

COVID-19 Weekly Focus

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2019 Knox County Total Population ¹	Total Confirmed COVID-19 Cases ²	% COVID-19 Cases/ Total Population	Total COVID-19 Deaths ²	% COVID-19 Deaths/ Total Population	
470,313	20,135	4.3%	186	.0004%	

SOURCES 1. U.S. Census Bureau 2. Knox County Health Department data from 12/05/2020.

Madeline Rogero honored



Former Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero was honored in a virtual luncheon by the Senior Citizens Home Assistance Service Friday.

By Mike Steely
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Former Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero was honored Friday by the Senior Citizens Home Assistance Service in a virtual zoom presentation. The organization's 27th annual Knoxville Award Luncheon lauded Rogero for repeatedly demonstrating care for the community and its residents. The luncheon recognizing deserving persons was different this year. Guests picked up their meal at the Knoxville Convention Center beginning

at 11 a.m. At 12:30 each guest had access to a link to view the video honoring Rogero which showed the life and career of Knoxville's first woman mayor. Guests could also interact with the video. All proceeds benefited the non-profit, a Knoxville-based organization providing home-maker and personal care services for seniors and people with disabilities of all ages. Rogero's history, rising from community activist to city mayor, was detailed in the presentation. Her eight years as

mayor were very productive, brought about many changes, and saw Rogero appointing Knoxville's first female chief of police. During the video presentation former Deputy Mayor Bill Lyons said Rogero knew how to build a coalition. Rogero thanked the organization and said she learned in her life that good people will often disagree with each other. Lyons said she often took on difficult situations with humor. Former Police Advisory **Continued on page 4**



Knox County Health Department data showed all five benchmarks as RED last week, indicating for the first time an increase in all aspects of COVID-19.

Board of Health moves to further limit gatherings

By Mike Steely
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For the first time during the COVID-19 pandemic, all five benchmarks set by the Knox County Health Department were in the RED when the Board of Health met Wednesday. With this knowledge in mind the group hesitated in placing further curfew restrictions but passed a limit on public gatherings. Several speakers spoke at the meeting's public forum, one of them calling for the public to openly defy the regulations. Most speakers called the board "unelected" and charged the board had no power to regulate people's daily lives. The county mask mandate continues with no expiration date and the 10 p.m. curfew continues for restaurants and bars until the end of the month. **Continue on page 2**

Vestal, Fort Dickerson soon to be connected

By Mike Steely
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Imagine taking a trail from Vestal to Fort Dickerson Park. That was the motive of several interested parties gathering for a recent tour on West Blount Avenue. Landowner Bobby Smelcer has granted an easement to Legacy Parks Foundation to create a trail up the ridge from his property at 3434 W. Blount Ave. to the Fort Dickerson quarry. When completed, the "missing link" between the Mary Vestal Park and Fort Dickerson will be filled in. The new trail will be open to mountain bikers and pedestrians.



Smelcer led a tour of his property where the trail will be improved and widened and the guests included Councilman Tommy Smith, Commissioner Carson Dailey, Parks and Recreation Director Sheryl Ely, Deputy Director Aaron Browning, Greenway Coordinator Tim Hester, Public Service Director Chad Weth, Legacy Parks Director Carol Evans, Vestal Community President Eric Johnson, and Contour Trail Design Company's Randy Conner.

Pandemic dominates discussion at BoE work session

By Ken Lay

The COVID-19 pandemic was again at the forefront at the Knox County Board of Education's work session last week. In his report to the school board KCS Superintendent Bob Thomas detailed the challenges of keeping schools open as Coronavirus cases continue to spike in the county. But he also reiterated that schools are the safest places for the students. "We know the safest place for our students is in schools, so we're trying our best to maintain that and to be in school each day, and I'll have to say it is getting much more challenging," Thomas said at the meeting Wednesday at the Andrew Johnson Building. "We're hearing that from our administrators on a pretty regular basis now." Several schools in the district have switched to virtual learning at points throughout the semester. Powell Middle School and Halls Elementary are currently using the virtual model with Bearden Middle scheduled to reopen for in-person learning today. Thomas said that the district tracks absenteeism of teachers and students as KCS has a shortage of substitute teachers. "I've heard concerns from our principals that our teachers are being spread thin as they are covering for their colleagues," Thomas said. "They're not getting their planning time. "I would like to commend our administrators, our employees, staff and our teachers for helping us to remain open in both virtual and in-person. I commend the understanding of our families and the perseverance of our students." The district is still actively seeking qualified substitute teachers and board chairperson Susan Horn gave an open invitation for candidates to apply for the open positions. "I know there are people in the community who are unemployed and I would like to encourage them to join our team if they're qualified," Horn said. Before the meeting, new board member Betsy Henderson was installed in a ceremony. She represents District 6 and replaces Terry Hill, who is now representing the district on the Knox County Commission. Henderson was active at her first board meeting as she suggested that the board consider reinstating raises for employees based on current sales tax revenues. "I didn't think I would speak at my first meeting," Henderson said. "But I would like us to consider reinstating the four percent pay raise to our employees." Thomas and the board agreed to consider the reinstatement in January after hearing from KCS Assistant Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer Ron McPherson that revenues have exceeded projections thus far this year.

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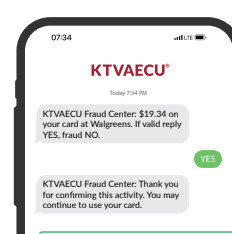


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Our children are at risk

From a distance



By John J. Duncan Jr.
duncanj@knoxfocus.com

One of my sons-in-law, Jason Brown, recently sent me two articles about the dismal results of online education.

The reports were from two school systems very far apart but strikingly similar in their findings.

Dr. Joe Gothard, superintendent of schools

in St. Paul, reported that nearly 40% of St. Paul high school students had failing grades.

He said many students seem to “have turned away completely and disengaged, and that’s tragic and sad.”

More than a thousand miles away, in Fairfax County, Virginia, an internal analysis found that nearly 10,000 students there had received Fs in two or more classes.

The report said “online learning is forcing a striking drop in students’ academic performance, and that the most vulnerable students – children with disabilities and English language

learners – are suffering the most.”

Jason and our daughter, Whitney, are the parents of three of our nine grandchildren, Emma, 16, Maclain, 14, and Harper, 11. They are very involved in their daughters’ lives and have great love and concern for young people.

Unfortunately, many years ago, we began a worship of computers in this country that has made us less human and has made billionaires out of a few in Silicon Valley.

Too much education was turned over to Google and not enough to live humans being teachers.

The national media, for

partisan political reasons, blew coronavirus way out of proportion and scared many people into believing it was unsafe for children to go to school.

Actually, many more children are killed in car wrecks almost every week than are dying from this virus. For the very few children who get it, the survival rate is 99.97%.

I wrote in an earlier column that over 8,000 people die in the country every day, and every death is sad, tragic, or even horrible.

I am certainly not making light of any death from coronavirus, but it is good news that slightly over 99%

of those under 65 who have it survive, most with just minor symptoms.

And the CDC reported that 94% of COVID-related deaths have been with comorbidities such as pneumonia, heart failure diabetes, old age or something else that could have been the main cause. In Japan, more people committed suicide in just one month (October) than have been killed by the virus this entire year.

I know that I studied much harder when I was in school for fear of being called on and embarrassed by some teacher or professor. And most students do better when other students are

present.

Some teachers’ unions, trying to act like they are doing everything possible for their members, have falsely claimed it is not safe for the teachers to be in class.

This is a bunch of hooey. It is perfectly safe for healthy teachers to be in school except possibly in some big-city areas where most of the students come from dysfunctional families.

Any teacher who does not want to teach should be replaced.

Our children need to be in school instead of sitting at home staring at a screen.

Board of Health moves to further limit gatherings

Cont. from page 1

With hopes that a vaccine arrives soon the board discussed the huge increase in cases, deaths and hospital population. Dr. James E. Shamiyeh warned that cases may continue to increase following gatherings for Thanksgiving. The board voted to prohibit gatherings of more than ten people in the same 360 square feet area. The current regulation had placed a limit of 50% capacity in any restaurant or bar business.

The regulation passed in a split vote with Knox County Board of Health Chairman Dr. Jack Gotcher, member Dr. Patrick O’Brien and Mayor Glenn Jacobs voting “No.”

Dr. Martha Buchanan

said the new rule applies to all social gatherings, not just inside restaurants. The limit of ten persons does not include people of the same family. Also excluded from the regulation are a variety of businesses and organizations such as nursing homes, churches, private dwellings, government buildings, and public and private schools.

The debate within Board of Health members centered on whether the gathering size should be a regulation or a recommendation. Mayor Jacobs had suggested it be a recommendation and said the board cannot “constitutionally regulate and enforcement would be difficult.” Currently the Knoxville Police

Department has been visiting restaurants and bars to enforce the curfew but the Knox County Sheriff’s Department has refused to enforce the board’s edicts.

Chairman Gotcher said he has some concerns about push back and the regulation may be “willfully disregarded.”

“The situation is evolving. We don’t want to water this down and lose the intent,” Dr. Shamiyeh said. Dr. Buchanan said a regulation has more meaning than a recommendation and added, “We don’t have mask police roaming around in Knox County.” She also said the health department is getting less complaints about mask wearing. Dr. Shamiyeh said that

no matter what the board does, the pandemic will probably get much worse in the next two to three weeks.

Dr. O’Brien said the 50% capacity safety regulation is already in effect and indicated that the “verbal minority who are loud” will continue to do so.

Dr. Marie Hurt said the new ten unrelated persons limit is social distancing and basically aimed at parties and celebrations. She said the regulation is no different in preventing the viral spread than mask wearing.

The new regulation will last for four weeks but, like the mask and other mandates, will be reviewed at each meeting. Dr. Gotcher suggesting having a mental health expert be a guest at one of the upcoming meetings. A discussion of the upcoming vaccine and how it may affect “getting back to normal” could also be an item to discuss.

At the end of the meeting the board voted to establish a 15-minute segment when members, if they wish, can respond to public forum comments and questions.

