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Gibbs Middle Project is Ahead of Schedule



Gibbs Middle School Principal Cindy White (far right, front row) and Donnie Fawver of Knox County Purchasing Department (far left, back row) hosted elected officials, Knox County Schools personnel, and community leaders on a construction progress tour of the new Gibbs Middle School this past Friday. The Gibbs Middle Project is 74% complete and within budget. The new school is scheduled to open in August for the 2018 school year.

MPC delays sidewalk requirement

By Pete Gawda

At their meeting Thursday, Dec. 14 the Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission revisited the sidewalk issue. After considerable discussion on the issue at the October MPC meeting, the commission voted 7 to 6 to require developers to put

in sidewalks. The new requirements were to go into effect Feb. 1, 2018.

At last week's meeting the MPC, upon recommendation of staff, voted to delay implementation of the new regulations for one year. Staff offered several reasons for the delay including

developing a master plan, formulating sidewalk construction standards and developing a procedures for processing waivers.

Commissioner Janice Tocher noted that it is difficult for developers when they hear at the last minute sidewalks are required. She wanted to give them advance

notice

"We have to look 20 years down the road and see where this county is going," was the opinion of MPC Chair Rebecca Longmire.

Commissioner Art Clancy stated that it was unfair for a developer to come up with

sidewalks without any connectivity to existing sidewalks. "We need a plan in place," he asserted, adding that there are a lot of details to be worked out.

Robert Whaley's request for final plat approval for a two lot subdivision on N. Broadway at
Continued on page 2

New council members face first regular meeting

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

The five new members of Knoxville City Council join that body Tuesday evening and encounter an agenda full of items such as rehiring a Nashville legislative lobbyist, grants for 22 units of affordable housing, an urban greenway project and upping the funds for a streetscape project and renovation of an old building.

The law department is asking the council to renew an agreement with Fred D. (Tony) Thompson Jr., the son of former Senator Fred Thompson, to represent the city in Nashville. The annual agreement is for \$55,000.

The Community Development Department is asking the council to award \$180,000 in an affordable housing grant to Restoration House of East Tennessee to develop 12 affordable housing units for low income single mothers at 2205 Village Place Way. A similar grant is being requested by the Helen Ross McNabb Center to develop 10 housing units for homeless veterans at 3720 Middlebrook Pike.

Council may also authorize Mayor Madeline Rogero to send a letter to the state director of transportation outlining the city's on-going ADA compliance efforts.

The Department of Engineering is asking for \$184,500 for the Urban Wilderness Greenway Project in a contract with Vaughn & Melton and for the contract with CDM Smith, Inc. for design modifications to the Old City Streetscapes Project on West Jackson Avenue from State to Central Street, to be increased by \$71,900.

Increasing the contract funds for the Sanitary Laundry Building roof repairs for removing windows and concrete panels is also on the agenda. The ongoing contract with Anderson Lumber Company would fund an additional \$49,362 bringing the total cost to just over \$613,000.

Other items on the new council's agenda include an agreement with Rogers Petroleum for fuel for city vehicles managed by Fleet Services and to lease property in the Regency Business Park at 900 East Hill Avenue for the Fire Department. The lease is for suites 140 and 439, including storage spaces.

A contract for repair of Fire Station #18 could also be approved between the city and Henley Roofing Solutions. Another contract might be increase between the city and Baseline Sports Construction for the Terman Tennis Courts Project.

The Public Service Department is asking for approval of a continuing agreement with Waste Connections for collection and disposal of residential waste and with Knoxville Landfills, LLC, for waste disposal of construction and demolition waste.

On first reading are two items: amending the city code dealing with interest and penalties on delinquent taxes and giving \$12,769 from the Save Our Sons fund to support a 10 week YMCA Project Reach program for service-oriented internships.

The new council may also approve appointments to the Audit Committee and several appointments and reappointments to city boards and KUB Board.



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY.

The new First District City Council member, Stephanie Welch, chats with Councilman-At-Large Finbarr Saunders shortly after taking the oath of office. The new Sixth District member, Gwen McKenzie, and Councilman-At-Large Marshall Stair make some notes and newly-elected Fourth District member Lauren Rider chats with City Council Attorney Rob Frost.

Saunders elected vice mayor

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

In their first votes as new members of the Knoxville City Council the five newly elected members voted unanimously with the remaining four members to select Councilman Finbarr Saunders as Vice Mayor.

The five members split on the election of a Beer Board Chairman with Gwen McKenzie, Seema Perez, Marshall Stair and Andrew

Roberto voting for Roberto. Councilman George Wallace was chosen in the 5-4 vote with the support of Mark Campen, Lauren Rider, Finbarr Saunders, George Wallace and Stephanie Welch.

The council unanimously elected McKenzie as their representative on the Knoxville Transit Authority.

A full house packed the main assembly room of the City-County Building for the oath taking and all the newly

elected members brought family members. Outgoing Vice Mayor Duane Grieve was master-of-ceremonies. Mayor Madeline Rogero spoke and praised the term-limited members of council and welcomed the new members by giving them some advice. At the end of the special session Rogero got a laugh.

"This is the shortest meeting you will have ever had," the mayor said.

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The Differences Between a Quitclaim Deed and a Warranty Deed

When two people want to transfer ownership of real property (real property is land, a house, etc.) between them in exchange for money, the document that officially memorializes the transaction is called a deed. A deed will have the description and location of the property on it as well as the name of the previous owner and the new owner. To transfer the property, one of two types of deeds must be executed. The first type of deed is the warranty deed. A warranty deed states that the person transferring the property "warrants" that the property is free and clear of all liens and impediments to clear title. If it is found later that there is a problem with the title to the property, meaning someone else has a claim to the property, then the previous owner can be held liable for not transferring clear title to the property as they stated they were able to do



By Jedidiah McKeenan
attorneyknoxville@gmail.com

pursuant to the warranty deed.

The second type of deed is the quitclaim deed. A person conveying a quitclaim is not warranting that they own free and clear title to the property. They are instead saying, "I do not know what interest I own in this property, but whatever it is, I am conveying it to you." With a quitclaim deed, there does not exist the protection for the buyer that a warranty deed has where the seller is essentially guaranteeing that they own free and clear title to the property.

Jedidiah McKeenan is an attorney practicing in Knoxville 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.

Big Brothers Big Sisters celebrate Christmas at Crowne Plaza

By Ken Lay

As the calendar shifted to December, Big Brothers Big Sisters of East Tennessee had its eighth annual Christmas Party at the Crowne Plaza ballroom as many of the mentors and children celebrated Christmas with its party on Saturday, December 2.

The event had a Polar Express theme and many of the organization's staff were dressed in pajamas. The Littles (children in the program) were also encouraged to show up in their pajamas.

The party was a joint project between Big Brothers and Big Sisters and the SAE fraternity chapter at the University of Tennessee.

The party was the culmination of a week-long celebration of several campus fraternity and sorority chapters on the UT Campus.

The events surrounding the party included a gingerbread house building contest and a gift-



PHOTO BY KEN LAY.

Brent Crabtree was recently named Big Brother of the Year at the Big Brothers Big Sisters of East Tennessee's annual Christmas party. Crabtree is featured with his Little Brother at the Crowne Plaza Ballroom.

wrapping competition in which the college students wrapped presents which were in a gift-exchange that ended the Christmas festivities at the event.

Santa Claus also made an appearance at breakfast.

Win Duncan, of the Tennessee chapter of the SAE Fraternity, said that he and all the students were honored to be involved with the event, "This is really cool,"

Duncan said. "Big Brothers and Big Sisters has a great dynamic because it really brings together the young and old.

"This is the culmination of a week of holiday activities. We get together with the sororities and we have a gingerbread house building contest, we have a gift-wrapping contest and we decorate trees. This is just a great way to spread the holiday spirit." The Christmas party

is also a celebration where the volunteers are honored.

"This is our eighth year and our program has really grown," said Big Brothers Big Sisters of East Tennessee Chief Executive Officer Doug Kose. "It's really grown in size. When we first started, we had 25 or 30 matches. Now, we have 300 people involved in the program."

"We have 150 matches and we have a waiting list."

At the Christmas party, Big Brothers Big Sisters of East Tennessee honored the Big Brother of the Year, the Match of the Year and the Big Sister of the Year.

The Match of the Year was Stephanie Smith and her Little Sister Josie. Brent Crabtree was named Big Brother of the Year. Sabrina Childs was named Big Sister of the Year.

The organization also honored Vice President Kara Finger for her 10 years of service.

MPC delays sidewalk requirement

Bill Terry, representing Habitat for Humanity addresses the Dec. 14 MPC meeting. He was responding to Lincoln Park residents claims that the design of a Habitat house would not fit into the historic community.



Cont. from page 1

the intersection of Gibbs Drive faced opposition from neighbors.

Steve Butler, representing the neighborhood association, stated that Mr. Whaley has made it known he wants to make the property commercial. He stated the neighborhood is on the National Register of Historic Places and the neighbors did not want a commercial development. He stated that property owners are not allowed to have more than one dwelling on their property and claimed Whaley's

petition was an attempt to circumvent that requirement.

Arthur Seymour, Jr. rebutted these claims stating that the issue in question was plat approval, not rezoning.

The MPC sided with Whaley allowing him to subdivide his property and construct a single driveway for both lots off N. Broadway. Currently his driveway is on Gibbs Drive.

Several residents of Lincoln Park came out to appeal the approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a Habitat for Humanity house

at 431 East Springdale. Residents claimed the design of the house did not fit into the historic neighborhood. One resident had a petition he claimed contained "dozens and dozens" of signatures opposing the Habitat house.

Bill Terry, representing Habitat said he had met with the neighbors to discuss their concerns. "We made every change they asked for," he claimed. Then the next day he said some residents appeared at a city council meeting to protest the action. He claimed there were five

or six neighbors who did not want a Habitat house in the neighborhood.

The MPC denied the appeal, thus allowing Habitat to continue with their building plans.

The remainder of the items on the agenda passed with no opposition and little or no discussion.

"It's getting close to Christmas, everybody is in agreement," stated Longmire.

The MPC reelected Longmire and Tocher to serve another year as chair and vice chair respectively.

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Publisher Steve Hunley
Editor, Art Director Marianne Dedmon
editor@knoxfocus.com, design@knoxfocus.com

Managing EditorRose King, rking@knoxfocus.com
Mike Steelysteelym@knoxfocus.com
Sales sales@knoxfocus.com
Pam Poe phpoe2000@yahoo.com
Bill Wright wrightb@knoxfocus.com
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2017 The year in review, part one

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

2017 turned out to be a very political year and saw several people announcing for Knox County Mayor and the mayor himself announcing he's running for U. S. Congress. The race for Knoxville City Council drew lots of attention with 31 candidates seeking the five term-limited seats.

January

The new year began with Fountain City leaders asking the city for better traffic control and the Parkridge Neighborhood Organization pushing for expansion of the Historic District there. The Knoxville Area Transit Authority began route changes including two new Sunday routes.

