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Plans unveiled for Gateway Park

By Pete Gawda

Plans were unveiled recently for the newest addition to Knoxville's over 1,000 acres of urban wilderness when a block party was held at the southern end of James White Parkway, the site of the proposed Urban Wilderness Gateway Park.

Plans for the park include amenities such as a landscaped access point and gathering space at Baker

Creek Preserve and at the southern end of James White Parkway, parking, pedestrian and bike pathways and trails, a bike park, additional children's nature play areas, a rock climbing wall under the overpass and improved connectivity to existing neighborhoods, businesses, schools and the planned BMX facility at South-Doyle Middle School.

"It's a big day" said city

councilwoman Stephanie Welch, whose South Knoxville district includes the area of the park. She said that when she first came to Knoxville in 1995 she discovered what she called "a road to nowhere," at James White Parkway. At that time she thought the end of the parkway would make a good park and now, 23 years later, she said they were officially starting the process to create that

park. "One of the things I like about Knoxville is how engaged our community is," Welch said.

"This gateway park is ours to shape and create," asserted Rebekah J. Montgomery, who oversees urban wilderness projects for the city. She said that conceptual plans are being formed and planners wanted to hear from the people. "What makes

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A representation of the proposed Urban Wilderness Gateway Park showing its connection via greenway to Baker Creek Preserve.



PHOTO BY KEN LAY

Members of the Walter P. Taylor Boys and Girls Club select their gifts at a recent Christmas in June party. The presents were donated by the Friendly Readers Book Club. The book club also sponsored a citywide bus tour for the children on Saturday, June 2.

Local bus tour exposes youth to city history

By Ken Lay

Several local retired educators and professionals from the Friendly Readers Book Club hosted a historical bus trip for some area children recently.

The Friendly Readers and the Walter P. Taylor Boys and Girls Club hosted a bus tour that showed the club members some parts of the historical Knoxville landscape on Saturday, June 2.

The tour went past Knoxville College, the Alex Haley Statue on Dandridge Avenue and went through parts of Downtown Knoxville, other parts of East Knoxville, Lonsdale and Mechanicsville.

The tour was part of the Educational Strategies to Combat Anticipated Prison Entrance (ESCAPE) Program, which employs innovative strategies to help keep inner-city youth out of the prison system.

The Friendly Readers Book Club adopted

the Walter P. Taylor Boys and Girls Club nearly two decades ago. The club began the ESCAPE Program in 2016 after viewing a presentation by author, associate professor and civil rights activist Michelle Alexander, who wrote "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness," which was published in 2010.

At that presentation in Nashville, Alexander challenged the audience to change the epidemic of incarceration.

So the 11 retired educators and professionals who comprise the Friendly Readers Book Club went to work.

"We adopted the Walter P. Taylor Boys and Girls Club some years ago and our objective is to influence these young people by exposing them to educational and community involvement," said Geraldine Taylor, a retired educator in Knox County, who remains an advocate for the community's youth.

The recent bus tour was guided by historian Bob Booker, who explained the significance of the various stops, which included old Knoxville High School, old Knoxville General Hospital (now Serene Manor), Lonsdale Elementary School, the Green Magnet Academy, the Beaumont Community, Sam E. Hill Elementary Schools, Cal Johnson Park and Recreation Center, Danny Mayfield Park, Maynard Elementary School, the Cansler YMCA, Vine Magnet Middle School and Edward Cothren Pool.

Booker said that he was privileged to narrate the tour.

"We have kids today who are between the ages of five and 12," Booker said. "We want to show them part of their community and heritage. This is important but they may not fully grasp all of the today."

"They may come back later and then that light bulb goes off and they remember being here."

Amplified busking, goats, and shopping center changes

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

Busking is a term used for entertaining in public, often with music or other performance, and it is more or less legal in downtown Knoxville. You've probably seen these performers at Market Square, in Happy Holler or other places around town.

The city council discussed limiting loud speaker amplification of those performances on public property and right-of-ways Tuesday and passed, on first reading, to do so.

Councilwoman Lauren Rider said she has been getting a lot of comments about amplified performers recently.

Police Chief David Rausch said that the police can respond to calls and give a warning.

"To me this is interfering on the First Amendment," Councilwoman Seema Singh-Perez said.

Rausch replied, "We are protectors of the First Amendment; this doesn't infringe, it's just not the manner."

"It could have unintended consequences," Singh-Perez replied.

The police chief said that performers can get a permit for amplification at the police department and indicated the permit may be without charge.

Rick Emmett, downtown coordinator, called the no-amplification ordinance a "smart idea" to make

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Rosie's World

Commission considers bridges, appointments, Hardin Valley plans

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

When the Knox County Commission meets in work session next Monday they may face an agenda of more than 60 items including requests for zoning changes. The chairman and commissioners will set their the agenda for their June 25 regular meeting, placing most of the items on a consent agenda that will pass with one vote.

Items that may see a discussion could include two appointments to the Library Advisory Board, appointments to the Richard L. Bean Juvenile Service

Center, and the planning commission.

The commission may also discuss changing the county's funding of the Kimberlin Heights Bridge Replacement project, upping it to 22% from 2%. The state has reduced its contribution.

A construction contract with a yet-unnamed company may be discussed for the replacement of the Kodak Road Bridge over Tuckahoe Creek.

A walking trail parking lot and monument sign installation for the Karns Connector may also be discussed.

A Hazmat simulation training system could also be discussed for the Knoxville Fire Department and Rural Metro Fire Department under a \$10,077 grant from the state.

Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett is asking the commission to approve an organizational chart for the executive branch. A 85% grant from the state for the Knox Recovery Court and the Veterans Treatment Court is also on the agenda.

The planning commission staff may be asked to prepare a Hardin Valley Community Plan and present it to the commission

for review.

The commission may also talk about closing a portion of Twin Oak Lane between Martin Mill Pike and Governor John Sevier Highway.

Chairman Smith wants to discuss a presentation to local state legislators and Commissioner Carson Dailey would like to invite Justin Cucchiara to make a presentation about the Seven Islands Birding Park.

Commissioner Charles Busler wants a discussion about September's upcoming commission reorganization and the swearing in of elected officials.

Do you ever have an "OH" day?

I'm sure most of us have had an "oh" day. What is it? It's something that you can't comprehend but you're glad it happened. An "oh" moment can happen when you see a newborn baby in it mother's arms. Or when something marvelous happens and your mouth creates an "O"--from surprise, or from an act that you can't comprehend but yet it fills you with awe and mystery. Such as viewing from the top of a mountain-top the rolling hills below. The love between two people can cause an "oh", whether it be between two lovers, or two older people, or between two youngsters.

Your mouth can make an "oh" if you see a beautiful plant, or the waves splashing on the shore of a beach. Even seeing a beautifully made car, or house, or a painting hanging on a wall can cause an "oh" There are also little "ohs" that happen in everyday life. A luscious cake made for someone's birthday, a beautiful afghan knitted for a loved one, even relaxing after cleaning your house, can produce a big "oh."

Most "ohs" cause happiness, but, there are some that don't make us feel too good. Get rid of those "ohs" as soon as possible. The good news is that you can always regain your "oh" if you find yourself bogged down in a particular rut. Look for the "oh" walking through your day while looking at "ordinary" places and people with new eyes What makes you say "oh?"

I experienced a huge "oh" on Mother's Day at my church when I was blessed with the "Mother of the Year" award. It was totally unexpected but much appreciated. Those "ohs" are blessings from God. Collect them and bring them out on that day when you're feeling a little blue and need to be uplifted. You'll be so glad you did.

Thought for the day: It's not the honors and not the titles that is of ultimate importance. Its what resides inside. Fred Rogers

Send comments to rosemerie@tt.net. Thank you.



PHOTOS BY PETE GAWDA.

Above, Guests at a block party held Saturday, June 1 at the southern end of James White Parkway look at a model of the proposed Urban Wilderness Gateway Park to be constructed at that location. Below, Guests look at a map of South Knoxville showing the city's urban wilderness areas and the proposed Urban Wilderness Gateway Park. They were asked to use colored push pins to mark the location of their own homes.

Plans unveiled for Gateway Park

Continued from page 1

South Knoxville special is our neighborhoods," said Montgomery as she recognized representatives of several neighborhood associations present.

A brief downpour before the program began did not dampen spirits as people gathered under a tent cooled by fans to view conceptual drawings and hear a description of what is planned. Nearby was a large model of what the finished park would look like. Guests were asked to fill out survey forms listing what they liked about Knoxville's

urban wilderness, their favorite things to do in the urban wilderness and the thing they would most like to see in the gateway park. On a large map of South Knoxville showing the proposed park they were asked to use colored push pins to mark their houses. After the speeches, vendors were on hand to serve cooling refreshments and there was a play area for children.

Construction is scheduled to start next year on phase 1 of the project with ribbon cutting on that phase to be held in 2020.



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Publisher's Position

Bitter Devils & Better Angels



By Steve Hunley, Publisher
publisher@knoxfocus.com

"You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time."
— Abraham Lincoln

Editorial writers for the Nashville Tennessean and the Memphis Commercial Appeal have had a big time lately talking about civility

in politics and "fear mongering." David Plazas of the Tennessean wrote "What the president says matters to the nation and to the world, and the president should set a tone that unites, that empowers, that inspires and that enlightens people." It makes me wonder what just country Mr. Plazas lives in, otherwise he would certainly know there is a large swath of the American people who never got over the election of Donald Trump in 2016. These people reject the notion Trump was elected president and not a few of them glory in being part of the "resistance." Of course people like David Plazas likely believed Barack Obama did that very thing: united this country, empowered it, inspired it and enlightened it. Naturally Obama did no such thing; he may have been perceived that way by some folks, but I can assure you, not all folks. In the current atmosphere, I don't know who might be able to unite this country. Mr. Plazas quoted the President from his Nashville visit: "We are taking back our country. We are returning our country back to our great American patriots." Plazas wondered, "What does that mean? Who does that mean?"

Does that mean returning to a time when Nash and Lewis (civil rights leaders) had to fight to get served at a lunch counter?" No, Mr. Plazas, it means there are a good many people in this country that no longer believe that America is the greatest nation on Earth and who believe we should be ashamed of our country. It means there are people in this country that believe our nation should come first. It means there are people in this country that don't think we should have to walk with our heads held down in abject disgrace.

