at Jefferson County. “Coaching was still pretty deep rooted in my blood,” recalled Witt.

What kind of program will Carter fans be seeing under Witt?

“We’re going to be very hard-nosed,” he answered. “We’re going to get back to a hard-hitting team, that when you walk off

the field you’ll know that you’ve played us, win or lose. You’ll know you’ve been on the field with Carter High School.

“We’re going to be high energy and fast moving offensively and defensively.”

The 40-year-old Witt, who is the school’s technology engineering teacher, also has “a love for track and field.”

Derek threw the shot and discus and ran on some relay teams himself in high school. He was head track coach at Karns and is Carter’s head coach in girls track, although he works mainly with the girls’ and boys’ jump and hurdle events and some with the sprinters.

“I push the track program really

hard and try to get as many of the football players involved as possible,” he said.

Participation in the girls’ and boys’ track programs has increased significantly since last year.

While there were only two female track athletes last season, there are eight this spring, Witt said.

“Thirty of our skill players in football are running track, doubling the number we had last year,” he added.

Carter, which is one of the Knox County schools getting a new artificial turf for the 2017 season, will start spring practice May 3 and finish up with a scrimmage game at Gatlinburg-Pittman on

Bradley named new GCA coach

Rusty Bradley will be returning to the high school football coaching scene in Knoxville this fall.

But he won’t be on the sidelines at Christian Academy of Knoxville.

Bradley was named the new coach at Grace Christian Academy last week. He’ll be guiding the Rams in their first season of Division II-A football.

Bradley, who led CAK to two Class 3A state titles in nine seasons, coached last year at University School of Jackson.

Grace Christian becomes the third Knox County school to name a new football coach since the end of the 2016 campaign. Earlier, Derek Witt was promoted to head coach at Carter and West selected Lamar Brown, longtime Morristown West coach.

The Knoxville Focus will have feature stories on Hunt and Bradley in upcoming issues.

May 19.

“The field is scheduled to be completed in mid-June,” said Witt. “It’s going to be centered more on the press box and we’re going to have a little more room on the sidelines. That’ll make it a little easier for the ‘Git back’ coaches. It’s definitely going to look different around here.”

Witt and his wife, Carrie, who also works for Knox County schools as Manager of Business Partnerships, have four boys – Henry (9 years old), Hiram (7), Hagan (3) and Hines (7 months).

IRISH SPRING



PHOTO BY KELLY KEARSE

Dust flies as the softball smacks the mitt of Catholic catcher Tori Topton in an early season high school softball game. The Lady Irish defeated Greenback 5-4 on this cool spring day.

It’s no April Fools’ joke – Currie is on the job as UT’s new AD

When a report first came out that John Currie was going to be the University of Tennessee’s new athletic director, it was hard to believe.

Huh ... John Currie? Who’s he?

For weeks it looked like David Blackburn was going to be the choice. Then surprising reports came out that Blackburn was out of the picture and Phillip Fulmer was a strong candidate.

Still no mention of Currie.

When new UT chancellor Dr. Beverly Davenport arrived in Knoxville, we began to hear other possible candidates being mentioned other than “Tennessee guys” Blackburn and Fulmer. Currie wasn’t in that group, either.

Soon afterward, it was in the news that North Carolina AD Bubba Cunningham was Davenport’s choice.

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By Steve Williams

He quickly replied he was not interested.

Fans wanting Blackburn were relieved. Maybe there was still hope for the 70 percent of the Vol fan base that was

pulling for the former long-time UT athletic administrator and Loudon native to get the job.

But Blackburn didn’t meet Beverly’s requirements. He was only a successful athletic director at UT-Chattanooga. She had to have an AD with experience at a Power 5 institution.

There have been multiple reports that Fulmer had been told on Monday, Feb. 27, that he was going to get the job. But the next day, Davenport flew to Manhattan, Kan., met with Currie and offered him the post.

The whirlwind developments ended with Currie in Knoxville two days later to be announced as UT’s new athletic director.

Davenport didn’t get her first choice. Instead of the North Carolina athletic director, she got a North Carolina native.

Currie had worked at Tennessee before as former AD Mike Hamilton’s “lieutenant.” There have been reports that he was instrumental in helping push Hall of Fame coach Fulmer out the door in 2008.

It’s believed Peyton Manning was the person who had to call Fulmer, his former coach, and tell him he wasn’t going to be UT’s next AD after all.

A follow-up poll showed 50 percent of the UT fan base was going to take a “wait and see” approach with Currie. I suppose that means 20 percent of Tennessee fans are totally against having Currie as athletic director and 30 percent are somewhat supporting him.