The Baker Creek Preserve added seven miles to the Urban Wilderness greenway and two Knoxville offices began to involve citizens in emergency operations.

The Knox County School System began asking citizens and officials for input in rezoning for the two new middle schools being built in Hardin Valley and Gibbs.

The city council began talking with developer Rick Dover about the future of the Old Supreme Court Building. Board of education member Jennifer Owen successfully moved to change some administration policies.

Commissioner Mike Brown was honored for his

service to the county and the Knoxville Botanical Gardens announced it was creating an indoor farmer's market.

Interim School Superintendent Buzz Thomas hosted a meeting with Hardin Valley parents interested in the new middle school there. The county's teacher evaluation system came under question by school board members. The number of candidates for city council increased with David Gillette, Lauren Rider, David Williams and Harry Tindell naming their campaign treasurers.

Self-service beer, new to Knoxville, came before the Beer Board and was passed on to the city council for an opinion and the creation of a new ordinance.

The month came to an end with the Knox County Commission questioning a contract with the company who operated The Cove boat rentals at Concord Park. The K-Town Sound Show Chorus prepared for the regional Sweet Adeline contest and there was loud objection to the Parkridge Historic District expansion during a public meeting at the O'Connor Senior Center.

February

Applicants for school superintendent began to be considered and Assistant Superintendent Bob Thomas led the list. He eventually was selected to replace James McIntyre.

The MPC began a series of meetings around the area to push the adoption of their one-year plan and Mayor Madeline Rogero announced a traffic study for Broadway through Fountain City.

The Knox County Pension Board was found to have two attorneys on its payroll. Several citizens voiced their concern about school zonings to allocate students to the proposed Hardin Valley and Gibbs Middle Schools.

The Joint Education Committee met and discussed raising teacher salaries, and hiring classroom assistants and bus drivers.

Parkridge residents began opposition to the H-1 zone and several attended the neighborhood organization meeting. The Historic Howard House on Broadway was placed up for sale. The Knox County Sheriff's Department purchased 400 body armor vests.

Governor Bill Haslam announced that \$15 million was designated for a Safety Center in Knoxville and some residents living around the site of this proposed Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center began rallying against locating it in a former church on Dewine Road.

Three teachers, Heather Palmer, Mary Sue Pruitt and Karen Latus, were chosen by the school system as "Teachers of the Year."

Lovelace Road, which ends at Melton Hill Lake, was requested to be closed to all but local

traffic because of complaints about drug use there.

March

The school board's search committee narrowed the superintendent selection down to Bob Thomas and Dale Lynch, Superintendent of Hamblen County Schools.

Former Commissioner Jack Huddleston was honored for his service and for securing funding for a traffic light in the Gibbs Community. The closing of Lovelace Road was denied because TVA owns property on the right-of-way.

The Knoxville Beer Board began talking of increasing fines for the sale of beer to minors and opponents of the proposed Safety Center appeared at a public hearing to continue their opposition.

A homeless camp in Halls was cleaned up by the Sheriff's Department and DUI-convicted volunteers. Twenty-two workshops were announced for the March Neighborhood Conference.

The Planning Commission, despite objections from some of the homeowners, gave quick approval of the proposed Safety Center and continued opposition was pledged.

The Third Creek Civil War Fort was dedicated along the greenway with Dr. Charles Faulkner speaking at the event. The county commission heard about

emergency preparedness.

Former School Superintendent Earl Huffmeister passed away and the county commission passed the "Safety Center" on first reading after being urged to do so by former Commissioner Mike Brown. The approval of the center was also being considered by city council.

The Knoxville Transit System upgraded its downtown trolley stop with decorative shelters.

April

The Knoxville City Council voted to approve the city's funding part of the Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center in an agreement with Helen Ross McNabb Center. Neighbors of the proposed center appeared and voiced their objections. The county commission followed suit but postponed a zoning request for a half-way house on Ebenezer Road.

Local Democrats met and elected younger leaders for their county party. Former Public Service Director Bob Clement spoke at the East

Tennessee Historical Society about his new book.

No less than 13 candidates announced they would seek the city council District 6 seat of former Mayor Daniel Brown. Gwen McKenzie would later emerge as the winner in the general election.

The board of education finished their careful deliberation and hired Bob Thomas on a two-year contract.

The city's proposed new Parking Ordinance was postponed in the MPC and planning director Gerald Green spoke on new zoning changes at the Neighborhood Advisory Council.

The Knox County Audit Committee asked for an audit of River Sports Outfitters operation at The Cove boat rentals.

Steve Diggs, CEO of Emerald Youth Foundation, presented plans for a youth facility in Lonsdale which he described as a \$10 million sports complex. County Mayor Tim Burchett announced plans to offer the Andrew Johnson Building for sale.

Gov. Sevier Highway Corridor stakeholders plan ahead

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

Governor John Sevier Highway runs from Alcoa Highway to Asheville Highway, serving South Knox County's growing number of residents, businesses and industrial area. It passes by historic areas, the veteran cemetery, and the commercial hub of Chapman Highway.

What will the highway look like in the future?

That's the question before the John Sevier Highway Corridor Stakeholder Committee which met for the second time

recently at Marble Springs Nuebert House. Liza Albertson, MPC's senior planner, hosted the meeting with a dozen local residents. The stakeholders represented

members of neighborhood organizations, historic sites, and interested citizens.

Commissioner Carson Dailey asked the planning commission to look into the current route and coordinate the stakeholders' efforts to see into the future and help control growth there. A third meeting is planned in January to look at the historic sites along the route and then a public meeting is being planned for February to give residents a say in plans.

Albertson told the meeting that the route has been designated a "Scenic Highway" by the state legislature. The idea originally suggested by Commissioner Dailey is to maintain the rural appearance of the highway.

Joining the meeting as new members were Art

Dyer and two representatives of the Ramsey House. Also attending were members of Marble Springs (the John Sevier home), the Bonnie Kate and South-Doyle Homeowners Association, Graham Development, and Joyce Feld of Scenic Knoxville.

Other members of the group include former Commissioner Mike Brown, Jim Buckenmyer, Samantha Burleson, Jim Gammon, Buddy Gregory, Tim Graham, D.J. Krahwinkel, Mark Mugford, Jim Sturdavan and Bob Thompson.

Albertson told the meeting that John Sevier Highway isn't scheduled to be four-laned until 2032.

The group is to consider several aspects of the highway's future: reserving the rural nature, developing design guidelines, providing a draft plan for adoption and guidelines. The planning project is expected to

last through the spring and summer of 2018.

The route is a state highway Route 168 and the stakeholders will be looking at signage, building heights, setbacks, etc. The area has been designated as a growth area.

If a historic or protected overlay is adopted as a recommendation it would be the first such designation in the county. Suggested during the recent meeting was the formation of a business and property owner's organization.

"We haven't got a lot of business contacts yet," Albertson said.

"We're in a scoping process. We're just talking about our options," she said. Brown said that he and the residents "have been working on this since before the highway was completed."

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Officials share Christmas Memories, Part Three

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

The Knoxville Focus has asked city and county officials to briefly tell us about their memories of Christmas. Over the weeks leading to the holiday these little stories will be shared with you, the reader, in hopes that you also have memories of a joyous holiday.

May this Christmas Season be wonderful for you and your family and create new memories.



Tim Burchett,
Knox County Mayor

My best Christmas memory is from 1976. I remember Christmas was very cold that December and there was lots of snow. My mother had been fighting cancer that year, including a long trip out of town for treatment. I'll always remember the feeling of having mom home for Christmas; her treatment was finished and she was cancer-free. I don't remember any of the presents I received, but I do remember there was a lot of love and we were all very happy that mom was home and healthy because God had been good to the Burchetts.



Finbarr Saunders,
Councilman, Seat C
At-Large

My father always read this story to my brother and me last thing on Christmas Eve.

This was published in 1932, the year my sister was born and I am sure he read it to her before us. In our pajamas, we were ready to "nestle snug in or beds, with visions of sugar-plums "dancing in our heads. A fire in the fireplace, the tree trimmed awaiting Santa's visit and we were off to bed almost too excited to sleep.



A warm family time.

I continued this practice with my children in the mid-70s and beyond, until my Granddaughter was born in 2006. Now it is a proud Granddad who listens as the son reads to his daughter. "Happy Christmas to all and to all a good night."



Michelle Carringer,
Commissioner, 2nd District

One Christmas that I will never forget is the year that my husband had moved our family to Sterling, Virginia, just outside of Washington, D.C. because his company had been bought by another company that was headquartered there. We had moved that summer prior to the start of school. Our daughter was starting Middle School and our son was starting Kindergarten that year.

The contrast between the fast-paced lifestyle in Northern Virginia and the lifestyle we were used to in East Tennessee was a real shock, and we were all immediately homesick for Knoxville -- so homesick in fact that even though the trip took eight hours one way by car, we found ourselves coming home at least one weekend per month. Starting in about October, as we started anticipating the Christmas season, we would always play Amy Grant's "Tender Tennessee Christmas" every time we crossed the state line from Virginia into Tennessee, with the entire family singing along at the top of our lungs. When Christmas finally arrived (which we spent -- of course -- in Knoxville), we had never appreciated being with our family and friends so much for the celebration of Christ's birth.

Needless to say, not too

long after returning to Virginia following that Christmas, we began planning our permanent return to Knoxville, which happened the following Spring. On our final trip home, upon crossing the State Line, we played "Tender Tennessee Christmas" one last time, even though it was May! Now, anytime I hear that song it takes me back to that special Christmas, when I learned that "A tender Tennessee Christmas is the ONLY Christmas for me!"



Andrew Roberto,
City Council District 2 Elect

After the sun set on a cold December evening about four years ago, my daughters and I pulled into a parking space at the Kroger off Northshore. The street was still wet from rain earlier in the day and we had arrived to relieve my law partner and his wife from their shift ringing the bell at The Salvation Army's red kettle our firm had sponsored. Soon it was just the three of us and the sound of our bells as shoppers came and went. The temperature felt like it dropped as every minute ticked by and not long after we got there Kylie and Hannah asked if they could get a hot chocolate. I gave them some money and they eagerly ran inside in hopes of finding some warmth. When the doors opened back up the girls emerged disheartened without any warm drinks as there was no hot chocolate to be found.

Growing more frustrated with our situation, the girls said "we don't want to be out here anymore, it's freezing and we're hungry!" My daughters and I huddled together and discussed why we were outside on that cold night. We would soon return to our home where there was heat and food for us to enjoy, but we were there to help raise money for families that don't have that option so that they too would have a warm place to go and food to eat. Realizing in some small way the reason we were there, Kylie and Hannah took the money I had given them for hot chocolate and added it to the donations we were collecting in the red kettle. Moments later, in what the girls to this day call a

Christmas Miracle, my law partner and his wife unexpectedly pulled up alongside our kettle with hot chocolate for each of us.

From our family to yours, we wish you a wonderful holiday season and encourage everyone to remember our friends and neighbors in need as we celebrate our own blessings.