Plazas wrote, "We need our leaders from the mayor to the president to provide a selfless, civil leadership at a time when basic facts, history and institutions are under assault." He's right about that, although I doubt we'd agree as to just how history has been revised and what institutions are under attack. Nor have I seen any editorials or opinion pieces castigating Democrats for engaging in uncivil behavior.

David Waters wrote in the Commercial Appeal a similar editorial, citing "bitter devils" as well as "better angels," a phrase also employed by David Plazas. Waters reminded readers it was Abraham

Lincoln, "the great Republican president" -(surely the last Republican any newspaper writer thought was great) who had appealed to "the better angels of our nature." Waters did note California congressman Adam Schiff was an example of a Democrat who isn't "above disrespectful and divisive rhetoric." Good Lord, there's an entire Congress full of them and one only has to watch CNN or MSNBC to see them form a beeline to denounce Trump in the most bitter and partisan and oftentimes personal terms. Waters cites a study issued by the National Academy of Sciences, which claims Trump voters were motivated to back him in 2016 because of "fears of waning power and status in a changing country." Waters wrote Trump supporters were worried "about cultural displacement", "especially among white, working-class voters." Now we get to the root of the matter. Waters decried the gubernatorial campaigns of Congresswoman Diane Black and businessman Randy Boyd whom he believes are attempting to reap the harvest of votes spurred by the candidates taking a hardline against illegal immigration. Waters scoffs at the legislature passing a bill to

outlaw sanctuary cities in Tennessee by pointing out there are none in the Volunteer State. Now, after recent action by the Tennessee State Legislature, there certainly won't be any sanctuary cities in Tennessee. Waters cites the U. S. Customs and Border Protection as the source for noting "cross-border migration is at its lowest level on record," which is true, but that trend started after the election of Donald Trump when it seemed more readily apparent the government would actually enforce its immigration laws. Waters poo-pooed the notion of violent criminals coming across our borders, noting that there is only "a handful or murders each year" committed by illegal aliens. Waters also pointed out there "are an estimated 6,000 - 10,000 MS-13 gang members in the United States according to the FBI", while there are perhaps as many as 1.4 million "domestic gang members in the country." Both numbers are entirely too large and Waters doesn't explain exactly why we should be unconcerned by foreign or domestic gangs while violent crime is on the rise in cities like Memphis. David Waters thinks we should all be more concerned about opioid deaths

and "unhinged mass shooters" which he believes are more of a threat to our society than "undocumented workers." Gang members aren't usually mere workers and they aren't "undocumented," Mr. Waters, they are illegal aliens.

Here's what really bothers these folks. Donald Trump doesn't speak for a globalist utopia, but rather a strong and vibrant America who puts its own citizens first. Donald Trump resonates with the people who get up and go to work every morning and want to make a better life for themselves and their families. Donald Trump speaks to those who still hold a reverence for this country's flag, believe in God and love this country. Donald Trump addresses the concerns of the people who have paid the freight on everything in this country and helped defend it with their blood and lives. Not everybody shares the vision of David Waters and David Plazas, but by golly, there are still tens of millions of Americans who share mine, especially here in Tennessee.

The bitterest devils around are those who just can't accept the notion Donald Trump is President of the United States of America.

Amplified busking, goats, and shopping center changes

Cont. from page 1

the ordinance city-wide. "Busking is going to occur," he said. Councilman Andrew Roberto said while he is concerned about freedom of speech the amplification ordinance is "not a ban."

Councilwoman Gwen McKenzie asked Rausch about churches holding events in public parks and Rausch said they can apply for a permit. Councilman George Wallace asked if the permit could be applied for online.

"I'll check into that, it's a simple process," Rausch said.

Only Singh-Perez voted "No" on the first reading of the ordinance.

Also passed on first reading was the new "goat ordinance," allowing private property owners to hire goats to help control overgrown lots. Erin Gill, sustainability director, asked that permitting temporary electric fences be added. The 12-volt fences would have to be removed after the goats have completed their task.

Two ordinances passed first readings involving both shopping malls. One opens the malls for uses not now permitted, such as auto sales.

Attorney Arthur Seymour said that Tesla Motors has inquired about welling vehicles at West Town Mall. The planning commission is requesting the changes to the SC-3 zonings.

MPC Director Gerald Green said the ordinance would place "some very tight limits" on the changes and that all plans would have to be approved by the planners. Green confirmed, on a question from Roberto, that the changes would allow, at both malls, things like health clubs, entertainment areas, and multi-dwelling facilities. He said the request comes from the Simon Group owners of West Town.

Approved on first reading was the rezoning of the former Toys"R"Us store at Knoxville Center Mall changing the SC-3 zone there to PC-2, Retail and Distribution. The change would allow EBCO to relocate there. Green said the change could affect traffic there which "could be challenging" because the building is located near a proposed multi-use residential area.

"The existing 50 to 60 year old zoning didn't anticipate these uses," he said.

In other action the council approved an increase in the

contract for the First Creek Greenway Project, working with the state on an accelerated bus corridor on Broadway,

issuing \$17 million in bonds to cover the street light conversion, and approved a fiber optic agreement with a

company that plans to serve downtown businesses with internet and voice services.



The Knoxville Focus cordially invites you to the launch and book signing reception of

Love Anytime

by Rosie Moore

Tuesday, June 19
5:00-8:00 p.m.

Fountain City Lions Club
5345 North Broadway,
Knoxville, Tennessee 37918

Rosie Moore enjoys reading, people, and spending time with her 21 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren. She started writing at a young age.



Rosie circa 2003 Focus archives

Rosie grew up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, for the first forty-six years of her life, before she moved to Knoxville, where she currently resides surrounded by her loving family.



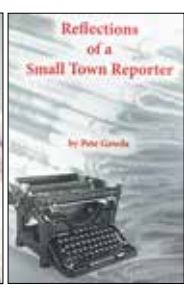
Rosie 2018

In the last decade people suggested she try to get her writing published, and she has since published two: "Daisy Mae" and "The Girls," both inspired by the women in her life.

Rosie is the longest serving columnist at The Focus, contributing "Focus on Seniors" in the paper's early days and nowadays submitting her thoughts and musings for "Rosie's World."

"Love Anytime" is a mostly fictitious love story, with some true-life episodes included. It is the story of a young girl who tries to circumvent and overcome a problem or difficulty in a clever and surreptitious way. She thinks she finds the answer when she meets the love of her life until war, imprisonment, and the chaos of life keep them apart. Will their love survive?

Also Appearing:



Recently published Focus contributors Pete Gawda, author of Reflections of a Small Town Reporter, and Ralphine Major, co-author of the Piddle Diddle the Widdle Penguin series, will be available to meet with their 2018 works.

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Limited copies of "Love Anytime" will be available for purchase at the event. It is also available for order at www.barnesandnoble.com.

Biggs and Gerke answer Focus questions

Compiled by Mike Steely

At-Large Commissioner Ed Brantley isn't seeking re-election for the District 11 county wide commission seat. Republican Justin Biggs is coming off a primary win against former Commissioner R. Larry Smith and will face Democratic challenger Daniel Gerke in the August 2nd General Election.

The Knoxville Focus is asking local candidates who have opposition several questions. Here is a summary of the answers in the Biggs-Gerke race:

How do you feel about the need to raise property taxes?

Biggs: As of right now I do not see a reason to raise property taxes. Specific issues may occur causing a need for an increase; I believe our growth will keep us from having to raise taxes as long as Knox County keeps progressing forward.

Gerke: I think we need to look at what we can do to reduce inefficiencies within our County Government first as well as eliminate the fee we pay the state of Tennessee for the taxes our county collects. b. I also think we need to revisit how our property taxes are currently set. Today if your property value goes up your tax rate goes down. The property tax rate calculation needs to be reviewed since we have a road repaving plan that is currently on a 75 year schedule, meaning we aren't really keeping our roads up-to-date.

c. We also have a significant amount of debt, about \$660 million dollars in debt. As the county continues to grow we're going to need to build more roads, parks, greenways, schools, and hire more teachers, police and other support staff for the county. In order to ensure we continue to offer

a vibrant community, we should explore all options and keep an open mind, and if that means we need to increase taxes, then that should be considered. When I mention a possible tax increase, I'm not saying we should raise individual taxes by thousands of dollars, there are enough people in the county that a minimal tax increase, if needed, should provide the necessary funding for the services our community needs

Should the commission have a larger say in how the schools operate?

Biggs: I believe we need to bridge the gap between commission and the school board. Commission can help out with certain areas. But the school board is elected to serve our schools, if help is needed I would gladly volunteer.

Gerke: I think the County Commission should work closely with the School Board, but I think the School Board, since they are the experts, should be in charge of determining what they need in order to operate top in class schools. As a County Commissioner, I would advocate for the schools and fight to get the funding they need to pay competitive wages to the teachers and staff. I would also fight for the appropriate money and resources to maintain the schools so our educators, staff, and children are in safe and healthy buildings so they can focus on teaching and learning. Education is very important to me and is the reason I moved my daughter to Knox County.

How do you feel about face-to-face visits at the county jail?

Biggs: Family members are now able to visit with

loved ones through a Face-Time-like experience. If the need for face to face visits keeps arising I am for specific times and dates for this to happen.

Gerke: Inmates are human beings and they should be allowed to have face-to-face meetings with those that are there to support them while they're incarcerated and when they are released from jail. I don't believe in cutting people off from their support networks. I know there are concerns about drugs and other contraband being brought in through these face-to-face visits, but cutting these out and making people pay for the virtual visits is not something I agree with. Most people in the county jail are from lower income families and removing them from having direct access to a pay to see approach will only break down their support network. I would work with Sheriff Spangler to get the appropriate funding he needs to ensure that contraband and drugs are not introduced through the face-to-face visits.

Do you have a favorite in who becomes commission chair?

Biggs: Our current commission chair does a great job and serves the community very well. When it is time for him to be replaced I would like to see a female presence as our new Chair.

Gerke: Commissioner John Schoonmaker. John keeps an open mind to things and is someone I can work with. He is passionate about his role as a commissioner and thoughtful with how he approaches problems. He's also my current representative for District 5. When I made the decision to run for County Commission, I met with John and he was kind and helpful. Although

I may not agree with all of Commissioner Schoonmaker's positions, I do think he would make a good Chair for the Commission and I feel he is a fair man.

What committees are you interested in serving on?

Biggs: Investment Committee, Emergency Communication Board, Parks and Recreation, Visit Knoxville, Code Commission, Beer Committee, Arena Use, are where I would like to be included. I plan on being very active upon Commission.

