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Con Hunley to return to Union County Opry stage



Con Hunley, one of East Tennessee's own and a favorite among country music fans everywhere, is returning to the Union County Opry Patriot Auditorium stage this Saturday, May 4. Hunley will be joined by special guests Southern Spirit. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m. and the show will start at 7:00.

By Focus Staff

Con Hunley, one of East Tennessee's most beloved performers, is coming back to the Union County Opry. "I'm looking forward to bringing my band back up to Union County for another great show," Hunley told The Focus.

The show is a homecoming of sorts for Hunley. His parents, as well as their parents, along with dozens of aunts, uncles and cousins were raised in the area. "I have a lot of sweet memories of spending

time there in my youth visiting relatives and lots of friends. That whole area - Luttrell, Sharp's Chapel, Maynardville, Big Ridge, Powder Springs - holds a special place in my heart."

Over the course of his career, Hunley has seen 25 of his songs hit the Billboard Country Hot 100, and 11 of those hit the Top Twenty. He has performed on country music's biggest stages, toured and shared the stage with some of country music's biggest names, and he is still going

strong!

Hunley will be performing his show this Saturday, May 4 at the Union County Opry in the auditorium of Union County High School. Tickets are reserved this year and range from \$20 to \$35.

"We did a show here last year, and it was just great! I feel like it will be another great one this year! My whole band will be there, and my brother Kenny and sister Ruthie will be there singing harmonies. Plus we've got a very talented

duo opening for us - Southern Spirit. They've got a big following in the area. We're all just going to have a lot of fun! I hope to see a lot of family and friends in the crowd!"

The show at the Union County Opry will start at 7 p.m. with doors opening at 6:00. Tickets can be purchased in advance online at unioncountyopry.com and at the Kitchen Design Center in Maynardville, or by calling 865-556-4255. Tickets will also be available at the door.



PHOTOS BY KEN LEINART

YWCA staff and donors pose for a group shot after Wednesday's kick off of the Keys of Hope Capital Campaign.

Knoxville mayor announces \$461.6 million budget

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
steelym@knoxfocus.com

Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon's State of the City address Friday proposed a \$461.6 million budget and an operating fund of \$338 million. Her proposal comes with no property tax increase, now set at \$2.1556 per \$100 of assessed value, which she said is the lowest rate since 1974.

Mayor Kincannon was introduced by Vice Mayor Tommy Smith, who spoke about her "policy-driven leadership. The mayor spoke at the World's Fair

Park amphitheater, sheltered from a light rain under a roof that she said is being repaired to maintain the historic structure built for the 1982 event.

Her address focused on public safety, more affordable housing, job creation and public infrastructure investment.

Kincannon focused on changes in the city in her five years as mayor including the growth of the Urban Wilderness, converting the old Baptist Hospital to the new Public Safety Complex,

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YWCA launches Keys of Hope Campaign

By Ken Leinart

YWCA Knoxville and the Tennessee Valley is making a big push to reach its goal of raising \$11.5 million to renovate its office at 420 West Clinch Avenue in downtown Knoxville.

With \$9.9 million raised since 2019 when the YWCA started working to secure the funding through grants, fundraising efforts, private donations, and other gifts to the non-profit agency.

YWCA announced the "Keys of Hope Capital Campaign" during a press event Wednesday, April 24, to not only draw attention to the fundraising goal, but to recognize contributors.

The YWCA also announced the renaming of the downtown building to the YWCA Nancy J. Land Center in honor of Stephen and Nancy Land who made a "unique gift" to the renovation campaign.

"This is our epicenter," Kathy Mack, Chief Youth Engagement Officer, said

during a brief welcoming statement Wednesday. "This is the home of the Jenny Boyd Keys of Hope Program."

The program is named after another contributor to the YWCA campaign, Jenny and Randy Boyd and the Boyd Family Foundation. Jenny Boyd, who could not attend Wednesday's event, was honored as well during the ceremony. Randy Boyd accepted the honor on her behalf.

The YWCA building was erected in 1925. In its near 100-year history the building has never been renovated.

Stephanie Burrage, CEO of YWCA Knoxville and the Tennessee Valley, said renovations are desperately needed.

Burrage said women "come to us after leaving an abusive relationship, leave jail, or are recovering."

Every year, she said, more than 1,200 women are turned away from the



Kathy Mack, Chief Youth Engagement Officer of the YWCA Knoxville and Tennessee Valley, opened Wednesday's press event with a few words of welcome.

YWCA program because of lack of space. The program can last up to two years. Women are given counseling, take classes on self reliance, and are given a road map on how to be self sufficient.

"Our program costs less than \$6,000 per woman,

per year," she said. Through government programs, Burrage said, "Taxpayers are paying about \$40,000 per woman, per year."

And the YWCA program works.

"Ninety-percent of the women who come through

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TPO hears population growth report

By Mike Steely
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The Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization is made up of the mayors of adjoining counties and cities and is federally mandated to provide transportation planning for the area. In its meeting Wednesday, the TPO learned that the group's required four-year report was certified by a federal and state review.

Zack Coleman, community planner with the Federal Highway Administration's Nashville office, announced the results to the seated mayors and mayoral representatives. The meeting also heard

a report on Tennessee Department of Transportation updates including three awards for Knox County, a study on sidewalks along state roads, and an upcoming traffic light study.

Mike Conger, senior transportation engineer with Knoxville-Knox County Planning, presented a report on future transportation involving population growth. The report showed that, although the population in the region continues to grow from outside people moving here, the actual local birth rate is declining and the local population is aging.

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Congress Passes Mega-Billions More For Ukraine

From a distance



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

Last week, Congress voted to send \$95 billion in additional aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan.

The largest portion was to Ukraine - \$61 billion - after the Congress had previously approved \$114 billion, for a total of \$175 billion.

The total GDP of Ukraine in 2022 was \$160.5 billion. In other words, we basically could have bought the whole country for less than we have sent them.

Of course, most of this money was approved due to the tremendous lobbying

effort made and the big campaign contributions given by the giant defense contractors.

For many years now, as Eisenhower warned, almost all of our wars have been more about money and power than about any real threats to this country.

All giant bureaucracies, when it comes to money, just want more, more and more. And most members of Congress don't seem to realize, or more likely don't seem to care, that we are spending money we do not have.

It is almost impossible to humanly comprehend our \$35 trillion national debt. And take a moment and try to comprehend how much this latest \$95 billion foreign aid bill is.

One billion dollars could make 1,000 Americans millionaires immediately. One billion hours is equal to 114,000 years. If we said we were going to spend one

billion dollars a minute, it would take 19,000 hours to do so.

This latest \$95 billion is equal to over \$260 million each and every day.

The largest recipient, Ukraine, in addition to our \$175 billion, has received over \$53 billion from the countries of the European Union and at least \$42 billion from the World Bank (and 17.5% of World Bank funds come from U.S. taxpayers).

As I pointed out in my March 4th column, Ukraine actually has had more money to fight this latest war than Russia has.

As of 2023, the total GDP of the U.S. was \$26.9 trillion. Russia's GDP of \$2.1 trillion is actually much smaller than California's GDP and about equal to that of Texas.

Just prior to this war with Russia, Ukraine's government was rated as one of the most corrupt in the

world. We would probably be sickened if we could ever really find out how much of this aid has been or will be wasted or stolen.

And as for giving billions in additional aid to Israel and Taiwan, I would ask - why? Both countries are much stronger per capita and in relation to GDP than the U.S. with our humongous debt.

The votes in the House were 311 to 112 on the Ukraine aid; 366 to 58 on aid to Israel; and 385 to 34 on the aid to Taiwan.

On the aid to Ukraine, a majority of Republicans (112) voted no, with all the Democrats voting yes. The Democrats in Congress don't hesitate to spend money on almost everything.

Only two Tennessee Republicans - David Kustoff of Memphis and Chuck Fleischmann of Chattanooga - voted to send more billions down the Ukrainian

rathole. Both Tennessee senators voted against the final bill.

The Congressional Budget Office says interest payments on our national debt will total \$870 billion this year and \$951 billion next year.

The top one percent already pay almost half of U.S. income taxes. Increases in corporate taxes will be passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices for everything.

Thus, most of the increased spending this Congress is doing, in foreign aid and everything else, and in Biden's shameless campaign of forgiving student loans, will be paid for by printing more money and by even more federal borrowing.

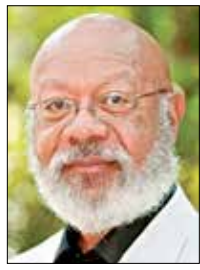
Germany, in the 1920s, was probably the most educated country in the world. Yet, read this from the biography of theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer:

"For Germany, 1923 was disastrous. The German mark, which had begun to slide two years earlier, went into free fall. In 1921 it dropped to 75 marks to the dollar; the next year to 400; and by early 1923 it plunged to 4,000. But this was only the beginning of sorrows.... The resultant economic turmoil would make the bleak conditions of a few months earlier look like the good old days: by August a dollar was worth one million marks; and by September, August seemed like the good old days. By November 1923 a dollar was worth about four billion German marks."

In the last 12 months, people from 150 countries have flooded to the U.S. because their governments have adopted socialist policies that have destroyed their economies.

The NAACP's latest salvo at Ron DeSantis

Last year the NAACP issued a "travel advisory" warning blacks that Florida was a "hate state" hostile to people of color. This probably was a surprise to the 6 million black and Hispanic residents.



By Dr. Harold A. Black blackh@knoxfocus.com haroldblackphd.com

When I took one of my two annual trips to Florida later in the year I was only attacked by mosquitos, fire ants and love bugs. Personally, I think it is a testament to how badly people want to flee the North if they move to Florida. I guess the aforementioned mosquitos, fire ants, love bugs and of course, Palmetto bugs (giant roaches), alligators, boa constrictors, humidity and a few hurricanes are a small price to pay if you are from New York.

The NAACP which is more interested in climate change, environmental "justice" and LGBTQ+ than in black education was responding to Ron DeSantis' rejection of the AP course on

black history. That course was more one of political and social indoctrination to the views of the left than one of history with sections on queer blacks in history, Critical Race Theory and the 1619 Project's rewriting of American history. DeSantis commissioned a group of scholars to write a more accurate rendering of history. Those who jumped on the anti-DeSantis bandwagon said that he was erasing black history when they were the ones who

denigrated black accomplishments in the face of the vestiges of slavery and Jim Crow.

Now the NAACP has struck again urging black athletes not to go to Florida colleges and universities because the state eliminated DEI staff and DEI programs from its schools. The president of the NAACP (who is from Mississippi) and its chairman (who lives in Tampa) in a letter to the president of the NCAA said, "While it is our duty to spread awareness and encourage action around these egregious assaults, we also recognize that protest can come at a price. The sad reality is, for many Black student-athletes, collegiate sports may be their sole opportunity at achieving the upward mobility necessary to propel them into their rightful places in

society."

"Florida's rampant anti-Black policies are a direct threat to the advancement of our young people and their ability to compete in a global economy," NAACP president Johnson said in a statement. "Diversity, equity, and inclusion are paramount (to) ensuring equitable and effective educational outcomes."

"The value Black and other college athletes bring to large universities is unmatched. If these institutions are unable to completely invest in those athletes, it's time they take their talents elsewhere."

