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New Year's Eve on Market Square to usher in 2017

Give 2016 the old heave-ho at New Year's Eve on Market Square, beginning at 9 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 31.

The family-friendly celebration to usher in 2017 includes music, midnight fireworks, a ball drop, an "Auld Lang Syne" sing-along and a new lighted "2017" sign. This year's celebration is

presented by Lloyd's Electric Service, Inc.

"This is the night when Market Square feels most like Times Square," says Judith Foltz, the City's Director of Special Events. "The spirit is so festive. We always start the new year on a good note."

The Temper Evans Band, of

Harriman, will perform covers from 10:30 to 11:45 p.m.

A slideshow of memorable events from 2016 will screen above the Market Square stage. The countdown begins at 11:55 p.m., followed by the ball drop and fireworks at midnight.

The Holidays on Ice skating rink will be open 10 a.m.-10 p.m.

on New Year's Eve and 1-9 p.m. on New Year's Day.

Restaurants on Market Square, including those participating in the Peppermint Trail, will be open and offering specials; call ahead for dinner reservations. No mobile food or alcohol sales will take place on the square.

Visit www.knoxvilletn.gov/

christmas for more details on New Year's Eve on the Square and www.downtownknoxville.org/holiday/peppermint/ for a list of Peppermint Trail participants. Parking is free at any downtown City-owned garages. The new public restroom facility in the Market Square garage is now open.

Cash Mob at Alvin Frye's Exxon brings friends and donations

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

How do you honor a person who has been in the same business for more than 60 years and has been a community leader, volunteer, and a respected character? Alvin Frye isn't well and his EXXON Station on Broadway in Fountain City is scheduled to close at the last day of December, but not before his customers, friends and family pay him a tribute.

Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett invited everyone to visit Frye's Exxon at 5306 Broadway to be part in a Cash Mob, similar to the events Burchett sponsored over the past few years beginning in South Knox County following the closing of the Henley Street Bridge for repairs.

Up until his illness the spry elderly man was at the service station daily. Two years ago he was honored on his 90th birthday and has been "Man of the Year" in Knox County. There's no counting the number of people who Frye and his wife, Mildred, have helped. When his station was threatened with closing a few years ago Frye said he was worried more about his employees than himself.

Tommy, Alvin's son, said although the station will close at the end of this month he will be around through January finishing car repairs and tending to the garage.

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PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY.

Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett, his daughter Isabel and his wife Kelly, sign the large "Thank You" card for Alvin Frye and his employees. The Thursday "Cash Mob" at the Fountain City Exxon Station, which will close December 31st, brought in hundreds of customers, friends and well-wishers. A fund has been established to help the 92-year-old Fountain City icon and his family.

County Commission Carter Convenience Center decision postponed

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

The future of a trash convenience center in the Carter Community remains unresolved as the Knox County Commission looks at tweaking an agreement with the property owner there with some commissioners apparently more interested in owning the facility than renting it.

The county would pay John K. Chesney \$2,000 per month to lease the property and the new agreement calls for a 10-year option. The agreement would expand the leased land beyond the .4 acres and offer more services.

Commissioners Randy Smith and John Schoonmaker asked last week what the cost would be to buy the property and were told the owner doesn't want to split up his holdings there. Located at 8815 Asheville Highway near the Asheville Highway and Andrew Johnson Highway intersection, the convenience center has been operated by the county for 10 years and apparently needs more room to expand, whether the land is purchased or additional footage is leased.

Dwight Van de Vate, Director of Engineering and Public Works, told the commission that the property owner may agree to discard a six-month notice in the proposed agreement that would permit the owner or the county to give a notice and then abandon the facility.

Smith said he visited the facility and called it "in dire need of improvement" but hesitated on the approval of the new lease. Plans for

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Berean Christian soccer team's DVD shows acts of kindness

By Steve Williams

While scoring goals is important in the sport of soccer, Berean Christian's middle school girls team also had another kind of goal in mind during the fall season.

"They wanted to do Christlike kindnesses for other students," said Coach Mike McDonald.

Inspired by contemporary Christian rock band Casting Crowns' song, "The Very Next Thing," the Berean team had a project to make their own "Nexties" DVD.

The 5-minute long production is colorful and lively

and its message encourages people to live in "the here and now" and wants them "not tripping over today" because of having "sight on tomorrow."

The "Nexties" DVD can be seen on line by going to www.YouTube.com and typing in Nexties Berean.

The DVD also includes situations where a first grader receives a gift and friends help friends.

"We made notes for everyone's locker with Christlike (encouraging) messages," said one Berean team member in the DVD.

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Casting Crowns lead singer Mark Hall (middle of back row) and Berean Christian Middle School girls soccer coach Mike McDonald (back row, right) stand behind members of the soccer team and the DVD production Nexties. The females are (left to right) Olivia Gibson, Erika Knisley, Adeline Gibson, EmmaBelle Hickson, LivyLea McDonald, Caroline Denham, Aliyah Col-lazo, EllieAnn McDonald, Zadi Fiveash, Meredith Irick, Maddie Moyer and Melodee DeVevo (Casting Crowns violinist).

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Wayne and King, Christmas, 1971

A Valued Christmas Gift

It was two or three days before Christmas when he got the gift. Wayne, my brother, tells me it was his favorite Christmas present that year---a German shepherd pup. His



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

coat was a beautiful gray with black tips. He was playful. When Wayne and his friends were sledding, he would often run and grab their knitted caps! Wayne named him "King."

In those days, parents stood in long lines to buy toys that were high in demand, such as the Cabbage Patch dolls. Today, people stand in line for hours to purchase expensive iPhones, iPads, Smart Phones, and all the latest gadgets that keep us connected in a high-tech world. There was no long line or high price tag for the German shepherd pup. He was given to us by a family in the Gibbs Community. Those were

simpler times. For Wayne to remember so much about King after these many years makes me think that the German shepherd pup was one of his favorite Christmas gifts ever.