The Board of Health meets again on December 16 to continue its review of regulations.

Commission again to consider limiting Board of Health powers

By Mike Steely

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When the Knox County Commission meets in work session next Monday Commissioner Kyle Ward may once again attempt to limit the pandemic powers of the Board of Health.

Ward’s new ordinance faces the first of two readings during the commission’s regular meeting on December 21 but will probably see some discussion during the work session. Basically Ward wants to change the county code to have the board serve “as an advisory board” to the Knox County Health Department. That would put Health Director Dr. Martha Buchanan as the authority but she would report to Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs and the state health commissioner.

A “Committee and Economics Well-Being Committee” was discussed by the commission last month and members were to be named by the end of the year. None have been named and the advisory function of that new group has not been determined.

The commission may also discuss the local state Rep. Jason Zachary’s bill to remove the Board of Health authority in the legislature. Thus far Tennessee Governor Bill Lee’s extension of an Emergency Act has authorized the Board of Health to issue regulations during the pandemic. Those include wearing a mask in public and private buildings, maintaining social distance, washing hands, and the latest regulations of restaurant and bar capacity at 50% and 10 p.m. curfew.

With the COVID-19 case numbers and deaths rising and the hospital beds being increasingly used for virus victims it seems the Ward ordinance might face some

Continued on page 6

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Publisher's Position Let them eat cake



By Steve Hunley,
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Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi standing in front of her \$24,000 refrigerator has never left my mind, especially when the economic policy of the Democratic Party is more Alexandria Ocasio Cortez than John F. Kennedy. Pelosi was showing off her collection of Jeni's ice cream, which retails at \$11.75 per pint. That means it's \$94 a gallon! San Francisco has the priciest real estate in the country and Pelosi and her minions are hardly tribunes of the people.

Ocasio-Cortez is the poster child of the socialist view of economics. For those of you who want to remind me she has an economics degree from Boston College, all I can say is whatever. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is a moron and has less idea about the working

of economics than my dog Sophie. Socialists peddle the theory that the wealthy have somehow acquired their money through exploitation of those who have less. The socialists seem to believe there is only so much money and billionaires and millionaires have accumulated their wealth through keeping some folks down. Others, those who actually understand economics, realize there is an abundance of opportunity to make a good living for every American if one will apply himself or herself. It is the entire explanation behind entrepreneurship, which has made America a wealthy nation.

There are going to be a slew of socialists running for Knoxville's City Council next year. The election cycle has already begun and incumbents Lauren Rider, Andrew Roberto, Gwen McKenzie and Tommy Smith are sure to be challenged by local socialist candidates. Seema Singh was the first self-described "Democratic socialist" to be elected to the City Council almost four years ago and her seat will be up for election as well. Amelia Parker, another socialist, was elected in 2019 by defeating the initial favorite for the seat, Amy Midis.

Singh has disappointed some members of the radical leftist flock and it remains to be seen if she will face an opponent who runs as a "true" progressive or however else a more purist socialist challenger would label himself or herself. It doesn't really matter; it's sort of like the distinction between a "Democratic socialist" and a "socialist." There is no distinction.

How will Lauren Rider, Gwen McKenzie, Andrew Roberto and Tommy Smith fare against socialist challengers? That's anybody's guess, especially as all of them are Democrats and don't want to offend any particular constituency. Rider, McKenzie and Roberto were elected four years ago, while Smith was appointed to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of South Knoxville Councilwoman Stephanie Welch, who joined the administration of Indya Kincannon. The problem for the incumbents is going to be distinguishing themselves from their socialist opponents while twisting and turning so as not to offend a soul. That is about nigh unto impossible a task as humanly possible. Some of the incumbents seem to be looking to run for reelection by holding as firmly to Mayor Indya

Kincannon's skirt tail as they can, although nobody knows whether that will do them any good or not. The strategy of the city council incumbents seem to be virtue-signaling to the socialists. My guess is that is a truly bad strategy if the goal is to win an election.

The socialists have already drawn a line in the sand; they have declared they are for not merely defunding the police, but abolishing the police department altogether. That should make for a fine distinction right there. If the incumbents are too squeamish about declaring their own support for the KPD or even public safety, then it opens the door wide for someone else to run on a public safety platform. Considering how crime is already rising inside the City of Knoxville, that should make for an interesting campaign. Just a couple of years ago, it would have been inconceivable that any candidate could run for public office in the United States of America who refused to endorse the simple idea of public safety; now, not so much. Don't be surprised if the City Council incumbents are loath to say they support having a police department or even back public safety. I can't see how any candidate

sidesteps the issue, as surely someone or some entity will quiz all the candidates for council if they support defunding the police or hiring more officers and implementing more training. It seems unlikely council candidates claiming a social worker is just as good as a police officer in filling out an accident report or appear at the scene of a robbery, rape or murder are going to get anywhere. That is if voters actually know the views of the people asking for their votes.

The council incumbents are already ringing the affordable housing bell, stampeding in their haste to burnish their progressive credentials in advance of the election. Keep in mind, only a small fraction of registered voters ordinarily come out to vote and the number usually falls from election to election. The lack of interest and participation by city voters should be an embarrassment to decent people, but it does raise the question of just what happens if someone shines the light of truth upon the views of the various candidates? What happens if the voters are riled? That is an interesting question and the City of Knoxville raised property taxes under the administration of Mayor Madeline

Rogero, largely to pay for the generous pensions for retired city workers. It is no secret Indya Kincannon is planning to raise Knoxville's property taxes once again, likely as the precursor to expand the "affordable housing" demanded by the socialists.

There certainly is a finite amount of money in the government's coffers, unless it is the federal government, which deficit spends constantly. When one area of the government expands, another must necessarily contract. The socialists want to diminish the police department and replace the spending with social programs and giveaways, all to be paid for by the taxpayers. To the socialists, business, big or small, exist solely for one reason: to pay taxes to support their social welfare programs. The only growth the socialist wish to see inside the City of Knoxville are housing projects.

Independents and Republicans - - - yes, there are some inside the city - - - will have to decide whether they want to vote against outright socialists or the faux socialism of incumbents too scared to take a stand against higher taxes and the "woke" agenda of a handful of people. Or do they simply stay at home?

Can I Stop Paying Rent If My Landlord Won't Fix Things?

I often get phone calls from tenants who will start the conversation talking about how terrible their landlord is and how the landlord will fix nothing and they are living in the worst living situation there ever



By Jedidiah McKeenan
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was. Then they get to where they tell me that, oh we are getting evicted because we stopped paying rent.

Unfortunately, you don't get to just stop paying rent because the landlord will not fix what you think they should. What can you actually do if the landlord does not fix what they are supposed to fix?

Tennessee Code Annotated section 66-28-502 states that if a landlord deliberately or negligently fails to supply essential services, the tenant shall give written notice to the landlord specifying the breach and

may do one of the following:

(A) Procure essential services during the period of the landlord's noncompliance and deduct their actual and reasonable costs from the rent;

(B) Recover damages based upon the diminution in the fair rental value of the dwelling unit, provided tenant continues to occupy premises; or

(C) Procure reasonable substitute housing during the period of the landlord's noncompliance, in which case the tenant is excused from paying rent for the period of the landlord's noncompliance.

Nowhere in there does it say you can simply withhold rent payments while staying in the property.

Further, the landlord is only required to supply "essential services." What

are considered essential services? Under the statute, essential services are utility services, including gas, heat, electricity, and any other obligations imposed upon the landlord which materially affect the health and safety of the tenant.

First, unless the issue that the landlord is not fixing something that materially affects the health and safety of the tenant, then the landlord need not fix the issue the tenant is complaining about.

Next, if the tenant believes that the landlord is not fixing what they are supposed to fix, the solution is not to just stop paying rent.

The options are: the tenant can fix the issue themselves and deduct the repair costs from their rent; sue for the loss in rental value to the property, or secure substitute housing until the landlord makes the required repairs.

Jedidiah McKeenan is an attorney practicing in Knox

County and surrounding counties. He works in many areas, including personal

injury, divorce and custody, criminal and landlord-tenant law. Visit attorney-knoxville.

com for more information about this legal issue and other legal issues.



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Starting Life in Knoxville (Part 5 in series on Dwight Kessel)

"In the beginning of my second-class year which would be a college junior, I decided I did not want to make the Navy a career. I resigned near Thanksgiving in 1947 and went to Beckley (West Virginia) to work for my Dad in his store, Neville Maytag and Furniture," Dwight Kessel shared. Later, Kessel did emergency teaching in the high schools and drove a Texaco gasoline truck before his friend from the Navy, Don Mirts, convinced him to come to Knoxville, Tennessee, and finish his education at the University of Tennessee (UT). With credits from DUKE and the Naval Academy plus going straight through for two years at UT, Kessel graduated with a degree in Industrial Engineering in 1950. His first job was with Knox Stove Works (Knox Metal Products). While at UT, he made many lifelong friends. He also attended a pledge dance where he "spotted a cute little brunette that my fraternity brother



By Ralphine Major
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knew." Kessel was introduced to Gloria Jane Grubb. They were married on March 10, 1951, and will celebrate 70 years of marriage in 2021.

While at the Naval Academy, 6th battalion, 22nd Company, Dwight Kessel met Chili Dean, Mont Egerton, and Don Mirts who remained lifelong friends. They all finally settled in Knoxville, Tennessee. Chili Dean became General Manager of Knoxville Utility Board and later on Chairman of the Board of TVA; Mont Egerton went to University of Tennessee Law School and spent the rest of his life as a practicing attorney; and Don Mirts went into sales and became General Manager of Dealers Warehouse Corporation, a building supply business. "Later on, Don found some lake property that he and I bought together and became neighbors. To this day, his boys call me Uncle Dwight," Kessel said. (To be continued)

Words of Faith: 1 Corinthians 13:1 (KJV), scripture Kessel used as the focus for a talk he gave years ago at a Baptist church in West Virginia. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."