Emmitt Smith, one of the University of Florida's most notable alumni opined, "We need diverse thinking and backgrounds to enhance our University and the DEI department is necessary to accomplish those goals."

Do the NAACP and Emmitt Smith want DEI in all parts of the university including sports? Surely they don't advocate for more whites on the football teams and the basketball squads. Well since 15% of the Florida population is black, then I guess they want only 15% of football players and basketball players to be black. Not! Anyway, the NIL money is more meaningful to the athletes than DEI.

Neither the NAACP nor Smith show how the elimination of DEI would negatively impact the education of black students and in particular black athletes. In fact, there is no evidence that DEI has furthered the academic achievement of black students. But the evidence does not matter to the NAACP. The large proportions of blacks in

sports have resulted in more blacks emerging from poverty than any effort by the NAACP. One interesting observation is that the school in Alabama with the most diverse student body is Troy State University which does not spend a single penny on DEI.

Does the NAACP president also want the five-star Florida athletes to also shun the HBCUs in the state that have athletic programs? I am waiting to hear the protests coming from the coaches at Florida A&M and Bethune-Cookman. Perhaps he is hoping that Florida athletes will come to his more welcoming and inclusive state of Mississippi. Rather, I suggest that they come instead to the University of Georgia, the Ohio State University and of course to the University of Tennessee.



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Project Emerald promises to create more than 440 new jobs

By Mike Steely
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The Knox County Commission voted unanimously Monday evening to grant a 10-year tax break for Greenheck Group's "Project Emerald," a proposed manufacturing facility in the Midway Business Park. The corporation will initially employ 440 people, take up the remaining space in the East Knox County industrial area with seven buildings, and plan a \$300 million investment.


The Knoxville Chamber's Doug Lawyer told the commission that a price of \$30,000 per acre has been agreed on in a project that will be handled by the Industrial Development Board. He said the project should begin this fall and the first two buildings up in 18 to 24 months.

"This is a win for Knox County," said Chairwoman Terry Hill following the unanimous vote to approve by the commission.

Greenheck manufactures air control systems and products used in commercial, institutional and industrial buildings. It began as a fan company in 1947. Greenheck manufactures its products in eight facilities across the globe and has five U.S. distribution centers.

In other action, the commission approved \$846,090 in funding for the Knox County Register of Deeds' office to continue digitizing land records, a project that began in 1999 with copying early land grant records.

The commission also approved amendments to the Fleet Safety Program and approved an amendment to permit office holders assigned vehicles by the county to designate a vehicle driver.



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Deadline for ad design is Monday at 5 p.m.
Deadline for Classified ads is Thursday at noon.
Deadline for submissions is Thursday by noon.
Articles, announcements, photo attachments and outlines may be submitted by e-mail to staff@knoxfocus.com.

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Publisher's Positions



By Steve Hunley, Publisher
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The Wrecking Crew... Rule Or Ruin

I have always admired Newt Gingrich and recall the "revolution" that saw Republicans win the House of Representatives in 1994. The first thing that the new Republican majority did was to elect Gingrich as Speaker of the House. When a friend sent me a link to a recent interview with Newt Gingrich with Politico, I read it with a lot of interest.

Gingrich was outspoken in his advice about current House Speaker Mike Johnson being picked at by Marjorie Taylor Green and a few other members of the Republican Caucus. Gingrich had recently said

Johnson is "working to lead the most complicated House since the Civil War." I agree with the statement. Gingrich called Matt Gaetz a "super narcissist" and said Johnson was leading a caucus where "30 or 40 members who ideologically wake up every morning knowing that they're gonna vote no - - they're not sure what the issue is, but they know they're going to vote no." Gingrich also said it is important to remember the current Speaker doesn't have a working majority on the House Rules Committee.

Newt Gingrich said, "The demons that Gaetz unleashed by going after McCarthy are still out there. You can't govern by shooting yourself in the head every day."

As Gingrich said, the House of Representatives isn't a PTA meeting, it has some very serious constitutional obligations. What it comes down to is a minority trying to dictate to a majority. "What are you going to do? Are we going to run around every day, stick your finger up in the air and see if Matt Gaetz blows on it?" Gingrich told the interviewer.

Unless the majority confirms to every desire and belief of the minority, that same minority will pull down the House around them. That strategy benefits only Democrats and the Crazy Caucus.

The Wrecking Crew has its own members here as they are trying to infiltrate the Three Rivers Republican Club and take it over. Last I knew, non-citizens cannot vote in American elections, much as the progressives want them to. If I tried to vote at the Farragut precinct, I couldn't because I don't live there. This same Wrecking Crew hasn't done much in the way of growing the Knox Republican Party.

The Wrecking Crew members can't even get along with each other. They couldn't even run a Facebook page without flinging accusations, very personal accusations, at one another, squalling theft. They are always creating drama and they don't seem interested in the bread-and-butter issues facing most working families today. They aren't barn builders, but they will burn it down just to spite someone who has one more cow than they do.

They spend their time

harassing and bullying and reserve their strongest criticisms and personal insults for other Republicans. Most of them have done little for the Republican Party, as I said before. They haven't raised the money to keep the party going and don't always support the candidates nominated by the Republican Party. They do little of the work, but do most of the posturing, all of the yelling, and run around wrecking things. Their attitude is to rule or ruin. The local Democrats aren't whizbang strategists or gifted politicians. They are largely the beneficiaries of the Wrecking Crew who claim they are the only Republicans there are. Many of them are refugees from states that are as blue as blue can be because they ran their own GOP into the ground.

Many of those people haven't been here long enough to remember how many Democrats held countywide office in Knox County. It wasn't that long ago.

The Wrecking Crew is the biggest asset the Democrats have, nationally and locally.

Double Standards Rife In Academia

Scott Galloway, a Jewish professor at New York University, put things into perspective when he pointed out the double standard about hate speech enjoyed by the anti-Israel protesters. "If I went into the NYU square with a white hood on and said 'lynch the Blacks' or 'burn the gays,' my ID would be shut off by that night," Galloway said while appearing on "Morning Joe" on MSNBC. "I would never work in academia again. There would be no need for the words 'context' or 'nuance,' I wouldn't be protected by the First Amendment or free speech."

Of course, free speech has been curtailed for quite some time on the campuses of the elite and elitist colleges and universities. Like all Leftists, they reserve that right for themselves and try and ban it for anyone else.

These people don't have the sense God gave a goose. There is a video circulating of a drag queen from a queer story time at a Massachusetts art center urging small children to

shout, "Free Palestine." Ironically, the only area where gay people are treated like human beings in the Middle East is Israel. Clearly, that drag queen had not heard about Abu Murkhiyeh who feared for his safety precisely because he was gay. Where did he live? Palestine of course. Where did Murkhiyeh seek asylum? Israel. What happened to him? His severed head and torso were found back in Hebron which he had earlier left. The 25-year-old's body was found near his family's house. An ugly and gruesome crime and some folks evidently need to be reminded homosexuality remains, at the very least, profoundly taboo in Palestine.

Our Deep Condolences To The Roberto Family

The Knoxville Focus family wishes to express our heartfelt sympathies to Knoxville City Councilman Andrew Roberto and his wife Sarah on the loss of their beautiful daughter Kylie. We are very deeply sorry for your loss and that of your family.

Keys of Hope Campaign

Continued from page 1

our doors and complete the program reclaim their role as contributing members of society," Burrage said.

That is why, Burrage said, it is vital to have the YWCA building renovated. "Keys of Hope offers a safe haven."

The building, Burrage said, is energy inefficient, has leaky pipes, and no air conditioning. She added that after the renovation YWCA Knoxville and the Tennessee Valley will be able to increase the number of women it helps on-site by an additional 25 percent.

"We've seen first hand the world of the YWCA," Nancy Land said during the ceremony renaming the building in her honor. "These women have jobs, pay rent. It is truly a hand up, not a hand down."

"And we need your help to get over the (fundraising goal) line."

Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs spoke about the fundraising goal of the YWCA and the way the agency has gone about it.

Jacobs said when numerous people get involved, no matter how much they might donate, it makes it a community project.

"The accumulation of effort has a much bigger impact," the mayor said.

"This is a wonderful program and, as 'mayor,' it's kinda cool because I often get put in these situations where I'm given credit for work that other people do. This is certainly one of those times," he said, laughing.

Then, pointing to the YWCA staff and honorees at wednesday's event, he added, "These are the people that make it happen."

Burrage said the YWCA can house 58 women, but currently only houses 17 until the YWCA can find other housing. This is because work will probably start soon on the renovation and the building has to be emptied when it does begin.

She said once the work begins it should, "Take about 12 months ... If there are no supply chain issues."

Also recognized at Wednesday's event were Jennifer Linginfelter of U.S. Rep. Tim Burchett's office and Tiffany Davidson of the City of Knoxville and Mayor Indya Kin-cannon's office.

Robot delivery ban to be extended downtown

By Mike Steely
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The Knoxville City Council will open its meeting tomorrow with a discussion on the new budget unveiled on Friday, April 26.

The continued prohibition of personal delivery vehicles on the streets, sidewalks and rights-of-way inside the city is also on Tuesday's City Council meeting agenda. The small computerized delivery units mostly used for food, operating now at some University of Tennessee locations, will be studied for possible future approval.

The council will vote to approve a \$3.6 million contract with Rogers Group Inc. for the 2024 Resurfacing Phase Two Project.

Two appeals of planning

commission decisions will also be heard, one involving a new driveway on Topside Road and the expansion of a turn lane on West Governor John Sevier Highway. The second appeal comes from the West Hills Community Association and seeks to overturn a planning approval for Maple Lane Homes LLC for a two-family dwelling in an RN-1 zone.

The mayor may be authorized to apply for a Safe Streets and Roads for All grant from the federal government for \$55,000,000 with an \$11,000,000 local match for the city's Vision Zero goal to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injury. Cannon and Cannon Inc. may see a \$58,100 bump in their contract for third-party engineering plans

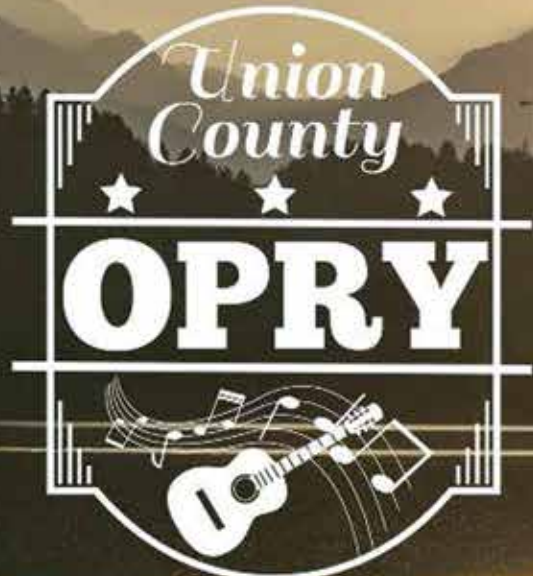
review, upping their current contract to \$193,000.

A contract may be approved for \$230,912 for the first two years and \$134,312 for a third year with Rimini Street, Inc. for software support services. The City is transitioning from on-premise Oracle products to cloud-based software packages.