Currie, who had been athletic director at Kansas State, is the ninth athletic director in UT history. He succeeds Dave Hart, who replaced Hamilton in 2011.

Bob Woodruff served the longest as athletic director in Big Orange Country, from 1963 to 1985, and General Neyland held the post twice (1936-41) and (1946-1962).

Tennessee’s other ADs have been Paul Barrows Parker (1931-1936), John Barnhill (1941-1945), Bowden Wyatt (1962-1963), Doug Dickey (1985-2003) and Hamilton (2003-2011).

Appropriately, Currie’s first official day at UT was Saturday, April 1. But it was no April Fools’ joke, even though about a month ago when we first heard he was getting the job, it sure felt like somebody was pulling our leg.

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Ken Sparks was one of a kind

By Alex Norman

East Tennessee lost one of its greatest ambassadors on Wednesday, March 29th when Carson-Newman football coach Ken Sparks passed away at the age of 73, following a five year battle with prostate cancer.

"It is a sad day at Mossy Creek," said Carson-Newman University President J. Randall O'Brien. "Coach Sparks leaves a legacy that has influenced, and will continue to impact, the lives of Carson-Newman student-athletes for years to come. Ken's devotion to seeing that his players develop on the field was secondary to seeing them develop as Christian young men off the field. He inspired us in the way he so bravely fought his battle with

cancer – with courage and full of faith. Our hearts are saddened, but we know that Ken is with his loving Heavenly Father. Our prayers are with his dear wife Carol and his family."

It was a coaching career that brought him to Gibbs, Morristown East and Farragut high schools, as well as Tennessee Tech, but it was the 37 years building the Carson-Newman Eagles program that Sparks is best known. His teams won 338 games, the 5th most in the history of college football. The only coaches with more victories are John Gagliardi, Joe Paterno, Eddie Robinson and Bobby Bowden.

The Eagles won 5 NAIA titles in the 1980s under Sparks's direction. The program moved up to Division II in 1990

and Carson-Newman became a regular postseason participant, finishing second in the nation on three occasions.

In 37 years, the Eagles played in the postseason 25 times, or a remarkable 68% of the time.

"I'm very sad to hear of the passing of Coach Ken Sparks," said Tennessee head coach Butch Jones in a statement released by the University of Tennessee's Sports Information Department. "Coach Sparks was a close friend to myself and our football program. I had followed Ken's coaching career from afar and our friendship really began when he was one of the first people to call me when I was hired at UT. That phone call and our talks over the years mean the world to

me. He was such a pillar in this community and was always willing to help.... I think anyone who had the opportunity to be around Ken Sparks would tell you what a special human being he was. His legacy extends way beyond the game of football. He touched so many lives off the field. The players he coached, he coached them to not only win football games, but to be successful in life. I spent some time with Ken a few weeks ago at his home and will always cherish that conversation... We lost a legend today and our thoughts and prayers go out to Carol and his family. He will be missed but always admired."

"I can't express how incredibly thankful I am that I had the chance to

really get to know and befriend Ken Sparks. The time we spent together was a blessing, and I always came away in awe of a man who was truly living for the Kingdom of the Lord," said Tennessee basketball coach Rick Barnes in a statement released by the University of Tennessee's Sports Information Department. "It's sad to realize that, at least in this life, I don't have any more opportunities to visit with and learn from him. But when I think about all the lives he impacted... and I think about the celebration taking place today in Heaven, it eases that sadness and evokes a sense of happiness that I was ever blessed to cross paths with such a great man. My sincere prayers

go out to his wife, Carol, his family and everyone whose lives he touched."

Back in November Sparks announced that he was retiring from coaching.

"It's not easy... but that's special," said Sparks at a news conference. "And I'm grateful that the Lord gave me that opportunity."

As good a coach as Ken Sparks was, he was a better man. He was always polite to fans and accommodating to the media.

Ken Sparks will be greatly missed by the people of Jefferson City, but he will not be forgotten.

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The Doctor is in
 a weekly column by
Dr. Jim Ferguson

The Street Key

The life force seems to beat stronger in some folks than in others. As a doctor I've observed this, but as a scientist I don't understand the phenomena. We've all heard stories of aged couples where the surviving spouse strangely dies shortly after the other. It's almost like the will to live is lost when some fundamental part has departed.

In some ways the cells of your body function similarly. If a crucial organelle is lost or cellular DNA is damaged, death results. Interestingly, if cellular damage occurs through toxins, trauma or radiation, inflammation results. Outwardly, we see this inflammatory process as, for instance, a red, hot, swollen and painful ankle joint. At the cellular level, inflammatory chemicals are released

by injured tissue to hopefully begin the healing process and avoid cellular or even organismal death. Inflammation can be readily observed under the microscope by a pathologist. A second type of cellular change known as apoptosis also results in cellular death, but without any observable inflammation. It's as if the cells are programmed to die. The mechanism of apoptosis is thought to reside in DNA.

