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Whittle Springs golf course ranked No. 4 Most Improved

By Steve Williams

The old golf course needed some tender loving care. And as it turned out, whom better to see and understand that than Knoxville's lady mayor.

But in 2015 someone had to let Madeline Rogero know about the needs of Whittle Springs, where golfers have now played for 101 years. Jerry Daniel and Paul Blackstock, members of the Whittle Springs Men's Golf Association and on the greens committee, thought Con Hunley would be perfect for that role.

They knew the famous country music singer had a relationship with the mayor, but even more important, Hunley knew Whittle Springs like the back of his hand. He caddied there as a young boy and continues to play there as much as anyone. Just the other day, in fact, WS General Manager Rusty Howell said, "Hardly a day goes by during golf season that Con doesn't play here."

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No. 14 is a straightaway par four 309-yard hole that lies in the center of Whittle Springs Golf Course. The tree and shade make it a picturesque hole.

SENIOR STARS

The spotlight is on seniors again this week as The Focus continues its own recognition of the top students of area schools' Class of 2019 with the Valedictorians and Salutatorians from South-Doyle High *(please see A4)* and Seymour High *(C4)*. Another type of senior is recognized in this week's Silver Years, Section D.

Seymour High School seniors recently attended the All Star Banquet and were recognized for their high achievement in ACT and AP exam scores, becoming National Merit finalists and member of collegiate classes. Pictured are: Elijah Ballew, Emmaline Combs, Kaitlyn Daniels, Devin Gister,Josh Glass, Hannah Hamilton, Hannah Hennon, Christopher Hilton, Joshua Kandel, Jaiden Kraft, Samantha Kulikowski, Make'la Lacey, Abigail Lawrence, Katie Leming, Elijah Stutz, Hannah Warrensford, Gabriel Whitaker, Eddie Zhang and Tony Zhang.

Six now seek Seat C

By Mike Steely
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Four seats on the Knoxville City Council and the office of city mayor are up for election this year and noon Thursday is the qualifying deadline for petitions to be turned into the Knox County Election Commission. Most of the interest has been on the mayor's race but the position, At-Large Council Seat C, now has six candidates.

Held currently by Vice Mayor Finbarr Saunders, the Seat C position drew two more candidates recently as radio personality Hubert Smith and former Knox County Commissioner Bob Thomas officially entered the race. Thomas pulled a petition

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Family Pet Portrait Day was picture perfect

By Mike Steely
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Seeing people taking their pets to get a photo with the Easter Bunny or Santa gave Cameron Brooks an idea. The Knox County Election Commission member, realtor and former Democratic Party chairman decided to try out the idea.

Brooks looked for help in creating "Family Pet Portrait Day" and found Gary Sturm of Mortgage Investors Group. Needing a location he found Prestige Cleaners owner and Knoxville mayor candidate Eddie Mannis who agreed to let Brooks use the Prestige Tuxedo location at 6217 Baum Drive.

When Farrah Williams-Deck of Farrah's Photography agreed to take the photos, Brooks had a crew together for the task.

"We do all types of photo events such as weddings, events, and people occasionally want to include their pets," Williams-Deck said.

The date was set for Sunday, May 5 and by 11 a.m. that morning, Brooks, Strum and Williams-Deck were at the store. The crew no sooner got set up when people started arriving with their pets. Brooks told The Focus that the pets and people would be arriving in shifts of about 15 minutes and already 32 families had reserved a time. One of the families to arrive was Mary Constantine, a retired feature writer for the Knoxville News-Sentinel, with her husband, Matthew Graveline, and their three dogs, Piper, Blu Jeans and Millie. All three family pets are rescue animals from East Tennessee Boxer Rescue and Belly Rubs Bassets.

With only a little leash entanglement and lots of laughter, the couple and pets settled in and the photo was taken. When Constantine asked how much of a donation that Brooks wanted he told her the photo is free and she would be getting a 5 by 7 professional photo in the mail.

"This is the first time we've done this and I thought people might like it," Brooks said.

As an affiliate broker for Realty Executives Associates and dog lover, Brooks believes in protecting his client's interests and is committed to supporting animal rescue groups.

After Constantine and Graveline left Prestige Tuxedo other people with pets, large and small, began to arrive.

"Things are going smoothly. It takes a bit to settle the animals and people in for the photograph but it's going very well," Brooks told The Focus later in the day. The event lasted until 7 p.m. and Brooks said 40 pet families had attended.

PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

Cameron Brooks and Eddie Mannis watch as pets and their people are positioned for photograph during the event at Prestige Tuxedo at 6217 Baum Drive.

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