As the Christmas holiday has become more commercialized over time, high-priced gifts are often associated with joy and satisfaction. But, not all gifts can be measured by money. It is such a blessed gift for everyone to be safe and healthy. A dog named "King" still reminds our family that great joy can be found in a gift that costs nothing at all! Of course, the celebration of Christmas reminds us that the gift of God's Son is the most important gift of all to mankind. "... but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23 (KJV)

In Tennessee, felonies are crimes punishable by one year or more in state prison. Lawmakers have designated felonies as class A, B, C, D, or E, with A being the most severe (for the most serious cases) and E being the least harsh.



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

Class A felonies receive sentences between 15 and 25 years. Class B felonies receive sentences between 8 and 12 years. Class C felonies receive sentences between 3 and 6 years. Class D felonies receive sentences between 2 and 4 years. Class E felonies receive sentences between 1 and 2 years. Note that these ranges

are for someone that has never been convicted of a crime and has no criminal history. For those with previous records, the range is extended (for example, Class A felonies could receive a sentence as long as 60 years).

When you hear people on TV talk about the length of sentences for crimes, it's important to remember that it is extremely unlikely for a defendant to serve all of their sentence in jail. For defendants who have little or no criminal history, they become eligible for parole after serving just 30 percent of their sentence. What is parole? Parole is when the defendant is released from jail and placed on a type of probation for the remainder

of their sentence. Now, a defendant may not be granted parole on their first try when they have served 30 percent of their sentence, but they are at least eligible to petition the parole board for early release at that point. Now, how does this work practically? It means that if someone gets sentenced to a 10-year sentence in jail, they could be out on the streets after 3 years. If this was not the case, the problem of overcrowded jails would be even worse than it is now. However, if a defendant is released early, they will be under court supervision for the remainder of their sentence (7 years in our example) to ensure that they are able to pass drug tests, seeking employment and not obtaining new criminal charges.

If a defendant who has a longer criminal history gets

sentenced, they will not be eligible for parole until they have served a greater percentage of their sentence. Also, some serious crimes require that a very high percentage of the sentence be served before a person become eligible for parole regardless of the defendant's criminal history. For example, if someone gets convicted of selling drugs within 1,000 feet of a school, park or church (which is about everywhere in Tennessee), then they are required to serve 100 percent of their sentence.

Jedidiah McKeehan is an attorney practicing in Knox County and surrounding counties. He works in many areas, including criminal, personal injury, landlord-tenant, probate, and estate planning. Visit attorney-knoxville.com for more information.

Cash Mob at Alvin Frye's Exxon

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Alvin's wife, Mildred, was present at the Cash Mob and watched the hundreds of people coming and going during what must have been the busiest day in recent memory. Cars were backed up in long lines and Michael Grider and other Burchett staff members were talking to customers and getting signatures on large "Thank You" cards to recognize Frye and his employees. He will be 93 years old in January. Many gas customers were old friends of the Frye family and others parked nearby to come to visit and to donate to the "Alvin Frye Fund" that the Fountain City Lions Club began. Funds will go to the much-appreciated elderly citizen and to his family for his care.

The fund will be accepting donations by mail at "Alvin Frye Fund" c/o

Fountain City Lions Club, P.O. Box 5276, Knoxville, Tn. 37928.

The "Cash Mob" began at 3 p.m. Thursday and cars were already lined up to get gas. There were so many customers that the employees could not get to every car and in an unusual occurrence many customers actually pumped their own gas. Several people donated in the Exxon Station office and donors included several elected officials.

Mayor Burchett talked with many customers and visitors and he and his wife, Kelly, and daughter Isabel, signed the Thank You card appropriately on the hood of a car parked at a gas pump. The mayor called Frye "a real hero."

Frye, a Navy veteran of the World War II and the Korean War, could not attend the event but his wife

was there and seemed very pleased with the turn out and the number of people who visited with her.

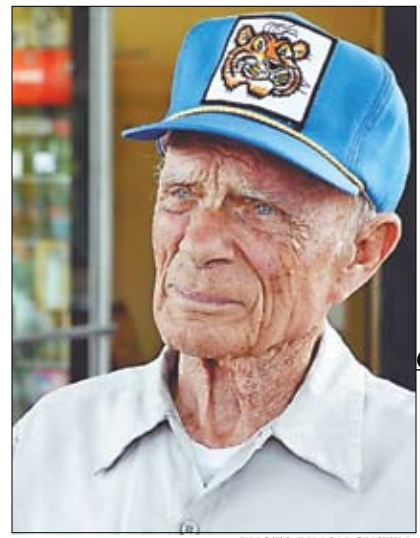


PHOTO BY JON GUSTIN.

Fountain City icon Alvin Frye, 2014

Berean Christian soccer team's DVD shows acts of kindness

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McDonald said the "Nexties" project was inspired entirely by the song and our love for Jesus. The song is an encouragement to Christians in how you walk out your faith, he added.

"I asked the girls on my team to come out of themselves and look for the

'next thing' that God has given them to do. They then got a friend to video the testimonies.

"In short the "Nexties" DVD puts feet to the song, "The Very Next Thing."

During the soccer season and in the midst of making the DVD, McDonald took the project to another level

by contacting Mark Hall, the lead singer of the Casting Crowns.

"He invited us to meet him and give him our DVD," said McDonald. "The outcome was quite unique."

Not all of the Berean players could make the Dec. 10 trip to McDonough, Ga., which is about 30 miles

south of Atlanta, but 11 girls did plus 12 parents.

"We went down on Saturday to see the Christmas program at Eagles Landing First Baptist Church, and then met Mark Hall on Sunday morning before church," said McDonald.