A friend of mine says, "You're either getting older or you're dead." Our bodies do change as we age, and though I'm not as strong as I once was, I have compensated with greater wisdom. We can resist some aspects of the aging process by exercise, diet and, perhaps, medications, which lesson vascular injury from high blood

pressure, for instance. However, I can't decide to live to one hundred and fifty years old. In fact, humans are "programmed" to live about one hundred and ten years under optimum conditions. This is a genetic reality. Perhaps the gene or genes that determine longevity can be reprogrammed, but at this point humans don't have the technology or maturity to manipulate our DNA.

For the present, we can choose to live well. A previous essay called A Well Being explored this notion. Components of living well are our definition of wellness and the physical realities of illness or aging. Some might also add that aging is a state of mind. However, I am convinced that a key aspect of successful living is a spiritual perspective. Though I am a Christian, this notion of spirituality is transcultural and timeless.

I recognize my bias regarding wellness when I compare my life to others. A friend of mine once told me that God sees each of us as we might view pedestrians from the 102nd floor of the Empire State Building. The pedestrians measure each other, whereas God sees us equally in his bird's eye view, and loves

us all.

I avoid using people's names in my columns. The exceptions are my wife, Becky, who is my editor, and my grandkids, after permission from their mothers. I am going to break that precedent for this column because it is a surprise for my mother-in-law, Joanna Venable. She's a big fan of my essays, and on April 8th, 2017, she turns one hundred years old. And despite her age-related aches and pains, her mind and the life force remain vibrant.

Joanna, epitomizes a life well lived. She was born in 1917 with America at war in Europe. Her family was, by most standards, poor, but they lived with a bedrock of faith. I admire an inquisitive mind which Joanna still has after one hundred years. Despite being born in a time which did not allow women modern advantages, Joanna went to Tusculum College. She recently commented to one of her daughters that she wishes she could tour factories and investigate their manufacturing processes. And her birthday wish? A gift for the woman who has it all was a street key, a tool she wanted to turn off water at the street if a pipe leaks!

A life is composed of a series of events and relationships. We all have memories of the past which together affords us a foundation for perhaps the most important time, the present day. The Psalmist sang of the primacy of "the day the Lord hath made," in Psalm 118:24, which has become my mantra. And since we Westerners think in linear time, we also look forward, into the future, hopefully with hope. (Ancient Eastern and Central American cultures viewed time as circular rather than linear.)

You may find it strange, but I'm reading a book on Western Civilization. I took Western Civilization in college, but my formal education was largely science related. My informal education, grounded in the humanities, is ongoing. We know of Socrates from his student Plato. Plato's student, Aristotle, taught Alexander the Great. We call university professors academics, a name derived from Plato's Academy in Athens. Alexander was not a bookish academic because he went on to conquer the known world. One last tidbit, the concept of universities comes down to us from Aristotle's school the Lyceum, the

first "university."

The Apostle Paul was no shoddy philosopher (lover of wisdom). His 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians is thought provoking and the prose is sublime. I'm fascinated by his concluding sentences describing man as "seeing dimly as in a mirror" - and they had pretty crummy mirrors 2000 years ago. He also says, "we know in part." Little did I realize that Brother Paul was echoing Plato who considered our thoughts a reflection of the Divine's. If you doubt me, Google Raphael's great painting The School of Athens which depicts Plato pointing upwards to Heaven's transcendent reality.

And man's quest to understand his origin, satisfy his curiosity and find purpose continues in this pseudo philosopher, the centenarian Joanna and my Mother who is also seeking wisdom by learning to use an iPhone and expand her window on the world.

I suspect God is an inquisitive being. After all he made man, and who knows what his creation will do next?

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

KCHD Diabetes Management Series starts April 11

Classes are free and open to the public

The Knox County Health Department's (KCHD) next Diabetes Management Series takes place Tuesdays, April 11, 18 and 25, from 6 to 7 p.m. in the KCHD auditorium, 140 Dameron Ave. KCHD offers the free, three-part series quarterly to help those affected by the disease.

"Successfully managing diabetes requires knowledge and ongoing vigilance, which at times can seem overwhelming," said

Shanthy Appelo, KCHD nutritionist and registered dietitian. "However, successfully managing the disease is possible with the right tools, such as learning how to recognize what leads to changes in your blood sugar levels and how to manage those levels."

The series provides information on how to manage diabetes through diet, exercise and medications. Individuals diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes or pre-diabetes along with their family members are encouraged to attend. Parking is free. Those interested in attending

should call 865-215-5170 or visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DiabetesSeriesApril2017> to register.