Dwight Kessel, Mont Egerton, and Don Mirts in front, 1946 Third Class Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Lifelong friends Mont Egerton, Dwight Kessel and Don Mirts at the June 2, 1994, Cherokee Country Club Re-election Party. (Both Egerton and Mirts are deceased; they passed away within three months of each other.) Pictures provided by Dwight Kessel.



Another 2020 surprise

The year 2020 just keeps getting better. We've struggled through a presidential election where the incumbent still hasn't conceded but claims that illegal voting has stolen the race from him. On top of that, the entire world faces a pandemic that in America alone has infected



By Joe Rector
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now wearing a boot on my left foot.

A month ago, my foot began to hurt. It ached, and in one spot a shooting pain on the outside hit. I figured this was just one more piece of evidence that my age was catching up with me. As the weeks passed, my foot hurt more, and I limped more. Amy

strongly suggested, a code for "do it," that a visit to the doctor was in order. So, I made the trip the Monday before Thanksgiving to Tennessee Orthopedic Center, and Dr. Hopkins announced that I suffered from plantar fasciitis and a stress fracture. How the second thing happened I'll never

know, but the combination is enough to slow me down.

I'm in this boot until a return visit later in December. It reminds me of the casts that I've worn on this same foot over the years. There have been four of them, along with two ankle surgeries. Luckily, most of the problems occurred when I was in high school. At that age, I could handle a pair of crutches well enough to try to race guys on the football team. On one occasion, I'd had a little too much to drink (yes, I was underage), and a car full of guys from another school wanted to fight my friends and me. I hopped out of the car with a cast on my foot and began banging on their car with my crutch. They must have decided fighting a crazy

person wasn't such a good idea.

I wrecked my mother's care while wearing one cast. A classmate almost ran me off the road. I backed into a driveway, looked the short way, the long way, and the short way again. When I pulled out, a Knox County Sheriff's cruiser, that was chasing the boy without siren or lights, broadsided me. I fell out of the car, grabbed my crutches and checked on the officer, whose vehicle was sitting in a deep ditch with the back end stuck in the mud.

This boot I'm wearing is strange to me. Always before, my foot was wrapped in a cast that couldn't hold any weight. I had to keep my foot off the ground at all times. With this new contraption, I can walk all I want. My gait is more

than a little off as I hobble around places, but at least my hands won't blister from holding onto the handles of crutches.

Let's hope things are better by the next doctor's appointment. I'm not inclined to do much more to heal an aching foot. Surgeries and hard casts don't seem practical for someone who isn't always the nimblest on his feet. I might prefer these aches and pains to any new ones that further treatments may bring on.

One thing is for sure: I'd like to have things healed up so I can walk out of this God forsaken year and into the next one that brings much more promise. Like most people, I'm over 2020.

Madeline Rogero

Cont. from page 1

Review Committee Chair and Community Relations Director Avice Reed said Rogero viewed her mayorality position "not as just a job but a passion." She also said "Knoxville looks much different" because of Rogero's leadership.

Former Tennessee Governor and former Knoxville Mayor Bill Haslam said Rogero's community organization experience led to many

needed services, especially to the most vulnerable of the citizens.

SCHAS CEO Tim Howell concluded the video by saying the organization has continued servicing people throughout the pandemic and has funds that will last through June of 2021. Past honorees include Jim Haslam, Pat Summit, Peyton Manning, Howard Baker, Jim and Kay Clayton, and Jimmy Duncan.

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NOTABLES FROM KNOXVILLE

BERT VINCENT

Bert Vincent was a newspaper feature writer for the Knoxville News-Sentinel and a writer for more than fifty years. His "Strolling with Bert Vincent" column was hugely popular. Born in Bee Springs, Ky., he taught school and became a high school principal.

When he was only 19 he bought a newspaper in Kentucky, sold it back in six months, and joined the army during World War I. After the war Vincent began wandering the country and returned to newspapers in Jackson and Nashville, Tennessee, Ohio, Illinois and Indiana. In 1929 he joined the staff of the Knoxville paper.

Vincent died in 1969. He wrote four books, helped raise funds for hospitals, the Knoxville Animal Shelter, a chapel, preserved folk lore, helped organize the Ruritan Club and established the Ramp Festival in Cosby. Trails have been named for him as well as the library wing at Lincoln Memorial University.

He's buried in the Hopewell Presbyterian Church Cemetery in Dandridge.

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Georgia's Wild Man: Eugene Talmadge

Pages from the Past



By Ray Hill
rayhill865@gmail.com

Reprinted from
January 26, 2015

For two decades, Eugene "Gene" Talmadge, was a fixture in Georgia politics. Bold, brash and plain spoken, Gene Talmadge was almost always on the ballot for some office until his death.

Born on September 23, 1884 in Forsyth, Georgia, Gene Talmadge was far better educated than one might have otherwise believed. Talmadge attended the University of Georgia and earned a law degree from the same institution.

Initially, Gene Talmadge's foray into politics was unsuccessful. He ran for the state legislature twice and was twice defeated. Talmadge's first political success was his election as Commissioner of Agriculture for Georgia in 1926. Things were never quiet when Gene Talmadge was involved; in fact, it was quite the opposite. Controversy seemed to positively swirl about "Ol' Gene's" head like flies in a humid Georgia summer.

Talmadge ran the Agriculture Commissioner's office just as he pleased and his political opponents accused him of malfeasance in office and out right theft, yet Talmadge proved to be enormously popular with one of Georgia's prime political constituencies: farmers. Commissioner Talmadge published a newspaper that was quite popular with farmers, offering advice, as well as a heaping helping of Ol' Gene's views on a variety of topics.

Gene Talmadge had toppled the incumbent Agriculture Commissioner in 1926, despite the fact the incumbent benefitted from a small patronage army. Talmadge was reelected again in 1928 and 1930.

Talmadge opponents in the legislature did not go so far as to attempt to impeach him, but they did formally recommend he be sued to recover state funds they believed he had misappropriated. Governor Richard Russell cautiously turned over the matter of suing Commissioner Talmadge to the state Attorney General, who concluded to drop the idea of any suit.

Governor Russell opted not to run again in 1932, preferring instead to contest a seat in the United States Senate. Russell's decision gave Eugene Talmadge his opportunity to run for governor and Ol' Gene hit the stump in one of his typically wrinkled suits. A wiry man with an unruly forelock of black hair that continually fell across his brow, the bespectacled Talmadge was an electrifying speaker and the farm-ers would howl with delight when Ol' Gene doffed his jacket to reveal his bright red suspenders. Talmadge offered his guests free barbecue or fried fish and lambasted his opponents with down home witticisms that

were oftentimes devastating to his opponents.

When hecklers accused him of theft as Commissioner of Agriculture, Talmadge dismissed the charge by saying, "Sure I stole, but I stole it for you!"

At the time, Georgia was a one-party state and the Democratic nomination was tantamount to election. Republicans were scarce and rarely white. Candidates competed for votes under Georgia's county unit plan; each county in the State of Georgia were assigned a number of votes and the candidate who carried the county won the votes, rather like a miniature Electoral College.

Eugene Talmadge was highly popular in Georgia's numerous rural counties and he easily won the county unit vote in the 1932 election. Talmadge was later to brag that he could "carry any county that ain't got streetcars."

Talmadge's first campaign for governor demonstrated his resourcefulness as a shrewd politician and an excellent campaigner. Talmadge excoriated the fee charged by the state for license plates, promising that if he were elected, he would reduce the fee to three dollars, which would allow poor farmers to afford them. For many of Georgia's less well-off citizens, it was proof positive Gene Talmadge was on their side.

Governor Talmadge immediately insisted the state legislature lower the fee for license plates and after debating it extensively, did nothing. That didn't bother Ol' Gene, he merely reduced the fee himself via gubernatorial proclamation once the legislature was out of session.

Talmadge's first term as governor was again marked by the same kind of controversy and charges of corruption as had been his tenure as Commissioner of Agriculture. Talmadge was positively loathed by much of the press in Georgia, especially in the state's more populous cities. Talmadge was equally thoroughly disliked by much of the business establishment and political elite. Ol' Gene effectively used the opposition of the establishment to burnish his own image as a man of the common people and opponent of the special interests.

Talmadge's refusal to play by the established rules only seemed to increase his popularity, much to the dismay and fury of his opponents. Although Governor Talmadge cultivated a sort of backwoods image, it apparently was an act. Visitors to his office found a small, quite well dressed man who could easily utilize a more urbane vocabulary, usually while smoking a large cigar.

Governor Talmadge sought a second two-year term in 1934 and demolished his opposition, winning every county in the



FROM THE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL COLLECTION.

Governor-elect Eugene Talmadge (left) and his campaign manager, Roy Harris in 1946.

State of Georgia save for three. Shortly before the general election, Governor Talmadge was irked by a textile workers' strike. Ol' Gene was having none of it and had the picketers arrested and placed in a former World War I camp that had once held prisoners of war. A show of force never bothered Talmadge.

When Governor Talmadge felt utility rates were too high in Georgia, he insisted the Public Utilities Commission fix the problem; the utility Commissioners, elected by the people, refused to lower rates and Governor Talmadge responded by arbitrarily creating a wholly new board to get his way. The Highway Commission suffered pretty much the same fate when it resisted the governor's power. The governor declared martial law and increased the size of the board and made it more responsive to his wishes. Already haven proved he had little regard for those officials elected by the people, Governor Talmadge encountered opposition from the state treasurer and state comptroller and Ol' Gene had them seized and physically removed from their own offices and the State Capitol.

Naturally, Talmadge's opponents derided him as a petty dictator, but many of his actions were perceived by his supporters as necessary and cared little how he got things done.

Governor Talmadge found himself at odds with the most popular politician in the country, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Increasingly alarmed with the liberalism of Roosevelt's New Deal administration, Talmadge began speaking out against FDR. Talmadge, a virulent racist, claimed many of the president's policies were designed to be less helpful to white citizens than blacks. Talmadge tried to rally Southerners to oppose Roosevelt, with little success. It was a risky approach in Georgia where FDR maintained his famed "Little White House" and considered himself an adopted citizen of the state. FDR was vastly popular in Georgia and Roosevelt's personal popularity would help derail Gene Talmadge's next campaign.