In addition to meeting Hall, the Berean team also met three other members of the Casting Crowns.

"Of all the people I've ever met who are in the public eye, Mark Hall was the most thoughtful," said McDonald. "He introduced himself to all 25 of us individually, made recognition of the girls as he watched the video and then invited us to lunch.

"My impression was of a man who had no interest in taking advantage of his fame. He was the true representation of the music he writes and sings and more."

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Publisher's Position

Do Local Officials STILL Not Get It?



By Steve Hunley,
Publisher
 publisher@knoxfocus.com

The Knox County Board of Education met last week with the Knox County Legislative delegation and the Knox County Commission to discuss the legislative agenda for the next session of the Tennessee General Assembly. The vice chair of the board of education was quoted as saying there are no failed schools, only failed communities. The chairman of the Knox County Commission came out strongly in favor of a gas tax hike and a state senator announced she was not elected to vote for what is popular, but what is right, which is usually code for voting against

the wishes of one's constituency. It was a garbled meeting with little of substance said and State Representative Bill Dunn stood out like a beacon of hope. At least somebody gets what just happened in the recent presidential election. People are wanting and demanding CHANGE from business as usual. Clearly, a number of our local elected officials did not get the message, much less the memo.

School board member Amber Rountree made the startling pronouncement "the county" is opposed to vouchers. State Representative Bill Dunn has been an advocate for school choice and has earned the continual ire and opposition of the teachers' union. Rountree either mis-spoke or made some big assumptions. Knox County has never gone on record as being against vouchers and school choice. In fact, Donald Trump won better than 60% of the vote in Knox County and is an outspoken supporter of school vouchers, as is his Secretary of Education

designee Betsy DeVos. The Knox County Board of Education, largely comprised of former teachers and unionists, very well may be opposed to school vouchers, but that doesn't necessarily equate to representing the majority opinion of the people throughout the county. Dunn challenged Rountree's narrative and pointed out at least four Knox County schools are in the bottom 5% in Tennessee. Representative Dunn also noted keeping kids in failing schools is blatantly unfair to the students. Rountree replied the schools are not failing; instead it is the communities that are failing. Rountree went onto complain about the Tennessee state law that requires schools to be given a letter grade on a scale, very similar to the grade teachers give students. Most of the board of education are opposed to any kind of evaluation that doesn't work in favor of the teachers' union. Representative Harry Brooks, Chairman of the House Education Committee, made the simple, yet effective point

that the Knox County Board of Education could design a program they believe is fair and would work for all concerned. Of course the likelihood of that happening is about the same as Trump divorcing his wife and marrying Hillary Clinton.

Dave Wright argued in favor of hiking the gas tax, a priority for the Haslam administration. Wright regurgitated all the usual administration arguments in favor of raising the gas tax to spend \$6 billion on road improvements across the state. Wright pointed out the gas tax hasn't been raised since 1989 and cars are more gas efficient now, meaning consumers don't buy as much as they used to. Automobiles are more gas efficient precisely because federal law required it, which meant automakers passed along the increased cost to buyers. I simply cannot even begin to understand the logic that a tax should be raised because it's been a long time since it went up. We all know they rarely ever go down.

Becky Duncan Massey

pipied up to say she wasn't elected to vote for what might be popular at the moment, but for what is right. Massey announced the gas tax hike is needed. I would make the blunt observation Ms. Massey wasn't elected for either reason, but mainly because her name is Duncan. That will likely avail her little when she comes up for reelection in four years' time.

Eddie Smith seems to be on board with raising the gas tax, a tax every working family will feel. The Haslam administration hasn't exactly been watching where our tax dollars go, but Smith had the all-out backing of Bill Haslam. Evidently Smith doesn't realize that Gloria Johnson would have been a better choice for taxing and spending, as she would have been delighted to raise taxes at every opportunity and with gusto.

All of this is all the more puzzling in light of the message being sent by President-elect Donald Trump to the American people. That message is the biggest tax

cut for the middle class in the history of the country, as well as reducing corporate taxes to 15%. Trump is also pushing a real infrastructure stimulus package that is actually innovative. Naturally, it took a genuine outsider to propose such a thing, which is completely foreign to politicians. Wouldn't it make more sense to see what projects are going to be initiated by the federal government before beginning a sweeping new program by the State of Tennessee? But of course, that's not how government has worked and that is a big part of the reason why people demanded change. Yet here are so many of our local officials who still just don't get it.

None of these folks, except for Bill Dunn and Harry Brooks, seem to understand the country is changing and moving in a new direction. Here's hoping they'll get the message sooner rather than later.

Carter Convenience Center decision postponed

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improvements there could include about \$500,000 in upgrades including as much as \$400,000 in paving and electric improvements. Should the owner sell the property to someone else, the county isn't sure if the new agreement would be honored. While the trash containers and portable office there could be moved the other improvements would stay with the property.

The commission voted to delay a decision for 30 days and have the proposed agreement renegotiated. The current lease agreement of the small tract, less than 1/2 acre, expires in August, 2017.

In other actions the commission voted, without discussion, to accept the former Rule High School property from the Knox County School System. The historic old school complex has been abandoned and empty for years and has been one of the sites rumored as a possible headquarters for the school's

new administration offices. The commission also voted a 60-day postponement of the closing of Lovelace Road. The single-lane road, which dead ends at Melton Hill Lake, has been the site of illegal activity and neighbors there had requested its closing and even possibly gating the route for local use only.

The commission also voted to make two Rules changes: moving road closings and changes to its "Drives and Roads" agenda and placing attendance requirements on applicants for re-zonings.

Commissioner Ed Brantley was named to the Arena Use Committee and Dr. Donald S. Keeble was appointed Director for the Sheriff's Office of Corrections Division.