Having diabetes is a risk factor for developing serious health complications including heart disease, blindness, kidney failure and lower-extremity amputations. In 2014, it was estimated that 10.5 percent of Knox County adults (18+ years) have been diagnosed with the disease. Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the U.S. and the eighth leading cause of death in Knox County. According to

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, if current trends continue, as many as 1 out of 3 U.S. adults could have diabetes by 2050.

Due to the prevalence of the disease, KCHD also administers several prevention programs aimed at reducing diabetes rates, including the Nutrition Education Activity Training (N.E.A.T.) after-school program, the walking school bus program, work-site wellness initiatives, breastfeeding promotion and advocacy, community engagement programs, and others.

Annual Fountain City Easter Egg Hunt

The Annual Fountain City Easter Egg Hunt is a yearly tradition bringing together kids of all ages and their parents to enjoy a fun day of vendors, games, a variety of activities, and, of course, Easter egg hunting! There will also be a visit from the Easter Bunny!

When: Saturday, April 8, 2017 from 9 a.m. to noon.

Where: Fountain City Park.

Hunts: Ages 6 to 8 - 9:30 a.m.

Ages 3 to 5 - 10:15 a.m.

Ages Walking to 2 - 11 a.m.

Ages 9 to 12 - 11:45 a.m.

*Note: Parents are NOT allowed to help kids hunt, so no parents will be allowed in egg hunt area. Small kids must be walking on their own! Please bring your own Easter basket. Some of the prizes will include stuffed animals, games, Easter baskets, toys, and bikes.



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1 Knoxville in bloom

2017 Dogwood Edition | The Knoxville Focus

Dogwood Events this week

'The Art of Recycling' sculpture exhibition on display April 6-19

Sculptures created by 11 University of Tennessee art students that incorporate materials provided by steel recycler Gerda will be on public display April 6-19 at the Knoxville Convention Center.

"The Art of Recycling" sculpture exhibition celebrates April's National Recycling Month and is a partnership among Gerda, Dogwood Arts and the University of Tennessee Sculpture Program. The artworks will be unveiled in a public ceremony Thursday, April 6, at 10 a.m.

In January, Gerda's Knoxville steel mill opened its scrap yard to the students, along with UT associate professor Jason Brown, visiting lecturer Jessica Ann and 3D area technician Erin Tucker. The students selected 4,860 pounds of discarded metal and

steel, provided free of charge by Gerda, and gained inspiration for new works of art.

"Most people don't realize how 'green' our business really is," said Johnny Miller, vice president and general manager of Gerda's steel mill in Knoxville. "This project provides an excellent opportunity to support these students and the arts, celebrate National Recycling Month and educate the public about our business."

Students at the dig were enthusiastic about the project and grateful for the opportunity.

"To create something of beauty and purpose from what many would consider to be ugly waste is an exciting prospect," art

Continued on page 6



University of Tennessee Sculpture Program student Hannah Shimabukuro begins the process of turning scrap metal into art. Her sculpture will be one of 13 on display during the Art of Recycling sculpture exhibition. The exhibition is a partnership among steel recycler Gerda, Dogwood Arts and the UT Sculpture Program.

Rhythm N' Blooms Music Festival

April 7-9, 2017: Set exclusively in Knoxville's historic Old City neighborhood, Rhythm N' Blooms Music Festival showcases the hottest chart-toppers alongside up-and-comers ranging from indie rock to iconic Americana acts to soul and hip-hop.

For the live music lineup and information on how to buy passes, please visit www.rhythmnbloomsfest.com.