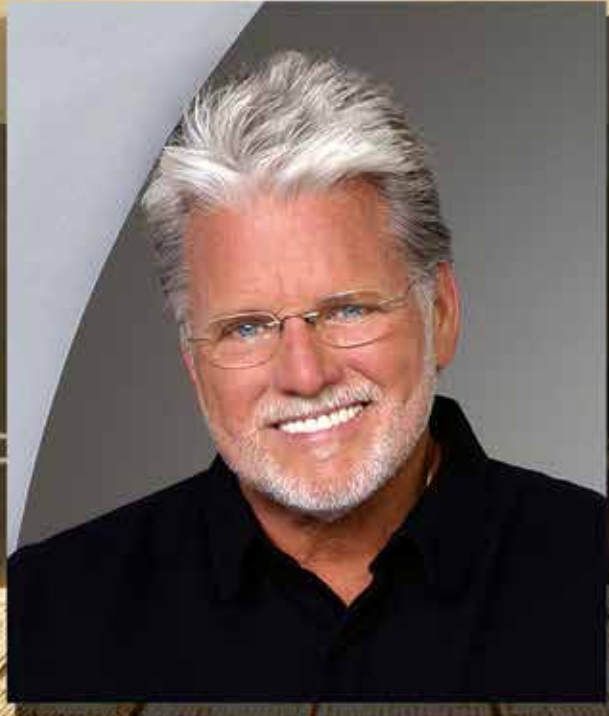
A new agreement with Helen Ross McNabb Center for \$25,000 may pass to fund the Sexual Assault Center of East Tennessee at a request from the Knoxville Police Department.

The council may also vote to hire KMF III Lawn and Landscape to care for the lawn and landscape at Safety City at 165 S Concord Street. The agreement is for \$29,620.

An Evening with Con Hunley



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Commission passes amended Comprehensive Land Use Plan

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
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It took five hours Monday evening but the Knox County Commission passed Mayor Glenn Jacobs' Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Plan after altering some language.

"I'm happy that commission unanimously passed the new comprehensive plan," Mayor Glenn Jacobs told The Focus.

"This has been the result of lots of discussion, back-and-forth, and, ultimately, collaboration. The goal was to create a framework that will guide better land use decisions for the next two decades. Thanks to commission and the Advance Knox team, we've achieved that," he said.

Jacobs had threatened the commission if large changes were made in the plan and apparently found the proposed amendments acceptable.

By far most of the amendments were introduced by At-Large Commissioner Kim Frazier and other changes were sponsored by Chairwoman Terry Hill and Commissioners John Schoonmaker, Richie Beeler, Kyle Ward and Larsen Jay.

Examples of some of the amendments to the plan include adding hillside and ridgetop protections, protecting "important soils" from developing areas and adding open spaces in expanded growth areas. Also, the plan permits two units per acre in planned residential zones, one

in rural conservation zones and up to three per acre in planned growth areas.

At one point near during the discussion Chairwoman Hill praised the overall plan and Mayor Jacobs' involvement. She also thanked the mayor's executive team and the planning staff for their hard work.

A few suggested tweaks were voted down and some were withdrawn during discussion.

"This is a great start," Frazier said.

The twenty-year plan is aimed at controlling growth, opening some agricultural land for housing, and preparing the county for the increasing population.



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY.

Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs spoke to the county commission's debate on changes to the Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Plan, accepting changes made to the 20-year plan for development.

A light rain didn't dampen the crowd which watched Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon's State of the City Budget address Friday.



Knoxville mayor announces \$461.6 million budget

Cont. from page 1

construction of the Empath Center there for medical and behavioral health services, and renovations at the SunSphere and World's Fair Park including the work on a new roof.

Future projects Kincannon spoke of include a new Burlington Fire Station, street improvements, pay increases for police officers, incentive pay for fire department personnel and a 2.5 percent pay increase for all city employees.

Kincannon is proposing \$8 million for additional affordable housing, \$7 million for park and recreation facility improvements and a new park for Lonsdale.

About \$11.7 million is proposed for road safety including repairs, upgrades, bridges, signs and traffic signals. Traffic-calming in the city would also get \$500,000 for speed bumps and other devices.

The budget includes \$2.7 million in grants to agencies including the Young-Williams Animal Center. About \$2.4 million may go to Zoo Knoxville. About \$3 million was proposed

for organizations like the Knoxville Chamber, Visit Knoxville, the Entrepreneur Center and Centro Hispano. More than \$1.5 million is proposed for community partners such as the McNabb Center, Mental Health Association,

Girl Talk, Emerald Youth, Big Brothers and Big Sisters and 100 Black Men. \$310,000 may be approved for opioid treatment through local agencies with funding coming from awards from class-action lawsuits against

pharmaceutical companies.

The budget proposal now goes to City Council for approval with the first reading set for Tuesday. The final vote on the proposed budget is set for May 28.

TPO hears population growth report

Cont. from page 1

Conger reported that the population within the six-county area may grow from 925,497 to 1.12 million by 2050. Most of that growth, from new arrivals, takes place in Knox County which is forecast to gain 98,128 more residents. Sevier County is next with an estimated growth of 35,366 people and Blount County is expected to get 35,458 new people. Each county will see population growth with Anderson, Loudon

and Roane counties growing at a smaller rate of growth.

The population and transportation growth report is released every four years.

The TPO board also heard an update on a ten-year project that included improvements planned for a 17-mile stretch of I-40 and I-75 slated to take place over the next 24 months, a corridor report and a proposed "choice lane" project.



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- 10 - 706 GALLAHER ROAD - KINGSTON, TN 37763 BLOCK SHOP BUILDING ON 0.77+/- ACRE LOT
- 11 - SHOREWOOD LANE - CARYVILLE, TN 37714 0.63+/- ACRE LOT IN COVE NORRIS S/D

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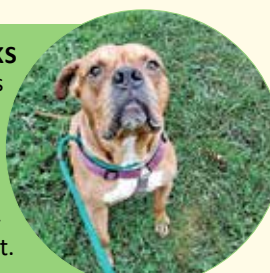




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The Doctor is in
a weekly column by
Dr. Jim Ferguson

Delusional Thinking

When debate is lost, slander becomes the tool of losers.
Socrates

Becky and I enjoy watching sports, but I focus on the sport that is "in season." I'll watch some of the National Hockey League playoffs because I played ice hockey into my sophomore year of college and the ridiculous fighting is virtually absent in the playoffs.

However, it's really baseball season and this caused me to think of an old comedy routine by Abbott and Costello entitled "Who's on First?" I'm sure most of you remember this classic shtick, but if not, search YouTube and enjoy real comedy without politics or F-bombs. But more importantly, I wonder who is in charge at the White House.

In medicine, as in virtually every other organization,

the captain of the ship philosophy is operative. In other words, I was responsible for the actions of my office staff just as surgeons are responsible for their patients on the operating table. Presidents are lauded for accomplishments during their administration. Similarly, presidents are criticized for failures.

All presidents have advisors, but Biden's obvious dementia raises the question of whether his advisors or Jill Biden is in charge. The 25th Amendment regarding President Trump's fitness was politically bandied about by Democrats and their media stooges. However, the comparison between the vigorous President Trump and the cognitively impaired Biden is profound and obvious to rational people.

We have historical precedents for the Biden situation. President Woodrow

Wilson suffered an incapacitating stroke in 1919 and his wife essentially ran the White House for a year and a half. Later, FDR's serious health decline during WWII ultimately prompted the passage of the 25th Amendment in 1967, providing for the replacement of an impaired president. Actually, the only thing saving Biden is Kamala Harris.

The latest disaster on Biden's watch is the anti-semitic mobs in New York City, Ivy League campuses and across the country. This made me think of the Frank Sinatra classic, "New York, New York, a helluva town." And it surely is, where more than 90% are Democrats and elect politicians like Alvin Bragg who waste millions prosecuting political adversaries while turning a blind eye to actual crime on the streets and subways. It's no wonder Gotham Democrats advocate drugs, rats, sexualization of kids with drag queen story hour, trans surgery and puberty blocking medication.

Gotham's choice (Biden) even attempted to "transition Easter" by promoting his "Trans Day of visibility." And last week, Biden profanely made the sign of the cross at an abortion rally in Florida.

Last week I wrote about the \$5 trillion in new taxes

that Biden is already planning if reelected, as well as his plans to eliminate Trump's tax cuts and promote a Wealth Tax on your 401(k), and even the equity in your house. Of course, Dark Brandon's plans will destroy the economy, Stock Market and housing market. And if reelected, Brandon will most certainly declare a "climate emergency" to control all energy including electricity usage, charging your electric car or running your air conditioner. Think I'm crazy? Look what Biden and his leftist handlers did to the border, promoting foreign invasion!

Psychosis is defined by delusional thinking, best described as non-rational thought. In other words, it would be delusional to perceive cell phone towers as structures the FBI uses to broadcast radio waves and control our minds. The old movie, A Beautiful Mind is a depiction of how a delusional person might see the world. And yet we have people who believe they are something they are not and demand that we embrace their delusional thinking and pronouns.

Two recent medical studies caught my attention. The first was from the Netherlands where researchers found that the majority of young people with gender dysphoria (confusion over their sexuality)

grow out of the confusion over time. And the second study from England found that hormone blocking drugs and gender reassignment surgery did not improve the health or well-being of kids with gender dysphoria. The findings were so dramatic that the National Health Service in England (no bastion of conservative thought) banned the drugs and the mutilating surgery. We now have credible data to say, "First, do no harm."

There are always exceptions, and it may be an oversimplification of complex issues, but there have always been girly men and tomboy girls. As I watched my own children grow up and transition to adulthood, it was sometimes a bumpy road. But they finally figured it out. Kids often want to appear edgy, unique, even trendy.

The 19th century opera "La Boheme" (The Bohemians) was about young people disregarding conventional standards of behavior. While I might disagree with coloring your hair purple, hair will eventually grow out and revert to nature's design. Puberty blocker drugs are lifelong with serious side effects. And you can't restore body parts that have been lopped off. Liberals cry, "Follow the science." Well, how about objective

genotypic DNA analysis or phenotypic anatomy?

Admittedly, I am a reasoned, and non delusional-conservative man. And since my background is in science, I approach issues from an observable, measurable perspective. But, I'm also a theist and a Christian. Albert Einstein once said, "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind." I agree with the professor.

I believe the progressive Democrats and Biden are wreaking havoc in our country and around the world. The border is a disaster, the cost of everything has gone up, crime is everywhere, people won't work and expect a hand-out, wars rage on Dark Brandon's watch, antisemitism rages on college campuses and mental illness, as well as drugs, has led to homelessness.

It is obvious, Biden is not up to the task of leading the country. His presidency has been a disaster. Actually, the only things I know that are working well are my marriage, my new church, my family and my aging body - most of the time.

Remember these objective truths on November 5, 2024. It's past time for a change.

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

PARC re-elects Jonathan Haskell as chair

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
steelym@knoxfocus.com

When the Police Advisory Review Committee met in its 2024 first quarter session Thursday evening it chose to re-elect Jonathan Haskell as chairman. Saadia Williams was chosen as co-chair.