Gwen McKenzie, Council
Member, District Six

When I was 8 or either 9 years old I overheard my parents talking about possibly sealing our fireplace... my first thought was how in the world was Santa going to bring our toys? They told me not to worry because Santa would still be able to use the fireplace or get in the house.

I still questioned this and on Christmas Eve my big brother told me to stop whining about it because Santa Claus wasn't real anyway and it was really our Dad who ate the cookies and drank the milk every year!! Needless to say I was devastated even after my parents assured me Santa was real and my brother was told to never, ever say that again! I was still nervous and not sure what to think about Santa.

I was dozing off when I heard someone in our living room in the middle of the

night moving around and bags rustling....could it really be Santa Claus?? I closed my eyes as tight as I could and fell asleep.

The next morning I was happy to see toys under the tree...but was it Santa or Dad? I had to know the truth so I looked around and there was the proof right before my eyes... Santa had left the bags he brought the toys in AND he dropped cookie crumbs leading to the fireplace!!! My parents confirmed it all and said Santa and Rudolph were running behind schedule due to the weather and that explained why he was in such a hurry and made a mess because he'd never left bags or dropped cookie crumbs before so it all made sense!!!



Duane Grieve, Council
Member 2nd District

I remember several Christmases in particular. There was always the anticipation of the cut tree with the special bubble candlelight's and the silver tinsel that we never were able to hang like ice cycles! My dad would make ornaments and the tree had different size light bulbs. We could always count on one string going out even after dad would test each string before hanging the lights! The packages from grandmother, that we knew were

always clothes, would arrive the week before Christmas! Christmas was a time of the year that we waited for that one special gift from Santa that would be under the tree. Much different from today when it seems that gifts are given year round.

I remember a chemistry set, games, books, model airplanes to build, a leaf collection set, but two Christmases stand out the most. Dad was in the Navy and we were living in Charleston South Carolina, and as was the case, my older brother and I got up about three in the morning and quietly snuck into the living room and there around the base of the tree was the Lionel Freight Train I had wished for all year! We decided to run the train which was alright until I decided to blow the whistle after making sure the train engine would puff its smoke! We knew we were caught when I heard my Dad "you boys get back to bed!"

The other memorial time was receiving the American Skyline building block set to go with my other pre-Lego plastic block set. The set had doors and windows, which actually would swing open and shut, and blocks that were shaped like miniature cinder blocks. As we grew older Christmas remained special as we watched my younger brother have the joys of Christmas morning and we continued to sneak out early to the tree to see what the gifts were to be! Even today with my children and grandchildren the joys of Christmas are special and memorable.

May your Holidays be filled with Warmth, Joy and Cheer ~

Have a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!



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Fountain City Professionals Award Community Excellence



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

John Fugate, President of the Fountain City Business and Professional Association, presented the principals of Inskip Elementary (Lynn Jacomen) and Fountain City (Ina Langston) each a check for \$300 on behalf of the association during the annual Holiday After Hours Networking Event Tuesday. The 2017 board members were introduced at the party and Barry Litton of Litton's Restaurant was recognized for his contributions to the community.

Moving school agenda might not happen

By Mike Steely
 steelym@knoxfocus.com

Moving the school board requests to the end of the agenda probably won't happen as easily as expected. Opposition to the idea surfaced during the Knox County Commission's work session last week.

Commissioner Carson Dailey introduced the idea telling the meeting that the media had requested the move. He told The Focus that television crews made the request to him and he passed it along, the idea being for the broadcast employees to cover the main meeting and finish before their deadline.

The school board items, often at least half of the agenda, are required by law to be approved by the commission and usually are only read into the record. Now and then a school item is brought up and discussed.

"What value does this bring?" asked Commissioner Brad Anders.

"I don't see the value," remarked Chairman Randy Smith, who added that the only delay is often the simple reading of the requests.

"I won't support holding them here," said Commissioner Dave Wright, who spoke about the school superintendent and others having to wait until the school requests would come up.

The matter goes to the regular commission meeting today.

Continue on page 2

Fire Station #12 reborn

By Mike Steely
 steelym@knoxfocus.com

At one time the Fire Station #12 was the furthest fire station from downtown Knoxville. Built in 1930 the station was built on property owned by the Lonas family. Recently the historic old station got a complete makeover to bring it up to date and make it more comfortable for the firefighters stationed there.

Captain D. J. Corcoran told The Focus that the Lonas family had a few stipulations before allowing the fire station to be built on what is now Old Kingston Pike. Capt. Corcoran said the family wanted all the oak trees preserved, and many of the trees stand yet today.

He said that one of the other requirements was that the portrait of Samuel Richard Lonas must remain at the first station and it is displayed today above the fireplace. The Lonas family settled in what would become Knoxville prior to 1790. The early name is sometimes given as "Lones" and part of the



PHOTO COURTESY OF HUBERT SMITH

Mayor Madeline Rogero and city council members join Fire Chief Stan Sharp and firemen of Station #12 to officially dedicate the renovated station on Old Kingston Pike.

name of Lonsdale comes from that family.

The fire station has been totally renovated. The firefighters stationed there were temporarily housed at the Lakeshore station until the project was complete. Corcoran said the walls were plumbed because they had buckled out, all the floors that had tile were

stripped, sanded and varnished, and the upstairs was reconfigured to offer four bedrooms. The watch stand where firemen make their reports was moved upstairs. The kitchen was totally renovated as well.

The old station has two bays and one fire truck is stationed there. Corcoran said that three crews of

three firefighters are now always stationed there on 24-hour shifts.

The city has grown by leaps and bounds since the station opened and the western end of the jurisdiction is now further away. But the historic Station #12 is updated to serve the citizens around its location.

Four more years for county's outside auditor?

By Mike Steely
 steelym@knoxfocus.com

What would you do if you had an employee that was doing a good job but found that you couldn't keep them due to an initial agreement? That's the situation that the Knox County Commission is facing because of a clause in the county charter.

Pugh and Company is the current "outside auditor" for the county and is now into its second four-year contract. If the voters don't agree to change the county charter, the company, much praised by the commission, won't be allowed to continue after the current contract.

Current suggestions include setting four-year contracts with no expiration of renewals. Every four years the contract would be placed for bids and Pugh and Company could submit a bid as well as any other audit firm.

The matter came up again in the Commission's Audit Committee meeting last week.

Law Director Richard Armstrong told The Focus that he is working to prepare a resolution to change the charter. If adopted it would be on the General Election Ballot for voters to decide.

Former County Commission Chairman Dave Wright, a member of the Audit Committee, said that in his

Continue on page 2

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New discoveries for an old body

Once again, I'm thinking about growing older each and every day. Yes, doing so beats the alternative, and I'm not complaining... sort of. What I'd rather say is that I'm discovering new things that accompany new birthdays.

For one, I've learned new tricks for retrieving things that I drop or which lie in my way. In times before, I'd bend over and pick things up. After back surgery and the arthritis that seems to have found a home in my spine, I now have grown



By Joe Rector
joerector@comcast.net

rather adept at using my feet. If I need a sock that lies in the floor, all I do is curl my toes around it and raise it to my hand. Sometimes, I have to get down on my knees to grab hold of items. Getting down isn't so bad; getting up is a different story. My legs don't offer as much power as they once did, so I use an arm to push up on a chair bottom or a tabletop to get to my feet.

I've also noticed that many parts hurt now for

no apparent reasons. My fingers and thumbs ache some days, usually after I've worked on some project in the yard. One finger locks when I bend it, and I have to straighten it manually. Strenuous exercise brings on night cramps in calves and Charlie horses in thighs. Arising in the morning brings on ten minutes of aches and pains from head to toe until the kinks work out.

I've always been an active person. I can sit for a while, but before long, I grow antsy and look for something to do. It might be cleaning, building, or organizing, but I manage

to stay busy. Nowadays, restlessness still creeps in, but I manage to fight it and stay still. I'm amazed how long I can now sit in front of the television and watch football games on Saturday or watch programs in the evening.

Each year, it seems that I become just a bit more forgetful. I can't find things that I've laid down some place other than where they belong. Keys and my wallet are too often the items for which I hunt before leaving the house. In addition, I more often walk into a room and wonder why in the hell I'm there. I walk back to where I was, only

to then remember what my mission was. So much forgetfulness only adds to more weariness for my legs.

These days, I spend more and more time in the past. An every day event triggers some past event in life. I remember things from my childhood that resemble present day happenings, and the old ones usually bring smiles to my face. Yes, I'm sure my memory is painted with a thick coat of romanticism; nothing is ever a good as I remember it.

The good thing that comes with aging is a sense of happiness. I'm comfortable with my life

and am thankful for a wonderful wife, two adult children, and a grandson. Too, my own skin is something which I find comfortable; the need to be better or different no longer is that important. I look forward to re-retiring so that Amy and I can take trips on a moment's notice. The freedom of this age is a wonderful thing.

My hope is that I'll have several more birthdays so that I can enjoy the good and bear with the bad. Life is good in all phases, and I thank the good Lord for giving me each new day. I'll take a couple of Ibuprofen and get on with business.

Four more years for county's outside auditor?

Cont. from page 1

years on the commission he's seen three different external auditors work for the county.

Commissioner John Schoonmaker suggested that the committee put the proposal on their January 17th meeting agenda.

The job appraisal of the county's internal Auditor, Andrea Addis, was also briefly discussed. Wright said he has the forms to fill out and told The Focus Tuesday that, as former commission chairman, he will complete her appraisal and review it with her.

Addis reported to the committee that the audits of the school's PPD property management program and of River Sports Outfitter's operation of rentals at The Cove Park will be ready in January.

She also said she has advertised again for an "IT" person after interviewing earlier applicants. She said she's searching for a person not only with computer experience but also with a background in auditing. She told them she recently hired a new member of her staff with a law degree.

Moving school agenda

Cont. from page 1

The commission voted to pass along the request from Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett to permit the public to take photos of public records without charge. Commissioner Charles Busler said he welcomes the transparency but asked how the request would be handled, specific or general.

"The public owns them," Burchett told the commission. He said the request could be specific or broad. His communication director, Michael Grider, said that allowing the public to photograph public records is "allowable under state records policy."

Cell phone or camera

copies of records would have no charge but hard copies of records would be charged at \$20 per hour plus the cost of copies. The commission voiced some concern about the amount of time that may require of county employees.

The first reading of a resolution to establish a RP Rural Preservation Zone was approved but may see some discussion in today's meeting. The Metropolitan Planning Commission made the request to permit large farm owners to request such a designation, permitting those farms to hold outdoor events like festivals, produce sales, etc.

The Lenoir City Utility Board (LCUB) is apparently the only utility district in the state not to pass along its "in lieu of taxes" revenue back to the jurisdictions it serves. The commissioners made a point that most of LCUB's customers are in West Knox County and nothing is paid to the county.

"LCUB hit a gold mine," Commissioner Ed Brantley said.

Chairman Smith said that LCUB donates its "in lieu of taxes" to Grainger and Union Counties but Knox County gets nothing.