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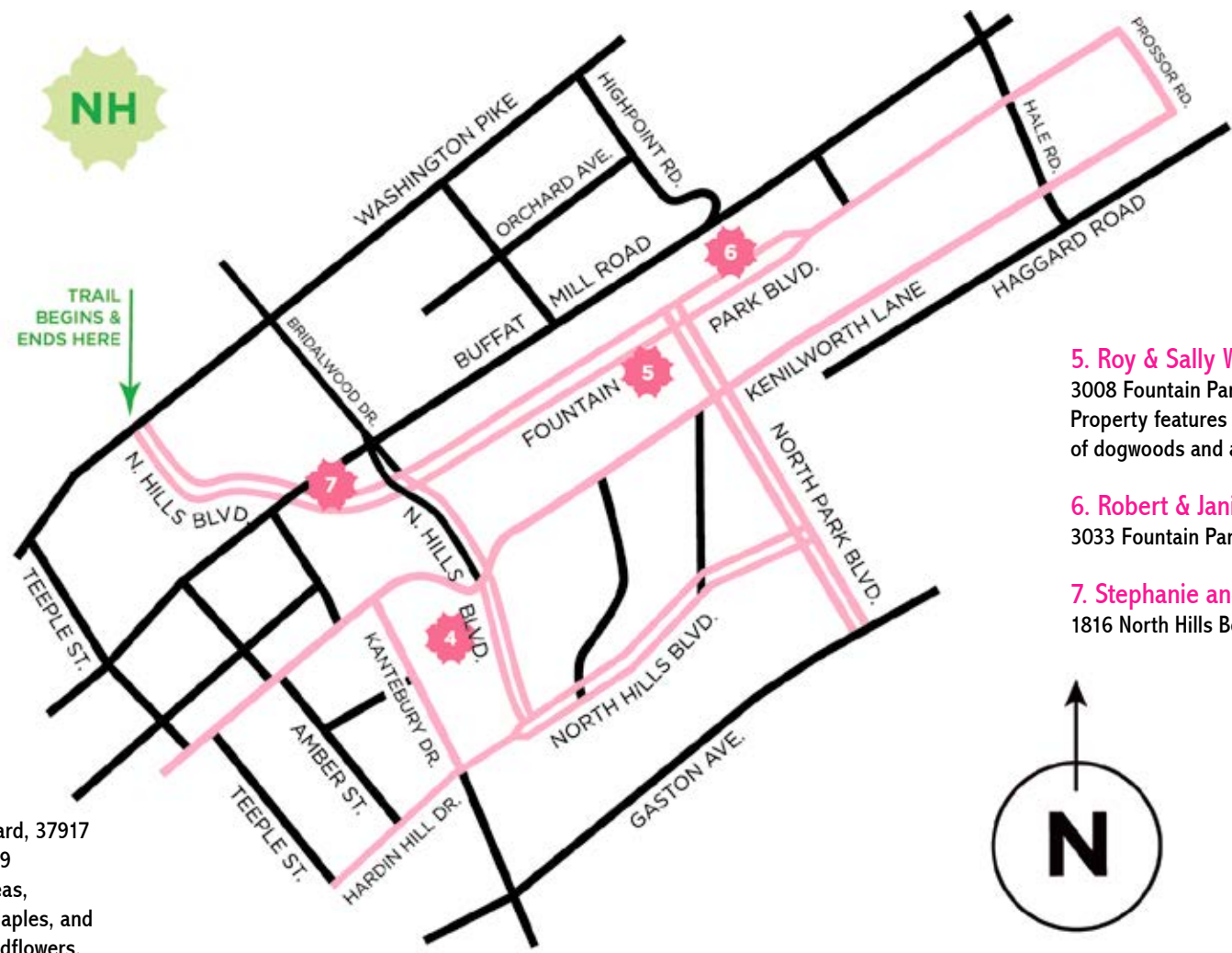