PARC heard a report from Executive Director Jered Croom who reported on his speaking engagements and advocacy and his sitting in on a discipline hearing at the Knoxville Police Department.

During the first part of this year PARC received 25 complaints and sent one

complaint to the police department for review. Eighteen cases are pending and six were reviewed and closed. Eight cases were referred to other law enforcement departments. In a year-to-year report PARC reported 19 pending cases last year and 18 this year.

Genoa Clark of the Choice Health Network spoke to the meeting about her group's effort via the Harm Reduction Network for people with drug addiction, including a needle exchange program. Clark talked about overdose prevention, supplies as needed, referrals, testing

and stressed the importance of not judging people.

Croom asked Knoxville Police Chief Paul Noel about police response to overdoses and Noel replied, "We find someone every single day." Noel invited Clark's organization to visit the department and speak to officers at a roll call meeting. Clark said her group operates in Knox, Campbell and Cocke counties.

Several people spoke at the meeting including Tina Sparks, who asked about the Take Me Home program and the Crisis Intervention Team. Noel said the Take

Cont. on page 2



PARC Chairman Jonathan Haskell and Director Jered Croom commented during the first quarterly meeting of the police oversight committee. Photo by Mike Steely.

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Visiting John Sevier's springhouse

A Day Away



By Mike Steely

If you have never visited Marble Springs, the home of Tennessee's first governor John Sevier, there's something there you might want to see, even if you are familiar with the site. There are lots of historic structures there including his historic two-story home but the most important thing on the grounds back then was the source of water.

Kyle Dickson, executive director of Marble Springs State Historic Site, agrees that Sevier, in looking for a home site prior to statehood, probably chose the hilltop location due to the natural springs there. In pioneer days, water and salt were two vital items needed for daily life.

Dickson said there are mentions of a salt being bought in Sevier's journals and he does mention the springs. After Sevier obtained the property he built a smoke house, a corn crib and the springhouse. The exact location of his springhouse isn't known but there are two places downhill from the house where the springs emerge where the springhouse was likely located. The stream eventually empties into Neubert Springs.

You can stand in either rear door of the house and see the current



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY.

This reproduction of the springhouse at John Sevier's Marble Springs homestead stands just below the historic two-story house of Tennessee's first governor. Springs were vital to early settlement and the springs may have led to Sevier choosing the location.

springhouse. Carrying water up the hill for daily use must have been an effort. Later someone built a well near the spring.

Fresh spring water was much safer than water from a river or pond, coming clean from the ground. It was used for cooking, washing clothes, bathing, and most other common daily tasks that required water. The cool spring water, at about 55 degrees year round, was also used to help preserve food that was often submerged in the spring. It was also vital in making whiskey.

Referring to the spring at one point Sevier wrote to his son and said, "I am so sorry to learn you are much afflicted with the Rheumatism, I wish you could spend a summer at Marble Springs, probably the water would relieve you, as it has done me. I am very confident it was

that water alone that gave me any relief."

Sevier owned a few slaves and they may have been involved in digging out the spring or building the springhouse.

When I visited Marble Springs recently, Dickson and volunteers were busy cleaning, repairing and checking the historic homestead, preparing for the season of visitors. You can get more information about John Sevier and Marble Springs by visiting www.marblesprings.net or call (865) 573-5508.

The Marble Springs State Historic Site is open Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. and Sundays from noon until 5 p.m. Guided tours take place at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. There are also audio tours available and self-guided tours are free.

The complex has over 30 acres of wooded scenery

and is occasionally used for weddings, family reunions and birthday parties. There's a gift shop and each building, including the two-story Sevier home, are open to tour. The site is aided by the Arts and Heritage Fund, Knox County, and the Governor John Sevier Memorial Association. Marble Springs State Historic Site is funded under an agreement with the Tennessee Historical Commission and is a Tennessee Historical Commission State-Owned Historic Site.

Marble Springs is located at 1220 West Governor John Sevier Highway in south Knoxville which can be accessed from Alcoa, Chapman and Andrew Johnson highways. While traveling Gov. John Sevier Highway, you may want to take it east to the East Tennessee Veterans Volunteer Cemetery and pay your respects.

Still Alive

This past weekend, I was thrilled to find out that my neighbors weren't dead. I mean nearly all of them. They disappeared at the end of October 2023. So few sightings

of them had me wondering if they'd moved or died. Not until last Saturday did they prove to be kicking and living normal lives. Out from their houses did they exit, and the rest of the day the entire neighborhood was alive.

Such things happen every spring. The weather cooperated for the first time in several weekends. Cold temperatures, biting winds and rain gave way to blue skies with a sun warming everything. Trees produced new leaves, along with fuzzy things from oaks and whirlybirds from maples. The buttercups had finished blooming, but other sleeping plants began pushing through the soil and mulch for another year.

Because I'm a mowing junky, I'd cut the grass and leftover fall leaves half a dozen times. Now, the sound of mowers being cranked and curses when those machines wouldn't start echoed through the neighborhood. Weedeaters chewed away at curbsides and flower bed edges as they neaten up yards. I call them yards because, in Ball Camp, we care most about the ground being covered in green plants. Clover, fescue, Bermuda grass or running vines suit our needs. Oh, some folks toil in their yards to have them look like show places, but we all know that the only way to have pure grass lawns is for every neighbor to do the same thing. Our lots are usually much larger than those in new subdivisions, so the maintenance products needed to produce lawns cost small fortunes. Most folks rested from their labors either



By Joe Rector
joerector@comcast.net

because they were out of shape after the winter or they spent a few minutes talking to neighbors. Some wives had visited nurseries and were raring to go to

fill beds with flowers and shrubs and seeds. In many cases, that meant the husbands stood ready with their shovels to dig the holes for the plants. Sometimes, couples argued over the whereabouts of those nursery purchases.

Although I'm not a fan of them, motorcycles hit the roads as folks took their first day trips to places like the mountains or the famous Dragon. Large cycles cruised while other bikes screamed as they passed. Those loud motorcycles invaded the peaceful day and caused neighborhood residents to look up and silently curse the squalling machines.

The birds returned with louder than usual voices. Their chirps were more like screams. The robins returned to my carport to once again build a nest right over the right side of my car. We warred for several days. The birds tried to build a nest, but I kept knocking the sticks and grass from the 2 x 6 beam. They finally gave up and moved to another location, but not before bombarding my car with poop and mud. I suppose I deserved the vindictive actions.

For the next few months, I'm looking forward to being outside. I'll ride the lawnmower and use all my other tools to keep my place looking as nice as possible. Some of my time will be spent talking with neighbors, playing golf, and sitting on the front porch or poolside. Thank you, God, for giving us spring. It renews our spirits and beautifies our surroundings. We are lucky people, and I'm glad we're all still alive.

PARC

Cont. from page 1

Me home program started in November to help locate people with autism, Alzheimer's and other mental disorders. The program allows family members to register emergency contact information and a physical description to help first responders if the individual is found alone or reported missing. He suggested caregivers keep an article with a person's scent on it to help in locating them.

Rick Roach asked Noel if he still supports an Alternative Response Team and the police chief said he is waiting on the results of the study.

Former university president joins Emerald Youth Foundation

David Olive has joined Emerald Youth Foundation as senior development and strategic initiatives officer.

Olive comes to Emerald Youth from Bluefield University, where he served as president for more than 16 years. He has served as chancellor since January. Olive is a native East Tennessean and graduated from Maryville High School before earning a bachelor's degree in business management from Tennessee Technological University. Following that, he went on to gain his Juris Doctor from the University of Tennessee College of Law as well as a Master of Divinity from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Prior to working at Bluefield, he worked at both Pfeiffer University and Carson-Newman University.

"I am excited to join the Emerald Youth Foundation team," said Olive. "The Foundation has an amazing and

life-changing mission that I find compelling, and I am blessed to have this opportunity to serve alongside others in making a positive difference in the lives of youth within the urban communities of Knoxville that will have an impact for generations to come."

Olive's role at Emerald will help drive the organization's fundraising efforts, helping advance the organization's mission through leadership and assistance with key initiatives and projects.

"We are thrilled to have David join our team," said Emerald Youth President and CEO Steve Diggs. "I look forward to working with David in his role and am proud that our staff is comprised of men and women who, like David, are committed to our city's young people and their families."

Olive is married to his wife Kathryn and they have a daughter, Kayla, and son, Will.

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Tarheel Statesman

Cameron Morrison of North Carolina

Pages from the Past



By Ray Hill

rayhill865@gmail.com

Since 1900, only three men have served as a congressman, governor and United States senator from North Carolina: Cameron Morrison, Clyde Hoey and William B. Umstead. Only Clyde Hoey was elected to all three offices, while Morrison and Umstead were both appointed to complete unexpired terms in the U.S. Senate.

Morrison was acknowledged to be one of North Carolina's best governors. A man of distinguished appearance, Cameron Morrison looked like an aristocrat and dressed the part, although his beginnings were relatively humble. Morrison chewed tobacco and spit it as well. During his time as governor of North Carolina, Morrison was a widower and his 10-year-old daughter served as his official hostess. A dynamic man who was forthright in the positions he took, Morrison was described by one political opponent as "a man chuck full of courage." Oftentimes dressed in a shirt with a "bat-wing" collar, Cameron Morrison was a colorful character even during his own time.

Cameron Morrison began his career as part of the movement that swept North Carolina and was led by Furnifold M. Simmons to restore the power of the Democratic Party inside the Tarheel State. A combination of Populists and Republicans had won control of the state legislature and elected one of their own to both of North Carolina's seats in the United States Senate. Morrison lost a bid for the state Senate before winning an election to serve in that body; Morrison helped to elect F. M. Simmons to the latter's first term in the U.S. Senate in 1901. In 1902, Morrison campaigned for the Democratic nomination to represent Charlotte in the U.S. House of Representatives, but he was defeated.

Having only served a term in the state Senate, Cameron Morrison began a campaign for governor in 1920. F. M. Simmons had not forgotten Morrison's support and the senator was by that time the boss of North Carolina's Democratic Party. Cameron Morrison was the candidate of the Simmons Democrats in the primary. Morrison had announced his candidacy two years before the 1920 Democratic primary and had been endorsed by Senator Simmons in 1919. Morrison was hampered in that election by the death of his wife and it took some months for the grieving candidate to get his campaign back on track. Morrison led the pack of candidates by a mere 87 votes and his nearest competitor, Lieutenant Governor O. Max Gardner, immediately

called for a run-off election. Both candidates charged the other with being the candidate of a political machine. Morrison denounced Gardner as the candidate of the "Shelby Dynasty" line of governors. Gardner replied that Morrison was the candidate of the Simmons machine. Cameron Morrison ran as the more conservative of the two candidates and won the run-off primary.

Once he was installed as governor, Morrison accumulated a rather progressive record. Governor Morrison was the chief and loudest advocate for "good roads" in North Carolina against stiff opposition at the time. Morrison argued good roads would not only be a benefit to citizens but also would help to attract businesses to the state which would in turn provide good-paying jobs for residents. Governor Morrison managed to muscle a \$50 million bond issue through North Carolina's state legislature. Two years later, Morrison induced the legislature to appropriate another \$15 million for the road-building program.