Gerke: I would like to serve on the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee's main function is to control the purse strings for the count. To me, this committee is one of the most important committees to be a part of. I would also want to sit on the joint education committee so that I can continue to advocate for our schools, teachers, staff, and students. Lastly, I would like to sit on the Parks & Recreation Board. I am an avid mountain biker and hiker. My daughter Zoe loves going to the different parks including bringing our dog Bruster to the dog parks. I also love Knoxville and our natural assets, with the mountains, rivers, lakes.

Should the commission meetings time be moved to 6 p.m. so more citizens can attend?

Biggs: We are elected by



Justin Biggs



Daniel Gerke

the citizens. I believe making it easier on them to attend would be an asset.

Gerke: If opening the meetings at 6 p.m. increases the amount of citizen engagement in county government, I would absolutely support moving the meeting start time up.

Why are you running?

Biggs: I am running for the betterment of Knox County. I am a fresh face that has been active in the community for some time. I want to see Knox County keep heading in a positive direction and I feel I am the best candidate in this race to do that. Representing every single citizen and giving them a voice upon Commission is my first goal in letting their voice be heard.

Gerke: I have a strong belief in the importance of local government and the crucial role of local officials in creating and nurturing a strong, vibrant and happy community. To achieve this goal, I believe in the importance of quality education, safe schools, and

The Knoxville Focus regretfully published incorrect photos of West High School's 2018 Valedictorian and Salutatorian in a recent edition. We sincerely apologize for the error and wish to congratulate West High School's 2018 senior class and recognize Connor Capell and Kacey Tomosovic for their excellence.



Connor Capell,
Valedictorian



Kacey Tomosovic,
Salutatorian

Ethics Committee to hear Anders complaint

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

The Knox County Ethics Committee meets in special session on Wednesday, June 13, to hear a preliminary report from the law department on a complaint against Commissioner Brad Anders. Bruce Williams has charged Anders, a former

candidate for county mayor, with accepting gifts from Rural/Metro prior to his vote in favor of an early renewal of that ambulance service's county contract.

The 8:30 a.m. meeting will apparently hear a report from investigator Terry Moran. Moran had previously

reported on similar complaints about Commissioners Bob Thomas and Charles Busler. The charges were dismissed after a public hearing.

The ethics committee may vote to dismiss the complaint based on similar information in the previous case.

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Neighborhood working group hears ideas for cleanup up of blighted properties

By Pete Gawda

Concerned citizens who want to do something about vacant and blighted properties in their neighborhoods met as a neighborhood working group on Thursday, June 7 at the Cansler Family YMCA. The meeting was facilitated by Debbie Sharp, assistant neighborhood coordinator for the city's office of neighborhoods and Cheri Hollifield, administrative specialist for the city's neighborhood code enforcement. The group meets the first Thursday of each month. Under a new format the group reviews blighted properties on odd numbered months. On even numbered months, such as June, the group hears from city officials and other speakers on blighted property issues and related topics.



PHOTO BY PETE GAWDA.

Cheri Hollifield, left, administrative specialist for neighborhood code enforcement, and Debbie Sharp, right, assistant neighborhood coordinator for the city's office of neighborhoods, presided over a neighborhood working group concerned with vacant and blighted properties. The event was held Thursday evening, June 7 at the Cansler Family YMCA.

Sharp and Hollifield shared with the group what they had learned from attending a conference in May in Milwaukee, WI, on what other cities are doing about vacant and blighted properties.

Sharp started off the meeting by sharing a strategy used by the City of Memphis for dealing with blighted properties. In an area with many blighted

properties the idea is to restore several lesser damaged properties first rather than tackling the worst properties first. Then progress can be shown rapidly as the number of rehabilitated properties increases quickly. This causes the rehabilitation project

to gain momentum and encourages neighborhood groups to get involved. Sharp said the rapid changes would inspire hope in the neighborhood. Another part of this strategy is to start at an anchor spot such as a prominent landmark or historical property.

Work would proceed from these anchor spots. Sharp said with this strategy as others see the progress, they will clean up properties in between.

Hollifield related how one neighborhood organization in Milwaukee did an assessment of the

neighborhood. As one person drove around the neighborhood, a passenger filled out a survey form on blighted properties. Then letters were sent to the owners of a properties not up to code. The letters encouraged the

Continue on page 4

2nd Annual Community and Social Justice Fair

East Tennessee Community Labs is hosting the Second Annual Community and Social Justice Fair on Saturday, June 16, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The fair will be held at the Magnolia Avenue campus of Pellissippi State Community College, 1610 E Magnolia Ave, Knoxville, TN 37917. The fair is free and open to the public.

Taking part will be a broad spectrum of more than two dozen East Tennessee organizations advocating for progress on education, environment, affordable housing, immigration, reproductive health, common-sense gun reform, economic equity, and equal treatment for women, for the LGBTQ community, and for racial, religious, and ethnic minorities. There will be breakout sessions on topics such as racism and economics, strategic planning for grassroots organizations, and using social media for organizing.

The fair is an opportunity for East Tennesseans to learn more about the organizations in their communities doing the important work of advocating for a more just and compassionate world.

East Knoxville Community Meeting hears expansion plans for Fort Sanders

By Pete Gawda

As Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center nears 100 years of service, the hospital is facing growing pains and is about to engage in a building program. The hospital's chief administrative officer, Keith Altshuler, detailed expansion plans at the Monday, June 3 East Knoxville Community Meeting held at the Burlington Branch Library.

Altshuler began his presentation by describing the current situation at the hospital, which was founded in 1919. The hospital currently has 541 beds, handles about 51,000 emergency room patients a year and delivers over 2,500 babies yearly. The hospital has 2,000 employees and serves 16 counties. There are departments to cover every medical area except

transplants and burns. Altshuler said the hospital has a strong oncology department and has 297 active physicians and 213 health care professions.

According to Altshuler the hospital has a 4-star rating out of a possible 5 stars from MEDICARE. It also has had the highest level safety rating for seven consecutive rating periods. He said the hospital provides nationally recognized stroke care.

Then Altshuler went on to explain the hospital's expansion plans.

"We think this new plan will have great flow. We will speed up care and offer more care," he said. "We are doing this because of acute need."

Plans call for renovation of the emergency department,

renovation of the main lobby and expansion of the parking garage. The emergency department will expand from 27 to 45 beds. The three existing ambulance bays will be increased to four. Several additional critical care beds will be located near the ambulance bays. "I think this will help our emergency department," Altshuler said.

Also, two additional floors will be added to the top of the professional building which currently houses doctors' offices. These two additional floors will contain hospital beds and will increase the number of critical care beds from 50 to 96. Altshuler said several critical care beds were lost with the closing of Baptist Hospital.

The entire building program is expected to be completed

in two years. With work on the emergency department expected to take 16 months and the addition of two top floors at the same time is expected to take two years. In response to a question from the audience Altshuler said that no streets will be closed because of construction or as the result of the expansion.

Altshuler said that construction cost for a parking garage is \$16,000 to \$20,000 per parking spot. He said it was his goal to one day eliminate all charges for parking. Currently there are contracts in place which preclude free parking.

Altshuler said there was some push back from community members who wanted residential rather than commercial development in the area.



PHOTO BY PETE GAWDA.

Lincoln Lincoln asks a question about expansion plans for Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center during an East Knoxville Town Hall meeting on Monday, June 3.

There are three houses and an old grocery store that will have to be either demolished

Continue on page 2

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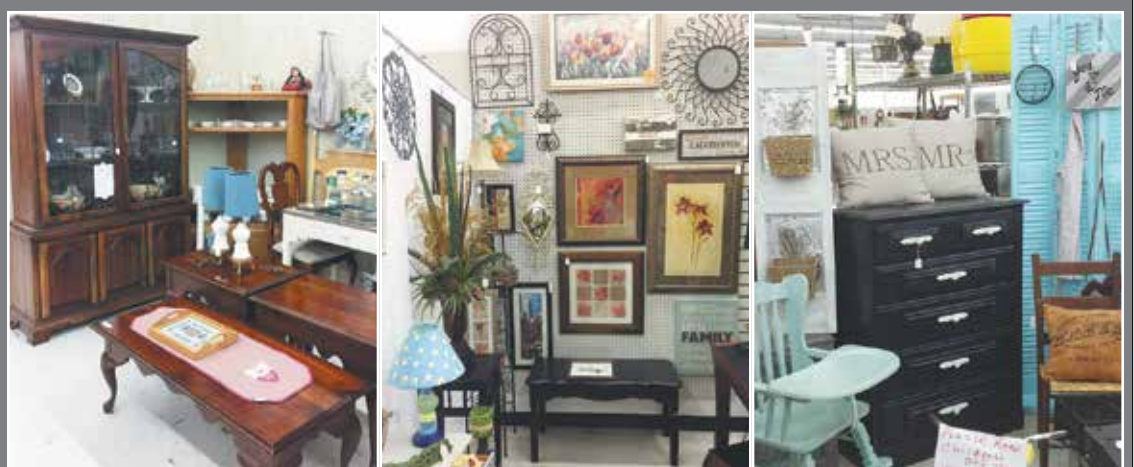


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Be nice



By Joe Rector
joerector@comcast.net

I arrived at the Knox County Clerk's office about five minutes before it opened. A man in front of me said the last time he completed this chore, he was number 50 in line. However, at that early hour, I walked in and immediately met one of the workers there. Her cheery voice and kind attitude made renewing my tags easy and pleasant. The fact is that we need more of this kind of behavior in our world.

The clerk's employee unarms visitors with her friendly demeanor. In return, others relax and return the kindness. Everyday, those workers at that office face throngs of drivers who want to renew licenses or registration stickers. The job demands patience and efficiency. For them to be kind also to folks, especially the ones who are more than a bit annoyed by the wait, is a credit to them. I didn't get the name of the woman at the Cedar Bluff office, but if she sees this column, I

want to make sure to thank her for being nice.

Fast food businesses are other places filled with stress on employees. Hungry customers are in a hurry to get their food and eat it or take it home to families. True, sometimes those workers at the businesses have no regard for customers and never worry that the line through the drive-thru wraps around the building. However, most of the folks on that side of the counter are concerned about processing orders as quickly as possible. We who are ordering food might make the day a bit easier for them by being nice. That means saying thank you and foregoing our first instincts to tear into a teenager for having to wait a long time for a burger, order of fries, and drink.