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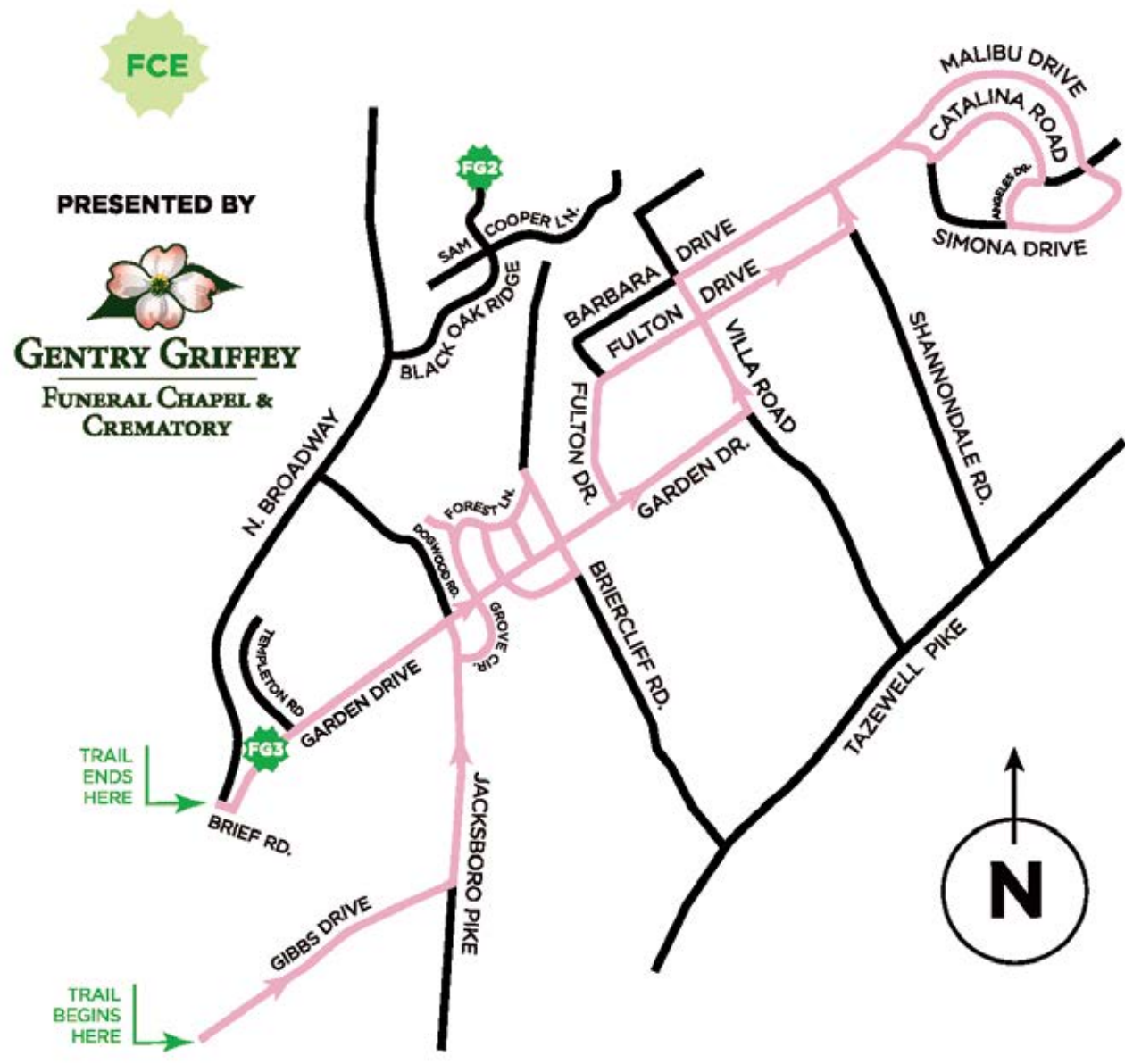
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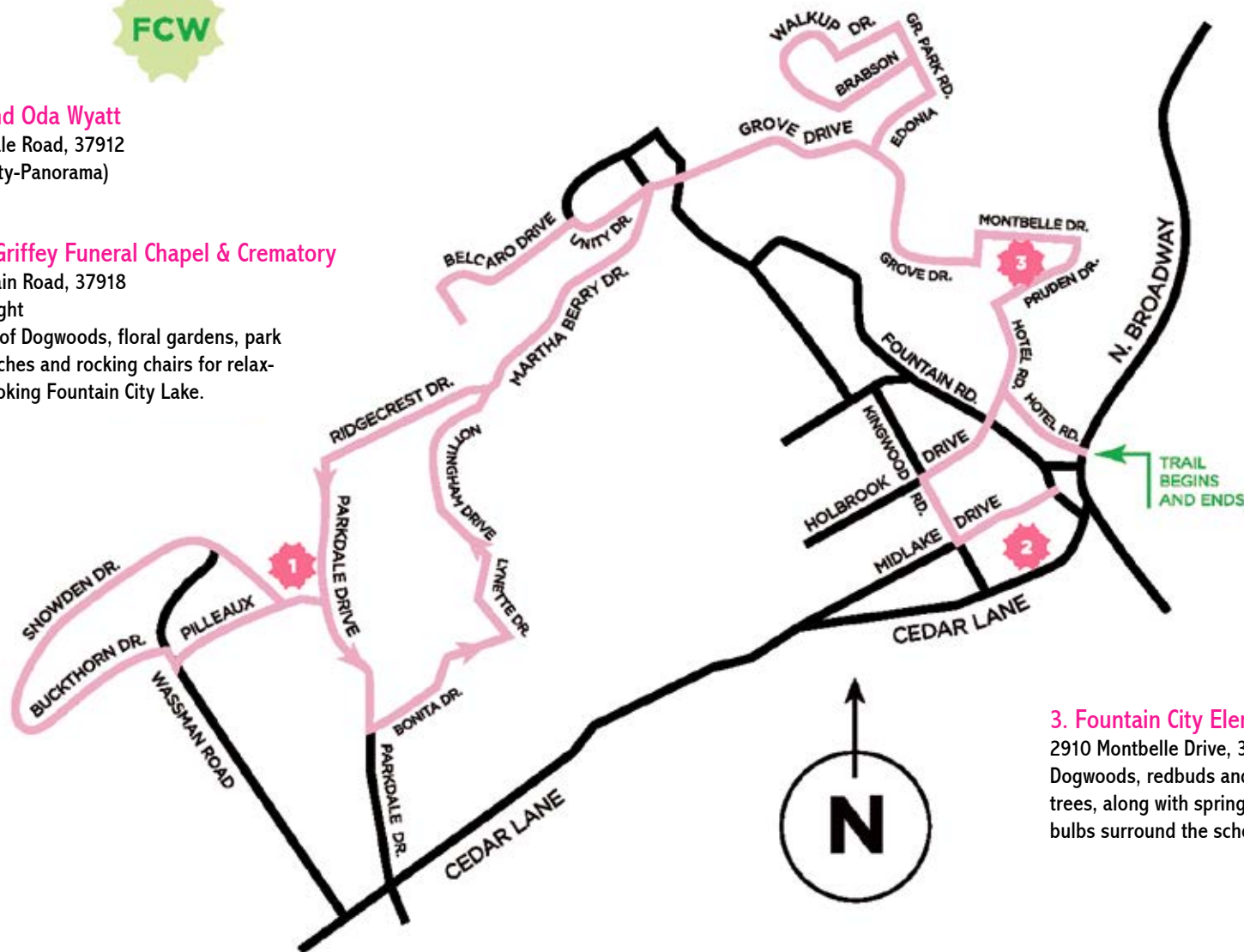