The governor sought and secured \$20 million to improve funding for North Carolina's universities, as well as the state-run schools for the hearing and visually impaired. Morrison sought more aid for the mentally ill and better funding for the North Carolina Board of Health. Governor Morrison also pushed the legislature to significantly increase funding for schools in the Tarheel State.

As governor, Morrison pushed the state Board of Education to pledge no form of evolution would be taught in North Carolina's public schools. "I do not believe that man, God's highest creation, is descended from a monkey," Governor Morrison said. "I will not consent that any such doctrine or any intimation of such a doctrine shall be taught in our public schools."

Cameron Morrison was still serving as governor when he had married Sarah Watts in Durham. Mrs. Watts was the widow of George Washington Watts. George W. Watts had been the business partner of the Duke brothers for 43 years. Together, George W. Watts and the Duke brothers merged their company with four other tobacco concerns to form the American Tobacco Company. The company had a virtual monopoly and stranglehold on the tobacco business in the United States until it was disbanded by a decision from the U.S. Supreme Court. Watts and the Dukes invested in other businesses, including textiles. The partnership of George Watts and the Duke brothers only ended with



NEA PHOTO FROM THE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL COLLECTION.

Senator Cameron Morrison of North Carolina in 1931.

the death of Watts in 1921. Watts' estate was valued at approximately \$184 million in today's dollars.

Cameron Morrison's marriage to Sarah Watts made him a very wealthy man. At the end of his governorship, the former governor and his bride settled into an opulent home, Morrocroft, in Charlotte. Morrison turned the 3,000-plus acres surrounding Morrocroft into a working farm that produced an income of around \$2.5 million in today's dollars.

The bitterness of the 1920 gubernatorial primary had faded and been forgotten between Morrison and O. Max Gardner. Gardner had been elected governor in 1928. That same year, Senator Furnifold M. Simmons had bolted the Democratic Party by openly refusing to vote for the Democratic presidential nominee, Alfred E. Smith. North Carolina voted for Republican Herbert Hoover. Senator Simmons had resigned his place as North Carolina's Democratic National Committeeman following his refusal to support Smith. Cameron Morris was elected to fill the post.

Morrison helped heal the breach between him and O. Max Gardner by liberally contributing to the latter's campaign kitty in 1928. Likewise, Morrison financially contributed to Josiah W. Bailey's successful bid to defeat Senator Simmons in the 1930 Democratic primary.

When Senator Lee Slater Overman died on December 22, 1930, with two years left on his term of office, it fell to Governor O. Max Gardner to appoint a successor to hold the seat until the 1932 election. Speculation fell on a number of possibilities, but most press reports seemed to believe former Governor Cameron Morrison was the likely beneficiary. Morrison remained popular for his road-building program, which TIME magazine called "the best

hard-surfaced road system in the South."

With the appointment to the United States Senate, Cameron Morrison inherited a stinging political problem with the pending nomination of Frank R. McNinch, who had been nominated by President Hoover to serve on the Federal Power Commission. McNinch, a former mayor of Charlotte, was a "Hoovercrat"—a Democrat who supported the presidential candidacy of Herbert Hoover. Many staunch Democrats who had gone down the line for the Democratic ticket and had supported Al Smith for the presidency were deeply opposed to the McNinch nomination. Senator Morrison opted to support his fellow townsman, which earned him the enmity of a goodly number of folks inside his own party.

Morrison had the support of Governor Gardner and Senator Josiah W. Bailey as he began his campaign for a full six-year term in the U.S. Senate in 1932. None of his opponents in the Democratic primary appeared to be a real threat. Robert Rice Reynolds was something of a ne'er-do-well and had been often married and, despite being a frequent candidate, had only been elected to no office higher than county attorney. Reynolds finally found his stride with a talent for public speaking and lampooning the wealth of Senator Morrison.

Later known as "Buncombe Bob," Reynolds' 1932 Senate campaign became the stuff of legends. Reynolds carried a carpet under his arm as he appeared in rural counties throughout the state, traveling from one destination to the next in an old Ford. Reynolds on the stump detailed Senator Cameron Morrison being chauffeured in a Rolls-Royce to Washington's elegant Mayflower Hotel, where he lived while in the Capitol. Brandishing the

red carpet, Reynolds cried to his audiences, "Cam's footman takes this here roll of carpet like this. . ." Demonstrating with a whip of his hands, the red carpet being ceremoniously laid so that the senator could walk across it. Bob Reynolds mimicked Morrison strutting across the carpet. "And do you know what he eats in that there hotel?" Reynolds asked his audience. "He eats caw-vee-yah! Do you folks know what caw-vee-yah is? Why that's fish eggs! Fish eggs from Rooshia!" Reynolds then proceeded to read the breakfast, lunch and dinner menus, as well as the price of each dish, intimating that Cameron Morrison consumed the entire menu daily during a time when many people barely had enough to eat.

The shrewd Bob Reynolds campaigned favoring repeal of the prohibition amendment. Cameron Morrison had cried, "I'm willing to die politically for Prohibition!" Reynolds was helped when the 1932 Democratic National Convention went on record as favoring repeal of the prohibition amendment to the Constitution. What Cameron Morrison likely thought was a lifetime seat in the United States Senate turned out to be a brief sojourn. Bob Reynolds won the run-off election in a landslide.

A decade later, Cameron Morrison revived his dormant political career when he sought election to North Carolina's newly carved out Tenth Congressional District following redistricting. The 73-year-old former governor dispatched an opponent inside the Democratic primary easily and faced former GOP congressman Charles A. Jonas in the general election. Cameron Morrison won 55% of the vote to return to Capitol Hill. Morrison could likely have served several terms in the House of Representatives had he chosen to seek reelection

but the congressman was determined to win back his old seat in the U.S. Senate. Bob Reynolds was retiring in 1944 and Morrison became a candidate for the Democratic nomination. Morrison faced one of North Carolina's most popular office holders in Clyde R. Hoey, the brother-in-law of O. Max Gardner, and a former congressman and governor. Hoey won the Democratic nomination in a five-man race with almost 69% of the votes cast. Morrison ran a very distant second with just over 26%. It was the end of Cameron Morrison's electoral career.

Morrison settled into a pleasant life as an elder statesman and country squire. The former governor's last notable political act occurred at the 1952 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Many Southern delegates had bolted the 1948 convention over the civil rights platform and walked out. Liberal Democrats provoked a fight in 1952 by proposing every delegate to the convention be required to sign a loyalty pledge to back the presidential nominee selected by that same convention. U.S. Senator Blair Moody of Michigan offered a resolution that would deny delegates a seat in the 1952 Democratic National Convention should they refuse to sign the pledge. Morrison spoke out against the Moody resolution. The former governor said he was likely the oldest delegate attending the convention, noting he would be "83 in a few days and a life-long Democrat." Morrison was still a fire-eater of a speaker and thundered in conclusion, "My God, deliver me from such tyranny as this over the minds and hearts of the Democrats of this country."

As Democrats sought to beat back the Eisenhower - Nixon ticket in the South, the "Squire of Morrocroft" spoke without hesitation for presidential nominee Adlai Stevenson. While in his eighties, a friend asked the former governor if he intended to write his memoirs. A dark frown covered Morrison's face before he said, "Not until after I retire."

The "grand old patriarch of North Carolina politics" went on a trip by automobile to Canada with his grandson James J. Harris Jr. and a friend from Charlotte. The 83-year-old Morrison was in Quebec when he suffered a heart attack. The younger Harris reported to his father Morrison was feeling uncharacteristically unwell and decided to remain in bed in his hotel room. The following day, Cameron Morrison had a heart attack around noon and died.

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The Price We Pay for the People We Love



By Justin Pratt,
Clear Springs Baptist
Church Senior Pastor

Inundated by heartache. This has been the mantra of life for me lately. Not so much on a personal level, but for so many others who have experienced the mental, emotional and spiritual pain of sorrow and sadness. Children who lost their father to an unexpected tragedy. Parents who are learning to navigate life without a person taken far before one would expect him to go. The passing of a sweet, aged woman of God who has given her entire life as a servant to everyone around her. A daughter who laments the death of her father and a lady entering widowhood, who says goodbye to a husband just short of their 50th anniversary. These are just to name a few that I have directly and indirectly experienced on a personal level over the last two weeks.

It seems like over the last few weeks I have been connected to more hurting people in a short amount of time than I have been this entire year combined. As I have walked through this season with many hurting families, one thing has become obvious: heartache and sadness are no respecter of persons and grief is real. Jesus gave fair warning to anyone that would read and believe the Scriptures that, "in this world, you will have tribulation." Any one of us who would expect a trouble-free life either isn't paying attention or living with an extremely obscured expectation. Misfortunate events, unexpected tragedies, enduring trials, and pain and suffering are all part of the human experience. There

is no way around it, life happens and sometimes life hurts. What is the response when we are flooded with heartache? What are we supposed to do when we are overwhelmed by a circumstance

had any value? In John 11, Jesus makes his way to the city of some brokenhearted sisters and the tomb of a very close friend who had died. I find it striking that in that moment, already knowing that He was going to resurrect Lazarus, He does something intriguing. The Creator of the world, Who was Alpha and Omega, Who knew the beginning from the end, calls a timeout in human history and exercises the tear ducts, that He Himself, had created. John says in two words, "Jesus wept." Have you considered why in that moment Jesus would weep? He knows Lazarus is about to live again, yet He teaches a valuable lesson to countless millions over the corridors of time. The lesson is this: grief is real and we need to exercise it. If the One Who knows all can be affected and welcome grief than shouldn't we? Jesus is telling the world, by expressing a heart of sorrow, that He loved someone and it hurt to know they were gone. Grief is not weakness, it is an intense expression of love. It is a necessity; the price you pay for the people you love. It has been said, "The only cure for grief is to grieve."

If you are hurting today or know someone who is looking for a way to cope with grief, I encourage you to acknowledge it, admit it, and then accept that it is ok! It looks different for everybody. The timing of it is diverse and how it affects someone is distinct. I don't proclaim to be a professional in this area, but this I do know: Jesus allowed Himself to grieve and so should we. It is just part of the price we pay, for the people that we so deeply love. Be blessed.

that is far beyond our control? When something hits us from nowhere, that we weren't prepared for, and we never dreamed it would hurt this bad, how do we respond? Can I offer one little, simple suggestion: grieve.

Grief is often viewed as an enemy. It is looked at as an antagonist or an adversary. Some mistake it for weakness. Can I offer a suggestion that when we are forced to deal with the harsh realities of life, not to view our natural response of grief as a bad thing? Grief is not good, grief is not bad, grief is a gift. It is an assortment of emotions that we experience as the result of losing something or someone that we loved or valued. Webster defines 'grief' as a noun that describes a person's deep and poignant distress caused by or as if by bereavement. While a good definition, I want you to consider it just a step further. Grief is the price that we pay for the people that we love. Deeply loving someone comes with a steep price tag: the emotional pain that it causes when we no longer have them. And, that is not a bad thing. Grief is one of the sure ways that we understand that what we had was special, it meant something, and we are heartbroken that it is no more. Without grief, how could we be sure that the now severed relationship



Knoxville's First Baptist Church is undergoing some repairs to the roof and steeple. Rev. Josh Gibson said the work there doesn't affect the chimes at all and work will be going on "for quite some time." Built in 1924 on West Main Street, the church is on the National Register of Historic Places. Photo by Mike Steely.