Nothing tests the limits of our temper as does a phone call to a major corporation. Whether the help is with our cable, computer, or health plan, most customers fume when

the first thing they hear is a recording. If the wait is long, company representatives are in trouble when they finally answer calls. Our first tendencies are to blast workers for failing to answer quicker. Never mind that the phone lines are jammed with customers; we want help now. A kind person on the other end can quickly diffuse angry customers. If that person can quickly take care of our problems or questions, we are a bit stunned. In the end, we change our tunes and become kinder, gentler people.

Now, I'm the first to admit that my patience wears thin quicker than most people, and I've been a surly S.O.B. at times. However, when people are automatically pleasant, I become a calmer person as well. In fact, I enjoy talking with the worker and tell her how much I appreciate the kindness and help. That's the way the world should be. More consideration for others makes everyone feel a bit better about life. One thing is for sure: we need to remember what our parents told us when we were children—be nice!

Do death and taxes have to be so complicated?

Join Dr. Matt Harris for a discussion of "A Fine Mess: A Global Quest for a Simpler, Fairer, and More Efficient Tax System" by T. R. Reid

Knox County Public Library invites the public to join Dr. Matt Harris for a discussion of *A Fine Mess: A Global Quest for a Simpler, Fairer, and More Efficient Tax System* by T. R. Reid, at noon on Wednesday, June 27 in the East Tennessee History Center auditorium, 601 South Gay Street. Bring your lunch or pick up something downtown. Drinks are available for fifty cents. Reading the book is optional. Books Sandwiched In is generously sponsored by

the Friends of Knox County Public Library.

"Just about every economist and political figure in America agrees these days that our tax code has to be reformed," the author says. Believing we have reached a breaking point, Reid travels around the globe visiting countries like Estonia, New Zealand and the UK to investigate how others tax their residents. Ultimately, he affirms his belief that the United States is capable of a radical reform for a "fairer, simpler and more efficient" tax system.

Harris is an assistant professor in the University of Tennessee (UT) Department of Economics and a research assistant professor in the UT Boyd

Center for Business and Economic Research. He is the inaugural recipient of the Michael Stahl PEMBA Faculty Research Fellowship. Although Harris is primarily a health and labor economist, his work on police militarization was featured in the Wall Street Journal, The Economist, and NPR. Harris also serves on the Economic Advisory Council for the Tennessee Department of Health.

Upcoming Books-Sandwiched-In Schedule:
July 25: Marshall Stair, Knoxville City Councilman, will discuss "The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America" by Richard Rothstein.

East Knoxville Community Meeting hears expansion plans for Fort Sanders

Cont. from page 1

or moved to make way for the expanded parking garage. He said some neighborhood residents are concerned about the historical value of these houses. The hospital has announced its intention to move one of the houses, at hospital expense, to a nearby hospital owned lot. They have also offered to allow historical groups to move another of the

houses at the historical group's expense.

Altshuler noted that the hospital is a not for profit organization. He stated that if the hospital were a for profit organization a move to the west side of the city would be more profitable than expanding at the present location. However, in addition to lack of concern about profit, he said the fact that there are no hospitals

to the east of downtown weighed in their decision to expand.

Lincoln Lincoln asked about trolley service to the hospital. Altshuler agreed that the hospital could benefit from trolley service.

"This is something worth fighting for," Michael Covington, moderator of the meeting, said of the hospital expansion plans.

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Bill Brock of Tennessee

Part Two

Pages from the Past



By Ray Hill
rayhill865@gmail.com

Thirty-two year old William E. Brock, III had managed the impossible, winning Tennessee's Third Congressional district in 1962. It was the first time the Third District had elected a Republican congressman since 1920. Brock was one of three Republicans in the Tennessee Congressional delegation, joining Howard Baker, Sr. and Jimmy Quillen, who had just been elected to Congress from the First District.

Elated Republicans quickly assembled for a special victory dinner in Knoxville to honor the three congressmen in December of 1962. Congressman Baker told fellow Republicans 1964 should bring even greater results. "Two years from now we should be celebrating the election of five congressmen, 50 members to the General Assembly and a Republican president," Baker said. "John Fitzgerald Kennedy is a one-term president."

As Bill Brock prepared to take the oath of office, he spoke before the Hamilton County Republican Women's Club and outlined his philosophy. Brock believed "the basic hope of this country is in people reasserting their rights to run their own affairs." Brock also sounded a theme that would remain a hallmark of his public life. Bill Brock strongly believed it is "of vital importance that people of all levels play a part in our government." The new Congressman-Elect felt the biggest threat to America was "not from the outside from some little character like Castro - - - but from our citizens' not being involved in their day-to-day lives that they don't pay enough attention to the way our government is mismanaged."

The Republican leadership in the U. S. House of Representatives clearly realized Bill Brock's potential, as the freshman had asked for a seat on the powerful Appropriations Committee or the Banking and Currency Committee. Brock later recalled his assignment to the House Banking and Currency Committee "were all that complimentary." The Chairman of the Banking and Currency Committee was Wright Patman, a fire-breathing populist who Brock remembered was hell-bent on destroying "the Federal Reserve system." Patman had first been elected to Congress in 1928 and Bill Brock still remembers to this day how the crusty Texan would open every meeting of his committee "with a 15 to 20 minute diatribe, which usually contained some comment to the fact that in this great country people who needed money should be allowed to get it and not have to pay interest rates." Naturally, most

Republicans were tired of Patman's showmanship and demagoguery and Brock believed he was put on the committee precisely because he was a freshman legislator. Both Brock's freshman status and his regular attendance of hearings less populated by other congressmen turned out to be a blessing. During Brock's first two years in Congress, Wright Patman chose to hold hearings requiring the testimony of "major financial figures", including the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, William McChesney Martin. Not infrequently, Bill Brock was the only Republican present and used the opportunity to learn as much as he could. Brock's knowledge of the country's financial workings impressed his colleagues.

Congressman Brock would receive special consideration from the GOP leadership. From the very beginning, Bill Brock participated in the proceedings of the House and when President Kennedy spoke before Congress, the Tennessean described JFK's talk as "a magnificent speech", but noted it "seemed to have too many contradictions." The young Congressman explained President Kennedy "talked about a reduction in taxation without giving specific proposals for a reduction in spending." Brock's statement was thoughtful and measured, especially when compared to that of his colleague Jimmy Quillen from the heavily Republican First District. Quillen's assessment of President Kennedy's speech was, "New England's breeze has caught the sail of the ship of state with a gust of hot air that threatens the turn of our country's future."

Although Bill Brock did not represent a district that was as solidly Republican as that of Jimmy Quillen, the young congressman could be a sharp partisan and was fearless in taking on the powers that be. When Senator Albert Gore opposed the appointment of Judge William E. Miller to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals because Miller was a Republican, Congressman Brock took the "Old Gray Fox" to task. "I'm surprised at Senator Gore's blatant attempt to make our federal judiciary a patronage plum for politicians," Brock thundered. "The citizens of Tennessee have a right to expect fair, impartial and adequate justice when they approach the bench." Brock scolded Gore, saying, "The judiciary must remain independent, above party politics, and must never become a place to reward political supporters. It is unfortunate that the senator has called for the appointment of any Kennedy Democrat,



FROM THE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL COLLECTION.

From left to right, New York Congressman Charles Goodell, Tennessee Congressman Bill Brock & Minnesota Congressman Albert Quie

apparently regardless of qualifications." Gore's own partisanship was highlighted when Congressman Ross Bass, a Democrat, warmly endorsed Judge Miller to Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, telling the President's brother Miller "definitely merits the promotion." Gore had another candidate in mind, backing attorney Harry Phillips for the judgeship, which was interpreted as a gesture toward fence mending with a faction of Tennessee Democrats in anticipation of his coming 1964 reelection campaign. Joe Hatcher, the veteran political columnist for the Nashville Tennessean, which strongly supported Gore, noted the senator's dilemma. While attempting to please Democrats, Gore was arousing the ire of Republicans who appeared ready to make the first serious challenge to his continued tenure in the United States Senate. Congressman Bill Brock was already being mentioned as an opponent to Albert Gore. Senator Gore also had to worry about facing a challenge inside his own party from conservative former governor Buford Ellington.

Brock admitted he was "fascinated and frustrated" by serving in Congress. The young Congressman and his wife Laura (called "Muffet" by everyone who knew her) were the parents of five-year old William E Brock, IV and three month old Oscar Handley Brock. Bill Brock frankly confessed he liked serving in Congress and speculated he might well run for the United States Senate one day. While working hard at being a congressman, Brock said he was still "learning the ropes" and concentrating on helping to advance the Republican Party in Tennessee. Bill Brock was determined that Tennessee would become a legitimate two party state. Brock confidently predicted that more Republicans would be elected to state and local offices in Tennessee. "The statewide Republican party in Tennessee today is easily twice as effective as it was two years ago," Brock said. The Congressman said it was important people have "a choice in all statewide races in the future." Brock said the GOP had failed in the past, noting, the

Tennessee Republican party had "failed to meet our responsibility to give the people an alternative in state races." Brock said merely placing a name on a ballot was not enough. Bill Brock emphasized, "We're going to run to win."

Yet again, Brock disputed his public image as a mindless conservative. Congressman Brock readily admitted he was a conservative but believed it was important for a candidate to "stand for something." Brock said he didn't want to come to Washington "just to oppose per se; I came up here to try to work to maintain the rights of the individual to make his own decisions in this country." Brock was serious about budget cutting and horrified many conservatives when he said, "There is no field that can't be cut. Defense is wide open. We seem to have gotten the idea in this country that the military is holy. It's not." Bill Brock was not merely mouthing platitudes; when the House of Representatives approved a \$16 billion authorization bill for the military, only 33 members voted against it. Congressman Brock was one of the 33 who had the courage to oppose it. Brock also questioned the \$30 billion allocated for the space program and its goal of landing a man on the moon. Brock wondered, "If we used the \$30 billion that program will cost for education we could enhance the character of this nation over the next ten years." A reporter noted while Bill Brock was "friendly and easy going", the young Congressman was not a typical "glad-handing, back-slapping type of politician." One of Brock supporters had lamented the lack of those traits in the candidate during the 1962 Congressional campaign, moaning "we'd have to kick him in the seat of the pants and say, 'Shake hands'."

Bill Brock was also quickly attracting considerable attention, especially for a freshman congressman. The Tennessean was invited to be the keynote speaker for the Virginia Young Republican Federation's convention.

