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CONTINUING A TRADITION



PHOTO BY PETE GAWDA

Lynn "Hawkeye" Bates is the pitcher for the Knoxville Holstons.

Vintage Knoxville teams carry on 'base ball' legacy

By Pete Gawda

People in Knoxville have the privilege of seeing how the national pastime of base ball (original spelling) was played back in the 1860s when it was much more of a gentleman's game.

The field behind the Historic Ramsey House serves as the home field for the Knoxville Holstons and the Emmett Machinists. These two teams and ten others in eastern and central Tennessee make up the Tennessee Association of Vintage Base Ball and they play according to 1864 rules.

The modern day Holstons and Machinists are reincarnations of teams of the 1860s. The first mention of the Holstons was on May 1, 1867 when the team was represented at the organizational meeting of the State Convention of Baseball Players. The modern day Holstons wear uniforms patterned after the original team's uniforms.

The Machinists were first

mentioned a short while later when the July 6, 1867 edition of the Knoxville Daily Free Press reported on that year's July 4th game between the two teams. The article stated: "The Emmett Club has been organized but a short time and is composed of machinists and operatives in the railroad shop. As to the game the newspaper stated, "It was closed at the fifth inning when the score stood Holston 65, Emmett 12."

Scoring in those early games was much higher than in modern baseball as evidenced by the above high score and the scores in the state championship series that year. The Holstons won the 1867 state championship by defeating the Mountain City Club of Chattanooga in a best of three series. In the first game of the series it was Mountain City 79 and the Holstons 50. The Holstons were victorious in the second game by a score of 52 to 31. Newspaper accounts did not give the score of the third game in which the Holstons were victorious.

Vintage base ball teams play with uniforms and equipment of the 1860s. As evidence, it is a gentleman's game where the pitcher delivers the ball underhanded in such a manner that the batter or "striker" can hit it. Also, the calls made by the umpire or "arbitrator" are often more of a consensus than a judgment call with the arbitrator sometimes asking the opinion of the opposing teams and spectators before rendering a decision.

The game is played without gloves and the catcher wears no protective equipment. Players have colorful nicknames such as Sleeter, Stove Pipe, and Molasses. A fly ball caught on the first bounce is an out. There are no called strikes or balls. The striker stays at the plate until either he hits the ball or swings and misses three times. A well hit ball can draw cries of "well struck" and the striker is urged to run faster by cries of "Leg it."

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Public meeting Thursday to discuss proposed Lonsdale community center

Members of the Lonsdale community and other stakeholders are invited to a City-facilitated public discussion on a proposal announced by Emerald Youth Foundation to build a multipurpose facility and sports center in Lonsdale. The proposal includes two multipurpose synthetic turf fields for soccer, flag football and other sports. It also includes a 30,000-plus-square-foot multipurpose facility featuring a learning center, a gymnasium with four basketball courts, locker rooms, concessions and a kitchen, a fitness area with a weight room, dance/aerobics room and cardio theater, an assembly room for public gatherings, and a performing arts area with practice rooms.

The proposed complex would be constructed on vacant City-owned

land along Texas Avenue between Stonewall and Sherman streets, as well as a portion of Knox County-owned property next to Sam E. Hill School adjacent to Lonsdale Homes.

Emerald Youth Foundation officials will detail their proposal, and Mayor Madeline Rogers will moderate a community discussion and question-and-answer session on Thursday, June 1 at 6:00 p.m. at Lonsdale Elementary School, 1317 Louisiana Avenue.

The school will be ADA accessible for the June 1 public meeting, but anyone needing a specific disability accommodation should contact the City's ADA Coordinator, Stephanie Cook, at scook@knoxville.tn.gov or 865-215-2034. For an English interpreter, contact the City Law Department at 865-215-2050.

Dollar General Store OK'd for Boyds Bridge Pike

By Mike Steely
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The Neighborhood Commercial zoning statute is supposed to permit only mom-and-pop type businesses within residential areas. One of these C-1 zoning areas is along Boyds Bridge Pike in East Knoxville and Dollar General Stores wants to build there.

The issue was before the Knoxville City Council Tuesday as Attorney Arthur Seymour, Jr., and Tim Dunaway of JMB Investment spoke on behalf of the project. Seymour said the site chosen is currently an abandoned filling station that houses an alternator repair shop.

The C-1 zone is designed primarily for neighborhood small businesses and Seymour argued that Dollar General fits the criteria.

"Our company has built over 40 stores," Dunaway said, adding that nearby residents were consulted and they are "excited by

its coming." He said he has met with Town Hall East and met six of their eight concerns, but Town Hall East spoke in opposition to the store.

Tim Hill of Hatcher Hill Properties also spoke in favor of permitting the Dollar General to locate there, saying he has "a financial interest" in the project but that he grew up in the area.

"This is where very rural people meet urban people," he said of the location. "This community is in dire need. The C-1 zoning is poorly written," he said.

Doug Toppenberg, president of Town Hall East, said locating the store there was "inappropriate use" of the zoning.

"East Knoxville is fragile," he said, adding "They are coming to take advantage of our neighborhood."

Rich Nelson of Dafney Drive also spoke against permitting Dollar General to locate in the zone.

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