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Holston Hills Plans Annual Garden Sale

The Historic Holston Hills Community Club is having its ninth Annual Garden Sale on Saturday, May 4, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Holston Hills Community Park, which is located at the intersection of Chilhowee Dr. and Holston Hills Rd. Plant enthusiasts are encouraged to view the multitude of plants, herbs, flora, shrubs, and gardening accessories that will be available for sale, including perennial, annual, houseplants, and

native plants. There will also be an area of fun garden treasures, tons of baked goods, and lots of plant

talk. All sales from this event will be used to maintain the Holston Hills Community Park.

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(l to r) Clark Wormsley's son and Webb head varsity baseball coach, Jordan Wormsley; Webb School President Ansel Sanders; Clark Wormsley; Webb Director of Institutional Advancement, Hugh Nystrom; and Clark Wormsley's son and Webb assistant varsity baseball coach Parker Wormsley celebrate the ribbon cutting and dedication of Webb's new Clark Wormsley Hitting & Pitching Complex, April 19.

Wormsley, retired Webb baseball coach, honored

New Hitting & Pitching Complex named for him

By Steve Williams

"It's a great honor to have something like this happen," said retired baseball coach Clark Wormsley last week in regard to Webb School's new Hitting and Pitching Complex that bears his name.

"I'm honored. I'm humbled,"

added Wormsley, who helped guide the Spartans to two state championships - the first as an assistant in 1985 and the second one when he was head coach in 2010.

Clark won 445 games before retiring in 2011 and passing the coaching torch to his son and Webb alum Jordan Wormsley, who continues to hold the reins of the Webb program.

Clark Wormsley, who was inducted into the East Tennessee Baseball

Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2007 and later the Tennessee Baseball Coaches Association (TBCA) Hall of Fame for 2017, said he realizes all the players he coached and their efforts and willingness helped make the dedication possible.

"It just takes so many people to have a successful program," he said. "The supportive parents, the

Continue on page 3

HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL Irish defeat Grace Spoil Rams' senior night

By Ken Lay

Catholic High School baseball coach Caleb Moore wanted his team to face some quality competition before it embarked on the upcoming Division II-AA East Region Tournament. And he had to like what he saw Tuesday night.

The defending Division II-AA State Champions picked up a key non-league win, notching a 5-1 victory over Grace Christian Academy.

Catholic's victory spoiled the Rams' senior night.

"Grace is a solid team and they're the kind of team that you want to play late in the year," Moore said. "They've really gotten better since last year. They'll go a long way because they have all the pieces in place to make a big run and I think they'll do that."

"They're the kind of team that we want to play to get ready for our region tournament."

The Irish (18-16) took a 1-0 lead in the top of the first inning. Leadoff hitter and center fielder Cooper Williamson, struck out to open the game. He would, however, reach first base safely when Rams' catcher J.J. Gibson dropped the third strike.

Williamson would later cross the plate with the

game's first run when he came home on a single by Alex Dittmore.

Grace threatened in the bottom of the second frame after Irish pitcher Hudson Lutterman issued consecutive walks to load the bases with one out. But he would escape as he struck out the final two Rams' hitters to end the inning. He struck out the side in the inning.

Moore said that Lutterman settled down after the rocky third inning. "He was uncharacteristically wild in that second inning," Moore said of Lutterman. "But he really settled down and pitched well."

In 5.1 innings pitched, Lutterman surrendered four hits and five walks. He had nine strikeouts before giving way to reliever Aiden Alexander, who gave up a run in the bottom of the seventh inning. He yielded two hits and fanned two.

The Irish, who dropped a 3-1 decision to West High

in its final home game of the 2024 campaign, created some separation when they scored four runs in the top of the third as Dittmore hit an RBI single and Grant Tallent drove in a pair of runs with a hit and Mason Fields drew a walk with the bases loaded. When the dust had settled, Catholic

Continue on page 3

HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER

Halls, Hardin Valley Academy win district titles

By Ken Lay

The 2024 high school boys soccer regular season has reached its home stretch and the postseason picture is becoming --- and will become more clear --- over the next several days.

Two area teams clinched regular-season district titles last week as Halls (District 3-3A) and Hardin Valley Academy (District 4-3A) each earned No. 1 seeds in their respective upcoming postseason tournaments.

The Red Devils (11-1-1 overall) clinched their regular-season

district title on the road at Karns Tuesday night with a 4-0 victory over the Beavers.

Halls, which made a run to the state tournament run in Class 2A in 2023, hasn't missed a beat this season since returning to Class 3A for the first time since 2021.

Chase Burnett, Danny Guevara, Ben Ritchie and Kevin Pendergrass each found the back of the net for the Red Devils, who avenged a District 3-3A Tournament quarterfinal loss to the Beavers in 2021.

Halls opened the week with a

non-district win over Oneida on Monday, April 22. The Red Devils blanked the Indians, 5-0.

Burnett scored twice, while Guevara, Pendergrass and Christian Anatole each tallied once.

South-Doyle splits pair

The Cherokees lost to Alcoa in a key district match last Monday night, falling, 4-3, to the Tornadoes despite getting goals from Roger Cruz, Landon Waalker and Anestis Tiriakidis.

South-Doyle, however, didn't

have long to brood as they had to return to the pitch and play Powell in a non-district game. The Cherokees notched a 5-0 victory over the Panthers behind two goals from Cameron Harp and single markers from Tiriakidis, Finn Straussfogel and Jude Straussfogel.

Hawks down Farragut to claim District 4-3A Title

Hardin Valley Academy, under first-year head coach Ray Dover, has survived the so-called 'District of Death,' as it claimed

its first district title in quite some time with a 4-1 victory over Farragut Tuesday night.

Ben Brophy and Daniel Perez each had a goal against the Admirals and Nathan Holbrook scored twice.

Anders Deets had the Admirals' lone marker of the match.

The Hawks (14-1-1) haven't lost since falling in their season opener on March 14. They knocked off Class 2A powerhouse Greeneville, defeating the Greene Devils, 4-1, Thursday night as Holbrook scored twice.

Continue on page 4

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HIGH SCHOOL TRACK AND FIELD

Several new KIL records could be set this year

By Steve Williams

The record book may look a lot different after this week's Knoxville Interscholastic League track and field meet.

Seven boys' events and four girls' events could have a new KIL record holder when it's over.

The annual meet gets underway today at 5 at Hardin Valley Academy with the boys' and girls' field events and Section 2 of the 3200-meter races.

All other track events will be Tuesday starting at 5.

Gracie Waite, HVA senior, will be trying to post new KIL records in the girls' discus and shot put events, while Farragut junior Katie Edmunds seeks a record victory in the pole vault. Webb sophomore Jazzlyn Garmer has record potential in the 3200.

As for record-breakers among the boys, keep an eye on Farragut junior Bryce Thompson in the

shot put and Farragut senior Julian Gorfido in the pole vault.

Other record hopefuls include Webb senior Michael Conley in the 200, Catholic junior Keegan Smith in the 800, Farragut senior Matteo Tonno in the 1600 and Webb senior Colin Eckerman in the 3200. Hardin Valley's 4x800 relay team also has a new record in its sights.

Conley has been the most successful Knox County track athlete this spring as he has top times in the 100, 200 and 400 dashes and the top marks in the long jump and triple jump.

Knoxville Catholic's freshman sensation last year, Chloe Truss, again has top times on the local scene this spring in the 100, 200 and 400 sprints.

A young Webb quartet of three freshmen - Carolina Areheart and twins Jazzlyn and Calysta Garmer



PHOTOS BY LUTHER SIMMONS

Webb's versatile Michael Conley kicks up sand in the long jump pit. He's also the top rated sprinter in Knox County.

- plus sophomore Kristina Weaver set a new KIL record last season in the 4x800. It will be interesting to see if they are back this season for a repeat.

Speaking of records, the KIL meet's oldest is the 6-7 high jump mark set by Larry Clapp of Gibbs 47 years ago in 1977.

Chris Kane, the meet director and Hardin Valley coach, foresees a four-way

battle between Catholic, HVA, Webb and Farragut for this year's girls' team title. On the boys' side, he thinks Farragut is the favorite, but HVA and Webb are also strong teams.

The Farragut boys and Catholic girls are the defending champions.

The KIL includes all public and private high schools in Knox County.

HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL

Farragut overcomes slow start to run-rule Lady Hawks in district finale

By Ken Lay

Farragut High School's softball team closed out the District 4-4A portion of its schedule with a 14-4 victory over rival Hardin Valley Academy Wednesday night at Bellamy Field.

The game was called after six innings due to the TSSAA run rule. The Lady Admirals scored in every inning but the first when they stranded a runner in scoring position.

"We got off to a slow start and we did that the first time that we played them," Farragut coach Nick Green said. "But I'm happy that we scored in five of the six innings."

After being turned away in the first, Farragut, which pounded out 13 hits, took a 1-0 lead in the bottom of the second inning when Anna French's RBI ground-out plated Delany Shrader, who doubled with one out in the frame.

From there, the Lady Admirals (19-9) just continued to build upon their advantage, scoring five runs in the third and adding two in the fourth to take an 8-0 lead.

Leadoff hitter Addison Pressley swung a big bat against the Lady Hawks as she went 2-for-3. She had a double, a triple, a stolen base, two runs and three RBIs. She was one of three Lady Admirals to collect multiple hits in the

game.

Hailey Nichols was 2-for-2. She doubled twice, scored two runs and drove in another. Shrader went 2-for-2 with two runs scored, one driven in. She also had a double.

Pitcher Hallie Grace Johnson had a pair of hits, including a double. She scored one run and recorded one RBI.

After falling behind, 8-0, the Lady Hawks scored all four of their runs in the top of the fifth inning as Natalie Nettles doubled and later scored and Ayla Perry clubbed a three-run homer over the left-center field fence to make it, 8-4.

The four-run fifth was the only time that Hardin Valley was able to do any damage against Johnson, who posted a complete-game victory, going six innings. She yielded four runs, five hits and one walk. She finished with seven strikeouts.

After surrendering four runs in the top of the fifth, the Lady Admirals' offense closed the game out with a flourish as Farragut scored three runs in the bottom of the fifth and ended the contest with three more in the sixth. It was Pressley's two-run double that ended the game in walk-off fashion as Audrey Ginel and Eleena Ralston scored on the play.



Gracie Waite competes in the Hardin Valley Invitational this season. She has top marks in the state in shot put and discus.

COLLEGE SIGNINGS

Lewis will start over again at Motlow State

By Steve Williams

Dexter Lewis may have been overshadowed a little by Fulton High's "Big 3" this season on the Falcons' run to a second straight state basketball title, but Motlow State Community College must have liked what they seen in the Falcons' senior guard and offered him a basketball scholarship.

Continue on page 4

Fulton Coach Jody Wright said the Falcons' Dexter Lewis "evolved" each season in his prep career and he has been rewarded with a scholarship to Motlow State Community College. Photos by Steve Williams.



Knee injury didn't stop Taylor from being a Division 1 signee

By Steve Williams

Despite undergoing knee surgery in her high school basketball career at Fulton, Sammy Taylor signed last week with Furman University and became just the third player in school history to sign a NCAA Division 1 scholarship.