GEM Technologies was granted a \$106,000 contract for the Knox County Violence Shelter and the 100th year celebration of the Fair Garden Community Center, formerly the Fair Garden School, was recognized.

Committee looks at school policies

By Pete Gawda

The Knox County Schools Policy Review Committee met last Monday to review policies on general school administration and fiscal management.

Most of the proposed policy changes dealt with changes in wording or clarification of terms to make the policies easier to understand and administer. Once committee members are satisfied with wording of changes and clarifications in certain policies, these changes will be presented to the board of education where they must pass two readings in order to go in effect.

The first policy mentioned concerned administrative and supervisory positions and qualifications. School board member Jennifer Owen had advocated a change in this policy to allow the board of education to approve all position changes made by the superintendent. Since this proposed change had already passed the first reading by the



PHOTO BY PETE GAWDA.

Gary Spencer, left, Interim Executive Director of Finance for Knox County Schools and Dr. Clifford Davis, Chief of Staff for the school system, listen intently during last Monday's meeting of the Policy Review Committee.

board, no action was taken. The committee determined that some minor wording changes were needed to update the policy on employment of administrative and supervisory personnel. Staff will make these changes and bring the new

proposed wording back to the committee.

The committee then dealt with administrative and supervisory transfers. There was some discussion of modifying the policy to include a time period

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Remembering Larry Graham

"He didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it." - Clarence Budington Kelland

After a family trip to Dollywood, the Graham family parted ways on August 16, 2015. It would be the last time Larry Graham's children would feel the caring touch from their father and hear "I love you baby and be careful." The family was forever changed when a driver under the influence of narcotics caused a head-on collision fatally wounding Graham and critically injuring his wife of 46 years and his sister-in-law. He was a husband, father, and grandfather, brother-in-law, uncle, coach, teacher, volunteer and friend. Even today, his absence is a void felt by his family, church and the community.

Larry Kendall Graham has been described by friends, co-workers and former students as "an Earth angel, "a true Christian man," "a loving, kind, and Godly man," and "a wonderful man that impacted so many young lives." He was not boastful, proud, or selfish; he was humble, kind, and generous.

"We lost the greatest man I have ever known and our biggest support in this journey we call life: a journey my father walked with such grace, humility, and dignity; a life lived with a joy and passion for helping others. He lived his life as an example for others to follow and left a legacy for us to continue," said his daughter, Kimberly.

"As a father he made sure we had what we needed, but most of all he made sure we knew we were loved," Kimberly remembers. "Our lives were not full of 'material' things but our lives were full of memories: backyard ballgames; work in the garden; raising dogs and chickens; going to church on Sunday; and late nights at the ball-park where he played or umpired ballgames — some of the best times of our lives.

"He paid attention to the little details which meant so much to us. We are proud to be the children of Larry Graham and will make sure that we continue to live our lives in a way that would make him proud."

He was a proud grandfather who loved his granddaughters. He loved to go to see them play basketball or soccer, be in school programs, or attend Grandparent's Day at their school. Papaw Larry made sure they knew they were loved and he made sure they felt special every time he saw them. There was always chocolate milk in the refrigerator and favorite snacks at hand when they came to visit. Their hearts were broken when their dad had to call and tell them that Papaw Larry had passed away. They started their senior and freshman year of high school the day after their Papaw passed away.

The church and community lost a man that gave so much of himself even after retiring from a 40-year teaching career with Knox County Schools. As a deacon of his church, he was called upon to deliver Christmas baskets, visit sick members in the hospital, and shuttle shut-ins to doctor appointments. He was a true example of a disciple of God and a man that cared about others. He taught an adult men's Sunday school class. He helped establish the Upward Basketball program at the church which involved children from all over the community and he refereed until a year before his passing. This past February, he was honored for his service to the church and especially his work in establishing the Upward Basketball program. He loved to play golf and played in the church's annual tournament which was held in his honor last year.



In the weeks before his death, he had reflected that in his 40 years of coaching and teaching he had taught approximately 20,000 students. That's 20,000 children who were encouraged, mentored, and taught to be the best that they can be, try their hardest at whatever they do, and that they are always loved. Many who were taught by Graham shared the same memory of him: "he only expected you to try and he did not expect you to always be first."

After retiring, Larry Graham continued to give back to the community by volunteering at school field days across the county, and most importantly at the Knox County Elite track meet. His love of children and love of sports continued to draw him back to these events each year. He enjoyed the interaction with the children and fellow physical education teachers of both past and present.

His love of education and teaching children continued until his untimely death. This past spring, the following Knox County Elite Track Meet awards were established in his name: Larry Graham Small School Team Champion and the Larry Graham Large School Team Champion.

"The most important man in our lives is missing. He may have been quiet but he was such a kind, generous, man that brought meaning to our lives. He was an example of how men should live their lives."

Committee looks at school policies

Cont. from page 1

for notifying the affected personnel of a pending change. This policy was tabled in order for staff to add the desired wording.

The policy on professional development opportunities was discussed next. Deputy Law Director Gary Dupler informed the committee that the word "shall" meant that administrative and supervisory personnel were required to experience professional growth development.

"Professional development is important, said Kelly Drummond, Executive Director of Human Resources, "It is a good growth tool." The committee decided to leave that policy as it is currently written.

The committee decided that the policy on nepotism needed clarification as to the definition of family members in order to be consistent with other policies dealing with family members.

They also decided that the language needed to be tweaked in the conflict of interest policy.

The committee determined that the policy on advertising and solicitation had some redundant language which should be eliminated.

The policy on complaints under the Americans with Disabilities Act was found to be adequate as it is currently written as were the policies on honorary diplomas, school visitors and administrative procedures.

Turning to Section D, "Fiscal Management," the committee decided to

consolidate some policies.