Eugene Talmadge, first dreaming of occupying the White House himself, settled for challenging Georgia's junior United States senator, Richard Russell, in the 1936 Democratic primary. Senator Russell, who would go on to become an iconic figure in Georgia, was deeply shaken by Talmadge's bid for his Senate seat and many thought Talmadge would win. Russell had to wage a hard fight and in the end, defeated the governor decisively.

Undeterred, Talmadge again ran for Georgia's other seat in the United States Senate in 1938, facing incumbent Walter F. George. The stately George had been a successful lawyer, a justice of the State Supreme Court, and was a highly regarded figure in Georgia. Walter George was profoundly respected by virtually all of Georgia's big businessmen, with much of his financial support coming from the Georgia Light and Power Company and Coca-Cola. The 1938 Senate race was complicated by President Roosevelt who, angry at his plan to enlarge the United States Supreme Court having been beaten in the Senate, sought to purge Senator Walter F. George from that body. FDR personally came to Georgia and made a speech saying George did not deserve reelection and announced were he a Georgian, he would vote for Lawrence Camp, the candidate supported by the New Deal administration. Senator George, sitting on the same platform as President Roosevelt denounced him, got up and calmly said he accepted the challenge.

Ol' Gene exulted with President Roosevelt's denunciation of Senator George. Talmadge thought it would be difficult for him to lose a three-way race for the nomination. Roosevelt's opposition to Senator George distressed and appalled many Georgians who, as much as they loved FDR, disliked outside intervention in selecting their own elected officials. George won the Senate contest rather easily and much of Gene Talmadge's opposition in Georgia believed he was finished as a political force in the state.

Gene Talmadge hardly

shared that assessment of his political fortunes and announced he would once again be a candidate for governor of Georgia in 1940. Talmadge had run well ahead of President Roosevelt's chosen candidate in the 1938 Senate race and to the surprise of his critics, he won the gubernatorial election.

Almost immediately, Governor Talmadge was embroiled in yet another controversy. Talmadge was after the scalp of a dean at the University of Georgia who had suggested white and black citizens should be brought together to be taught. Talmadge demanded the dean be fired, but the university's Board of Regents balked. Once again, Talmadge restructured yet another board that did not bend to his will and the governor got his way. This time there were serious repercussions and the university's accreditation and that of Georgia's state schools and universities was revoked by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

It was a stinging rebuke to a governor who complained the university had become a breeding ground for liberalism, communism, and worse. Talmadge was seeking reelection in 1942 and Georgia had changed the law to allow a governor to serve one four-year term instead of two two-year terms. Gene Talmadge desperately wanted to win reelection, but lost to reform candidate Ellis Arnall, largely because of Talmadge's interference with the university.

Forced out of office, Gene Talmadge returned to his law practice and operating his farm, which was quite successful. Talmadge's wife, Mitt, actually ran the farm so efficiently it made the family rather wealthy.

Talmadge bided his time and as Governor Arnall could not succeed himself, entered the 1946 primary for governor. It was the last of Gene Talmadge's campaigns and despite not being entirely well, Ol' Gene gave it everything he had. Stumping all across the state, snapping his red galluses, Talmadge lost the popular vote that year, but won the county unit vote, which was enough to make

him the Democratic nominee and presumptive governor-elect.

Gene Talmadge never got to serve as governor again, but did manage to turn Georgia politics on its head yet again. Talmadge, weakened by his love of cigars and hard liquor, died suddenly on December 21, 1946. Talmadge's death precipitated a wild scramble that left Georgia with three governors.

Gene Talmadge's death did not come as a complete surprise to some of his top advisers, who had taken the precaution of determining just what would happen if the duly elected governor died before he was able to take the oath of office. They determined that should the governor-elect die before being sworn into office, the legislature would choose from amongst the second and third place contenders in the election. Although Talmadge was unopposed in the general election, supporters had written in the name of Ol' Gene's son and campaign manager, Herman.

Herman Talmadge finished second to his father.


Lieutenant Governor Melvin E. Thompson insisted he was the lawful governor, saying he should be sworn in due to Eugene Talmadge's death. Thompson's claim to the office was clouded by incumbent governor Ellis Arnall who said he should remain in office until a duly chosen successor was properly elected.

The dispute was a bizarre political and legal brawl, almost comical in nature.

Governor Arnall refused to surrender possession of the governor's office, although Herman Talmadge managed to occupy it himself and had the locks changed, while Lieutenant Governor M. E. Thompson hurried to file a claim with the State Supreme Court. Although elected by the legislature, Herman Talmadge was removed from office by the Supreme Court in March of 1947. The court held that M. E. Thompson was indeed the acting governor until the 1948 election.

Thompson's elation was short-lived, as Herman Talmadge ran in 1948 and was elected governor. The Talmadge dynasty lasted for three more decades. Herman Talmadge served as governor and was elected to the United States Senate in 1956, having forced out Senator Walter F. George, a feat his father had not been able to accomplish. Herman Talmadge remained in the Senate until his defeat in 1980 by a Republican.

Eugene Talmadge, once known as the "Wild Man of Sugar Creek" (and there was an entertaining biography of the same name), the source of so much controversy, sleeps in his native Georgia.


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E-911 back up space approved by Council

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
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The Knoxville City Council approved an agreement between the city and the Knoxville/Knox County E-911 agency for space in the new Public Safety Complex in the former St. Mary's/Tennova Hospital just off North Broadway.

Demolition and reconstruction is underway at the site and the emergency agency wants 18,000 square feet at the former Women's Pavilion there, at 1630 Huron Street, to use as a backup site for their equipment. Deputy Mayor David Brace told the meeting that the city will allot \$3.6 million to the project and be paid back by E-911.

The council approved directing a number of COVID-19 funding from federal

grants to several community programs. Those include Rapid-Rehousing Services, Emergency Shelter and Services, and Shelter and Services provided by the YWCA.

The COVID-19 funds designated to the Volunteer Ministry Center, \$262,330, was approved for extending that organization's Street Outreach program. The approval means the number of current employees there will double to eight. VMC director Bruce Spangler said it will mean the program, which locates and helps homeless people, will extend to the entire city and concentrate on Old City or anywhere that the homeless congregate.

Spangler said the outreach program provides housing information, connects the homeless to various community services and even connects homeless

persons to their out-of-county families.

"I'm thrilled we're able to add this effort to the hard-to-reach people," Mayor Indya Kincannon said. Councilwoman Amelia Parker bemoaned the years the city has gone without such an effort and added, "There's a lot more to do."

The council also voted to acquire a house and lot at 2542 Fair Drive. Harold Cannon, Director of Engineering, said the house will be demolished and the lot "returned to green." The lot, next to First Creek and the Fountain City Skatepark, will be added to that park.

Also approved was permitting the mayor to apply for a \$4 million state grant from the Department of Transportation to fund the Advanced Traffic Management System. Cannon said, if approved,

the project would keep people moving with coordinated traffic lights. He said that in places where the system has been used the "results are remarkable."

Visit Knoxville was forgiven more than \$396,000 in funding during the pandemic and allowed to keep the funds. Stephanie Welch, director of Economic and Community Development, told the council that Visit Knoxville coordinated pandemic efforts and continued its marketing efforts during the pandemic.

Visit Knoxville's efforts are supported by hotel-motel tax revenue. Councilwoman Lynne Fugate said the city "cannot lose momentum" and must be ready as the pandemic eases after a vaccine is introduced. Visit Knoxville President Kim Bumpass spoke

about the large amount that tourism contributes to the local economy and how her department has coordinated virtual events, helped with the census and embraced its stakeholders during the pandemic.

"We moved 100 events to 2021," she said, adding that visitors are interested in safe travel destinations and that the local mask mandate is helping draw visitors to Knoxville along with the many outdoor events in the area.

Amending the current city budget by adding COVID-19 funding to some programs drew some objections from Councilwoman Seema Singh who said she liked most of the changes but disagreed that the proposal was presented all in one resolution.

"I want to get each item

and vote on it," she said, asking how the city's budget will be at the end of the current year. She was told that thanks to the COVID-19 federal funding the balance is better than expected and an audit will be completed in about two months.

"We have \$46 million in reserve being used for cash flow," Singh said, suggesting the extra funds should be used for social services. She and Councilwoman Parker voted "No" on the budget amendment after Deputy Mayor Brace responded with a long list of items within the adjustment.

The council approved \$100,000 in a Community Agency Grant to the Knoxville Education Foundation to help secure internet access for K-12 students. About 700 students are involved in the city effort.

How does a veto work in Knox County?

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
steelym@knoxfocus.com

During a recent Knox County Commission work session the law director mentioned that a resolution that had passed could be vetoed by Mayor Glenn Jacobs.

Whether or not that resolution faces a veto by the county mayor in the future, the power of a veto and how it could be overridden is interesting and little known.

According to the Knox County Charter every ordinance, resolution or emergency ordinance by the commission is submitted to the mayor for approval or veto. There are some exceptions including borrowing money or issuance of bonds.

A veto by the county mayor means the matter will be returned to the county clerk within ten days. A veto of an emergency ordinance goes back to the clerk within three days of passage. The clerk, in both cases, notifies members of the commission within five days of receipt.

Sometimes the threat of a veto can rattle a commission when going against

the wishes of a county mayor.

In 2019 Mayor Jacobs threatened to veto a resolution from the commission authorizing a study on relocating the Knox County School Administration office to the empty East Towne Mall. After a two-hour discussion on the matter the commission voted to ask the mayor to work with the city of Knoxville to look at a comprehensive study of the future of the mall.

Once a veto has been received by the commission from the clerk, the commission has thirty-five days to vote to override the mayor's action. The override requires a majority plus one vote of the membership. In the case of ordinances and emergency ordinances a two-thirds vote is needed. If the veto is voted down the ordinance immediately becomes law.

Should the county mayor fail to sign or veto an ordinance or resolution within ten days of passage the mayor cannot take any further action and it would become effective on the date specified by the commission's vote.