Apparently Knox County has two representatives on the LCUB Board named by the county mayor. The county is pushing the utility district to respond.

Commissioner Dailey spoke briefly about attempts to get the state law changed to permit people convicted of DUI to pick up litter. The idea was one of three requests made by the commissioners to local state legislators



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

Michael Grider, Knox County Communications Director, explains Mayor Tim Burchett's proposal to allow citizens to photograph public records.

recently and Dailey said he is talking to the Lieutenant Governor about getting the law changed.

An amendment to an agreement with Helen Ross McNabb Center's block grant for ten units to house homeless veterans at 3720 Middlebrook Pike was passed along to the regular meeting without recommendation. Commissioner Hugh Nystrom said housing the veterans is "great" but asked why the increase.

Becky Gibson, director of community development, replied that the cost of the project came back higher than expected.

"Demolition started today and we're moving forward," she said.

Also passed along with no recommendation was a grant from the state for a Greenway Corridor Study. The \$300,000 funding must be matched

by the county. Parks and Recreation Director Doug Bataille said the study would begin with Beaver Creek and called the study "a little better plan" that would look at greenways and subdivisions, connectivity, topography, etc.

Commissioner Wright suggested that property owners in the Gibbs Schools and Ruritan Park area would be interested in a greenway.

The commissioners also voted to pass along the idea of shifting from bonded elected and appointed county employees and replacing the bonds with a Certificate of Insurance. The county trustee and the sheriff would not be included in the change. The idea is to cover those officials employees with insurance and save money on purchasing bonds for them.

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Ned Carmack

Pages from the Past



By Ray Hill

rayhill865@gmail.com

Edward Ward Carmack, Jr. possessed a name made famous by his father. E. W. Carmack had been a congressman, United States senator and only just barely missed having been elected governor; the elder Carmack had also been a newspaper editor who deftly used his pen to praise his friends and torture his enemies in print. It was that same talent that brought about E. W. Carmack's death on the streets of Nashville. Carmack, then editor of the Nashville Tennessean, had encountered Colonel Duncan Cooper and Cooper's son Robin. Carmack had been subjecting his former friend and employer Duncan Cooper to withering scorn and ridicule in the editorial pages of the Tennessean. Colonel Cooper had sent a message to the editor to stop the abuse, a message that Carmack ignored. Both parties were armed and Carmack drew a pistol and shots were exchanged, leaving Robin Cooper wounded and Edward Carmack dead.

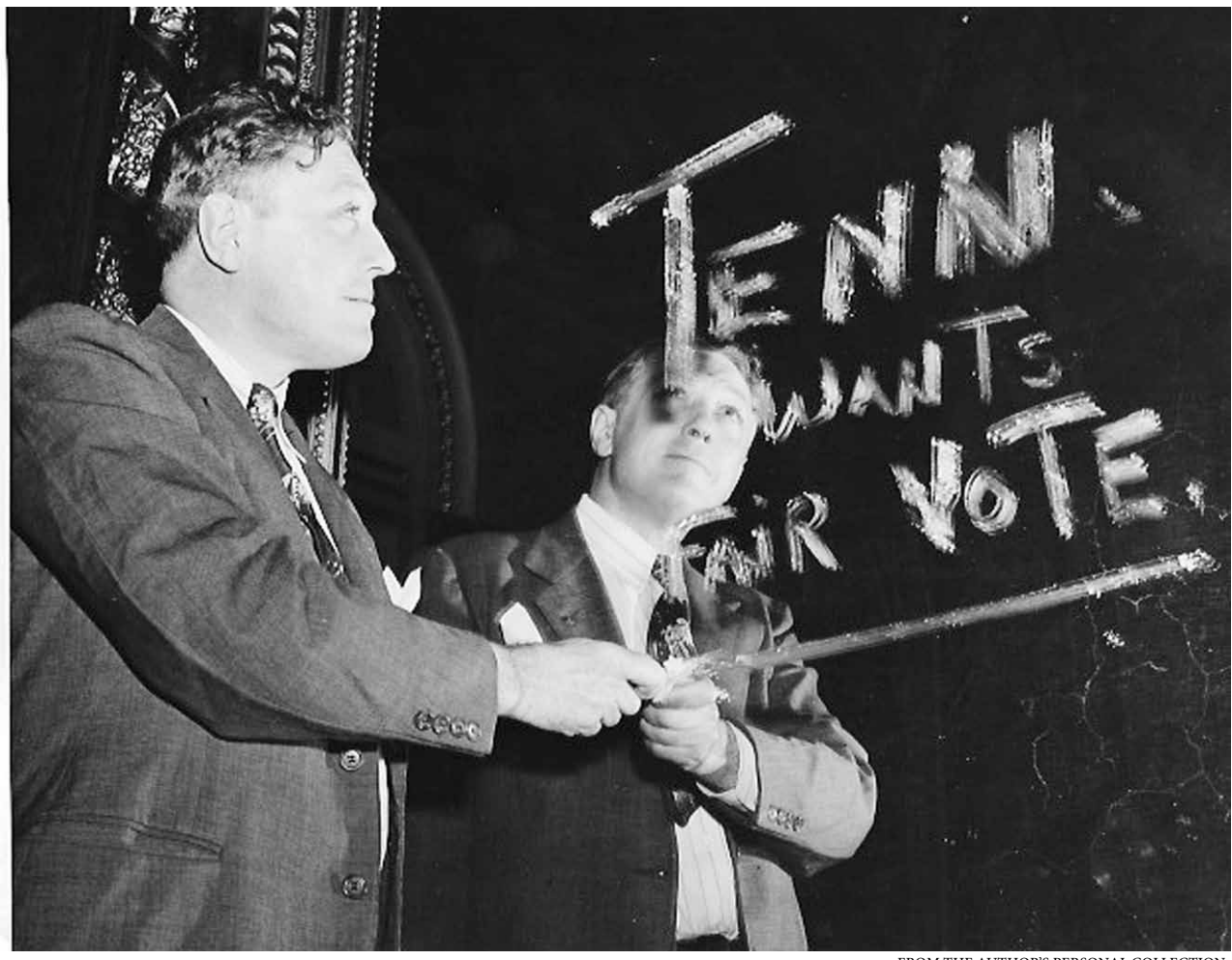
The killing of Edward Ward Carmack was hotly debated subject by tens of thousands of Tennesseans. There were those who saw Carmack's death as an outrageous murder, while others contended the editor had fired the first shot and Robin Cooper was acting in self-defense. The dispute almost destroyed Tennessee's Democratic Party for a period of years, yet it left Cobey Carmack a widow and ten-year old Edward "Ned" Carmack, Jr. fatherless.

Despite having lived in Nashville for sometime, the Carmacks made their home in Columbia, Tennessee. Elizabeth Cobey Dunnington Carmack had borne her only child somewhat late in life and took her son back to Columbia. Mrs. Carmack and her sister Lucille Dunnington, evidently derived some income from the Dunnington estate. Lucille never married and the two sisters would remain very close until Lucille's death. Cobey was appointed Postmistress of the Columbia post office, an appointment that had to be made by President Woodrow Wilson and confirmed by the United States Senate. The appointment was a recognition of both Senator Carmack and his widow. The appointment provided Cobey with additional income, allowing her to help pay for the education of her son, Ned. By 1923, the Wilson administration had faded into history and had been replaced by that of Warren G. Harding, a Republican. With the change of administrations, Congressman J. Will Taylor, the Republican patronage boss in Tennessee, was looking to replace Mrs. Carmack with a deserving

member of the GOP. Tennessee's junior senator, Kenneth D. McKellar, sought to fight replacing Cobey Carmack with a Republican, but he was only able to delay the inevitable. Senator McKellar put up such a fight that reporters questioned whether or not his relations with Congressman Taylor had been ruptured. McKellar was quick to reply he and Taylor were still friends, but candidly admitted he did not at all like how Mrs. Carmack had been treated by the Republican boss.

At the time of his mother's ouster as postmistress of Columbia, Ned Carmack was a twenty-two year old law student. Young Carmack eventually earned his law degree, but would have a difficult time finding a place for himself in life. At various times in his life, Ned Carmack would be a lawyer, newspaper owner and publisher, candidate for public office, and real estate developer. Unfortunately, Ned Carmack did not make a real success of any of his occupations, causing Shelby County political boss E. H. Crump to bluntly crow Carmack had been a failure at everything he had tried to do in life during one political campaign. Ned Carmack was very well aware he possessed one of the more famous names in Tennessee politics and aspired to follow in his father's footsteps.

Robin Cooper, who had fired the fatal shots that had killed E. W. Carmack, died under mysterious circumstances when Ned Carmack was around twenty years old. Cooper left an unknown guest in his automobile and was found dead, his skull crushed from having been beaten with a rock, in or near a creek. The bloody rock was found in Robin Cooper's automobile, which had been left running until it ran out of gas. The same night Robin Cooper was killed, Ned Carmack was spending the night with a college friend, yet for the remainder of his life, he would privately claim the credit for having killed Robin Cooper. His political campaigns past, Ned Carmack was especially quick to claim that he had murdered his father's killer. Eventually, Carmack's delusion would grow, as Ned Carmack told at least one friend, Houston Williams, that he had killed Colonel Duncan Cooper by smothering him with his own pillow. The truth is, Colonel Cooper died in bed surrounded by his family. Andrew Ewing, the college friend with whom Ned Carmack had spent the night Robin Cooper was murdered, was interviewed by a writer for the Nashville Tennessean some years after Carmack had died. Andrew Ewing admitted he was then eighty-one years



FROM THE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL COLLECTION.

Edward Ward "Ned" Carmack, Jr. in 1946

old and while the events being discussed had occurred sixty-two years earlier, he was certain he remembered most of the details. "Ned Carmack was a brilliant young man with a literary bent, vigorous and fiery in his manner," Ewing recalled. "He was very like young Joe Byrnes [sic], who also wanted to emulate his famous father." Ewing remembered that Carmack had been out on a date before arriving at his boarding house. Ewing also recalled he had been interviewed twice by the police as to the whereabouts of Ned Carmack of the night of Robin Cooper's murder. The police quickly concluded Ned Carmack was not Robin Cooper's killer.

Ned Carmack didn't much care for the legal profession and tried real estate speculation, but that profession did not bring success and Carmack settled in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Carmack accepted a job as the editor of the Murfreesboro Daily News Journal and it was no coincidence that he was engaged in the same profession that had first made his father famous. In his capacity as editor for the Daily News Journal, Ned Carmack exhibited some of the flair of his famous father, albeit not enough to get himself killed. In 1933, Carmack bought the newspaper from Andrew L. Todd, a wealthy businessman and politician who had lost a race for the United States Senate to Cordell Hull in 1930. It was not long before the newspaper began to fail.

Eventually control of the newspaper returned to the Todd family and Carmack's sights were set on making a career for himself in the political arena. The people of Tennessee would be electing a U. S. senator in a special election in 1938. Incumbent Senator George L. Berry was running hard to succeed himself while the combine of senior senator K. D. McKellar and his political partner E. H. Crump considered whom to support. Carmack had been considered a likely candidate to run for the state Utilities Commission and his announcement he would run for the United States Senate came as something of a surprise.