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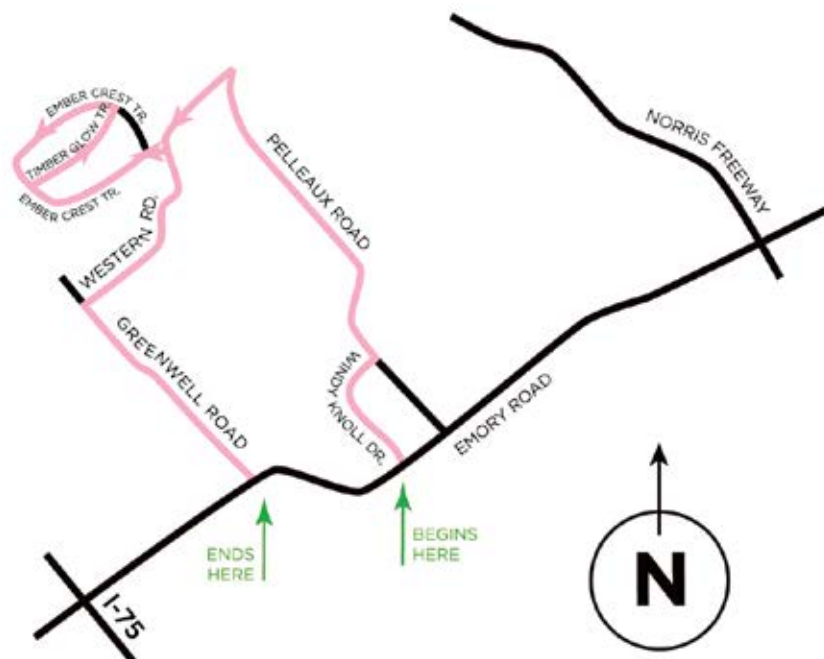
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'The Art of Recycling'

Cont. from page 2

student Thomas Colabella said.

This marks the third year the partnership has culminated in a public art exhibition, and the Knoxville Convention Center remains an enthusiastic supporter of the project.

"The Knoxville Convention Center is proud to host this exhibition, which

not only showcases stunning works of art but also reminds us of the importance of environmental responsibility," said Mary Bogert, general manager of the Knoxville Convention Center, which was the first convention center in Tennessee to achieve Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) certification. "We have a

strong interest in green practices. We also appreciate the fact that this exhibition complements our \$1 million permanent art collection."

Participating UT students include Colabella, Reid Arrowood, Mary Badillo, Zachary Edwards, Mary Hallman, Holly Kelly, Otis Kennedy, Elena Lee, Cara McKinley,

Hannah Shimabukuro, and Drew Shorter.

Around the world, Gerdau transforms millions of metric tons of scrap into steel every year. The company's Knoxville mill recycles discarded steel into reinforcing bar, which is used to support concrete in new bridges, buildings and other structures.



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Public invited to learn about 'retrofitting suburbia' to create healthier, vibrant places

The public is invited to attend one of two free presentations by Ellen Dunham-Jones, a leading authority on sustainable suburban redevelopment. Her presentation "Retrofitting Suburbia for 21st Century Challenges" explores how the design of where we live affects public health, economic vitality and sustainability; and will take place on two evenings in April:

- Tuesday, April 4 at 6 p.m., doors open at 5:30 p.m., at the Farragut Town Hall Community Room, 11408 Municipal Center Drive, and

- Wednesday, April 5 at 6 p.m., doors open at 5:30 p.m., at the University of Tennessee Art and Architecture

Auditorium, 1715 Volunteer Boulevard. Parking is available after 5 p.m. in staff lot 23.

