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Knox County School Board Elects New Chair

By Anne Primm

Chair Terry Hill called the September 4 special-called meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. on Wednesday afternoon. Three board members were absent from the meeting: First District Representative Evette Satterfield, Third District Representative Tony Norman, and Eighth District Representative Mike McMillan. The sole purpose of this meeting was to elect a new chair and vice chair for the Knox County Board of Education for the current 2019-2020 school year. After the pledge of allegiance and moment of silence led by Second District Representative Jennifer Owen, nominations were opened. Fourth District Representative Virginia Babb nominated Fifth District Representative Susan Horn for the chair position. The motion was seconded. Owen moved to accept Horn as the new chair by acclamation. That motion was seconded and the board unanimously voted Representative Horn as the new chair.

Next, Seventh District Representative Patti Bounds nominated Owen for the position of vice chair.

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St. Jude's little ambassador visits Knox County officials

By Mike Steely
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"Hi, I'm Kael Hill and I'm the mayor for the day," the young man said when meeting Knox County Court Clerk Sherry Witt and other Knox County officials Wednesday morning. Kael and his mother had just come from a personal meeting with Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs who apparently bestowed the honors on the small cancer survivor who

is an ambassador for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Witt hosted the gathering and invited other officials and employees to meet with Kael and his mom, who are traveling the region to bring attention to Childhood Cancer Awareness Month this September.

Born with leg cancer and now equipped with a prosthetic leg, the outgoing young man took the time to shake every hand

and one by one the officials said their name and told him what they do in the county. Kael and his family live in Johnson City and spend much of their time promoting St. Jude.

Kael was quick to tell everyone that he plays soccer. Following the introductions Kael thanked everyone for the reception and everyone had snacks and chatted with him and his mother.

Charles Susano Jr., Circuit Court clerk, stands with Kael Hill and Sherry Witt during a reception for the young St. Jude representative. Several county officials and employees attended the Wednesday morning event and Kael shook hands with everyone there. Photo by Mike Steely.



Local officials enjoy annual fair luncheon

Commissioner John Schoonmaker presents a \$500 check from Knox County government for HonorAir to its founder, Eddie Mannis, during Friday's Tennessee Valley Fair Government and Business Luncheon, which traditionally opens the fair every year. The fair is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year and will feature innovative exhibits, livestock shows, concert series, action sports, exciting rides and variety of unique foods every day through its close on September 15. For more information, please visit www.tn-valleyfair.org. Photo by Mike Steely.

Maintenance ongoing again at Fountain City Lake

By Mike Steely
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Parrot feather could be called the kudzu of the water world. The plant, often used in household aquariums, is infesting Fountain City Lake. According to City Stormwater Engineer David Hagerman, the invasive plant is overwhelming the popular lake.

Although the lake, commonly called the Duck Pond, is owned by the Fountain City Lions Club, which also owns and maintains the 7.9 acre park, the city has been tackling a pollution problem for several years.

So far it is reported the city has sent more than \$760,000 on projects at Fountain City Lake since 2014, including dredging, draining, cleaning, pump repairs and repairing the earthen walls.

For several years the city has been warning visitors not to feed the ducks and swans human food and



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

Fountain City Lake is infested with parrot feather grass and clean up was scheduled to begin on August 27. Part of the infestation comes from people dumping their aquariums in the waters there.

had placed acceptable food vending machines there for feeding the water fowl. Trout have been stocked in the lake since

it was drained, repaired and allowed to refill. Several natural springs feed the lake and are the source of First Creek that runs

from the lake southward and empties into the Tennessee River downtown.

The latest source of the infestation of parrot

feather weeds appears to be people dumping their aquariums in the lake. Aquarium gravel has been found at the bottom near

the edge of the lake. Some people may think they are saving their goldfish or other aquarium inhabitants but dumping aquariums there have created a growth of parrot feather which has overtaken the waters.

It seems a never-ending problem for the lake and work there was scheduled to begin last month with inmates taking part in the Knox County Sheriff's Department's voluntary work release program.

The weed removal plan involved a small draw-down of waters there and the use of mechanical cutters and rakes to remove the weeds.

"City Public Service workers will then vacuum out the lake's fish screen that is contained in the outlet structure to remove any weed fragments that got trapped there," Hagerman said prior to the operation beginning.

Following the cleaning

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