Carmack issued a rather nebulous statement saying he was running "because I believe the views I hold upon public issues, and the fights I have made for them, are in accord with the interests and wishes of the people of Tennessee." Carmack had never been elected to any office previously and his "fights" on behalf of issues and the people of Tennessee could only be perceived through his brief time as a newspaper publisher. Carmack was careful to note he was a strong supporter of President Franklin Roosevelt, whose popularity remained undiminished in Tennessee. "I have been active in my support for President Roosevelt," Carmack declared. "I believe in him, and in the great humanitarian objective toward which he strives." Saying he intended to speak in every county in Tennessee during the campaign for the Democratic nomination for the Senate, Ned Carmack promised to make his views on the pressing issues of the day more clear to the average voter.

Ned Carmack's announcement made him the third candidate to officially declare for the Democratic nomination for the U. S. Senate. Senator Berry had already announced he was running to succeed himself and Congressman J. Ridley Mitchell, representative from Tennessee's Fourth District, had made his own candidacy public. Tom Stewart, District Attorney for a group of Middle Tennessee counties, soon followed with his own announcement and would prove to be a formidable candidate, especially as he had the open support of McKellar and Crump.

"Little Ned" Carmack gamely began campaigning in East Tennessee, accompanied by his seventy-six year old mother. Former state senator J.T.

Durham, who presided over the small audience, referred to Carmack as "the illustrious son of one of Sumner county's most illustrious sons." The candidate was introduced to the audience by lawyer R. H. Harsh, who said, "Like his father, he is a man who would dignify and adorn any position he might hold." While Ned Carmack was the first candidate for the U. S. Senate to make a formal speech in pursuit of the Democratic nomination, little more was heard of his campaign until late June when it was announced by his campaign headquarters the candidate would be speaking in Brownsville, Tennessee.

E. W. Carmack then made sensational news in July when the Tennessean carried a photograph of the injured candidate being lifted in a stretcher to a waiting ambulance on the front page. The unconscious Carmack had been discovered lying in a ditch on a roadside near Paris, Tennessee at 1:30 a.m. Carmack was moved to a hospital in Rutherford County, near his Murfreesboro home. Discovered not only unconscious, but bleeding, three separate police agencies began a determined inquiry into unraveling the mystery surrounding Ned Carmack's discovery. Carmack had been due to speak in Dresden and Paris, but had never showed up for his speaking engagements. Carmack's automobile had been found on the opposite side of the road from where the candidate had been found; the car had been run into a ditch. A "brain specialist", Dr. Cobb Pilcher, had examined Carmack and concluded the candidate had "suffered a pretty serious injury", a brain concussion, but believed Carmack would make a recovery. Carmack's brother-in-law, J. W. Hart,

was as puzzled as everyone else. Hart agreed the case was "as much of a mystery as ever" and confessed he knew "absolutely nothing about how it could have happened." Authorities thought it odd that Carmack's car, although in a ditch, "was not even scratched", although the candidate was found with his legs paralyzed and blood pouring from his nose and mouth.

Police were having an exceptionally difficult time piecing together the details of Ned Carmack's journey. Evidently, Carmack was in Dresden, yet never stopped for his speech, but was seen asking a boy how to get to Paris. Carmack was seen at McNutt's Luncheon and Service Station around 7:00 p.m. when he stopped for gas. Yet Carmack was on foot, telling Mr. McNutt his car was down the road. Carmack took a can of gasoline and later showed up in his car and Mr. McNutt wondered if he might fill Carmack's car up with gas. Carmack replied he didn't have any money and would have to travel to Paris to get some. One patrolman admitted it was difficult to make sense of the story of just what happened to Ned Carmack at this point. The patrolman noted Mr. McNutt claimed to have seen Carmack around 7:00 p.m. and remembered that Carmack was bleeding from his nose when he had gotten the gasoline. The owner of "Bunkwood", a roadhouse establishment, insisted Carmack had not put any gasoline into his automobile until 11:00 p.m.

That was the last time anyone saw Ned Carmack until he was found unconscious and bleeding.

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Merry Christmas!

It is a favorite among the Christmas songs---"The Most Wonderful Time of the Year." It's true. The words that Andy Williams made so popular at Christmas time carry so much meaning. Folks seem friendlier, days seem brighter, and moods seem lighter. Joy abounds all around us.



By Ralphine Major
ralphine3@yahoo.com

School in Greene County, and meetings with our publisher and illustrator. We received our registered trademark from the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office in Washington, D.C. for the character and its name! We made new friends at a ranch while having photos made for our latest book. Look for "Annie" in our newest book, "Piddle Diddle, the Widdle Penguin, and the Texas Longhorns." This month we appeared on CW20 in an interview with Alan Williams at the WVLT Studio and later that day gave a presentation of our books and shared our story at the Ossoli Circle Club House on Kingston Pike where we were invited

by Wayne's seventh grade English teacher. We are happy to have our book in the Lone Star Literary Life which reaches thousands of subscribers and Facebook followers all across the State of Texas! This year has been so much fun, and we have been so blessed.

In a year that has been filled with so much chaos, it is a welcome sight to see the signs of Christmas. Our nation has seen her share of storms and wildfires, as well as violence and protests. The VOL nation has seen their football team fall to a historic low followed by the chaos of replacing its leaders. What a year! In this season of pine cones and peppermint sticks, jingle bells and Jolly Ol' Saint Nick, there is so much more to Christmas. Chaos



Picture of a beautiful mountain snow, courtesy of Steve Ellis, Light House Studio

turns to calm as we experience "Christmas." Traffic slows, shoppers wrap up their search for gifts, and hectic days come to a halt. The world, it seems, nearly stops on Christmas Day as we celebrate the birth of the Christ child who brought hope to a hopeless

world. During this holy season, may you experience Christmas in all of its quietness and beauty; may you find the joy in every day as if it were Christmas;

and may the prayers for peace, love, and joy fill our world and your heart. Christmas Blessings to you and yours!

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Sevier County School Board



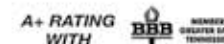
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Halls High School's cheerleading squad, coached by Cheri Duncan, repeated as TSSAA state champions in the non-building division this year. Front row (left to right): Harper Kirby, Maddie Conner, Brianna Yanniello, Caroline Elliott and Cassidy Gresham. Middle row: Carly Minhinnett, Caroline Dykes, Maggie Beeler, Katlyn Appling, Sarah Nelson and Taylor Wood. Back row: Sydney Hollingsworth, Skye Yanniello, Grace Lawson and Abbey Hopkins.

Halls cheerleaders rebuild routine and capture state title again

By Steve Williams

Halls High School's cheerleading squad had to come up with a new game plan prior to the TSSAA state competition this year.

No problem. Coach Cheri Duncan's girls returned home with the school's fifth state championship in six years. "We lost two girls on the Thursday before we left on Saturday and had to

completely redo the routine," recalled Duncan. "We rebounded well and actually scored seven points higher than last year. I am very proud of the girls."

The 2017 TSSAA Cheerleading Championships were held Nov. 11 at MTSU in Murfreesboro. Halls took top honors in the non-building division.

"Non-building is a division where there is no stunting," explained Coach

Duncan. "We tumble a lot, cheer and dance. The main focus is cheering, dancing and tumbling."

Earlier this year, cheerleader Brianna Yanniello was named homecoming queen at Halls Sept. 29 after she and her fellow sponsoring cheerleaders raised \$14,749.02, according to Duncan.

Over \$44,000, which goes to HHS athletics, was the total amount raised by

homecoming contestants, added Duncan.

The Halls cheerleaders use the money they raised for competition expenses, said Coach Duncan.

The Halls squad also qualified for the nationals at Disney World in February but won't be attending, added Duncan.

Prior to this year, Halls' cheerleaders had captured state titles in 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2016.

Carter wrestlers pick up big wins in recent action

By Ken Lay

Carter High School's newly reinstated wrestling team made some historical strides recently.

The Hornets, along with the Halls High Red Devils, boasted one of the county's original programs. But Carter dropped the program in 1983.

The Hornets did return as an AAU team in the early 2000's before the school reinstated the program last season.

Carter picked up its

first dual meet win of the season recently when it defeated a combined team of Union County and Claiborne County in Strawberry Plains recently. The Hornets notched a 54-24 win in its home match on Friday, Dec. 8.

In that dual, Kobe Jenkins (160 pounds), Christopher Harmon (106), Justin Smith (113), Kaemon Cox (132), Kenneth Orozco (138), Randall Coffey (195) and Roy Ramsey (138) all won their respective bouts

by forfeit.

Bradley Daugherty (182) and Julian Hammontree (220) both won by fall.

Kierra Sands, a 132-pound junior defeated her Union County opponent via the pin.

The Hornets also wrestled Fulton and dropped a close 38-30 match.

There, Orozco (145), Jenkins (160) and Hammontree (220) all recorded pins while Harmon (106) and Ramsey (152) both won by forfeit.

Carter coach Dustin Dudley said that he and his team also got a great effort from Smith in an 8-6 loss to Indae Walton of the Falcons in the 113-pound match.

On Saturday, Dec 9, the Hornets grappled in the Sevier County Duals and picked up wins over Seymour and the host Smoky Bears.

Against the Eagles, Hammontree, Ramsey, Jenkins, Austin Weir (170 pounds)

Continued on page 4

DEAR SANTA

UT fans get a new AD and football coach for Christmas

1, 2, 3, 4!
I'm gettin' nuttin' for Christmas
'Cause I ain't been nothin' but bad
I held out for Gruden way too long
Somebody snitched on me
I hollered no for the guy in Ohio
Somebody snitched on me
We couldn't get Cutcliffe back
We tried Gundy but that fell through
Even botched the deal at Purdue
Somebody snitched on me

Tennessee football fans won't find lumps of coal in their stockings this holiday season after all.

With Phillip Fulmer being named athletics director at UT a couple of weeks ago, it even feels like Christmas came early for Volunteer sports fans.

Fulmer gave us new head football coach Jeremy Pruitt, who appears to be in the process of giving us a team like we used to have in the good ole days.

If only next month were August. Nevertheless, I believe we'll have an off-season filled with positive thoughts and new hope.

For other sports' wishes, here's my letter to the North Pole:

Dear Santa:
Give the national sports media a clue and UT football fans the last laugh.

Give the NCAA some mathematical sense and an eight-team football playoff bracket (Five conference champions won't fit into four playoff berths).

Give Tiger Woods a great comeback season.
Give Rick Barnes a Big Orange blazer to wear and honor Ray Mears.

Give the Lady Vols another game against UConn.
Give Ernest T. Bass all of Butch's leftover bricks.
Give major league baseball more players like Jose Altuve.

Give Giancarlo Stanton back to the Miami Marlins.
Give Tom Brady a few more seasons.

Give tennis another rivalry like Connors versus McEnroe.