Although a freshman in the House of Representatives, Bill Brock shrewdly used those opportunities available to

him to jab the Kennedy administration. When the White House announced 10,000 students would receive government jobs for the summer, Congressman Bill Brock pointed out the Kennedy administration had entirely bypassed the civil service system. Brock noted the jobs had been "transferred from civil service to the White House, which will directly place sons and daughters of deserving Kennedy Democrats in these summer jobs." Nor was Brock shy about publicly citing the rough tactics used by the Kennedy administration to get its way. Speaking before a Chattanooga civic club, Brock told his audience, "Several congressmen have received almost direct threats that their states would lose certain military installations if the congressman does not support the administration."

Bill Brock was one of seventy Tennessee Republican leaders who met in Nashville in March of 1963 to discuss the possibility of challenging Senator Albert Gore the following year. Hobart Atkins, who was a veteran of Tennessee's State Senate and had been the GOP nominee against Gore in 1952, told his fellow Republicans, "Gore can be beaten, in fact, he has beaten himself. All we need is a candidate and we can get one."

Brock remained a serious contender against Senator Gore and while determined to help build a Republican organization in Tennessee, the Congressman traveled across the state. Brock was the featured speaker at a fundraising dinner at Nashville's Hermitage Hotel. The Chattanooga congressman explored the theme of "no more Gore in '64" for Republicans paying \$25 per plate at the dinner. Brock gleefully told his fellow Republicans, "I think we should close this rally with a suitable rallying cry. King John and Prince Albert must go in '64." Still, Brock was cautious when asked if he would oppose the senator in 1964. "Well, the only thing I can say is that we have more than enough capable prospective candidates who could win in '64."

In less than three months, Brock had traveled more than 10,000 miles

to speak to Tennesseans. Albert Gore was already looking over his shoulder and had toured Tennessee and had already made more talks throughout the state than he had during the first six years while in the U. S. Senate.

The Nashville Tennessean, a strongly liberal and Democratic newspaper, was alarmed enough by the prospect of Bill Brock challenging Senator Gore that it attacked the Congressman in an editorial following his speech in Davidson County. Scorning the notion that Brock represented a new modern Republican party, the Tennessean charged the Congressman offered nothing but "the same tattered old rags of Republicanism that went out of style more than 50 years ago." Clearly, the Tennessean believed Bill Brock represented a threat to Senator Albert Gore.

Gore had praised Kennedy's handling of the Cuban missile crisis and told a gathering of Democrats the issue would ensure the President's reelection. Gore gushed it was "an example of leadership supported overwhelmingly, if not unanimously by our people." Bill Brock disagreed, saying, "It is pretty frightening to most of us that the President took a stand, then backed down, and then took another stand and then backed down again." Congressman Brock told a gathering of Republican women it was sad that "we now blockade the exiles and freedom fighters instead of Castro."

Despite being a freshman congressman, Bill Brock was slowly becoming an important figure in Tennessee.

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



Picture of Dallas and Joretta Harrell, provided by Linda Harrell Tunstall

For years, our big yellow school bus made a stop at the Harrell home. I cannot even remember a time when I did not know the Harrell family—two parents, two daughters, and two sons. The father is a long-time Halls resident Rev. Dallas Harrell. He grew up in Washburn in Grainger County, Tennessee, with his parents, sister, and three brothers. Though the family attended Salem Primitive Baptist Church, Dallas was saved at home when he was in his mid-teens. The young Harrell attended Washburn High School and was a varsity basketball player. During his senior year, the team only lost two games. After high school, the Washburn

graduate landed his first job at Winter Garden in Knoxville. But it was at a theater in Washburn where he went to watch the movie, "Harvey the Rabbit," that he met his future bride, Joretta Antrican. Dallas and Joretta were married in June of 1953. Over two years later, on

November 11, 1955, Dallas announced his calling to preach. He was 22 years old.

The couple's family soon became six, and one of the young father's principles was that he always worked to support them. Daughter Linda Harrell Tunstall remembers her

father's often complicated work schedule. "While being a pastor, Dad also worked as a Teamster driving trucks in the Knoxville area for different companies for many years. If he was part of a layoff at one of the freight lines or if that company went out of business, he had to work the 'Extra-Board.' The shifts he had to work could be any day or time. To work full time, his shifts would sometimes be Tuesday through Saturday or sometimes his shift would start at 4:00 a.m. Since his work did not have a route that would require over-the-road driving, he was never too far from home." With a wife and four children, being near home was surely important to Rev. Harrell.

"Even during those busy years of raising a family and working a public job, Dad continued to share God's Word. He continued to love and minister to numerous families during their times of joy and happiness as well as those times of sadness and sorrow," daughter Nina Harrell Roberts

recalls. "He has always taken time to visit the sick and those who have lost a loved one," she added. I remember calling the hospital on a Sunday evening when our former pastor, Rev. Ralph Berry, had suffered a stroke. I spoke to Grace Berry, his wife, who told me that Dallas Harrell had been by to visit. Both

Berrys are deceased now, but how special it must have been to have another pastor visit them in their time of need. (Next week: Part 2, The pastor's life today and the legacy he will leave.) Happy Father's Day! Book signing, Fountain City Lions Club, 5345 N. Broadway, Tuesday, June 19, 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.

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Debt Collection Against a Divorced Couple

When individuals get divorced there are almost always debts that must be split up between the parties.



By **Jedidiah McKeenan**
attorneyknoxville@gmail.com

Car loans, mortgage payments, and credit card bills are all debts that are accrued during marriages that someone must pay for after two people are divorced.

When people are divorced, often times they will agree to pay for the cars in their possession and pay for the debts that are in their names. But what if the debt was a joint debt? Who owes that? Even if one person agrees to pay a joint debt after the divorce is final, they may not actually do it. What

happens then? Unfortunately, an agreement to pay a joint debt after a divorce does nothing to stop the creditor from getting money from whomever they can possibly get it from. So, even if your spouse has agreed to pay the credit card bill, if they do not do it, the credit card company can still come after you what you initially agreed to pay.

What recourse do you have against a spouse who does not pay a debt they are supposed to after a divorce? Well there are no good options. You can take them back to court and the judge can order them to pay the debt

and even threaten them with jail time, but it does not help you get away from the initial creditor chasing you down for money.

How can you avoid this? Again, there are not a ton of good answers, but I advise people to try to get these things resolved prior to the finalization of the divorce through refinancing in one person's name, getting loans in one person's name only to pay off jointly held debt, and the splitting up and dissolving of any and all joint accounts.

Jedidiah McKeenan is an attorney practicing in Knox County and surrounding counties. Visit attorney-knoxville.com for more information about this and other legal issues.

Neighborhood working group hears ideas for cleanup up of blighted properties

Continued from page 1

owners to clean up the property and offered help. If a later check revealed no improvement, code enforcement was contacted. Hollifield suggested that neighborhood associations make a priority list for cleanup as they conduct such a survey.

The question was asked if it would be possible to do such a survey in Knoxville electronically. The reply was that the city did not have that capability at this time.

Hollifield went on to say that Knoxville code enforcement is largely proactive while in other cities it is complaint driven. While other cities take an owner to court, Knoxville tries to work with owners.

A discussion was held to determine how to determine the vacancy rate in a neighborhood. It was noted that such things as a check of the owner's address of record and utility records could be used. Also for a fee, the post office will prepare a list of properties when the mail is undelivered or returned.

Sharp told the group about two for-profit companies in Milwaukee who are working with the city to clean up blighted properties. A smaller company buys up less expensive blighted properties. They employ people

who are learning a trade to rehabilitate these houses. Not only are the houses renovated, unskilled people are taught a trade and are able to secure higher paying jobs. Then the rehabilitated properties are rented on a rent to own basis to lower income people. A larger company buys more expensive blighted properties and gets tax credit as these properties are rehabilitated and rented to lower income people.

Sharp said that absentee or slum landlords are sometimes the cause of blighted properties.

The conference included a tour of Milwaukee neighborhoods to see how they have been beautified by such methods as painting murals on vacant warehouse walls and encouraging establishment of community gardens and farmers' markets. In one instance a shipping container was converted into a stage for outdoor neighborhood performances.

Sharp told how one city used encouraged neighborhood involvement in clean up by asking teens to photograph the good, the bad and the ugly in their neighborhoods. These photographs were used to formulate a plan to rehabilitating the neighborhood.

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Kick-Off Classic returns to Neyland Stadium

By Ken Lay

The Knoxville Orthopaedic Clinic High School Kick-Off Classic will return to Neyland Stadium in 2018 and the schedule for the annual event was released recently.

The event will kick off the 2018 season on Friday, Aug. 10 with 12-minute games beginning at 6 p.m.

Action begins with The King's Academy taking on Karns. Coach Hal Greer will make his head coaching debut with the Lions. He previously served as defensive coordinator under Steve Matthews at Catholic High School. The Irish won the Class 5A State Championship in 2017.

Carter will then take on Powell in a game that features a new coach for the Hornets. Vic Wharton takes the helm in Strawberry Plains. The Panthers will also have a new head coach on the sideline. Matt Lowe returns to West Emory Road after a stint at The King's Academy.

Campbell County will tangle with Central. The Cougars will feature a high-octane offensive attack. Coach Bryson Rosser's Bobcats reached the Class 5A Semifinals last season.

Bearden will take on Austin-East. The Bulldogs and the Roadrunners each made the playoffs last season. Each team, however, saw its respective 2017 campaign end in Blount County. Bearden dropped a 28-0 decision to Maryville in the first round of the Class 6A Playoffs. Austin-East lost to Alcoa in the Class 3A Quarterfinals.

Halls will play Fulton. The Red Devils, who won Region 2-5A in 2018, will have a new coach in

Continued on page 2

PRIDE OF THE PREPS IN 2017-18



Jack Sompayrac runs onto the court as he's introduced prior to a game his senior season at Knoxville Catholic.

PHOTO BY KELLY KEARSE

Sompayrac was a leader in two sports for Catholic

(Part 2 of The Knoxville Focus' annual feature recognizing local high schools' female and male Student-Athletes of the Year)

By Steve Williams

Jack Sompayrac can look back on his prep career with plenty of fond memories.

Knoxville Catholic's Class 5A state championship in football highlighted his senior year and being named the Most Valuable Offensive Player in the 45-28 win over Beech was a bonus for Sompayrac, the quarterback of the Fighting Irish.

The 6-2, 195-pounder threw two touchdown passes and ran for two more in the title game at

Tennessee Tech in Cookeville.

Sompayrac, who also stood out in basketball, is Catholic's male Student-Athlete of the Year.