KeKe McKinney (Kentucky) and Jayda Johnson (Tennessee State) were the two other Lady Falcons to claim that distinction.

Samaria, who has gone by "Sammy" most of her life, averaged 18 points in the regular season (fourth best in Knox County) of her senior year and also collected seven rebounds per game for Coach Tony Cooper's team.

"I've been dreaming to



Mom finishes up paper work and dad smiles as Sammy Taylor flashes a big grin on Signing Day last week at Fulton. Taylor, who will be going to Furman, is the third NCAA Division 1 women's basketball signee in the school's history.

play college ball since I was probably 6 or 7 years old," she said last Wednesday (April 24).

Furman started recruiting Taylor the summer of her sophomore year and before her knee injury occurred and didn't back

off.

Sammy said her knee felt about 85 percent recovered at her signing last week outside the Larry Cox Room under Jody Wright Arena. Although she finished the season, she said her right knee hasn't gotten

to the point of her liking.

At Furman, she will be playing a guard position on the wing or a small forward position.

"I was so thankful to the Lord because without Him, nothing would have been possible. Keeping faith in Him, it just shows me how much He can do ... How much He can do for you and how much He will do for me if I just keep faith in Him.

"Also, I'm just really thanking my parents for putting me on the right path and held me to become who I am today and experiencing this moment."

Taylor was a 4-year starter at Fulton and was named to the All-State team in 2022. She was selected to a spot on the All-District 3-3A team this year.

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'Often in error, but never in doubt'

Several years ago, my wife and I went to Chattanooga to meet the posters on one of the "chat boards" so prevalent on the Internet. It was a chance to see the faces behind the names of those guys who freely offer their opinions on any number of subjects, mostly the ebbs and flows of Tennessee football. I had been asked to share my thoughts on Tennessee football history.



By Tom Mattingly

When I arrived, there was someone there I didn't expect, but someone I was glad to see. He had already commandeered the podium and showed no signs of letting go.

I had been "upstaged" by the inimitable "Swamp Rat," Dewey Warren. Vol quarterback from 1965-67, who always talked about "humming that tater" and making things happen on the football field. He hailed from Savannah, Ga., hence the nickname.

He was the kind of guy people seemed to instinctively follow, just to see where he was going. The saying "often in error, but never in doubt" certainly applies. An hour or so with Dewey was a roller-coaster ride through mid-1960s Vol history. You just asked a question, then sat back and enjoyed the ride.

Somebody asked if he really scored the winning touchdown in the 1965 UCLA game. I had expressed some modest doubts, having recently looked at the film.

Dewey answered quickly: "The official raised his hands over his head, didn't he?"

It was fourth-and-goal at the UCLA 1, UCLA leading 34-29, maybe the longest yard in Tennessee football history. A crowd of 40,000-plus had never seen such offensive fireworks.

Dewey told of having two pulled groin muscles and ace receiver Johnny Mills being out of the game. When he found no receivers open, he beat a not-so-hasty path to the northwest corner of Memphis Memorial Stadium, the new stadium in the Bluff City at that time. He eventually scored, and the history books have recorded that Tennessee won, 37-34.

"The play opened up like the Red Sea," former Vol center and 1965-66 All-American selection Bob Johnson told Marvin West in "Legends of the Tennessee Vols," "but I thought Dewey would never get there."

Dewey also told of drawing up plays in the dirt in the huddle that weren't in the playbook and having to explain to Doug Dickey why he did so. He was more eloquent when the plays worked than when they didn't. Dickey's exact response is unknown, but all of us have our opinions about what they were.

"Dewey was a T-formation quarterback nobody else wanted," Dickey said. "I don't think anybody ever expected him to play."

Dewey was adamant in insisting that two of the most historic missed field goals in Vol history, one in 1966 against Alabama

and the other in the January 1968 Orange Bowl game against Oklahoma, were both good.

"We had driven all the way down the field against Alabama and were on the 4-yard line," he recalled, speaking as the quarterback on the drive and as the holder on Gary Wright's fateful kick.

"I was going to run the ball to the middle of the field and call timeout, so we could have a straight-on kick, but someone called timeout.

"We should never have been in that position. What do you do? It was a tough angle. A lot of people thought the kick was good. I thought it was good."

The kick against Alabama was close. The one against the Sooners wasn't. In neither case did the official raise his hands over his head. The passage of time hasn't softened Dewey's opinion in the least. He's sticking to his view of history.

He told a marvelous story about forgetting his helmet his first chance against Mississippi in 1965, right after Charley Fulton was injured. There he was, standing sans helmet in the huddle, with teammates snickering and blue-shirted Rebels ready to get after him. That cost the Vols a time out.

Dewey Warren is not far removed from the signal-caller who led the Vols to glory in his day. He still has the swagger.

The "experts" of his day wondered whether he could play.

"I really didn't look like a quarterback," Dewey told West. "I



"The T-formation quarterback nobody else wanted"

couldn't do a lot of the stuff quarterbacks are supposed to do. But I knew my limitations. I knew what to do to help us win."

He spent his 1963 freshman season at linebacker, playing in a not-so-memorable 70-0 loss to Kentucky's rookies, then being redshirted a year later. Vol broadcaster George Mooney took one look at Dewey on the scout squad and said, "There's my quarterback." It took a year or so, but there he was under center, leading the Vols to football glory.

He was one of 26 legends whose careers West chronicled. Dewey was No. 20 on the list on the printed page between Bowden Wyatt and Frank Emanuel, each an All-American selection. Whoever told Dewey, "If you stay, you'll play," knew what he was talking about. Dewey stayed... and played.

When Dewey finally got his chance, it was like a wolf getting its first taste of sheep.

Even if he did forget his helmet.



PHOTO BY KEN LAY.

Catholic pitcher Hudson Lutterman delivers a pitch Tuesday in the Irish's 5-1 victory at Grace Christian Academy. Lutterman threw 5.1 scoreless innings against the Rams, earning the win on the mound.

Irish defeat Grace Spoil Rams' senior night

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had a 5-0 advantage. Grace got its lone run of the contest in the bottom of the seventh on an RBI single by A.J. Ward plated Gibson, who singled to lead off the inning and later stole second.

GCA coach Brent Walsh said his squad battled emotions on senior night.

"We're building and we're trying to get to where Catholic is," Walsh said.

"They're defending state champions for a reason, and it was senior night and we were really emotional.

"We need to do a better job keeping that in check. We've had a big year, and after all we've been through, I'm proud of these guys. We won 14 games last year and we've won 19 this year and that's the most we've won since we won state."

Is this the best time of the year for sports?

By Mark Nagi

I got home recently from a long day of fighting crime and wanted to do nothing more than to make dinner, give Bailey (my seven-year-old double doodle) treats and hugs, and watch something sports related on TV.

And folks, currently there are many options. Which leads me to something that seems like sacrilege when there is no NFL or college football...

Is this the best time of year for sports? I'm talking mid-March to mid-June. Let's discuss.

First, we are only three weeks removed from the NCAA men's and women's basketball tournaments. This year we saw Tennessee's men's team advance to the Elite 8 for only the second time in program history. As much as the Purdue game hurt (a month has past and Zach Edey just went to the free throw line again), the Vols gave their fans so many wonderful memories.

The men's tournament rarely disappoints, as

we can all rally around moments like Oakland beating Kentucky in the first round. The women's tournament this year got huge ratings thanks to Iowa's Caitlin Clark, UConn losing short of a title again (the Candace Parker curse continues) and South Carolina finishing off an undefeated season.

While college football is still a few months away, the best we have here is spring football. Tennessee played the Orange & White game in front of a less than capacity crowd as Neyland Stadium continues renovations. When the stadium is fully open, we can embrace the spring scrimmage, and Vols fans have done so.

In terms of professional football, we have the United Football League. (cricket sounds)

The USFL and the XFL joined forces and if nothing else this gives us something to have on in the background on a weekend afternoon.

But the NFL, in the way only the NFL can, dominates the sports

landscape 365 days a year. We just finished with the NFL Draft (Tennessee Vols were taken), then there will be mini-camp and the schedule release in early to mid-May.

For me, the best of this sports calendar is the NHL playoffs. 16 teams get in, and you must play four best of 7 series to win the Stanley Cup. Each of the 16 teams that gets in has an actual chance to win that trophy, the most difficult trophy in professional sports to capture.

Right now, we are in the first round, and games are played every night. From Edmonton to Tampa, it's an absolute blast to watch.

Scoring is up in these playoffs, Nashville is once again representing, and hoping for another run at the Stanley Cup Final, as they did in 2017.

There's nothing like playoff hockey, especially Game 7's. If you are a neutral observer, that is. Because if your team is playing in those games, it's torture.

The NBA playoffs are

also taking place, and if you'll allow me to be the old man shaking his fist at the cloud, they actually play defense at this time of year!

In addition to all of that, you have Major League Baseball heading into its second month of the season. You also have college baseball hitting its stride. Tennessee has been to the College World Series two of the last three seasons, and Tony Vitello has this team in position to make another serious run at Omaha.

For high school sports fans, in late May we get the Spring Fling in Murfreesboro. Soccer, track and field, golf, baseball, softball... those kids work for months to get to there, and it is a lot of fun for their parents as well.

I know that the Fall gives us a ton of football and the baseball playoffs. And that's wonderful.

But let's appreciate what we have right now.

Because come late June, we will be in the sports desert until late August...

Wormsley, retired Webb baseball coach, honored

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supportive administration - everything has to come together and I was very blessed in those years that I was the head coach to have a very good support network and really talented players that were willing to work hard.

"It was great to see the former players that came back to the dedication," added Wormsley. "That was one of the things I enjoyed the most - all the stories. We had players that were here from the 1985 state championship team all the way through to 2011. I was just so excited to see them,

see their children, and for some of them grandchildren, and hear their stories."

And the other thing you think about, Clark pointed out, is this "amazing" facility. "It's going to help future Webb athletes for many, many years to come, and maybe even my grandchildren one day."

Wormsley's oldest granddaughter, Ruie, is in kindergarten at Webb and 7 years old. He also has a 4-year-old granddaughter, Emie, and an 11-month-old grandson, Mercer Clark, who was named after him. "So who knows," he said.

"Maybe one day they will be able to use the facility that has their grandfather's name on it."

Clark's youngest son, Parker, is Jordan's assistant coach.

"There has been a Wormsley in the Webb program for 40 years now," noted Clark.

The 8,400-square-foot facility includes a netted indoor practice area that features two full-length bullpen tunnels and two hitting tunnels for Webb's baseball and softball teams. The complex also houses changing rooms for baseball, softball and

soccer.

Wormsley also served as offensive coordinator for the Spartan varsity football team for over 30 years and as Webb Middle School Dean of Students and a teacher in the Middle School.

The new complex is one of several new projects to be added to the Webb campus this past year as part of the school's Spartan Athletic Enhancement Initiative to provide the training facilities Webb students, and particularly Spartan athletes, need to maximize their performance and support their well-being.



Clark Wormsley (standing, ninth from left) with former Webb Spartan baseball players and coaches, including Wormsley's sons Jordan Wormsley (standing, sixth from right) and Parker Wormsley (kneeling, second from right), at the dedication of Webb's new Clark Wormsley Hitting & Pitching Complex, April 19.