Commission: Board of Health powers

Cont. from page 2

resistance. It is likely the anti-mask, anti-Board of Health citizens again show up to speak to the ongoing issue.

Also on the agenda is the sales agreement for the Andrew Johnson Building between the county and BNA Associates LLC. The purchasing company made some changes to the agreement last month which caused the county to pull back and renegotiate the \$6 million offer from BNA. Meanwhile plans to move the Knox County School Administration office from the historic hotel building to TVA's East Towers are still underway.

Finance Director Chris Caldwell told The Focus the

county is still working on an agreement.

"We hope to have it completed soon and let the commission take action this month," he said.

The commission may also hear from Mayor Jacobs on a proposal to create a "Sports Authority of Knox County and the City of Knoxville" for a professional minor league baseball complex downtown. Randy Boyd, owner of the Tennessee Smokies, has plans for a possible \$142 million mixed-use baseball stadium next to Knoxville's Old City. He is hoping for local taxpayers' help to raise more than \$52 million for the new stadium.

Also on the agenda is the use of discretionary

funds by outgoing commission members. The new rule would regulate funds to leaving commissioners through June of their final term, saving the remainder for their incoming replacement. That new rule is sponsored by the commission's Rules Committee.

Another Rules Committee suggestion would authorize the chair or vice chair of the commission to be the only authority to call an "Emergency Meeting." Currently the Knox County Mayor may also call such meetings.

The commission may also discuss a final approval of a ban on smoking on the grounds of any county-owned playground and details of a planned annual retreat by the commission.



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2020 FOCUS / COACHES' ALL-KNOX COUNTY HONORS

By Steve Williams

Others receiving votes for the award included West senior running back Isaiah



“From committing himself to working extremely hard in the weight room to develop his body to studying and learning our defense and his position inside and out, he also has been determined to succeed

Fortner is one of three finalists for the TSSAA Class 5A Mr. Football award, which will be announced Tuesday.

By Steve Williams

"Coach Clark Duncan is and has remained consistent as a respected coach in our profession," said Farragut Coach Eddie Courtney Saturday. "His teams reflect his toughness, play with great effort and perform with class. His success



South-Doyle Head Coach Clark Duncan communicates with his players and staff on the sidelines. Duncan was voted The Focus / Coaches' 2020 Coach of the Year by his peers.

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Rebels run past Austin-East 77-48

By Ken Lay

Aubin Goporo made his coaching debut for West High Tuesday night and the Rebels' new basketball coach guided his team to a seemingly lopsided victory over Austin-East. But he wasn't all that impressed with his new team's performance. "These kids didn't play well tonight but I understand why," Goporo said after the Rebels dismantled the Roadrunners 77-48 before a spirited crowd on Senior Night at West High School. "These kids were under a lot of pressure. "They were under pressure because it was our first home game. It was also our first game and it was also our senior night and nobody wants to lose their game on senior night." Goporo, who recently served as director of Student-Athlete Development for coach Rick Barnes at the University of Tennessee, said his goal at West this season is not to complicate things for the Rebels. "For us, it's about keeping it simple," said Goporo, who previously won more than 300 games and five state championships at Florida Air Academy

in Melbourne Beach.

"Our goal is to keep it simple. We want to keep it simple but we don't want to be predictable."

Despite some first game jitters, the Rebels shared the basketball against the Roadrunners as they had three players post double figures in the scoring column.

Will Biven led the way with 18 points. Eiram Cuevas added 16 while Taylor Preston finished with 10 points.

But that was only part of the story for West High's balanced and potent offensive attack.

The Rebels made nine 3-pointers and every player who scored had at least seven points.

Gabriel Pastrama and Houston Dyer each had nine points. Dyer made three shots from beyond the 3-point arc. Baker Dance added eight points and Darius Martin finished with seven for the Rebels, who led 20-12 after the first quarter and extended their advantage to 35-21 by halftime.

West was hot early after halftime as they opened the third quarter with a 10-4 run.

The Rebels took a 45-25 lead when Cuevas converted a basket with 5 minutes, 52 seconds remaining in the third frame.

Jaquarius Sanders led the Roadrunners with 12 points and was the only Austin-East player to score in double figures. Ahijah Washington scored nine points while Jay Allen and Keon Smith scored eight points each.

Before the game, West honored seniors Jack Eggleston, Dance, Martin and Dyer. The school also honored former head coaches Chris Lindsay and Gary Petko.

Lady Rebels celebrate Senior Night with victory

By Ken Lay

Three West High School girls basketball players were honored on Senior Night after the Lady Rebels captured a 57-36 victory over Austin-East Tuesday night.

All three players made significant contributions for the Lady Rebels in their win over the Roadrunners, who were playing their first game of the 2020-2021 season.

With the victory, West improved to 3-0 and has wins over Central in a Hall of Fame game and District 4-AAA rival Hardin Valley Academy in the Powell Thanksgiving Tournament.

Early this week, the Lady Rebels honored seniors



PHOTO BY KEN LAY.

West High senior point guard Kyra Buntyn dribbles and sets the offense in the Lady Rebels' 57-36 victory over Austin-East Tuesday night. Buntyn scored 18 points and was one of three seniors honored after the game.

Kyra Buntyn, Alexis Porter and Faith Mills in an early-season Senior Night

ceremony.

Early on, however, the Lady Roadrunners (0-1) had visions of spoiling the celebration for the Lady Rebels as the two teams slugged through an evenly matched opening quarter, which was a defensive struggle. The teams were in a 5-5 deadlock at first quarter's end.

But the Lady Rebels kicked things into high gear and outscored Austin-East 19-5 in the second frame to open a 24-10 lead by halftime.

West continued to pull away as it scored 19 points in the third stanza. The Lady Rebels had a 43-18 advantage heading into the final eight minutes

of the contest.

Buntyn, a point guard, led the Lady Rebels with 18 points, including 11 after halftime.

Porter, who plays forward for the Lady Rebels, scored 13 points. Mills, another forward, was one of three West High players to score four points (joining Imani Hardin and Isha Abduraqueeb) and Shya Bullock scored three.

For the Lady Roadrunners, Ahya Moreno led the way with 12 points. Lynn Deena Drew added nine and Saniya Andrew finished with eight.

Duncan, Coach of the Year, continues to knock on title door

Cont. from page 1

has been the difference he has made in the lives of all his players."

Duncan received 11 of 17 votes in the balloting for Coach of the Year. Courtney received three votes, while West's Lamar Brown, Halls' Scott Cummings and CAK's Travis Mazingo got one vote apiece.

"It is a great honor to be recognized by your peers," said Duncan after receiving the news Friday. "This recognition is due to a great effort by our coaching staff, players and support staff."

South-Doyle finished the season with a 10-4 overall record.

Duncan, a former Unicoi County High and University of Tennessee football player, remains positive and will guide the Cherokees down a

different path starting next season in Class 4A.

Duncan thought he was through coaching in 2003 when he went to South-Doyle High School and became assistant principal and athletic director.

He started coaching as an assistant at Fulton (1981-85) and then became head coach at Powell in 1986.

His first sniff of a state title came in 1991 when his Panthers lost in the Class AA finals to Brentwood Academy.

"I thought I was through coaching and went to South-Doyle in 2003 as assistant principal and athletic director," recalled Duncan.

"In 2009 I could not get anyone to take the South-Doyle job. I told the candidates the only reason that you will not be 0-11 is because we only played 10 games.

"The superintendent and Principal Rick Walker asked me to take it for one year. I took the job and we went 0-10. I tried to hire someone in 2010 did not get anyone to take the job. We won one game and were 1-9. Now we were 1-19 and I took it personal and said 'we're going to fix this.'

"So 12 years later, I am still coaching."

Duncan and Karen, who have been married for 40 years, celebrated

the arrival of their newest grandson just days prior to the Oak Ridge game.

"My newest grandson, William "Camp" Hennigan, was named after me, Clark William Duncan," said Coach Duncan.

Camp's brother Shep is

2½ years old now.

Duncan's son-in-law Zach coaches the Cherokees' cornerbacks and is the team's special teams' coordinator.

Daughter Kendal is still working for Coach Pruitt, said Coach Duncan.

The Focus / Coaches' 2020 All-Knox County Team

HONORABLE MENTION, cont. from page 1

CARTER: Anthony Stocker, Athlete, Sr; Chandler Wilson, QB, Soph; Maurice Sylvia, OL, Sr; Tim Flack, DL, Sr.
CENTRAL: Deon'tae White, WR, Sr.
FARRAGUT: Carter Schuermann, OL; Trey Nesbitt, DE; Camden Kuhn, DB; Trace Corum, WR; Carter Nussbaum, LB.
FULTON: Bill Anderson, OL, Jr; Tommy Sweat, QB, Sr; Keenan Vaughn, DE, Jr.
GIBBS: Colton Qualls, QB, Sr; Mason Cole, DE, Sr; John-Aidan Pittman, PK, Sr; Luke Warwick, LB, Sr; Bryson Walker, WR, Sr; Ethan Coppinger, WR, Jr.
GRACE CHRISTIAN: Cooper Riggs, QB, Sr; Pierce Browning, WR, Soph; Michael Human, WR, Sr.
HALLS: Hayden Woods, LB, Sr; Ty Humphrey, QB, Sr; Seth Simpson, DB, Sr; Zach Plunk, OL, Jr.
HARDIN VALLEY: Braden Schloff, WR; Zach Passafume, KR; Michael Spurgeon, LB.
KARNS: Cameron Glenn, DL, Sr.
KNOXVILLE CATHOLIC: JT Quinones, LB, Sr; Tommy Winton, WR, Jr; Daven Cozart, DL, Soph; Hayden Todd, OL, Jr; Javis Mynatt, DB, Jr.
POWELL: Cannon Lusby, LB, Jr; Jordan Brown, RB, Sr; Ayden Greene, WR, Soph; Brycen Hodges, OL, Sr; Camron Gann, OL, Jr.
SOUTH-DOYLE: Nick Martin, QB, Jr; Curtis Young, LB, Jr; Anthony Berrier, WR, Sr; Mason Chandler, Holder, Sr; Almarion Greer, DB, Soph; Lavolius Johnson, DL, Sr; Cameron Monday, LS, Jr; Tajaun Owens, RB, Soph; Hunter Simpson, HB, Jr; Andrew Denas, OL, Soph; Tate Hunter, OL, Jr; Max Hull, OL, Soph; Weston Parker, OL, Sr.
WEBB: Brik Boruff, OL; Leo Bonifacio, LB; Charlie Robinson, QB; Otto Niendorff, PK; Joey Bonifacio, LB; Corey Williams, DL; Jackson Baker, WR; Joseph Moore, DB; Bradee McCoy, DB; Joey Fulcher, DE; Elijah Bane, RB; Dominic Vance, RB; Ford Wagner, TE; Luke Julian, OL; Tabb Layton, OL; Steven Beaty, OL.
WEST: Trevon Barfield, RB, Soph; Isaiah Mattress, RB, Sr; Shannon Blair, WR, Jr; Tyson Siebe, PK, Soph; Baker Dance, QB, Sr; Jack Eggleston, LB, Sr; Elijah Rogers, DB, Soph.