"Ellen presents insightful, applicable examples on how our suburbs can be transformed into places that help people be more physically active while supporting economic vitality," said Knox County Health Department (KCHD) Director Dr. Martha Buchanan. "Her visit is an excellent opportunity for developers, elected officials and residents to learn about what communities around the country are doing to create healthy, engaging places while activating the most powerful assets in

their neighborhoods."

The event is free, but the public is asked to register by calling 865-215-5170 or by visiting <http://tinyurl.com/WSSPublicRetrofittingSuburbia>.

An award-winning architect, Dunham-Jones is a professor of architecture at the Georgia Institute of Technology where she coordinates the Master of Science program in Urban Design. She has served in several national leadership roles including Board Chair of the Congress for the New Urbanism, AIA Design and Health Leadership Group, and the Hanley Wood Sustainability Council. She is the co-author of "Retrofitting

Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs." She received her undergraduate and graduate degrees in architecture from Princeton University. Her research intersects trends in contemporary theory, health and real estate development, and has been featured in the New York Times as well as on TED, PBS and NPR.

Dunham-Jones' presentation is part of a speaker series coordinated by KCHD, Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization, Knoxville Area Association of Realtors and East Tennessee Quality Growth, and is funded by the Tennessee Department of Health.

The series focuses on how the built environment impacts population health and economic vitality.

Built environment factors that contribute to poor health was an area of concern in KCHD's 2014-2015 Community Health Assessment. It's well documented that the built environment influences public health, especially in

relation to chronic disease – the burden of which can be reduced through an active lifestyle and proper nutrition. However, many urban and suburban environments are not well designed to facilitate healthy behaviors or create the conditions for good health.

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The UT Gardens, Knoxville, is holding its biggest sale of the year on Saturday, April 8, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. This year the focus will be on "Pollinator Power."

Butterflies, bees, and birds as well as bats and other small mammals are all responsible for pollinating about 80 percent of all flowering plants on Earth. That means that one out of every three bites of food you eat is dependent on pollination. Many of these organisms are in decline due in great part to a loss of feeding and nesting habitats. Adding pollinator plants to your garden is one of the best ways you can help them out. This year's Spring Plant Sale at the UT Gardens will feature plant varieties beneficial to pollinators. Plants will be clearly marked and trained staff and volunteers will be available to answer questions.

The sale will also include a wide array of herbs, edibles, ornamental perennials, annuals, trees and shrubs as well as hard-to-find choice selections like 'Carolina

Sweetheart' redbud, hardy Bulgarian Windmill Palm, and 'Chocolate Fountain' mimosa with its striking, dark purple foliage and sterile blooms.

Limited quantities of the brand new, creamy gold-tipped 'Kosmic Kale' will be available. Bred in Boskoop, Netherlands, this semi-hardy vegetable is beautiful enough to add to the flower garden while producing delicious and nutritious greens for your culinary pleasure.

A preview sale will be held on Friday, April 9, from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m. for all University of Tennessee employees, Gardens volunteers, and UT Gardens members. Memberships can be purchased on Friday with an immediate discount on plants.

For directions to the Gardens' location on the campus of the UT Institute of Agriculture on Neyland Drive, or for a listing of the huge selection of plants on sale, visit the UT Gardens website: ag.tennessee.edu/utg.

Tree Planting Celebration at Marble Springs State Historic Site

In recognition of Arbor Day, Marble Springs will host a Tree Planting Celebration on April 8 starting at 10:00 a.m.

Participants will first learn how to properly plant and label saplings to meet arboretum qualifications as set by the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council. Afterwards, participants can help plant the 60th tree in recognition of Marble Springs reaching a level 2 Arboretum. Lunch will be provided for those helping plant our celebratory tree and take place at about noon.

Guest speaker, Tom Simpson, the Region Urban Forester with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, will provide a lecture on The Importance of Urban Forestry at about 1:00 p.m.

The Marble Springs Arboretum will be open for self-guided tours throughout the event with a guided tour scheduled at about 2 p.m. Children can also participate in Earth Day themed

crafts throughout the event.

Please confirm your attendance at info@marblesprings.net or by calling (865) 573-5508. Organizers will need a name, contact number, and email. If there are any dietary restrictions, please provide them when confirming your attendance.

This event is free. Donations are appreciated with all proceeds going towards grounds maintenance and educational programming at Marble Springs. For more information please visit the website at www.marblesprings.net, call (865) 573-5508, or email info@marblesprings.net.

This event will take place at the Marble Springs State Historic Site:

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