Give UT softball another Monica Abbott.
Give Gibbs High softball Carol Mitchell Field.

Give UT athletics more loyal fans like sports radio caller Roger.
Give North Carolina its long overdue NCAA suspension.

Give high school football coaches more money and college coaches less.
Give the NBA a shorter season.

Give NASCAR the good ole days.
Give college football fewer bowl games.
Give the TSSAA football playoffs only teams with .500 records or better.

Give the Heisman Trophy to a left offensive tackle someday.

Give sports more people like Lou Gehrig, Tamika Catchings, Jackie Robinson and Pat Summitt.
Give youth sports more people like Larry Cox.

Continued on page 2



By Steve Williams

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Vine escapes Powell with OT win 53-44

By Ken Lay

It took a little overtime but the extra work paid big dividends for Vine Middle School's boys basketball team. At the end of the night, the Golden Bears left Powell with its perfect record intact.

Vine, which nearly saw a win slip away at Powell in a rematch of last season's James A. Ivey Jr. Memorial Middle School Basketball Tournament Championship Game, but the Golden Bears used a strong overtime period to notch a 53-44 Knox County Middle School Basketball Conference victory in hostile territory Thursday night.

Vine (11-0 overall, 9-0 in the KCMSBC) was in command throughout the contest until the Panthers made a late surge to send the game to overtime.

Powell (9-5, 4-5) went down 37-29 when Vine point guard Ahijah Washington scored with 2 minutes, 26 seconds remaining in regulation.

Washington's basket appeared to put the game out of reach.

But the scrappy Panthers had other ideas.

Their defense forced the Golden Bears into consecutive turnovers before Jackson Fielden nailed a 3-point basket to pull Powell to within 37-32 with 1:12 remaining in the fourth quarter.

Vine then took a 39-32 edge on free throws by Shannon Blair before the Panthers scored the final seven points of regulation. Powell actually had a chance to go ahead with 10.4 seconds left.



Vine Middle's Javaree Roebuck and Jay Allen defend against a Powell inbound play as Jackson Fielden (20) attempts to find an open teammate. The Golden Bears downed the Panthers 53-44 in overtime Thursday night.

De Kinnebrew knotted the game at 39-39 and was fouled on the shot. He missed the ensuing free throw but did send the game to overtime.

The Golden Bears dominated the extra frame and coach Jerel Heyward said he felt fortunate to escape Emory Road with a victory.

"Powell plays hard. They're tough and they fight hard and they scrap," Heyward said. "They're a good basketball team."

"I can't say enough about Ahijah Washington. He's our point guard and he played well for us and on top of that, he's dealing with a sprained ankle."

Washington, who normally starts for the Golden Bears, came off the bench Thursday night due to his tender ankle.

But once he entered the fray, he certainly didn't appear to struggle much. He came in early in the second stanza and promptly scored nine points by knocking down

three long-range jumpers for Vine, which led 9-2 after the first quarter.

He finished the game with 20 points to lead all scorers scored nine points (all from the free throw line) in the extra frame for the Golden Bears, who edged the Panthers in last year's tournament championship game after Powell won the regular-season meetings between the two schools in East Knoxville.

Vine continued to be in control of things and led 23-11 at halftime. Powell trimmed the deficit to 31-25 by the end of the third frame.

The Panthers, who trailed by as many as 16, made a late run in the third quarter. Fielden made it 28-19 with two minutes left in the frame. He scored six of Powell's final eight points of the frame and made it 31-25 with a bucket with 25.4 seconds left.

Bryce Burkhart had a pair of foul shots to make it 30-23 a short time earlier.

Powell coach Darin Courtney said he was proud of his team's effort as it fought an uphill battle all night.

"This was a typical Powell effort by a bunch of kids who'll scrap and run through a wall for me," he said. "Our kids showed a lot of guts. That [last basket of regulation] by De Kinnebrew was big and it gave us a chance to go ahead. But missed free throws happen."

"We're not into moral victories at Powell but we have two undefeated teams [Bearden and Vine] and we had a chance to win our games with both of them and that's all you can ask for."

Fielden led the Panthers 16 points while Kinnebrew finished with 10.

Javaree Roebuck had eight points for the Golden Bears while Jay Allen and Tyree Gibson scored six each.

Kirby leads Halls in comeback win over Lady Panthers 45-41

By Ken Lay

Early in its game Tuesday night, things were looking grim for the Halls High School girls basketball team.

The Lady Devils fell behind rival Powell by 15 points in the first quarter and their leading scorer, Panda Riggs left with a foot injury.

Riggs wouldn't return but Halls would eventually notch a 45-41 District 3-AAA road victory over the Lady Panthers at Halls High School.

The Lady Devils (5-5 overall, 3-1 in the district) fell behind 18-3 when Powell's Chloe Ellison scored a basket with 1 minute, 15 seconds remaining in the first quarter. Halls, however, would score the last six points of the frame to pull to within 18-9.

From there, the Lady Devils would methodically chip away at the Lady Panthers' advantage. Halls pulled to within 29-23. It would benefit from Powell (4-7, 2-3) losing its leading scorer midway through the second stanza. Senior guard Haley Schubert was ejected after being called for a double technical foul. She left the game with 12 points (including half of the Lady Panthers points in the opening quarter). Her departure left both squads without their respective leading scorer.

But Halls, which pulled to within 36-33 by the end of the third quarter, relied on a freshman to shoulder the bulk of the offensive load. Guard Macy Kirby

keyed the Lady Devils comeback as she scored 15 points in the first half to keep Halls close.

She came up even bigger after halftime. She finished with 31 points and made the only two field goals for Halls over the final eight minutes. Her 3-pointer with 3:15 left gave Halls a 39-37 lead, its first advantage of the game.

Her late basket provided the final margin and made it 45-41 with 41 seconds remaining.

She was also 6-for-8 from the free throw line in the fourth quarter.

"She's a great player," Halls coach Tom Poissal said of Kirby. "We lost our leading scorer when Panda Riggs went down with a foot injury. We'll find out more about that later. But she's averaging over 20 points per game."

"After we lost Panda, we did some things and we ran some things to highlight [Kirby]. She wants to be highlighted. She wants the ball."

Kirby certainly wanted the ball on this night against the Lady Panthers. She delivered in the clutch for the Lady Devils.

Kirby said that Halls knew the urgency surrounding the game.

"I think we just wanted it more than they did," Kirby said.

Senior Emma Cummings finished with 11 points for the Lady Devils.

Dani Bryant had 13 points to pace the Lady Panthers.

UT fans get a new AD and football coach for Christmas

Cont. from page 1

Give referees the ability to make the tough call with the game on the line.

Give women's college basketball a mercy rule.

Give major league baseball another third baseman like Brooks Robinson.

Give the SEC basketball media a new crystal ball, after picking the Vols to finish 13th in the conference.

Give Antonio Brown the NFL's MVP award.

Give George Quarles a job on the UT coaching staff someday.

Give all players, coaches and fans good sportsmanship in victory and defeat.

Give every dog a home and a stick to retrieve and every cat a warm lap to curl up in and purr.

Give every boy and girl a ball and a chance to play.

Give the world peace, civility and gratitude.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Lady Panthers get past Vine in league tilt

By Ken Lay

Powell Middle School's girls basketball team closed out the pre-Christmas portion of its 2017-18 schedule with a victory.

The Lady Panthers had their share of struggles Thursday afternoon, used a big fourth quarter to notch a 29-23 victory over Vine in a Knox County Middle School Basketball Conference victory at Powell Middle School.

The game was a defensive struggle but the Lady Panthers, who were clinging to a slim 5-4 lead at the end of the first quarter, created a bit of separation in the second stanza.

Powell turned up the defensive pressure and held the Lady Golden Bears to just two points in the second frame. Vine got its only points of the

period on a bucket by Richia Watkins.

Vine took an early lead in the opening quarter as Rianje Bailey opened the scoring in the contest with a 3-pointer. Watkins also had a free throw.

Powell, however, was able to take the lead thanks to baskets by Cassidy Hill and Cassie Sakhleh. Hadley Testerman also had a free throw in the frame.

Sakhleh scored five of her 10 points in the second stanza and helped the Lady Panthers open a 14-6 lead by halftime.

After the break, the Lady Golden Bears stormed back and pulled to within 16-15 when Bailey buried a 3-point shot with 2 minutes, 21 seconds remaining in the third quarter.

Bailey, who led all scorers with 15

points, produced all of her offense from beyond the 3-point arc. She hit five 3-pointers, including four after halftime and a pair in the when Vine made its third-quarter run.

Watkins finished the contest with six points.

The Lady Panthers, who led 20-17 after three quarters, opened the final frame with a modest 4-0 surge and took a 24-17 lead on a free throw by Sakhleh with 2:28 left.

Bailey answered with a 3-pointer to make the score 24-20 with 1:08.

Powell was able to put the game out of reach thanks to an old-fashioned three-point play by Reagan Radoesky and a pair of free throws by Madelyn Tilley.

Bailey closed out the scoring with a trey with 7.9 seconds left.

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Renfree turns a good season into an 'incredible' one

By Steve Williams

Jake Renfree, Knoxville Catholic junior, had a good cross country season.

In the annual KIL meet in October, he finished runner-up behind three-time champion Carter Coughlin of Webb School.

In November at the TSSAA state meet, Renfree placed fourth in the Large Schools division.

Most prep harriers would love to have such results on their resume.

Jake went to Charlotte on Thanksgiving weekend to give the Foot Locker South Regional a try. He was seeded 50th and only the Top 10 qualify for the nationals. The odds of him advancing weren't good. But he ran eighth.

The unheralded Renfree was soon packing his gear for San Diego, site of the 39th annual Foot Locker national finals - the Super Bowl of prep cross country.

The 40 best schoolboy runners from all over the nation would be there on Dec. 9 and Jake was one of them.

His storybook season has one more chapter. In last place early in the national championship race, after conserving energy at the start, Renfree increased his pace and gradually passed 35 runners to come in fifth.

In a month's time, Jake had gone from good to nationally known.

"It's an incredible feeling to know that the hard work over the last six months has come to fruition," said Renfree last Thursday back in Knoxville.

"It was an incredible experience and one that I will never forget."

Renfree covered the 5K course at Morley Field and Balboa Park in 15 minutes, 38.7 seconds.

Webb's Coughlin finished 15th in 15:52.3.

The boys' winner was senior Dylan Jacobs of Orland Park, Ill., who was timed in 15:19.7.

Renfree said his performance in the nationals has inspired him to strive for bigger goals.

"My confidence as a runner has skyrocketed in the past three weeks, and I feel like I can keep improving ... I'm really excited to see how far I can go."

Catholic Coach Sean O'Neil was in San Diego with Renfree.

"We felt like Top 15 was a realistic goal, but Top 5 definitely exceeded my expectations," said O'Neil. "Jake went out and executed our race plan to perfection."

"His progression this season has been phenomenal. He stepped up his training over the summer and came into the fall with great fitness, but he still needed more experience running at the front of races to work on the tactical side of things. He learned as the season went on, and really put it all together when it mattered most."