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Two games in one

Bowl games are fickle creatures, almost two games in one. One team might dominate for a half, and after intermission the other team comes back and makes a game out of it.



By Tom Mattingly

The 1966 Gator Bowl, No. 22 in the bowl's history, was such an affair. It was Tennessee versus Syracuse in Jacksonville, Fla., Dec. 31, 1966, on ABC television. A crowd of 60,312 gathered for the New Year's Eve afternoon extravaganza.

As the teams squared off, the Vols appeared to be overmatched, with Syracuse having future pro running backs Floyd Little and Larry Csonka ready to tote the football. The Orangemen were bigger than the Vols (most teams were in those days), and the fear was that they would literally mash the Vols into submission by running the ball relentlessly.

Coming off an 8-1-2 season in 1965, the Vols were 7-3, Syracuse 8-2. Linebacker Paul Naumoff joined tight end Austin Denney, punter Ron Widby, and center Bob Johnson in earning All-American honors, with Johnson adding Academic All-American honors to his resume. Widby was the NCAA punting leader with a 43.8-yard average. Quarterback Dewey Warren threw the ball all over the field that season, attempting 229 passes, completing 136 for 1716



The Vols line up for the ABC television introductions before the 1966 Gator Bowl, led by Austin Denney (84), Doug Archibald (55), Paul Naumoff (50), under the watchful eye of head coach Doug Dickey (hack left). Photo courtesy of University of Tennessee Sports Information Office.

yards. He was the team leader, always talking about "hummin' that tater." Johnny Mills, the wide receiver from Elizabethton who was introduced pregame by ABC's Bill Fleming as a native of "Elizabethton, Tennessee," set a single game receiving mark in 1966 with 225 yards against Kentucky, a record that lasted until the 2001 LSU game. Gary Wright kicked field goals of 36 and 38 yards to give the Vols the early lead. A Warren pass to Denney off a fake field goal attempt

stretched the lead to 12-0. Richmond Flowers caught a second Warren TD pass, and the Vols led 18-0. All appeared well, but looks can be deceiving. Syracuse came roaring back in the second half. Csonka, who rushed 18 times for 114 yards on the day, scored on an 8-yard run on the third period, and Little, who carried the pigskin 29 times for 216 yards, added another from three yards out with 46 seconds left. Overall, Syracuse racked up 348 yards rushing on 57

carries, yet the Vols came up with enough big plays to take the improbable triumph, 18-12. For the day, Warren completed 17 of 29 passes, with one interception, for 244 yards. Mills caught eight for 86 yards, with a touchdown grab called back. Flowers caught five for 80, and Denney four for 78. The game is best remembered, however, for the Vols making two significant defensive plays. Syracuse had the ball fourth-and-2 at the Vol 4

in the fourth period. With a backfield that had Csonka and Little ready to make the tough yardage, what play do you call? The ball went to a lesser-known Syracuse player, Oley Allen, and Nick Showalter, wearing No. 88, made the play. Nick said he knew what was coming, thanks to intense preparation from linebackers coach Vince Gibson. He got around Little, then fought off Csonka to make the play. "He told us 100 times that when Little lined up

as a tight wingback, they were going to run the toss sweep." Later in the period, one of the most memorable hits in Tennessee football history took place, Naumoff against Csonka. "Paul stood him up, and spit and sweat came up like a water balloon," said Showalter. "You could hear every pad and every part of a Riddell helmet crunch. Those helmets had a special sound to them." After spending 1964 as a receiver, Paul had played defensive end in 1965. He was considered an All-American candidate at that position coming into 1966, but moved to linebacker after Tom Fisher died in a March traffic accident near Benton, Tenn. Thanks to some outstanding performances on the field and some yeoman-like work by the Sports Information Office, most notably Haywood Harris, Paul earned consensus All-America honors at his new position and ended up with a long career (1967-78) with the Detroit Lions. It was part of the everyday routine for Haywood. "I looked at my job as an opportunity to help people enjoy the Vol experience as much as I did," said Harris. "That was the joy of the job as far as I was concerned. Any time I get to do some publicity on the local or national level for Tennessee, I'm thrilled." Through the years, he did his job quite well. Four All-American selections in the same season would bear witness to that fact.

The Curious Case of Jeremy Pruitt

By Mark Nagi

Well, here we are again. Another football season for the Tennessee Volunteers, and another coach that is on the proverbial hot seat. Yes, we have certainly been down this road before. Pruitt is the fifth head coach at UT since 2008. That much turnover is not a good thing, and the results have shown that to be true. Pruitt's Vols have lost all eight games to their biggest rivals in Alabama, Georgia and Florida, with none of those games being close affairs. (Note: I'm writing this article on the eve of the Vols' December 5th game against the Gators, so if Tennessee somehow pulls the upset, just ignore everything I'm saying.)

The defense is average, and the offense is abysmal, one of the worst in the nation. Nearly three years into Pruitt regime, UT still doesn't have anyone on the roster that has proven he can be a quality SEC quarterback. Even Bent Cimaglia, one of the best kickers in the nation, has had a subpar season. Even more concerning is the Vols stature when it comes to picking up new players. Tennessee's recruiting has tumbled from being ranked second in the nation to thirteenth after a couple of high-profile recruits decommitted. Pruitt has a 15-17 record (before the Florida game) as the Vols head coach. All the good will from the eight-game winning

streak that extended between the 2019 and 2020 season is long gone. His buyout is reportedly \$12.6 million, a number that jumped about \$5 million following the extension that athletics director Phillip Fulmer gave him a couple of months ago. His assistants make a few million combined as well, so if Tennessee made a move, those are some big checks to write, especially during a pandemic. Division rivals South Carolina and Vanderbilt have already decided that the buyout situation wasn't enough for them not to fire their head coaches. The Gamecocks booted Will Muschamp in November and the Commodores said goodbye to Derek Mason

last week. This gave them a head start on their search for a new coach. We do know that Fulmer is going to give Pruitt every chance to succeed. Fulmer still feels wronged from his firing in 2008 and doesn't want to can Pruitt unless it is absolutely necessary. Fulmer hired Pruitt a week after he was installed as Tennessee's AD, and Pruitt's success or failure does impact Fulmer's legacy. "We have a great fanbase. I love our fans," Fulmer said during Vol Calls on December 2nd. "But I am going to tell you... there's nobody more impatient than Jeremy Pruitt. He's intense and relentless to get done what he wants to get done... An interesting statistic that I found was Coach (Johnny)

Majors was 14-15-1 in his first thirty games and Coach Pruitt is 15-15 in his first thirty games. I really think we're a better football team than our record has shown... (The) team plays hard and I think the Auburn game was a good example of that. But we're not taking care of the ball and protecting it like we should, and we certainly haven't gotten the takeaways that you would think a normal aggressive defense would get." Fulmer was tasked with getting the football program back on track when he was hired in 2017. For a time, it appeared that was the case. But it's hard to make the argument today that Tennessee football is on the rise.



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Being 'tough but fair' helps Jones win in many ways

By Steve Williams

When it comes to football wins, you probably haven't heard of the most successful coach in Knoxville. He surpassed former UT Coach Phillip Fulmer's number many years ago and also has more victories than Webb's David Meske and Farragut's Eddie Courtney, two veterans on the local high school scene. Heck, this guy's total would probably even rival Alcoa's Gary Rankin, who is the state's all-time prep leader with 453 wins.

His name is Ricky Jones and he can't tell you how many he has won or exactly how many years he has coached. But those who are familiar with youth football in Knoxville can vouch for his record.

Jones has been a youth coach since the mid-1970s, starting two years after he graduated from Fulton High School in 1974. He figures he's coached about 40 years since then, having to take off four or five years for being on the road working.

Counting league games and extra bowl contests, that adds up to coaching around 15 games a



PHOTO BY STEVE WILLIAMS

Ricky Jones, who has been coaching youth football in Knoxville since the mid-1970s, guided his 8U Falcons to the championship in the 2020 Battle in Rocky Top.

season on the youth level. You can do the math.

Those familiar with local youth football can also verify that Jones has lost very few.

Jones can tell you he gets a lot of satisfaction from it.

"I'll go home and I'll think about these boys," said Ricky, a little emotional after his 8U Falcons team won the championship in the Battle in Rocky Top tournament at John Tarleton Park Nov. 25. "I will

be thankful for what God give me and it will be good.

"Between now and the next season, I always find out if the Big Man wants me to coach again, and then I'll find out who He wants me to take. I say, 'Send me who you want and I will do my best with them.'"

Jones' success on the scoreboard stems from his coaching style. It's akin to tough love.

"It's physical practices," said Jones, who is now 64. "A lot of teaching in the blocking and tackling. We feel like over at the Falcons' program, when you run physical practices, you protect your kids from injury. It's opposite of what most people think.

"Plus, that's how I was taught when I was growing up. It was successful then and it's successful now."

Two-thirds of his coaching has been with the 7 and 8-year-olds. He likes the training aspect of it with that age.