Wording was added to the Fiscal Management Goals and Objectives policy to establish internal controls.

The title and wording of the policy on gifts and bequests were modified to include the word "Donations" as it was noted that most gifts to schools were called donations and not gifts.

Wording changes were approved for the policies on receipt of funds at school level as well as the policy on deposit of funds.

Language was removed from the policies on the accounting system and the policy on financial reports to be placed in a consolidated financial policy.

When they came to the policy on audits, there was some discussion of the definition of audit. It was noted that in some cases an internal review would be sufficient and not a complete audit. Staff will change the language and bring the policy back to the committee.

The policy on payroll was clarified to state that the published salary of an employee does not include deductions such as taxes, social security and retirement.

The committee determined that the language in the policies on expenses and reimbursements, surplus property, purchasing, bids and quotations, purchase orders and contracts needs to be changed. Minor changes in wording were made to the policy on state and federal eligibility determination.

New Beverly Baptist Church has been rented to host New Year's Eve Celebrate Jesus 2017

Saturday, December 31, 2016

Doors open at 7 p.m.

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A Day Away

Kingston's Fort Southwest Point

By Mike Steely
 steelym@knoxfocus.com

Within an easy day's drive from Knoxville are pioneer and Civil War forts like James White Fort, Fort Dickerson, Fort Higley (all in Knoxville) and Fort Loudoun and Tellico Blockhouse in Vonore, Fort Hill in Loudon, and Fort Swaggerty Blockhouse near Newport. Did you know that all of these sites are not the original locations of the reconstructed forts? Even Fort Watauga in Elizabethton isn't where it was originally located and neither is Fort Marr in Benton, Tennessee.

The exception is Fort Southwest Point in Kingston. The reconstruction there sits exactly on the sites of the fort's original buildings.

Evidence of an ancient Native American settlement was found there in the 1700s when soldiers were constructing a fort there.

Southwest Point overlooks the two rivers that come together just below the hill, an ideal place



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY.

Two of the reconstructed buildings at Fort Southwest Point in Kingston. All the buildings are on the historic footprints of original buildings.

to observe water traffic. Just across the Clinch River was the Cherokee Territory and a ferry served the area to transport early travelers to the Indian trail that led across the Cumberland Mountains and on to the Nashville area settlements.

Back in 1792 most of the war with the Chickamauga Cherokee was over. The federal government built Fort Southwest Point at the furthest west point of the territory overlooking the Clinch and Tennessee Rivers. Col. Return Meigs was appointed commander

and Indian Agent and given the duty of protecting the border and escorting travelers into the Native American territory on the other side of the Clinch River.

Just west of what is now Kingston was still Cherokee territory and the

Native Americans established and operated a ferry there.

In 1797 the future king of France, Louis Phillippe, visited the fort site and noted the site in his journal.

It is said that the Lewis and Clark Expedition of what is now Western America recruited men at Fort Southwest Point.

Southwest Point was garrisoned with troops and operated until the Cherokee Agency was moved to Tellico Blockhouse near Vonore in 1807. The agency was to move several other times until the tribe was forcibly relocated to the west. At one point the fort accommodated 625 soldiers. One of the commanders there was Colonel David Henley for whom the Knoxville bridge is named. The fort also was Roane County's first post office and a school for Cherokee children operated there.

Fort Southwest Point was eventually abandoned. In the 1970's archeologists began uncovering foundations of six buildings

there as well as artifacts and evidence of a large stone wall. In 1984 more building sites were found and a third major archeology search in 1996 discovered the footprint of a large building there.

Restoration of the old fort began about 1974 and, thus far, 13 foundations have been found and several buildings reconstructed atop the original footprints.

Today the fort continues to gain new life as buildings are reconstructed there. One recent addition is a small chapel just below the fort near the river.

The fort has a visitor center and museum and a large parking area. It's located just off Interstate 40 along Highway 58 just south of Kingston.

Fort Southwest Point is owned and operated by the City of Kingston. You can contact the fort by calling 865-376-3621. The free attraction is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. You can view the fort's website at www.southwestpoint.com.

Jackson Avenue Terminal OK'd for Distillery

By Mike Steely
 steelym@knoxfocus.com

The number of microbreweries and distilleries are growing in Knoxville and another is now planned for the former Jackson Avenue Terminal. The Metropolitan Planning Commission voted recently to approve a Use on Review for owner Brett Honeycutt to use the historic old railroad freight terminal for a multi-venue, whiskey-making location.

Located at 203 West Jackson Avenue just below the North Gay Street Bridge the distillery would be located in the 4,700 square foot warehouse. The developer is promising not only the distillery but also a tasting room and a retail area.

Ginger Kielarowski, owner of Fire Street Lofts, told the

planning commission she was concerned about the smell that might come from the mash being prepared there.

Stanton Webster, one of the owners of the proposed distillery, said the odor question would be resolved because of the small size of the works there and the grain will not be cooked on site. He said the still would be running at the Jackson Avenue location but would only be half the size as the one at Knoxville Whiskey Works.

MPC Staffer Mike Reynolds told the commission that the odor of a business downtown is not to cross the property line of that establishment.

After Commissioner Art Clancy III moved and the request passed Chair Rebecca Longmire told Kielarowski that

odors are a complaint driven subject and she should contact city codes on any violation.

The commission also approved Baker Creek Bottoms, a brewery, restaurant and residential development in the former Sevier Heights Baptist Church in South Knoxville and tabled, at Verizon's request, a request for a cell tower along Martin Luther King and Holston Drive. Longmire said the action puts the request "in limbo" until Verizon comes back with a request.

Also tabled was amending the city's zoning ordinance regarding creating a mixed use district in the Bearden Village Opportunities area. The city has asked MPC to hold off on plans there and include them in an overall rezoning revamp for the entire city.