Since the nationals, Renfree has been nominated for the Gatorade Runner of the Year award for Tennessee and heard from numerous college coaches, said O'Neil.

Rebecca Story of Christian Academy of Knoxville, who placed third in the Foot Locker nationals last year and won the South Region championship last month, surprisingly came in 34th place with a time of 19:03.3

Claudia Lane, a junior from Malibu,



PHOTORUN.NET FOR FOOT LOCKER

Jake Renfree, a junior at Knoxville Catholic High School, turned in a surprising fifth place showing at the Foot Locker Cross Country National High School Championships Dec. 9 in San Diego.

Calif., repeated as the girls' champion, running the 5K in 17:03.4.

"The national race was disappointing, but I am happy with my season and am proud of my Foot Locker South and Tennessee championship wins," said Story.

"I had a bad race which happens sometimes. I was blessed to be there and loved seeing my Knoxville friends, Jake and Carter, both make All-American."

Balanced offense propels Panthers to 71-53 win

By Ken Lay

A balanced scoring attack spelled victory for Powell in its District 3-AAA road game against rival Halls Tuesday night.

The Panthers had two players post double figures in the scoring column and another finish with nine points in their 71-53 league victory before a packed house at Halls High School.

Josh Woods had a game-high 24 points while Desmond Billingsley added 15 to lead Powell (5-6 overall, 3-2 in the district) to a key victory. Caleb Tripp finished with nine points for the Panthers, all after halftime.

Powell had 10 players score in the contest. Westly Reynolds scored six points. Jonah Miller had five. Lance Davis finished with four. Bruce Chapman and Jake Majors each knocked down 3-point shots for the Panthers while Riley Bryant made a free throw for the Powell, which fell behind early as Halls High's Jordan Corvette scored the first five points of the contest.

Corvette, who was honored for joining the Red Devils' 1000-point club and setting a single-game scoring record with 56 points against Gibbs late last month, gave Halls (4-6, 1-3) a 5-0 lead when he nailed his first two shots to open the game.

But Powell, which has shown some steady improvement since a sluggish start, rebounded. The Panthers bounced back.

After falling behind early, the visitors scored the next 11 points en route to closing the frame on a 19-8 run.

Woods had 11 of Powell's first-quarter points and was a force all night for Powell.

Powell coach Gary Barnes said that the balanced offensive attack was key in this latest installment of the Emory Road rivalry.

"We want to take good shots and we don't really care who gets them," Barnes said. "Our team is set up a little different than theirs. We want good shots but Jordan [Corvette] can score a lot of points in a hurry for them."

It was Corvette that kept the Red Devils close early. He finished with 21 points, including 11 in the opening stanza.

He had 18 at halftime. Jordan Biliter scored three of his 12 points over the first 16 minutes. Trystan Palmer had a field goal and Korey Mulberry added a foul shot to account for the rest of the home team's offensive output.

Powell exploded in the second quarter. The Panthers outscored the Red Devils 26-11 in the second stanza to open a 45-24 halftime advantage and all but put things out of reach.

Barnes said that he's been pleased with his team's effort lately but he also noted that there remains plenty of room for improvement.

"Hopefully we will keep playing together on offense and continue to play good defense," he said. "Hopefully, we can continue to improve."

Halls, meanwhile, has struggled out of the gate and first-year head coach Jonathan Smith was distraught after his team's showing Tuesday night.

"We need to work on our team cohesion before we can think about basketball," Smith said. "And that all starts with me."

"I'll continue to try to get them in positions to be successful but they have to decide if they want to do the things that it takes to win games."

Catholic's Brock Jancek is making big-time strides

By Steve Williams

Brock Jancek was a beast inside for Knoxville Catholic in its run to the TSSAA Class AA state basketball championship game last season.

The 6-7, 215-pound power forward continues to be a force under the basket in his senior year, but the improvement of his game overall is what has impressed veteran head coach Mike Hutchens the most in the early going.

"His ball handling," pointed out Hutchens. "We have actually run him at point guard at times this year when we've had to take care of the ball late in the game."

"His 3-point shot and medium-range jumper also have really come along."

"I think he's a legitimate Division 1 prospect."

Jancek has been Catholic's top scorer in a 6-1 start in the Irishmen's return to the Class AAA ranks,

averaging 26 points per outing.

He dropped in 22 points in a 72-61 season-opening District 4-AAA loss at Maryville. In that game, Catholic, without its football players, dressed only eight and played only six.

Jancek has had two 30-point games and a season-low 16 in a two-point comeback win over William Blount.

Catholic also had logged wins over Heritage, CAK, West and Grace Christian prior to last Tuesday's 65-57 victory over visiting Farragut.

Jancek scored 27 against the Admirals (4-7) and senior guard Jack Sompayrac added 14. Catholic led 33-29 at halftime and extended its advantage to 48-38 after three stops.

Senior guard Ethan Sherrill swished in 21 points for Farragut, while Chris Dalton added 10.

Coach Hutchens said

"defense" was the key to the win, although his team had a good shooting night, making 5 of 11 from 3-point range, 19 of 34 overall from the field and 12 of 15 free throws.

Brock's younger brother, Jack Jancek, 6-4, 180-pound sophomore point guard, contributed significantly on the defensive end.

"Even though Farragut really shot the ball good in the first half, they made some tough shots," said Coach Hutchens. "In the second half, we made a little adjustment by putting (Jack) Jancek on their point guard, who had hurt us in the first half. He did a really good job on him in the second half and helped us build a lead."

Catholic took a 4-1 district record into its game Friday at Hardin Valley Academy.

Hutchens said his team enjoys being in Class AAA.



PHOTO BY KELLY KEARSE

Knoxville Catholic's Brock Jancek soars to make a shot attempt in a District 4-AAA game against William Blount. Veteran Head Coach Mike Hutchens calls his senior power forward "a legitimate Division 1 prospect."

"You can see that the crowds are bigger and there is more excitement," he said. "Our kids know a lot of kids in the league, particularly the Farragut and Bearden kids. They've all played against and with each other in AAU and **Continue on page 4**

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Alontae Taylor was a must get for Tennessee

By Alex Norman

If you ever are bored at work, do yourself a favor at watch Alontae Taylor's highlight tape. It's spectacular.

What you see from the 4-star prospect from Coffee County Central HS is someone with breakaway speed, toughness and athleticism. He's the real deal, and soon will make some college very happy.

Taylor played quarterback at Coffee County, and was most often the best player on the field, no matter the opponent. But his future likely lies at wide receiver or defensive back. 247Sports lists him as the 23rd best wide receiver prospect in the nation.

Taylor played in the 11th Annual Toyota East vs. West Tennessee All-Star Classic on Friday, December 8th in Clarksville. He was

named the East's Offensive Most Valuable Player.

"Playing in (Class) 6A helps," said Taylor. "Playing in the best region in Tennessee is really fun, but coming out here and playing with the best players in Tennessee, you figure out if you are real or if you are not real so... at the end of the day I'm gonna do what I got to do."

In his final high school football game, Taylor had three catches for 71 yards, two carries for 26 yards, and even threw a deep pass to Riverdale's Savion Davis for a touchdown. This was on a trick play. Taylor started a couple of yards behind the line of scrimmage as a receiver, leaped high in the air to make the catch, and then launched a pass more than 40 yards in the air. It was a play

that showed off his tremendous abilities.

Taylor shared the field with future Tennessee Vols Jacob Warren, a tight end from Farragut, and Ollie Lane, an offensive lineman from Gibbs.

Taylor brings a lot to the table, and college coaches have told him where they see him fitting in.

"A lot of speed, a lot of sweeps, stuff like that," said Taylor. "Playing slot receiver, I can do a lot of things so... I can't say that I'm ready at the college level, so I'm glad I'm going in January, so I can get in the weight room, get in the playbook and just be a better receiver."

Taylor has already graduated from Coffee County Central HS, and will be an early enrollee...

Taylor was a Tennessee verbal

commit that de-committed on November 13th, the day after Vols head coach Butch Jones was fired. But with the hiring of Jeremy Pruitt, Taylor once again put Tennessee on his watch list.

He took to twitter and announced that on December 22nd, he would choose between three schools. Tennessee, Georgia and Louisville. "I'm a Tennessee boy you know, representing the state. I love the orange and white. I love the fan base. I have a lot of family here so them being able to come and watch me play is important."

Taylor took an official visit to Tennessee the day after that All-Star game, and enjoyed his time in Knoxville so much that he cancelled a future official visit to Louisville.

And then on Wednesday, December 13th, Taylor decided that he couldn't wait any longer. Once again going to twitter, and tweeting that Tennessee was the place for him, saying that he was "1000% COMMITTED," along with a #PruittEra hashtag.

The previous week Taylor told me what was going to go into this decision.

"Just how I feel... if I feel like I am at home and really playing time, that opportunity," said Taylor. "You never want to go into a program and be told that you are gonna play. If it is given to you, you didn't earn it so, I'm just looking for that school that I can have a good relationship with the coaching staff and the players."

Tennessee remains Taylor's home sweet home.

Carter wrestlers pick up big wins in recent action

Cont. from page 1

and Daugherty all notched forfeit victories while Coffey and Smith recorded pins as the Hornets prevailed 42-30.

Against Sevier County in a 40-18 win, Ramsey won a decision while Smith, Cox, Jenkins, Weir, Daugherty and Coffey all won by forfeit.

Carter dropped a 44-30 decision to Catholic despite forfeit wins from Smith, Cox and Daugherty and pins from Hammontree and Jenkins. Smith also recorded a pin in a 113-pound exhibition match.

Carter also battled valiantly against powerhouse Halls. The Red Devils prevailed 42-24.

Ramsey, Coffey and Hammontree all won by forfeit and Smith earned a victory via the pin.

Dudley said he's pleased with the direction that his program is heading.

"It's great to see these kids have some success this year because they've been working so hard," Dudley said. "Last year, they worked hard and they were upset at the matches because we didn't get many wins.

"But my assistant, Tim [Free], told them that they had to get their butts kicked five or six times before they got their first win. You either win or you learn.

Hammontree, Jenkins,

Sands and Daugherty are all returners from last year's squad and Free, who coached the Hornets during the AAU days, was on Carter's last team before the school eliminated the program more than three decades ago.

Sands nearly qualified for the girls state tournament while Daugherty and Jenkins all had deep runs at the region championships. Hammontree spent much of last season on the junior varsity squad due to the school's depth in the weight class last year.

"We have three returners [on the boys team] and Kierra," Dudley said. "And they're all doing a good job teaching the younger kids."

Catholic's Brock Jancek

Cont. from page 3

Rocky Top. We're excited to be in it."

Unbeaten Bearden, the District 4-AAA leader, rode a 13-game win streak into Friday's game against Maryville. Catholic will host the Bulldogs Jan. 5.

In the meantime, the Irishmen will play Clinton Wednesday (Dec. 20) as the three-day Heritage Christmas Tournament gets underway.