"They want to learn and once you can get their attention, you can train them to be what you want them to

be," said Jones. "We teach them basic raw-bone football. We have a tough system for them to learn, but we're patient with the learning part.

"I still enjoy it. That's the key to it. I enjoy the teaching part the most."

Jones, who works at Y12 as a sheet metal worker out of Local 5 in Knoxville, got his start as a youth coach assisting Jerry Cash and said he learned everything he knows about it from him.

"He's the best coach in the business," said Ricky. "I remember playing for him and coaching with him. His system is what I wanted to put into youth football and it's been very successful. He was tough. Oh boy was he tough, but he was fair. That's what we want to be."

Pug Jones, 47, has been assisting Jones in recent seasons. "I coached Pug when I was with Cash."

Jones' discipline sometimes is needed away from the playing field.

"They've got to be disciplined at school and at Walmart and especially grandma's house," said Ricky. "All momma has to do when they get out of line is tell us about it and

we'll take care of it. You have to have it that way. The boys need it.

"You're going to do more than coach, especially with inner city kids," he added. "You've got to make friends with them and they've got to believe in you, and then they've got to trust you. And then you've got to be hard on them. That's what they want."

Jones said some of his boys are from families "that are less fortunate ... But that's what we are in the business for."

At least two of Jones' former players have become current college standouts – wide receiver Amari Rodgers at Clemson and offensive tackle Darian Kinnard at Kentucky.

And a lot of his boys are now grown men, who have become successful in life.

"I tell you what, it's over 95 percent successful," said Jones proudly. "You instill that hard work in them. Once they get there, it's up to them whether they want to make it or not. I haven't heard much negative when it comes to that."

Keller and Jones are Metro Knoxville Runners of Year



By Steve Williams

Kaden Keller of Hardin Valley Academy has been named the Metro Knoxville Cross Country Coaches Association's Runner of the Year for boys.

The girls' honoree is Maryville's Andie Marie Jones.

Bryan Brown of Hardin Valley Academy was selected Coach of the Year.

The All-Metro Knoxville teams also were announced.

The boys' honorees include Alex Brittain (HVA), Trevor Coggin (Farragut), Nate Hillis (HVA), Abdul Jaber (Alcoa), Macguire Jones (Maryville), Kaden Keller (HVA), Zimri Kuhn (Knoxville Ambassadors Home School), Mitchell McCown (HVA), Andrew Schultz (HVA) and Riley Smith (Knoxville Catholic).

Making up the All-Metro Knoxville girls' team are Maddie Archdale (HVA), Lexi Foley (Farragut), Anna Graves (Webb), Melanie Hayman (Farragut), Avery Holdsworth (HVA), Camryn Johnson (Farragut), Andie Marie Jones (Maryville), Grace Lathrop (Farragut), Kennedy Reynolds (Farragut) and Savannah Rivera (Knoxville Ambassadors Home School).

BOWLING: Bearden Coach Jennifer Allen says the regular season is winding down and this will be the last week of competition. This week is the last of the regular season.

Bearden is in first place among the boys, while Hardin Valley is in second, said Allen. The Bulldogs and Hawks are scheduled to face each other Tuesday at Oak Ridge.

Karns' teams are new on the bowling scene this year. Post-season tournament will start after the holidays.

MR. FOOTBALL: Knox County has two finalists this year – Kalib Fortner of Central in Class 5A and JD Dunn of CAK in Division II-AA. Mr. Football winners will be announced Tuesday.

GCA OPENING: Grace Christian Athletic Director Shawn Mehegan said last week the school is still

"working on" filling its football head coaching vacancy.

"We're in the interview process," he said. "We have a lot applying."

MAC RESULTS: The All-MAC Conference football

team (local Middle School age conference) defeated Team Indiana 22-14 in the Battle in Rocky Top tournament's 8th Grade American Division, but lost to the Warren Central Warriors 12-6 in the semifinals. The Warriors went on to

win the title 22-20 over the NKY Bengals.

The MAC team plays its games Nov. 21 and 22 at Webb School.

CAK SIGNEES: Four CAK baseball players signed scholarship papers

recently.

Zach Bergstrom will be going to play college ball at Emmanuel College, Elijah Dew at Walters State, Andrew Kribbs at Tennessee and JD Price at Western Carolina.

Kribbs was an All-District

player in 2019 and is a 2021 pre-season All-American for Under Armour Baseball Factory.

The Warriors won state titles in 2018 and 2019 before the 2020 season was shut down by the coronavirus.

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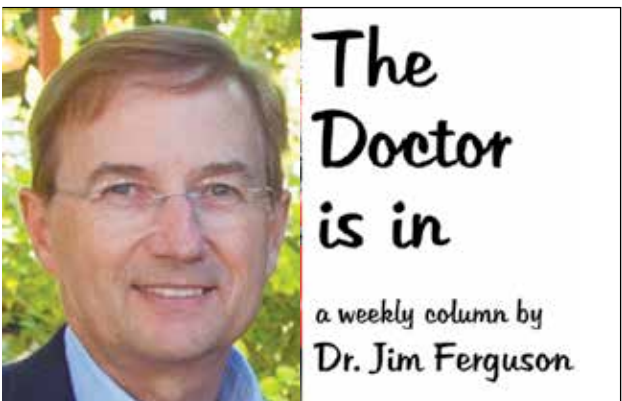
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The Doctor is in

a weekly column by
Dr. Jim Ferguson

Inoculations

“How tremendous the spiritual change that it brings... what wastes and deserts of the soul a slight attack of influenza brings to light...

what ancient and obdurate oaks are uprooted in us in the act of sickness, how we go down into the pit of death and feel the waters of annihilation close above our heads...”
Virginia Woolf

I hope everyone has received their annual influenza shot, because influenza is a miserable experience and can kill. As America awaits the COVID vaccine approval and availability, it is irresponsible not to get a flu shot having experienced the devastation of the “Chinese flu,” for which there had been little hope until President Trump’s Operation Warp Speed’s vaccines and treatments.

Nothing is perfect, including the flu shot. However, science has shown it to be

60% effective in preventing or lessening the severity of influenza illness. (Trump’s COVID vaccines are said to be 90-95% effective against that scourge.)

A rational person would take the influenza inoculation, and I do so every year. I insist my family get a flu shot and we will take the COVID vaccine ASAP. Yet only half of Americans take the annual flu shot, and Kamala Harris said she won’t take Trump’s COVID vaccine.

Science (not Simon) says 60-70% of a population must be vaccinated or have immunity to stifle a viral epidemic like influenza or the COVID flu. The Spanish flu of 1918-19 killed 50 million people because there was no “herd immunity” to the mutated influenza virus. And since COVID is a new pathogen, there is no herd or natural immunity to this viral infection. Hence the need of vaccines because only a fool would want to acquire

natural immunity to COVID through infection.

We take for granted a functioning body and immune system, until we get sick or the latter fails. Though I have aches commensurate with my age, my immune system remains healthy and protects me from an environment replete with viruses, bacteria, fungi, parasites and even mutated cells in my own body which produce malignancy.

Evolutionary theory holds that cosmic radiation produces mutations in our DNA, which sometimes confers survival benefits and other times cancerous changes. I have a general working knowledge of the immune system, but its intricacy is mind boggling.

Basically, the bone marrow produces red blood cells which transport oxygen, platelets which staunch bleeding from trauma, and white blood cells that fight infection. Some white blood cells attack bacteria, others produce antibodies, some eliminate cancer cells and others orchestrate the entire immune response.

There are a number of risk factors that predict serious outcomes with influenza and COVID infections, but I have seen many elderly patients with serious health problems survive COVID. As an internist I wonder why some get seriously ill and others don’t. There are a number

of bacterial infections which require only a scant number of bacteria to produce serious disease. Other microorganisms require hundreds if not thousands of infectious agents to produce infection. This is called the inoculum effect. Might the same be operative in determining the severity of COVID infections?

According to Angela Rasmussen, a virologist at Columbia University, no one knows how many COVID viral particles are necessary to cause infection. Logically, a low inoculum might produce a milder infection by allowing the immune system time to ramp up its response. On the other hand, a large inoculum might produce a large inflammatory response with serious consequences, like the COVID cascade syndrome with multiple organ failure.

As science studies COVID I’ve been intrigued by reports of dogs being used to search for people with COVID infections. A dog’s sense of smell is a million times that of humans. However, I don’t believe viral particles have a smell. I’ve read reports that dogs can identify people with malaria, so perhaps they are smelling the volatile organic compounds (VOCs) released in sweat or breath of ill persons.

Recently I came upon a new test to aid in the diagnosis of asthma. Apparently, inflammation in the respiratory tract generates the

free radical nitric oxide and a measurement of increased fraction of exhaled nitric oxide (FeNO) can be a marker of asthmatic inflammation. Perhaps dogs are sensing/smelling the inflammatory reaction in the respiratory tract of COVID patients.

These days, I find it amazing how quickly we accept the ridiculous. As I think back ten years or more, I don’t recall any confusion about bathroom privileges, sexual identification rather than XY and XX chromosome structure, illegal aliens versus citizens, or the primacy of the rule of law and the sanctity of We the People’s vote. All of these standards have been destroyed by liberal Democrats, progressive socialists and our own tolerance. A friend has a tee shirt which states on the front “I’m Intolerant...” and the back reads “... of racism, sexism and pedophilia.” Tolerance is overrated and has become the cudgel of leftists.

Perhaps we’ve been inoculated with Big Lies and now have become tolerant of or resigned to lunacy and injustice. The incessant attacks on President Trump for the last four years have made half of the country insane with hatred and immune to truth. We’ve been vaccinated by the media and become immune to injustice. Some have been worn down and have resigned themselves to Joe and the end of the

voting system. More than 74 million like me will not accept Biden unless the allegations of voting fraud are thoroughly investigated. President Trump, in his speech to the nation on December 2nd, said it was his sworn duty to assure the allegations are adjudicated.