"Jack has been a tremendous leader for the Irish in both football and basketball," said Athletic Director Jason Surlas. "He was a three-year starter in both sports, and has been instrumental in winning two state football titles, and reaching the state championship game in basketball."

One of the area's top long-range shooters as a junior, Sompayrac and the No. 1 ranked Irishmen won 28 straight games in their run to the Class AA finals, where they fell to Nashville Maplewood 60-57 at MTSU's Murphy Center in Murfreesboro.

In his sophomore football season, Sompayrac, returning

from a broken arm, joined other subs in finishing up Catholic's 48-8 romp past Nashville Pearl-Cohn in the Class 4A title game.

"Jack took full advantage of every opportunity he had in his high school career, and his impact on our athletic program will be experienced for years to come," added Surlas.

VANESSA BELANGER, named Catholic's female Student-Athlete of the Year, was a four-year starter for the Lady Irish soccer team, and pivotal in the long standing success of the program, which included one state championship and many district and region titles, said Surlas.

"Vanessa proved to be a wonderful example of how to be a tremendous student in the classroom, a strong leader among her



Vanessa Belanger was a four-year starter for Catholic girls soccer and "pivotal in the long standing success of the program," said AD Jason Surlas.

peers in the hallways, and an outstanding athlete on the field," summed up the Catholic AD.

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FATHER'S DAY

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Gunner Smith battles adversity to return to hardwood

By Ken Lay

Gunner Smith loves basketball and he's not about to let anything come between him and his passion for the game.

Like several other young players, he spent last week at the Panther Pride/Fellowship of Christian Athletes Boys Basketball Camp.

He ran his drills along with other aspiring hoopsters, despite the fact that his mobility was a bit limited. Smith was the top fourth grader at the camp in June, 2017. Soon after the camp, however, things took a terrifying turn for the young man.

He was diagnosed with a brain tumor the following August.

"We found out about his brain tumor on Aug. 20," said Brittany Smith, Gunner's mother. "We were air lifted to Vanderbilt and he had a five-hour surgery the next day. The doctor told us that he was able to remove all of the tumor."

The malignancy may have been removed. All, however, wasn't right for Gunner, who is now an 11-year old rising fifth grader.

"When, he woke up, his right side was paralyzed," Brittany said.

But it wasn't enough to keep young Gunner down for long. He's in the midst of a recovery period that should end with him regaining full mobility, but it has been and will remain a long process.

"With him being young, it works in his favor to make a full recovery," Brittany said. "He's young and that works in his favor. He's a tough kid. He's going to physical therapy once a week. That's down to once a week and that's a good thing. It used to be more.

"He's a tough kid."

That's a huge understatement. He's also undergoing chemotherapy and he's managed not to let that zap all of his energy. He couldn't wait to return to summer basketball camp.

"It just feels good to be back out here and playing basketball," Gunner said. "It's just great. It's been hard. My motto is 'all heart.'

Before I had surgery, my dad asked me if there was anything I needed and I told him that I wanted my all heart shirt."

Gunner, an Oklahoma City Thunder fan, is back on the court. He participated in all the drills at last week's camp. He, however, has not been cleared to play.

"This is hard. It's hard when I have to work on my foot," Gunner said. "I can't play 3-on-3 this year."

He's always loved the game of basketball but Brittany said his passion has grown since last year's diagnosis.

"He certainly doesn't take it for granted anymore," she said. "I think the game's even more important now."

Camp director and Powell Middle School boys basketball coach Darin Courtney said he's glad to see Gunner back on the basketball court.

"He's just an inspiration," Courtney said. "He's out here and he's competing.

"Last year, he was the best player at the camp, in his grade. Our motto [for the camp] is 'Strong in Christ.' This is about more than just basketball. This is about people getting healthy. He's just been amazing. His perspective has changed. He's just living his life. He's having fun. That's what this is all about."



PHOTO BY KEN LAY

Westin Reynolds, Cole Frost and Bryson Cowden spent last week coaching young players at the Panther Pride/Fellowship of Christian Athletes Boys Basketball Camp. The three players are former Powell Middle and Powell High players. All attended the camp as youngsters.

Trio of former players return to coach at local basketball camp

By Ken Lay

The Panther Pride/Fellowship of Christian Athletes Boys Basketball Camp provides young players with the opportunity to learn basketball from the Powell Middle School basketball coaches.

But boys coach Darin Courtney and new girls coach Steve Waugh always get help from former players. And 2018 was no exception. Three former players who played at both Powell Middle and Powell High came back home to assist Courtney and Waugh as they teach the game that they love to the community's young players.

During the camp, which was held last week, recent Powell graduates Westin Reynolds and Cole Frost returned to Powell

Middle, fresh from their appearance in the Class AAA State Tournament in Murfreesboro in March. They were joined by fellow Powell graduate Bryson Cowden, who will be a junior at East Tennessee State this fall.

These players were asked by Courtney to serve as coaches and counselors at the camp and they certainly obliged.

"It's just refreshing to teach fundamentals to these kids and it will help me become a better player," said Reynolds, who will play college basketball at Walters State Community College in Morristown next season. "It's good to come in and work with these kids because these kids

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Gladiators claim MS baseball title in dramatic fashion

By Ken Lay

A successful season ended in a league championship for the Gresham Middle School baseball varsity baseball team recently.

The Gladiators culminated their 2018 campaign by winning the league championship at Karns SportsPark last month. Gresham, which finished the season with a 14-2 record, was the top seed in the league's postseason tournament.

The Gladiators won the tournament in dramatic fashion as they notched a 4-3 walk-off victory over Christian Athletics, a team comprised of home school players. Gresham won the game in the bottom of the seventh inning on an RBI double by Jay Faulkner.

The Gladiators also got a solid effort on the mound from Brady Ackermann, who threw a complete game, going seven innings. He surrendered three runs,

five hits and three walks while striking out five in the championship game.

Christian Athletics forced a winner-take-all game when it knocked off the Gladiators in the opening game of the championship round. The home school squad won that first game 7-3.

"We had beaten them twice during the regular season," Gresham coach Kevin DeBusk said. "This was a what-if game because they gave us our second loss of the season in the tournament.

"I'm really proud of these kids. Most of them grew up playing together at Fountain City Ballpark. We had some who moved in later. This is a great group of kids and they always played their best when their packs were against the wall. This is the scrappiest bunch of kids that I've ever seen."

Austin Ellis also had an

RBI single in the title-clinching tilt. Gresham fell behind early in that game. The Gladiators scored single runs in the second and third innings before scoring two in their final at-bat to bring the championship to Fountain City.

Elijah DeBusk singled and walked in the season finale. He scored twice. Carson Jessie doubled. Logan Rodewald singled and scored in the seventh inning while Blake McCarty had a key single in the game.

Despite losing the first game of the championship round, Gresham had a late rally come up short after falling behind 7-0.

The Gladiators manufactured enough offense to win but the team's calling cards were pitching and defense. Gresham had a team fielding percentage of .934.

"Our kids made plays,"



Gresham Varsity Middle School Champs. Front Row L to R- Brady Ackermann, Trey Johnston, Elijah DeBusk, Logan Rodewald, Chris Caldwell, Luke Prince. Back Row L to R- Coach Kurt Ackermann, William Price, Ian Miller, Ryan Bolton, Austin Ellis, Jay Faulkner, Blake McCarty, Brody Cranford, Carson Jessie, Coach Kevin DeBusk, Coach Chuck Johnston.

coach DeBusk said. "We were strong up the middle and it wasn't that these kids made just a few plays. They made a lot of big plays.

"This team had a real high baseball IQ. They watched a lot of games on TV and we went to a UT

game together. I never ran out of pitchers. The team has played together forever and I had eight quality pitchers."

Many on the team will move on to play at Central High School. Bobcats coach Devan Parrott has thrown his support behind

the Gladiators, who will play in some open tournaments on weekends over the summer.

"I'm excited to see what these kids do when they get to high school," coach DeBusk said. "Coach Parrott came to see us in some of our games."

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Kick-Off Classic returns to Neyland Stadium

Cont. from page 1

Jeremy Bosken. Bosken, who replaces J.D. Overton, most recently coached at Cleveland under former West High coach Scott Cummings. The Falcons will look to make another postseason run this year.

In the next contest, Farragut will tangle with Gibbs. The Admirals returned to Class 6A in 2017 after winning the 2016 Class 5A

Championship. The Eagles will also have a new coach in 2018 as Brad Turner takes the reins. Turner was a longtime assistant in Corryton.

Webb will then tangle with West. The Spartans went 7-4 last season and reached the second round of the Division II-AA Playoffs last year. The Rebels were 7-5 in 2018. Lamar Brown returns for his second season as head coach

on Sutherland Avenue.

Hardin Valley closes out the night when it takes on South-Doyle. The Hawks (5-5 in 2017) missed the playoffs. But they closed their season on a high note when they knocked off Farragut before a capacity crowd at HVA and an area television audience in a Rivalry Thursday Game. The Cherokees qualified for the Class 5A Playoffs and had a deep run in 2017.

Career Magnet Academy to join TSSAA

By Steve Williams

Career Magnet Academy is joining high schools in Knox County that are members of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association. The TSSAA Board of Control approved the request of CMA for membership when it met June 5-7 at the state office in Hermitage.

Central Magnet Academy, which is located on the Pellissippi College campus on Strawberry Plains Pike, is under the jurisdiction of the Knox County Board of Education. CMA has an enrollment of approximately 300 students in grades 9-12. It plans to compete in bowling, cross country and golf

and will be placed in Division I, Class A, District 4 in bowling, Region 2 (Small) in cross country and District 3 (Small) in golf.

The addition of Central Magnet Academy will give Knox County 23 high schools in the TSSAA.

In other action, the Board of Control denied the request of Concord Christian School to

participate in the post-season basketball series during the 2018-19 school year while not fielding a varsity football team.

CCS announced in May it would not field a high school varsity football team for the 2018 season.

Citing the low number of committed players and concern for

student safety, Head of School Mark Kelly said, "This was not an easy decision, but one that needed to be made."

"Although this is a disappointment to our student athletes, coaching staff and football fans, it is ultimately the right decision for Concord and the long-term success of our athletic programs."

Plans are being developed to provide football at the junior varsity level for the 2019-20 school year at CCS.

Athletic Director Bruce Johnson outlined the school's commitment to refocus efforts and strengthen Concord's middle school football program for the 2018 season.

PRIDE OF THE PREPS IN 2017-18

Awards haven't spoiled Collins' respectful ways

By Steve Williams

Abby Collins started at Concord Christian School as a kindergartener. She finished as its first athlete to sign with a Division 1 NCAA school, the United States Air Force Academy.