The commission also approved a planned residential development along Campbell Station Road and Newcomb Lane after the developer said that the entrance to the proposed homes would be off Campbell Station. Local residents along the narrow Newcomb Lane were concerned that the additional traffic might enter on their road. The development falls within the Farragut urban plan and, following the vote, Longmire urged the residents to meet with the developer, Homestead Land Holdings, LLC.

Also passed was a multi-dwelling development on the Northwest side of Sutherland Avenue, south of North Concord Street. A local landowner said that the project would hurt property values

there and that the local gas line is located beneath what would be the housing units.

The 24 dwelling units there were approved on the Use on Review and the matter now goes to City Council for final approval.

Duplex units were also approved for Turner Homes, LLC, on Joe Hinton Road, northwest of Middlebrook Pike. Nearby homeowners objected to no sidewalks being included on the development plans but Attorney Arthur Seymour, Jr., representing the developer, said there is no room for sidewalks on that side of the street.

The commission voted to confirm the nominations of Rebecca Longmire as chair and Janice Tocher as vice chair.

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City Council

Forum gives views on beer sales, new trash canisters

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

The Knoxville City Council got an earful Tuesday night when Rev. Doug Stauffer of the Antioch Baptist Church spoke in public forum and called some of the council out by name for their vote recently to do away with the distance required between beer sellers and churches.

Stauffer demanded a compromise be passed such as the one presented unsuccessfully by Council Nick Della Volpe permitting churches and beer sellers to occupy the same shopping center but keeping the distance between the two. He lambasted council members Marshall Stair, Brenda Palmer and Duane Grieve for their support of the matter and said that the city is not really in line with the state law.

The minister said that he will oppose those council people who supported doing away with the distance requirement and called their actions "Anti-Church and Anti-Christian."

Only three councilmen voted not to drop the distance and Stauffer praised

their stand on the issue.

Community activist Vivian Shipe, a longtime proponent of the creation of a Safety Center, also spoke in public forum. She said she learned that Tennessee is the 4th worst state in the nation in providing mental health services. She also said that military veterans with mental health issues who end up in jail could have their VA benefits affected.

"Please hear the citizens you represent and budget in as a recurring expense the one-million dollars the county has already pledged for a Safety Center," she asked.

Mayor Madeline Rogero responded that the city has been meeting with the county and with the Hellen Ross McNabb Center but has not been asked to put in \$1 million.

"Once we get an idea of what the state is willing to do then we will look at our next budget," the mayor said.

"We will be stepping up to the plate," Rogero said.

In other business the council voted to allocate \$25,000 to help buy an ancient Native American

statue from a private owner for the McClung Museum. Director Jefferson Chapman said the artifact is 800 years old and was discovered in Wilson County, Tennessee, in the 1930s. The museum has one of the two statues and has an option for the female figure to sit beside the museum's male statue. The council also voted on final reading to dissolve the KAT Community Advisory Committee and to name that group's former chair person, Sandra Booher, to the main KAT board. Two new members, Chris Crouch and Walter L. Williams, were also named to that board.

Also approved on its final reading was to amend the codes to permit the new 96-gallon trash canisters.

On that subject two residents of the Buffet Trace Condos said seniors cannot easily handle the large containers and the size is a hazard for the handicapped and elderly, especially those living in condos or on hillsides.

Chad Weth, City Public

Service Director, said that smaller canisters are being ordered for those people who can't handle the larger containers. He said that out of 40,000 larger containers delivered to homes, he's had only 160 calls complaining and most of those were from condo owners.

The council also gave final zoning approval for the former Sevier Heights Baptist Church to become an entertainment venue and brewery and for a former finance company building on Magnolia to be used for student housing.

Vice Mayor Duane Grieve said he hopes the Magnolia Street rezoning of the former bank doesn't set a precedent for the neighborhood and indicated he was not pleased with the proposed architectural look of the structure.

Also authorized was the purchase of a new trash compactor for the Transfer Facility on Elm Street for \$239,000 from Design & Construction Services LLC.



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY.

Too big and too heavy? Are the city's new trash containers too large and too heavy for the elderly and handicapped to handle? This past week was probably the first time homeowners used the bigger containers and some are finding the bulky containers awkward and difficult to use. Several condo owners complained about it in Tuesday's City Council meeting with a promise by the city to order smaller containers.



The Knoxville City Council voted Tuesday night to help the McClung Museum purchase the small statue on the right by authorizing \$ 25,000. The figure is apparently a match for the male figure and both were plowed up from a mound in Tennessee. McClung Director Jefferson Chapman said the two figures may be the best pre-historic figures in the United States. (Photo Courtesy of the McClung Museum.)

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Ray Blanton PART ONE

Pages from the Past



By Ray Hill
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Ray Blanton is little remembered today save for one thing: the corruption of his administration. Compared to many of Tennessee's more significant historical figures, Blanton's political career was not long, but it was impossible not to notice the man who became governor. While Ray Blanton was considered by many to be a conservative Democrat, he campaigned largely as a populist. There has long been a deep streak of populist sentiment in Tennessee and Ray Blanton mined it in every race he ever ran.

Born April 10, 1930, Leonard Ray Blanton was named for his father. Ray Blanton grew up in the tiny hamlet of Adamsville and his parents, Leonard and Ova, were poor sharecroppers. Eventually, the Blanton family built a road contracting business that became successful. Young Ray Blanton liked to drink and allegedly engaged in more than a couple of bar fights and on one occasion his neck was grazed by a roving bullet.

Blanton settled down enough to graduate from high school and went to the University of Tennessee where he earned a bachelor's degree in agriculture. Ray Blanton used his degree to become a school teacher, teaching in a small town in Indiana for a few years. Blanton returned to Tennessee where B & B Construction had become prosperous enough that he could earn a living with other family members.