NOW A TIGER: Former Catholic standout Luke Smith is starting at guard in his freshman season at Sewanee and averaging 13.3 points for the Tigers (4-4), who are at the holiday break in their season.

Smith also is averaging 5.6 rebounds and 4.1 assists for the NCAA Division III team that is a member of the Southern Athletic Association.



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A New Christmas Poem

Many thanks to Greg Davis for sharing this Christmas Poem

<p>Twas the night before Christmas, He lived all alone, In a one bedroom house made of Plaster and stone.</p> <p>I had come down the chimney With presents to give, And to see just who In this home did live.</p> <p>I looked all about, A strange sight i did see, No tinsel, no presents, Not even a tree.</p> <p>No stocking by mantle, Just boots filled with sand, On the wall hung pictures Of far distant lands.</p> <p>With medals and badges, Awards of all kinds, A sober thought Came through my mind.</p> <p>For this house was different, It was dark and dreary, I found the home of a soldier, Once i could see clearly.</p> <p>The soldier lay sleeping, Silent, alone, Curled up on the floor In this one bedroom home.</p> <p>The face was so gentle, The room in such disorder, Not how i pictured A United States soldier.</p> <p>Was this the hero Of whom I'd just read? Curled up on a poncho, The floor for a bed?</p>	<p>I realized the families That I saw this night, Owed their lives to these soldiers Who were willing to fight.</p> <p>Soon round the world, The children would play, And grownups would celebrate A bright Christmas day.</p> <p>They all enjoyed freedom Each month of the year, Because of the soldiers, Like the one lying here.</p> <p>I couldn't help wonder How many lay alone, On a cold Christmas Eve In a land far from home.</p> <p>The very thought Brought a tear to my eye, I dropped to my knees And started to cry.</p> <p>The soldier awakened And I heard a rough voice, "Santa don't cry, This life is my choice;</p> <p>I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more, My life is my god, My country, my corps."</p> <p>The soldier rolled over And drifted to sleep, I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.</p> <p>I kept watch for hours, So silent and still And we both shivered From the cold night's chill.</p>	<p>I didn't want to leave On that cold, dark, night, This guardian of honor So willing to fight.</p> <p>Then the soldier rolled over, With a voice soft and pure, Whispered, "carry on Santa, It's Christmas Day, all is secure."</p> <p>One look at my watch, And I knew he was right. "Merry Christmas my friend, And to all a good night."</p> <p>This poem was reported as written by a marine. The following is his request. I think it is reasonable....</p> <p><i>Please. Would you do me the kind favor of sending this to as many people as you can? Christmas will be coming soon, and some credit is due to our U.S. Servicemen and women for our being able to celebrate these festivities. Let's try in this small way to pay a tiny bit of what we owe.</i></p> <p><i>Stop and think of our heroes, living and dead, who sacrificed themselves for us. Please, do your small part to plant this small seed.</i></p> <p><i>May God bless you and have a Merry Christmas!!</i></p> <p><i>There are many who think we should bring our soldiers home. These guys and girls are front line troops. If we bring them home, are we bringing the frontline closer to home?</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>My thanks to all our soldiers past and present!</i></p>
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The Doctor is in

a weekly column by
Dr. Jim Ferguson

Measurements

This is an unusual Christmas season for me. I say this because all my shopping is done, the presents are wrapped and are already under the tree. I'm not being smug because my wife Becky, like most women, does the lion's share of Christmas shopping. Actually, she likes shopping, and I don't want to deprive her of this joy. And remember Ferguson's axiom #5, "Women shop; men buy."

In truth, the entire fall is "my gifting season." You see, Becky and I were married in September, her birthday is in October and both of our daughters were likewise born in the tenth month of the Gregorian calendar. So, the "gifting season" for me begins with the day Becky took me in, extends through multiple birthdays and concludes

with gifts commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ.

I try to pay attention to gifting hints from my girls, but my family is so blessed we want for little of substance. And this Christmas the adults in my extended family have decided to make donations to charities rather than trying to find gifts for people who already have so much.

I'm relieved this Christmas Season because most years I find myself wandering in shopping malls along with other addled men seeking inspiration for gifts. Adding to my annual confusion is the sizing of women's clothing. As a science based guy I understand that measurements must relate to an agreed upon standard. For example, if I use a tape measure to determine the dimensions of a door frame, I must be sure

that I'm reading the numbers in inches rather than centimeters.

Some years ago I learned that more expensive women's clothing has a different standard of measurement than used with less expensive brands. And I know of at least one higher-end women's shop in Knoxville that has developed their own scale with sizes 0, 1, 2 and 3. Perhaps this is something like small, medium, large and extra large in men's clothing. However, using these adjectives would obviously be bad marketing in a women's store - if not suicidal!

Some years ago I was attending a medical conference in Mexico, and we decided to take our daughters with us to the fancy resort. Unfortunately, our luggage was lost and the winter clothes on our backs didn't cut it in Puerto Vallarta. So the next morning we went to town for swimsuits, sunscreen, toothbrushes and underwear. I'm a medium size guy, so I assumed Fruit of the Loom was standard, at least in the non-metric Northern Hemisphere. That night at dinner, Becky noted my pained expression. I explained that my underwear was cutting off the blood flow to my legs - and elsewhere. It was over Fajitas that I realized

"Mexican medium" is not medium for a gringo, especially one with a full belly!

Many people now do their shopping online, and it's one reason why Jeff Bezo is one of the richest men in the world. I like Amazon's service, but I get more inspiration from Christmas catalogues than surfing the web. I attribute this year's Christmas shopping success to both a catalogue and their local brick and mortar store. It was a relief to point to a picture in the catalogue of what I wanted and have the helpful sales lady shepherd me around the store. Again, the only touchy part of the exercise was sizing. It helped to compare my daughters' and wife's height, etc. to my shepherd's physical attributes. However, in this now surrealistic world, I'm just glad I wasn't shopping for women's unmentionables at Victoria's Secret.

I love everything about Christmas, but especially Christmas music. Carols resonate throughout the Ferguson household beginning at Thanksgiving. If you have a smart TV, look for or download the Pandora app. This site has all types of Christmas music, including traditional, classical, country, doo-wop and more. Christmas music transports me out of politics and the cares of the world to a

better plane, and helps me focus on family, friends and the "reason for the season." Perhaps we should pipe Christmas music into Congress, The White House and the press room beginning at Thanksgiving and extending through New Year's Eve. "The Beltway Boys" would still have plenty of time to fight during the other eleven months of the year.

My church is noted for its music ministry and its magnificent Casavant Frère organ. Recently, the choir and accompanying musicians performed our annual Christmas cantata. The sermon was preached with beautiful music and voice. Mozart wrote magnificent orchestral and operatic music. Musical experts surmise that Mozart considered the human voice to be the most musical of instruments. Though I am not a musical expert, I think Mozart is right. And as Count Basie said, "If it sounds good, it is." If you doubt me listen to the Kyrie of Mozart's Requiem, the acapella group Pentatonix or go to YouTube and search Sugar Plums' Holiday Treats, especially their medley of The First Noel/It Came Upon a Midnight Clear/Joy to the World. Nuanced vocalizations are sublime.

This year is also unusual

because all my family will be together on Christmas Eve. My daughter from Portland, Oregon and her family will be with us at The Big House for food, wassail, carolling, and children's "performances." What is also unique is that Big House, once mine, is now my daughter's, and she and her husband will be the host for Christmas Eve in their new home. I sense a passing of the torch.

I have already received the best Christmas gift, and perhaps someday I'll tell you about it. Until then, I maintain that we have all received the best Christmas gift which came, not by UPS, but a "long time ago" in a country "far far away." What amazes me is that so many still choose their way and reject the Way.

The notion of "intellectual honesty" is often used to justify a non-spiritual life. Like the Proverbist 3000 years ago, I've come to realize that I can't know everything. Demanding that reality conform to what I know or can measure is hubris and leads to a limited horizon. I now welcome the mystery and the majesty, and, especially at Christmas, I celebrate it.

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

Leading in-home senior care provider, Acti-Kare, enters Southwest Knoxville

Acti-Kare is extremely excited that franchise owner Miya Sin has started servicing Knoxville and the surrounding areas. Acti-Kare In-Home Responsive Care has over 130 locations nationwide, and has helped thousands receive the proper care they deserve.

Miya was taught growing up that "elders know best" and, "Respect and obey your elders" is one of the most important virtues. Miya has over 10 years of experience as a private caregiver, and specializes in Alzheimer patient care. Miya understands the tremendous benefits that in-home care can provide. "I am very passionate

about providing quality care to seniors. To care for those who once cared for us is one of the highest honors. The smile on their faces and the laughter they enjoy are the reasons why I have built my career around senior care."

Acti-Kare of Southwest Knoxville has multiple initiatives, but Miya's focus is on helping people live full, independent, and dignified lives within the comfort of their own home. Her caregivers are heavily screened, licensed and bonded. Most importantly, they all have a genuine caring heart.

"We are not your average in-home care provider," explains Miya, "Acti-Kare



Miya Sin

promotes an active lifestyle and memory stimulation, which helps seniors build confidence."

If you know of someone who may need care, or have any questions please do not hesitate to call Miya Sin at (865) 383-1160 or visit swknoxville.actikare.com.

Find the Christmas Spirit in the Heart of Knoxville

Those meandering through Market Square with visions of sugarplums might also get a glimpse of the true meaning of Christmas - and it comes with free hot cocoa.

An easy-to-find gift-wrapped tour truck will be the centerpiece of "The True Meaning of Christmas Tour" festivities from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday, December 21, in Market Square near Holidays on Ice.

Knoxville is one of the final stops for The United Methodist Church as it hits the road in 16 states this year to visit 21 cities to offer free hot cocoa and offer an invitation to join with others to unwrap the true meaning of Christmas. Church Street United Methodist Church, Second United Methodist Church and Central United Methodist Church have teamed up to locally host the come-and-go event. The entire community is invited.

"We want to offer our community a

different type of gift: an opportunity to celebrate what Christmas is all about by engaging in service with neighbors, boosting joy and building relationships with others," said the Rev. Chuck Starks, senior pastor at Church Street United Methodist Church.

The day's activities include a collection of canned goods to benefit families served by Beacon of Hope, a partnership between Church Street and Vestal United Methodist churches that serves the South Knoxville Community. The food co-op feeds 20 families a month, and additional support such as necessities, clothing, Christmas gifts and school supplies is also provided.

Attendees are invited to bring food donations to The True Meaning of Christmas Tour stop between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. on December 21.

A survey conducted by Pew Research

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Find the Christmas Spirit

Cont. from page 1

Center in 2013 indicated that the activities that people least liked at Christmas time are the commercialism/materialism, money/expenditure, and shopping/crowds.

What they most look forward to is spending time with family and friends (69 percent) and religious reflection/church (11 percent).

The True Meaning of Christmas tour will stop in

21 cities from December 2-24. Follow the tour online at UnwrapChristmas.org and #UnwrapChristmas.

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