"I have had the opportunity to coach Abby in volleyball the past five years and I can say Abby still answers me with a 'yes ma'am!'" said Carmen Hochevar. "She is dedicated and determined with a perfectionist personality! She brings strong qualities to our team, school and our community that are above reproach."

Collins, also CCS's first-ever military Academy appointment, played a pivotal role as the Lady

Lions finished third in the Class A state tournament her sophomore and junior seasons and made the Final 4 in the 2017 TSSAA Division II-A tourney.

Abby's dedication to excellence in sports is also a reflection of how she carries herself in the classroom, said Hochevar. She had a 4.4 cumulative GPA, was Salutatorian of her class and National Honor Society president her senior year.

Collins also emerged as a leader in the community and represented Two Rivers Church on a mission trip to Jamaica, noted Hochevar.

Collins, 5-10 and left-handed, was voted team MVP and captain her

senior year. She was an All-State setter in 2016 and earned All-Region honors for the third time in 2017. She also had been a three-time team captain in basketball prior to playing club volleyball instead her senior year.

JON ROBERTS: The four-year football player is Concord Christian's male Student-Athlete of the Year, leading the way for head coach Troy Fleming as a two-time All-Region selection.

In addition to playing football, Roberts was in the National Honors Society and his extracurricular activities included volunteering in Sunday school at First Baptist Concord and in the Middle School

ministry at Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church.

Roberts was a leader by example.

"Jon has exemplified every high standard characteristic you would want in a leader: tough, compassionate, dedicated, morally upright and hard working," said Coach Fleming.

"He comes to work daily with a positive attitude, looking to better himself and his teammates. He has played through multiple injuries and he truly has dedicated himself to Concord football."

Student-Athletes of the Year Abby Collins and Jon Roberts with Concord's Head of School Mark Kelly.



TSD honoree Sydney Rednour a 'natural leader'

By Steve Williams

Sydney Rednour, Tennessee School for the Deaf's female Student-Athlete of the Year, played volleyball and basketball and was on the track and field team.

The Lady Vikings' senior also was winner of the Patsy Smith Female Athlete of the Year award.

"Sydney has become a natural leader," said Coach Brooke Peters. "Her dedication, hard work and commitment to improvement have shaped her into an incredible athlete and young woman. We all believe she will succeed in her future career and life-long endeavors."

TRISTEN DAVIDSON: The sophomore was named TSD's male Student-Athlete of the Year. He played football and basketball and was on the track and field team, according to Athletic Director Luke Benson.

Davidson also was the recipient of the Yafet Yoseph Male Athlete of the Year award, said Benson.

Hall, L&N honoree, excels in new sport

Armani Hall helped lead L&N STEM Academy's girls tennis team to a runner-up finish in the TSSAA's state championships at the recent Spring Fling in Murfreesboro.

But that was only the tip of the iceberg as far as the senior's selection as L&N's female Student-Athlete of the Year.

"Armani came to STEM as a basketball player, but she realized we didn't have that sport, so she used her athletic ability to evolve over the past four years into a very competitive tennis player," said Athletic Director Josh Orrick. "It was fun to watch!"

Hucklebee is Gibbs' female Student-Athlete of Year

Softball standout Sierra Hucklebee is Gibbs High's female Student-Athlete of the Year, said Jeff Thomas, the school's athletic director.

The senior shortstop had a .531 batting average as she helped lead the Lady Eagles to third place in the TSSAA Class AA state tournament this season.

The versatile Hucklebee, an LMU signee, also played second base and filled in at pitcher.

She was a three-sport athlete at Gibbs, also playing volleyball and basketball.

Hucklebee received the Johnny Mauer Award, which is presented annually by the Optimist Club of Knoxville.



Left, Sydney Rednour was dedicated to improvement at TSD.

Above, Tristen Davidson stood out as a sophomore for Tennessee School for the Deaf.

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MLB Draft hits home in Knoxville

By Alex Norman

Typically, the Major League Baseball Draft has been felt across Knoxville area high schools, as well as the University of Tennessee.

2018 was no different, as a handful of prospects from the high school and college ranks heard their names called last week, and will eventually have decisions to make regarding their amateur status.

Ryder Green, an outfielder from Karns High School, was picked in the third round by the 27-time World Champion New York Yankees. MLB.com listed him as then 82nd best draft prospect in the nation.

Green batted .462 with 39 RBI for the Beavers in his senior season. He has signed with perennial

SEC powerhouse Vanderbilt, which isn't limited in the number of scholarships they can offer since they are a private university. Green will have to decide whether a free education at a top academic university, with a solid baseball program, is enough to keep him out of pinstripes.

"First class organization, second to none, really," Green told WBIR-TV about the Yankees. "Everything I went through with them has been extremely classy and so I'm excited." Green worked out for the Yankees recently at their training facility in Tampa. "I used to hate the Yankees," Green admitted with a smile. "I despised them. If the Yankees were on my favorite team was who beat them... but times change and it's

good."

So, is it Nashville or The Bronx (someday) for Green?

"It depends on the money and what happens there," Green said. "Hopefully it is there but if not, Vanderbilt is an unbelievable option and hopefully I'll be able to do this again if it is Vanderbilt."

Tony Vitello's first season as Tennessee's baseball coach ended as so many have since the firing of Rod Delmonico following the 2017 season, without a trip to the SEC Tournament. However, the Vols did show improvement, and will be bolstered by some key additions. Perfect Game USA has Tennessee's Class of 2018 as the 8th best in the nation.

But can Vitello get them to campus?

Four Tennessee Vols signees were taken in the MLB Draft. It all depends on the money they are offered as to whether they head to the minor leagues or to Lindsey Nelson Stadium.

Shortstop Jonathan Ornelas was picked in the third round by the Texas Rangers. Pitcher Aaron Ashby heard his name called in the fourth round by the Milwaukee Brewers. Pitcher William English was picked in the fifth round by the Los Angeles Angels. In the 12th round, second baseman Sean Guilbe was taken by the San Diego Padres.

Ornelas is a top-100 prospect that picked UT over Arizona State, Arizona and Florida, amongst others. He was the big get

in this class.

With regards to current Tennessee Volunteers, two players from this year's team were picked on the third and final day of the draft.

Sophomore pitcher Zach Linginfelter was picked in the 19th round by the St. Louis Cardinals. Linginfelter had a career best 71 strikeouts in 55 innings this past season. He led the Vols in that category, and chipped in save saves as well. Linginfelter was originally taken by the New York Yankees in the 2016 MKLB draft. He has until July 15th to decide whether to sign a contact with the Cardinals, or to return to Rocky Top for his junior season.

Senior catcher Benito Santiago, son of the former

Major Leaguer of the same name, was taken in the 34th round by the Washington Nationals. Santiago started 54 games last season, with seven home runs and 34 RBI.

Tennessee Tech has been on a magical run this season, advancing to the Super Regionals where they were facing Texas as this issue was going to print. The news got even better for first baseman Chase Chambers. The former Farragut standout was taken in the 18th round by the New York Mets.

Congrats to all of these student-athletes for the realization of a life-long dream.



Kimberly Graham-Daughter of Larry Graham, Lisa Loftin-Teacher, Carolyn Graham-wife of Larry, Tori Bumgardner-Winner, and Susan Hibbett-Teacher.

Bumgardner wins Larry Graham Physical Education Award

By Ken Lay

Gibbs Elementary School student Tori Bumgardner was recently awarded the Larry Graham Physical Education Award at the school's year-ending awards assembly program late last month.

Bumgardner won the award that goes to Gibbs Elementary School's best physical education student. She's the fourth recipient of the award, named for former Gibbs Elementary physical education teacher Larry Graham.

Graham had a large impact on Knox County Schools and at Gibbs Elementary School and on the Corryton Community.

Bumgardner was awarded the award not only for her accomplishments

in physical education but for her strong leadership skills. It is a special award for an exceptional person.

Graham, who was killed in an auto accident, was remembered as "the type of person who made your day better just because you were around him."

Even after retiring from education, Graham remained an advocate for Gibbs Elementary and all of the students in the Knox County School system.

He volunteered to officiate the four Knox County Elementary Track Meets as well as the district's Elite Meet.

He also taught a Sunday School class and worked in his church's Upward Basketball program.

Farragut's Buckner inducted in ETBCA Hall of Fame

By Ken Lay

KODAK --- Matt Buckner has yet to see his 40th birthday but he's already established legendary status as a high school baseball coach. He's won 508 games and three state championships.

Buckner was honored by his peers when he was recently inducted into the Fast Tennessee Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in a ceremony at Smokies Stadium. He recently completed his ninth season as Farragut High School's head coach.

He's guided the Admirals to seven Class AAA State Championships in 2010, 2011 and 2014. Farragut also posted runner-up finishes in 2013 and 2015.

Buckner, who played at

Monterey High School under Tommy Pharr, previously coached at Bearden High School. He led the Bulldogs to the 2009 Class AAA State Tournament before heading west and replacing Pharr as Farragut's head coach.

Pharr, who won six state titles leading the Admirals, departed for Christian Academy of Knoxville. He won Class AA State Championships with the Warriors in 2014 and 2016. CAK recently won the 2017 Division II-A State Championship in Murfreesboro.

Buckner's Admirals beat Bearden in April and that was the coach's 500th career victory. The Admirals went on to win the District 4-AAA and Region 2-AAA Tournaments after claiming the district's regular-season title.

Buckner said that he was honored to be inducted into

the ETBCA Hall of Fame on Saturday, June 2.

"This was nice," he said. "I'm still young. I'll be 40 in two weeks."

"I've coached at two great schools and I've had some great players and some great assistant coaches."

Farragut athletic director Donald Dodgen said that he was proud of Buckner and thankful that the coach is at Farragut.

"This couldn't happen to a nicer young man," Dodgen said. "He's a great baseball coach and a great teacher."

"But more than that, he's just a great person. I've watched him grow up a lot over the years. [Farragut principal Ryan] Siebe and I are really proud of coach Buckner and his accomplishments and we're happy to have him."

Trio of former players return to coach at local basketball camp

Cont. from page 2

are the future of the Powell program."

For Frost, who will enroll at the University of Tennessee as a special education major this fall, the camp provides a chance for him to remain in basketball. He noted that he played intramurals on Rocky Top. But he also said that he will still continue to follow the Panthers as his schedule permits. He also relishes the opportunity to work with potential future Powell High stars.