In 1964, the thirty-four year old Ray Blanton ran for and won a seat in the Tennessee House of Representatives, representing McNairy County. Blanton accomplished little as a freshman legislator, but set his sights on higher office. Blanton determined to challenge Congressman Tom Murray in the 1966 Democratic primary. Murray had been in Congress since 1943 and was Chairman of the House Post Office Committee. It was not an especially prestigious perch for a long-serving congressman, but it was a rich source of patronage. The Murray family was especially powerful in Jackson, Tennessee where the congressman's brother, David, was the attorney general.

Blanton was hardly the only person in the Seventh Congressional district who believed Tom Murray was vulnerable; he was one of four candidates who ran against the congressman. Seventy-two years old as the primary election approached, Murray was weakened by the fact several other candidates were from his own Madison County, the most populous area in the district, save for a portion of Shelby County that had been placed in the Seventh District.

Many believed Tom

Murray might opt to retire in 1966, but the congressman stubbornly insisted he was running. Still, the rumors abounded that Murray would retire. Finally, the congressman snapped to a Memphis newspaper reporter, "Of course I'm running." Evidently, the rumors were generated by an effort from inside the Murray camp to persuade the congressman to retire in favor of Jack Woodall. Woodall was Murray's field representative and thought to be highly popular in the district. Murray, a bachelor, enjoyed having a drink and many close to the congressman did not believe him to be as mentally alert as he had been.

For twenty-four years, Tom Murray had been enormously popular with most of his constituents and held a vice-like grip on his congressional district. Congressman Murray had easily swept past every challenger, either inside the Democratic primary or the general election. Murray had been shocked when a Republican, Julius Hurst, had come within 11,000 votes of beating him in 1964. Had it not been for the Lyndon Johnson landslide that year, Tom Murray might well have lost. Murray's task in getting himself reelected was complicated by the addition of the Memphis suburbs having been added to his district through redistricting. The area was new to Congressman Murray and Henry Sutton and State Representative Jack McNeil both hailed from those same suburbs.

Congressman Murray, while noted for his Southern hospitality and courtesy to one and all, ran an outdated office with a very small staff, especially considering he was the chairman of a House committee. In an age where congressional and senatorial offices might email several press releases per day, Tom Murray had no press secretary at all.

When approached by friends who gently tried to talk him out of running, the congressman grunted, "I have plenty of time to make up my mind." It soon became readily apparent Murray had no intention of retiring.

State Senator Gene Stewart, also a Jackson Democrat, announced he would run, "Murray or no Murray." Stewart immediately began an intensive campaign from one end of the district to the other. Gene Stewart was indefatigable, canvassing for votes in out of the way places other politicians overlooked or simply ignored. Stewart would show up at stockyards, auction sales, and traveled back roads to visit remote farmhouses.

Opposition to Congressman Tom Murray centered on neither Ray Blanton nor Gene Stewart,



FROM THE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL COLLECTION.

Congressman Ray Blanton, 1972.

but instead upon a young man from Whitehaven, a suburb in Shelby County. Henry Sutton was thought to have the best chance of ending Tom Murray's congressional career. In fact, during the campaign for the Democratic nomination for Congress, almost nobody gave Ray Blanton much of a chance of winning.

Even though he was running once again, Tom Murray barely bothered to campaign. As the returns began to trickle in, just about everybody was astonished. Congressman Murray was leading, but just barely. Close behind Murray was Ray Blanton. Blanton had concentrated his efforts on the rural vote and it had paid handsome dividends.

As expected, Henry Sutton handily carried the Shelby County suburbs, but his vote was eroded by the candidacy of Jack McNeil, who ran second. Ray Blanton ran third in the Memphis suburbs, while Congressman Tom Murray ran a poor fourth. Murray had carried his own Madison County, but his vote in his home county had been diluted by the candidacy of Gene Stewart. In the eleven counties that comprised Tennessee's Seventh Congressional district, Congressman Murray carried six of them. Ray Blanton ran well behind Tom Murray in several counties and carried four counties. Blanton's margins in the rural counties were enough to give him a 384 vote margin of victory.

Republicans in the Seventh Congressional district were stunned, having anticipated running a campaign against either Tom Murray or Henry Sutton. Blanton immediately set out to unify his own party and won the endorsement of Congressman Murray. Ray Blanton said he was proud "to follow in the footsteps of such a great statesman."

With the nomination of Ray Blanton, Republicans became somewhat disheartened, although 1966 proved to be a good year for the GOP. Blanton's efforts to hold together his own party paid off on Election Day, as he beat Julius Hurst

by only 1,965 votes. Still, Ray Blanton had managed to topple an incumbent congressman in the primary and beat a credible Republican challenger in the general election. Blanton had gone from being an unknown state representative to congressman-elect from Tennessee's Seventh Congressional district.

Despite Congressman Blanton's populist rhetoric, he proved to be a rather conservative Democrat in many respects. As 1968 approached, Blanton's political resemblance to Alabama Governor George Wallace was readily apparent. Blanton was hardly noticeable on Capitol Hill, preferring to spend more time in his district office. Congressman Blanton, unlike Senator Howard Baker, voted against extending the Voting Rights Act. Ray Blanton was also highly critical of those who opposed the Vietnam War and was staunchly opposed to lowering the voting age from 21 to 18.

Blanton was challenged inside the Democratic primary in 1968 by Jack Woodall, who had been his predecessor's field representative inside the Seventh Congressional district. Woodall had practiced law since leaving Congressman Tom Murray's payroll and was believed to be a popular figure in a district he knew intimately. Blanton's constituent service helped him in his reelection bid substantially. The congressman carried every county in the district and even won the thirty-three precincts inside Shelby County where Woodall was expected to run strong. In fact, Ray Blanton beat his challenger in Shelby County by a margin of almost two and a half to one.