In the fourteenth century, power battles between the Pope in Rome and Phillip IV of the Holy Roman Empire resulted in two popes, one in Rome and one in Avignon, France. This became known as the Avignon Papacy and lasted sixty-seven years.

“Donald Trump and the Avignon Presidency” is a brilliant essay by Steve Deace in the American Thinker published December 3, 2020. Without investigation and satisfactory resolution of the extensive voting fraud allegations, we will continue as a divided nation. Democrats refused to accept Trump as President in 2016 with disastrous consequences for our country. I can assure you the President’s base is larger and more passionate than the corrupt media, subversive deep state operatives and radical Democrats. The base will never accept Biden as President unless the election is proven legitimate.

God save us from an “Avignon Presidency.”

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

Pandemic and Holiday Stress: How to Cope

By The University of Tennessee Medical Center

December will wrap up what is undoubtedly one of the most stressful, uncertain and even frightening years most of us have ever experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions. Whether through having the illness personally or having to cope with the isolation felt from social distancing, quarantining, or working/studying from home, everyone’s mental health has been affected.

Dr. Rocio Huet, an integrative medicine specialist from The University of Tennessee Medical Center, gives some insights into mental health and provides some advice for moving into 2021.

“It’s clear most people say their mental health has been affected in some way during 2020,” said Huet. “More than 50 percent of adults have reported they have

been struggling with mental health issues due to worry and stress over COVID-19.”

Therefore, Huet suggests the following for coping with mental stress caused by the pandemic:

- “Minimize watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including those on social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting. Listen to health professionals about COVID-19 to help reduce stress. Stay connected with others and make the outbreak less stressful by understanding the risk to yourself and people you care about.”
- “How do you stay connected to others? Video calls, phone calls, handwritten notes or appropriately socially-distanced meetings can provide a sense of normalcy by giving us a way for us to reconnect with our loved ones.”
- “Take care of your

physical health: Getting adequate sleep, exercising daily, drinking enough fluids (water and green tea), and eating nourishing foods are important to sustaining positive mental health. Try to eat at least 5–7 servings of vegetables, 2–3 servings of fruits and foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids daily. Some of these foods include tomatoes, apples, dark, leafy greens, nuts, and berries. Avoid excessive alcohol use.”

- “Managing our stress helps prevent the disruption stress causes to our immune system. Various mindfulness techniques such as meditation, breathing exercises, and guided imagery reduce stress. Some easy self-care activities that you can integrate into your daily life include maintaining a consistent sleep cycle, getting at least 30 minutes of movement daily, being in nature, laughing and doing at least two pleasurable

things every day. These activities might include family games, movies, crafts, reading, cooking, or music.

Huet explains that in addition to dealing with the mental stress of COVID-19, many people feel a strain on their mental health because of the holidays and the increasingly colder months with less daylight. One in five Americans are prone to experiencing depression, and more so in the winter months, people are affected by a sub-type of depression called seasonal affective disorder or SAD.

“Many people report feeling symptoms of seasonal affective disorder as temperatures drop and we have fewer hours of daylight,” said Huet. “Whether it’s how life existed pre-COVID, or finding it harder due to the cold and dark to enjoy the activities we’ve relied on over the past several months, such as taking a

walk or eating dinner outdoors on the patio of our favorite restaurant, it is normal to ‘grieve’ the things we miss in our lives during the winter months.”

As for the holidays, Huet notes that many of us look forward to the happiness that the holidays bring, and even though this season will look different, it doesn’t mean you have to abandon every tradition that you are used to.

“Instead of gathering with your entire extended family, try having a dinner virtually where everyone makes his or her favorite dish and shares his or her favorite holiday memory,” said Huet.

For reliable information on taking care of your health or a loved one’s health, contact UT Medical Center’s Health Information Center at (865)305-9525 or online at www.utmedicalcenter.org/hic.

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Overcoming Division

This past year we have seen clearly the many demonstrations of division in this country. We have seen political, racial, and COVID-19 division (masks or no masks). We have seen protests, shootings, social media fights, hurtful



By Mark Brackney,
Minister of the
Arlington Church
of Christ

do. He was tempted in every way yet was without sin. Every sin we have ever done or will do was paid for on the cross. Jesus paid for every sin, including racism. We have access to a bigger reality than we could ever come up with. The Spirit now dwells

in us and a sign of that spirit is the mutual love we should have for each other (1 John 3:16-24). Ephesians tells us how those who trust in Jesus are to live. Through the gospel we are rescued. Because of the gospel we are reconciled and with the gospel we are rebuilt (Ephesians 2:11-22).

The passage in Ephesians talks about a wall of hostility that existed which is talking about the barrier in the temple of God. Jews and Gentiles lined up to walk into the temple. They were quizzed as to their ethnicity and the Gentiles couldn't come in. They had to stay in the court of the Gentiles. Imagine today if before you walked into a worship assembly, you had to be quizzed on your ethnicity. The Jews had labels for the Gentiles: uncircumcised heathens. They were considered excluded from citizenship in Israel because of their bloodline. They were unworthy and treated without hope. You know what this sounds like? Racism. It was awful and God saw it and he demanded change because this was not the heart of God.

Paul says there is hope. "But now...you have been united with Christ Jesus. You have been brought near through the blood of Christ. There is no longer a barrier between people. Sin made us far away but we have been brought near through the gospel. Let us repent of the barriers and walls we continue to erect after Jesus knocked it down. Let us strive for peace and live in unity."

A good place to start is Ephesians 2. In this chapter we read about the Gentiles. If you are not a Jew, you are a Gentile. Both Gentiles and Jews were given access to God and thus unity due to the gospel. God saw man, created man in this image with dignity and worth, but man sinned. God had a rescue plan in place and that is Jesus. Jesus did something we could never

Traveling historic Norris Freeway

The highway runs from Rocky Top (Lake City) to Halls Crossroads and,

A Day Away



By Mike Steely

among other landmarks, crosses TVA's Norris Dam, the agency's first hydroelectric produc-

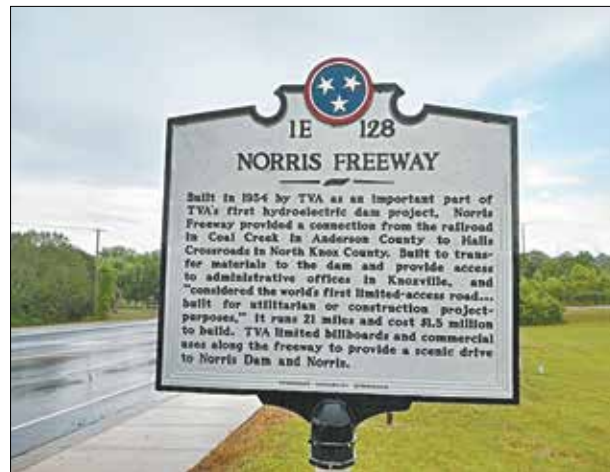
er. But Norris Freeway is more than just a road that did not exist before the 1930s and much more than just an access way to the dam.

Bet you didn't know that the road was originally planned to be a railroad. When the federal government found that too expensive and impractical the road was built. Today the road is a busy Knox County route that starts at Maynardville Highway in Halls and follows gentle hills all the way to Norris Lake.

A long running effort by the city of Norris and various stakeholders is to have the route designated as the Norris Freeway Scenic Byway. The idea has been submitted to the federal government and already approved by the state, complete with a historic marker in Knoxville.

The application for the designation was presented by Scott Hackler, Norris city manager, along with photos and information supplied by Michael Carberry of the Norris Planning Commission. Carberry, according to Hackler, provided most of the effort to recruit stakeholders. Among those are Senator Lamar Alexander, Lt. Governor Randy McNally, Representative Dennis Powers, the governments of Anderson, Campbell and Knox counties, the City of Rocky Top, Norris Dam State Park, TVA, Anderson County Tourism, the Museum of Appalachia and the Coal Mining Museum.

The town of Norris is the lead in the effort and is awaiting a decision by the federal government. The town was built to house construction



Built in 1934 as a military and industrial access highway Norris Freeway begins in Halls and ends in Rocky Top. The City of Norris and others want the route to be recognized nationally as a "Scenic Byway."

workers who worked on the dam. It was a planned community that became a model for others throughout the nation. The town was sold to private owners in 1948.

Knox County Commissioner Charles Busler, who represents part of the area along the route, said the original highway had several cattle crossings including one that still exists in Halls beneath the road. Busler said the old tunnel can be walked through if you know where it begins.

The Norris Project inaugurated one of President Roosevelt's most ambitious New Deal programs. In addition to the dam, the generously funded TVA agency created a state park and a planned community.

The road heads northwest from Halls, past the large Walmart center. Old Andersonville Pike enters the route just beyond the Cedar Ridge Baptist Church and crosses Bull Run Creek. Just beyond there to the north it passes through Hobert Gap and then intersects with Racoon Valley Road.

Further on it passes Fairview School and on to the Clayton Industry plant. When Norris Freeway intersects with Andersonville Pike the road passes by the Museum of Appalachia and East Norris Road. You can

continue across the Pike or take the Norris Road to the City of Norris.

If you proceed along Norris Freeway you come to the area of Norris Dam, with a state park featuring hiking trails in the hills and along the waters of Clinch River. There's also a historic water mill, a museum, barn, and visitor's center. Norris Dam State Park has two campgrounds, the largest of which is across the dam toward Rocky Top (Lake City), where the freeway crosses under I-75 and ends.

Much of the original Norris Freeway is relatively intact, but development pressures increasingly threaten it. The Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office has determined that 18.9 miles of the original 21-mile Norris Freeway is eligible for the National Register of Historic Place and proponents of the designation are awaiting final approval.

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ALTERATIONS

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Knoxville, TN 37918
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Electrical - Plumbing
Gas piping & Welding
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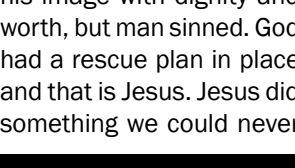
classifieds

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Furniture, glassware, clothing & more
Variety of clothing \$1 each
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LEAVE PHONE # IF NO ANSWER