"It's good to see the competition coming up and right now, things look like they're in pretty good hands," said Frost, who is coaching AAU basketball with the Tennessee Fury

and harbors aspirations of possibly becoming a scholastic coach. "I've thought about coaching one day."

"I'll miss the game but I'm sure that I'll come back and watch some Powell games this season."

While Cowden doesn't play for the Buccaneers at ETSU, he remains in basketball, working as a referee in the Johnson City Area. He is in the school's nursing program.

"I'm just focused on school right now and I officiate in Johnson City and I've done some games in Scott County," Cowden said. "But I'm always willing to come back and help when I'm free."

"These kids are the next generation of Powell players. It's always fun to come

back. It's middle school basketball and these kids just want to play."

All three were campers in the camp at some point and they had glowing memories of their time as players.

"I remember coming here and learning from the high school players," Cowden said.

For Reynolds, the camp help fueled his love for the game.

"I remember when I was growing up, coming here and learning from the high school players that I looked up to," he said.

Frost agreed. "When we came and learned from the high school players, it was fun," he said. "Those guys were like celebrities to us."

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The Doctor is in

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Admonitions

One of my observations of life (Fergisms) is that parenthood is a state of constant concern about your children, and intermittent worry. Since I have four grandchildren - and another on the way - I believe the state of concern extends to grandparents. However, the joys of children far outweigh even the challenges of the teenage years. Three thousand years ago the Psalmist sang, "Children are a reward from the Lord" (Psalm 127:3), and the Proverbist observed, "Grandchildren are the crown of the aged" (Proverbs 17:6). I'm convinced you never understand something until you can explain the concept to someone else. You can see why I have perspective when you realize that the word "doctor" derives from the Latin word docere which means

to teach. Doctors teach their patients and each other, as well as support staff and trainees. However, as a parent I went back to school - in a sense - because I had to relearn a lot of things to help my girls with homework. Fortunately, I went back to school before the era of the so-called "new math." A friend of mine is a math major and designs computer programs. He found that the new math was both illogical and obtuse. When we built our retirement home, Becky and I converted a large space, designated by the architect as a storage closet, to a movie room. The grand kids love to come over and watch movies with JD and BeBe (nicknames for Jim-Dad and Becky). And we love being with the Cute-Ones, watching kid movies with wonderful graphics and introducing

Cute-Ones to classics like the Muppet Movie. Like his grandfather, Oakley loves Star Wars, except the episodes with the big worm, Jabba the Hutt, who is a bit scary for a six year old. And like her grandparents, three year old Josie loves Mary Poppins.

Among the many memorable songs in Mary Poppins is "I Love to Laugh." As I sang along with Uncle Albert, floating on the ceiling, I started thinking about laughter, asking "Why do humans laugh?" Most people laugh as a response to something they consider funny, but sometimes anxious situations can provoke what we call "nervous laughter." I'm not ticklish, but my grandkids are. I can't remember whether I was ticklish as a kid, and neither can my mother. Maybe I was once ticklish and lost my tickle on the way to adulthood. However, I think laughter from tickling is different than laughter produced by a good joke. Tickling seems more associated with anxiety than mirth.

Laughter can be deep and belly shaking or just a light giggle. Experts recognize "laughter-like vocalizations" in the great apes (chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans and bonobos). Gelotology is the study of laughter in humans and

what people find humorous. Experts have found that "laughter is infectious," but not like influenza! Why do you think preliminary acts are used to "warm up the audience" before the main event? In the same manner, television uses studio laughter or a laugh track to promote mood in the audience. Musical scores in movies similarly promote mood.

Scientists can demonstrate activity in the brain stem limbic system (hippocampus and amygdala) associated with laughter. It is intriguing that the hippocampus is an early target of Alzheimer's Disease where laughter patterns often change. Inappropriate laughter is sometimes associated with dementia and other medical conditions like cataplexy and narcolepsy or pseudobulbar palsy and psychoses. Because laughter is thought to stimulate the release of endorphins, laughter therapy has also been used even outside of comedy clubs! Maybe we should all seek such therapy.

Following the events of the day sometimes makes it harder to laugh. And since laughter has been associated with a release of tension and better health, watching CNN and reading the NYT

does not promote well being. Just as laughter stimulates more laughter, being around negative people will darken your soul. These days, even late night comedy shows and sports have become politicized, where negativity is the tour de force. I've read that Jerry Seinfeld no longer does comedy shows on dour and politically correct college campuses.

There is a fundamental property of the universe known as entropy which states that energy dissipates just as a spinning top winds down and eventually falls over. I've previously written about a book called "The Practice Effect." The idea behind this work of science fiction was entropy. In an imaginary land everyone worked to make something from nothing. As an example, rubbing sticks together ultimately resulted in a chair. And if the craftsman stopped "practicing" on his creation, the chair would quickly revert to sticks.

Becky and I are again reading "Mere Christianity" by C. S. Lewis with a group of fellow Christians. Lewis, the Oxfordian British Don, can be difficult, so our discussions of Lewis' thoughts are often more valuable than his prose.

Lewis believes we must practice at being loving even if we don't feel warm and fuzzy about something or someone. And by practicing love and charity we are changed for the better.

There's a 16th century prayer by Fra Giovanni known as "Take Joy." It was originally a Christmas greeting to a friend, but I think the message is timeless. I encourage you to Google the entire prayer and its admonitions!

I believe you must seek and take joy wherever you can and welcome laughter's release from negativity. After 9/11 Becky recalls hearing a child's laughter and how she realized the absence of laughter in those somber days. You can stay engaged, but when the relentless parade of negativity drains your soul, it's time to turn off the TV and use the newspaper for more constructive enterprises such as wrapping fish.

Some years ago I came upon another pithy admonition which I loved and used in a daughter's wedding toast. I believe it may work for you:

"So here's to love and laughter and happy ever afters!"

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

Pet Preparedness

Hobo the Wonder Dog's annual physical and vaccinations is always the first week in June. Pet preparedness for the unexpected is always on our minds. There are many unexpected disasters, but the one affecting most pet owners is losing or being separated from their pet. Whenever Hobo visits with his veterinarian we are diligent to have his microchip checked. There is National Check the Chip Day which is a good idea but; I believe it's easier having identification checked by your veterinarian during their annual visit and National Check the Chip Day. We want to stress the



By Howard Baker, RN BSN

importance of microchipping your pet and keeping the registration information updated. A pet owners worst disaster is being separated from their pet.

Remember, a microchip without an accurate registration is not helpful in reuniting you with your pet. Hobo the Wonder Dog always wears a collar with his identification tag with up to date contact information. Hobo is chipped and his registration information is checked and updated at least twice a year: with his annual wellness visit and National Check the Chip Day on August 15th. Having the correct registration information is vital to protect your

pet in the event you become separated.

Ohio State University, in a study they conducted in shelters, found that: 73% of owners of stray dogs and cats that had microchips were found. The reasons owners were not found 35% were incorrect or disconnected telephone numbers and 10% had unregistered microchips, 17% were chips not being registered with the manufacturer's database. The study highlights the importance of having accurate contact information associated with your pet's microchip and National Check the Chip Day.

4 tips to help reunite a lost pet:

1. Visual identification on your pet's collars in the form of a ID tag, microchip tag, and rabies vaccination tag

- 2. Microchip your pets
- 3. Update contact information on all forms of your pet's identification yearly
- 4. Check your pet's microchip number with the national registry: www.petmicrochiplookup.org

Losing a pet is traumatic and stressful and microchipping your pet increases your odds of being reunited. Hobo and I hope you and your pet are never separated, but believe in having all the tools available just in case.

It can get confusing on where to register your pet's microchip, so use the one animal shelters and veterinarians will search—the one who manufactured your pet's chip. If you are unsure who manufactured the chip, check the number with the Universal Pet Microchip Lookup Tool: www.petmicrochiplookup.org.



Dr. Ann Combs, DVM checks Hobo the Wonder Dog's microchip during annual exam

Hobo and I hope you will be prepared for any disaster that might separate you from your pet; having a microchip with updated information is the best chance to be reunited. If you already have a microchip, take a few minutes to update your contact information—it could be the difference between lost and found!





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Life and Death Matters

There is not much detail given about life after death in the Old Testament. Israel was left to their own experience and speculation. What they experienced left them the idea that death was final. The body is placed in the tomb and it stays there. Everything accumulated or achieved in this life is left behind and fades with time because we all die. Their speculation and hope said something else though. They thought perhaps there was life after sheol - the Hebrew word for "grave". Sheol was a shadowy existence with not much substance. The Hebrews thought there might be a place where the faithful continue to serve God, but they were not sure.

With such unknowns, the Hebrews and other ancient cultures tried to find a measure of immortality in their children and their reputations. Many modern people try to do the same thing. We want our children to carry on our name after we are gone. But truly, how many of us know our great-great-grandmother's maiden names? After two or three generations, we will be forgotten. We might try to gain immortality through a statue or monument. There might be a grant or scholarship in our name at the local university or college. There might even be a book written about your life or some one-liners on your tombstone. But over time, books become outdated, tombstone writing fades, and at some point you will be forgotten. I just hope they remember me at least through dessert at the funeral dinner.

But despite the Hebrews' ignorance about the

afterlife, they were still following God. They had great faith. We like them may say though, "Who knows what will happen when we die?" Well, let me tell you a secret - we know! Unlike those who lived during the history of the Old Testament, we live after the cross. The two on the road to Emmaus were sad and their hopes dashed. They said, "We had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). They thought Jesus was the one, but they knew death was final. Even when they heard news of the empty tomb they did not believe. Even walking alongside Jesus for several miles did not change their minds. They didn't recognize Jesus until he blessed the bread. Once he did that their eyes were opened.

Then there was Saul of Tarsus. Saul made it his mission to stamp out this growing sect who followed this Nazarene. He was on his way to Damascus to imprison some of the followers of Jesus when a bright light engulfed him. And whose voice did he hear? It was that of Jesus. He was alive. He was who he said he was. Years later, the Corinthians wrote a letter to Paul wondering about what happens after death. They trusted their experience and began to believe death was final. Paul tells them that if death is final, then we are worse off than those around us with no hope. We are worse off than those who lived during the Old Testament days who knew nothing of the afterlife (I Corinthians 15:12-19). Paul, like the writer of Ecclesiastes (3:18-21), agreed that if death is the end, our faith is useless. But we don't have to worry about being deceived. Our faith is not just wishful thinking. "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (I Corinthians 15:20). He is alive!

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