Other new Spartan sports facilities include a girls' lacrosse field, softball field and fitness and training center.

No. 5 in a series on TODD HELTON, Hall of Famer

Helton had a bat that sizzled and hit angry long drives

Jon Miller assisted Bud Bales in coaching Todd Helton in baseball at Central High School and was Joel Helton's Defensive Coordinator and Special Teams coach when Todd played football for the Bobcats.

Miller, who later became principal at Central, recently took time to recall some memories and share stories on Todd, who will be inducted into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame this summer on July 21 in Cooperstown, N.Y.

"I was very fortunate to be at Central High School and coaching football and baseball through the 1990s and 1980s and we had some outstanding athletes and of course Todd Helton was at the top of all those lists. He was just a phenomenal young man and it sure was a pleasure watching him play every day and practice. I was very fortunate, not only with Todd, but that baseball team was loaded and the football team was loaded. It made coaching real easy and, like I said, really fun.

"I started helping Coach Bales when I started at Central, so I helped him probably 10 years. And I'm going to tell you, we had some phenomenal baseball teams all through the 80s and 90s and when Bud was there - I'll put in a plug for Bud Bales. Of course he is in several Hall of Fames, but my goodness, what a terrific mentor and coach. I couldn't have asked for a better guy to work with. I learned so much from him. Of course, I was really young and he was just a super to watch work every day and see what he went through and how detailed he was. Relating that with Todd, he didn't shy away from any of that. He just gobbled it up.

"Todd came from excellent athletic stock. Jerry (his dad) was a pro baseball player and a great high school athlete also. He was hard on (big brother) Rodney and Todd both, as far as staying on them, making them toe the line, lifting weights and he was with them every day, too. He really pushed them. They were just phenomenal; both of them.

"One of my favorite stories is no matter what Todd did, if it was off-season or in-season, anytime Jerry was around, he would scream at Todd all the time: 'Did you get your benches in? Did you get your benches in?' Todd was such a gifted athlete; he didn't have to lift a whole lot of weight. He put his time in.



GOLDEN TIMES!

Todd Helton and Assistant Coach Jon Miller hold the 1990 TSSAA baseball state championship trophy at MTSU after Central's 13-5 win over Memphis Munford.

But Jerry stayed on him all the time about his weight work and all that sort of stuff. Todd was so even-tempered and everything, I know he got frustrated with them (Jerry and his Uncle Joel). They stayed on him all the time. Of course, we all knew we had a prize there. You didn't have to motivate Todd Helton a whole lot. He was the most fierce competitor probably I ever coached, other than his brother.

(Rodney and Todd were not in high school at the same time. There's four or five years difference in their ages.)

"Rodney was a baseball player and a football player. He was absolutely tough as nails. Todd got a lot of that from watching his brother and I'm sure growing up they probably challenged each other a lot. They also loved each other to death.

"Rodney was a starter since he was a freshman, and I'm telling you, he worked hard in the weight room. Of course, to get a scholarship to Alabama; that's all you really need to know. He went down there and came back with a national championship ring.

"To relate that to Todd, they were both really tough kids and mentally just outstanding and just hated to lose. I think that was a Helton characteristic. It didn't matter if it was Jerry or Joel or Rodney or Todd, they wanted to win. I think that's instilled in all of them. And it was contagious, both their attitudes and toughness exuded through and through our

team. You knew if you were playing Todd or Rodney, you were playing two winners right there.

"Todd wasn't the big brute that Rodney was. Rodney was a big, strong middle linebacker and full-back and he would just blow you up. He was just a mentally tough kid. Todd in a different way was mentally as tough as Rodney was. But both of them were great kids.

"They were competitive and intense - the whole family. But stuck together and loved each other. The Helton family also included two younger brothers (Ronnie and Timmy) and two sisters, Debbie and Jamie.

Early memories include a sizzling bat

"One of my earliest memories of Todd athletically was when he was in the eighth grade at Gresham. He would walk over to Central High after school. This little eighth grader comes in - and I mean you can hear the ball sizzle off the bat. It just makes a different sound. I'm throwing BP to him and I'm behind the screen. I didn't have a helmet on at the time, but when he came in here to take some swings, I would put a helmet on. That's how good he was with the bat even as an eighth grader.

"I'm sure if there was a pick-up game in the backyard, whether he was swinging at corks or bottle caps or whatever, he was phenomenal at it.

"I knew Todd would be coming over to high school as a ninth grader and I thought, man this kid right here is going to make my JV team pretty good next season. He never saw a JV uniform.

"Heck no, his freshman year, he lined up in center field and I'm telling you, that skinny little thing - HE WAS TOUGH.

"When Todd came to Central his freshman year and was starting on the baseball team out there in center field, he didn't look very big at all and he wasn't. But my goodness, could he play. I mean he could bunt, hit, catch, pitch, he could do it all.

"Another characteristic about the Heltons ... When Joel played at Cumberland University, he was skinny as a rail and Todd was as skinny as a rail and I'm assuming Jerry was too. But when Todd got to the pros and out of college, his body developed. He got bigger and stronger. Joel was the same way. They called him the Bear because he was so strong. And Jerry was the same way. Their bodies just matured a little bit later and man, they were big people.

"I'll tell you another memory I have of him too. Of course he's in the Hall of Fame because he batted .330 for his career. His whole deal was he hit line drives. I mean he hit angry balls in gaps. He could just crush it. He didn't hit those big, towering bombs like Bubba Trammel (former high school and college teammate who also played in the majors). Bubba hit stuff a stewardess ought to be on. Todd would hit stuff that would hurt your neck. Everything he hit was a line drive. His home runs were just missiles when he hit it out. You can look at his stats in college and pros. Of course, he hit to every field and he hit tons of doubles because he could just hit line drives in gaps. That was his style. He just could absolutely hit the ball on the screws. Like I said, a different sound. You could hear the ball hiss when it took off his bat. When he hit it, he wasn't getting any of those cheap hits.

A quarterback with a linebacker's mentality

"Football-wise, I will tell you that most of his accolades were from the offensive side because he was a great field general, a competitor, like I said he

just hated to lose, but he was so talented. He played defense for me as a free safety and he said - 'I want to be a linebacker,' - I tried playing him 15 yards deep, but I couldn't keep him there. He was just hard-nosed, and just wanted to be involved in everything, but such a smart player - I mean you could tell him anything and he would know exactly what adjustments to make.

"But I always said he's a quarterback with a linebacker's mentality. He loved to mix it up and get into the action. I even developed some blitzes for him without Joel knowing it, uh, too. I put him through the A gap occasionally, knowing he was our star quarterback and I would send him right in the meat of the action. He didn't shy away a lick and I don't think anybody hardly ever put a hand on him. He was just so good. He was such a gamesman. He knew how to play anything. If you played mumbly peg or checkers with him, he was going to figure out how to win.

"I think one of the biggest things other than God-given talent I always say he has is his computer was just faster than everybody's. His decision-making was phenomenal, just off the charts. And I think in both sports that was on display. If it's hitting a baseball coming at you at 95 miles per hour, Todd Helton could do it because his computer was fast. If it was making a decision on throwing an out route or a skinny post, he could anticipate and see and make quick decisions. I think that's the thing that separates him as much as anything ... along with that great talent he had.

When needed, Todd had a go-to drill

"I had hired Gaines Cox as our baseball coach at Central when I became the school's principal later in my career. Todd had come back into town and he came by the school one day. Coach Cox wanted to meet him and pick his brain a little bit. I remember Coach Cox asked him, 'When you're not hitting it real well, what's your go-to drill to get back to hitting the ball?' Todd said, and I can just picture this, 'I go in the cage and I do what I did as a kid. I throw the ball up and I try to hit the back of the net with it.' Instead of using a tee, just toss it up, soft toss it and hit line drives. And that was Todd

Helton.

"I know he and his dad hit thousands of balls in their basement. Jerry had a net and I know they hit tons of balls and Jerry probably sat there for hours, tossing it to him. They probably just worked on the same thing - just driving the ball and hitting it level. Just hitting line drives. I saw that every day. That's the way he hit it through college and in his pro career. He stung it, absolutely.

"The one season he hit .372, he was chasing .400 there for a long time."

Todd plays golf right-handed

"We were behind the gym one day at Central and I had some golf clubs out. I was messing around and Todd came up and said, 'Hey, can I hit one?' I said sure. You know he's left-handed. I can't hardly eat left-handed. We're probably 150 yards away from the stadium and the football field and we dropped a couple of balls. He takes my right-handed club and just nails it - I don't know if it was a 7-iron or what - but just like he hits a baseball, he nails it and it's as straight as a string and lands on the football field. He tees another one up and hits the same way and I'm thinking holy smokes. Until this day, he still plays golf right-handed. And I don't know if he had ever played. He's probably swung a golf club, but that just amazed me. That's how talented he was. If it was hitting something, he had that God-given ability to hit it square.

"I'll tell you a few other characteristics about Todd. He's just a great individual with great character. He was the guy that the teachers loved and the kids loved him. He had all this talent and all these awards and you would never know he was in the building. Low profile, quiet, good student, just an outstanding young man. His brother was kind of the same way.

Rodney, like I said, was the toughest guy I ever coached, but he wouldn't say boo unless something was out of kilter, then he would take care of it.

Todd is as high character young man as you ever want to have. I think you saw that too at UT and also when he played for the Rockies for 17 years. The people fell in love with him because he is such a good guy. A good person.

Halls, Hardin Valley Academy win district

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Brady Hammer and Marques Powers also scored in the Greeneville match.

This week, the Hawks will close out the regular season with a game against Catholic at Blaine Stadium on Tuesday night. Kickoff is slated for 7 p.m. In that match, Dover will match wits with his mentor, Gordon Heins.

Dover played club soccer for Heins and also previously served as

his assistant at Catholic before becoming head coach at Farragut, and later at HVA.

Irish play Chattanooga Baylor to 1-1 draw

Catholic closed out the Division II-AA East Region portion of its schedule with a 1-1 draw against the Red Raiders Tuesday at Blaine Stadium. Grayson Goodale scored the Irish's goal in the match.

Lewis will start over again at Motlow State

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Lewis, who improved his play on offense through his high school career, said he started getting recruited by Motlow State in late March. He signed with the Bucks April 17.

"It (college offer) has always been a goal for me," he said. "Since I was 7 years old, it's what I've

been working for. It's been a process, but I'm happy that I'm in this position now."

Lewis added: "Motlow State is a good school for me to have a good start. Start from the ground up again. Knowing where I came from (Fulton), it should be a good start for me."

The 6-1, 185-pound

Lewis said he will play point guard or the No. 2 position.

In football at FHS, he played safety, OLB and receiver.

But basketball he said has always been his love and dream.

"I've mainly been getting trained by my auntie all my life," said Derek. Auntie is Jasmine Lewis, a former Lady Falcons standout.

"The Big Three got a lot of the publicity and a lot of the ink," said Fulton Coach Jody Wright. "But we certainly wouldn't have achieved what we did without Dexter Lewis. You know Batman had Robin and those Big Three had better than Robin - they had Dexter Lewis."