Reelected once again in 1970, much of Blanton's district had been moved following redistricting in 1971. Tennessee was losing one congressional seat and fourteen counties from Blanton's district were combined with one from Congressman Ed Jones's district, along with five from that of Congressman William Anderson to form

Tennessee's new Sixth District. Blanton seemed not to care, as he had his eyes on a seat in the United States Senate.

The incumbent, Howard H. Baker, Jr., had been the first Republican ever elected to the United States Senate by popular vote in Tennessee. Baker had defeated Governor Frank Clement, one of Tennessee's best vote-getters to win election in 1966. Baker had fostered a competitive Republican party in Tennessee and by 1971, the GOP held the governorship, both Senate seats and four of nine Congressional seats.

Congressman William Anderson, who after Richard Fulton of Nashville, was the most liberal member of the Tennessee Congressional delegation, flirted with both a bid for the 1972 Democratic presidential nomination, as well as running for the U.S. Senate. Anderson had first achieved notoriety for having commanded the USS Nautilus, the first submarine to successfully sail under the polar ice cap of the North Pole. Anderson's own district had been significantly reconfigured and he was targeted for defeat by Republicans. Eventually, Congressman Anderson decided to run for reelection in 1972.

Defeating Howard Baker would be a daunting task for any Democrat, but Ray Blanton never lacked self-confidence and despite facing minimal opposition inside the Democratic primary, the congressman was careful not to antagonize any challenger. Following the same strategy he had employed against Congressman Tom Murray, Ray Blanton wanted to lead a unified Democratic party into the general election.

Ray Blanton called on the liberal and conservative Democrats to come together.

"Otherwise, we are not going to unseat the incumbent senator, and we are not going to elect a governor in 1974," Blanton said.

Blanton claimed Howard Baker would never have defeated Frank Clement

in 1966 had it not been for liberals who had supported Senator Ross Bass in the Democratic primary deserting in the general election. Sharing the blame for defeats equally, Congressman Blanton said Senator Albert Gore had been defeated for reelection in 1970 and gubernatorial nominee John Jay Hooker had lost that same year because conservative Democrats had defected from the party ranks.

Ray Blanton theorized that with the passing of Frank Clement and Estes Kefauver, the defeat of Albert Gore and Ross Bass had changed both Tennessee and Tennessee's Democratic Party.

"Now, you don't have any strong personalities and thus, the personality cult is past," Blanton opined. "But the ideological factions still exist and many a potential candidate would hesitate to risk heavy sums of money to be the party standard bearer if it was only an empty gesture."

Many believed Ray Blanton had not supported Senator Gore inside the primary, nor had he been for John Jay Hooker, but he had rallied to both in the general election. If nothing else, Blanton was a hardcore partisan Democrat who had little good to say about any Republican.

1971 was a busy year for Ray Blanton. The Tennessee congressman went to the Middle East as part of a congressional junket and his travels inside the Volunteer State took him from Sneedville in East Tennessee to Memphis. Congressman Blanton took time to fly to Little Rock, Arkansas to pay fealty to Wilbur Mills, Chairman of the powerful Ways and Means Committee. Mills was entertaining presidential aspirations of his own and Blanton had promised to support the Arkansas Democrat.

Congressman Blanton was traveling across the state to increase his name recognition and profile with tens of thousands of voters who didn't know he existed. Blanton prophesied that 1972 would be a banner year for Democrats, both nationally and in Tennessee.

Blanton believed Democrats would make a "startling" recovery from the defeat they suffered in 1968, which the congressman described as a "national mistake." The congressman boldly forecasted the Democrats would recapture the presidency from Richard Nixon by winning "the most startling, history-making victory that American politics has ever witnessed."

Ray Blanton said Richard Nixon was "the worst president since - - - not Herbert Hoover - - - but Millard Fillmore."

By November of that year, Blanton had sent letters to prospective supporters saying he would run for the U. S. Senate in 1972 if he could raise the necessary funds to wage a serious campaign.

Ray Blanton had thoroughly tested the political waters and was poised to challenge Tennessee's most popular Republican for the United States Senate.

Zoo Knoxville sign approved

By Mike Steely
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When is a sign or billboard exempt from the city's new sign regulations?

The Knoxville City Council recently gave approval to the mayor to enter into a license agreement with the state transportation department allowing Zoo Knoxville to construct and maintain a "gateway sign" at the corner of Rutledge Pike and Timothy Street.

The agreement allows the city to assist in the construction and maintenance of the sign. The display,

featuring animals and graphics on a permanent hard surface, is whimsical and very noticeable— but is it a sign?

The two-year effort to control the size and height of signs has been used to block efforts by commercial companies for billboards and wall signs and even used to turn away a request from Magpie's Bakery for use of a cartoon animal atop their Central Avenue store.

Councilman Nick Della Volpe asked about the proposed Zoo Knoxville sign

and pointedly asked Vice Mayor Duane Grieve, who headed the Sign Ordinance Committee, if the proposed sign was a billboard.

"Don't call it a billboard," Grieve replied.

City Law Director Charles Swanson said the proposed sign was a "wayfinding sign" and that signs by government organizations are exempt from the sign ordinance.

The agreement with the state is for ten years at no dollar cost and passed the council unanimously.



Artist rendering of the new Zoo Knoxville sign.

Christmas Stress

I've watched some recent television families go through their holiday gyrations. Sometimes joyful endings occurred, but at other times, the whole family wound up dysfunctional by the end of the program. Even in real life, stories abound about the



By Joe Rector
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crazy events that come with the holiday season. My own family used to have plenty of drama during the Christmas season, but at some point we got over it.

Just making it home for Christmas brought about strife. After we married, Amy and I began the holiday season in Cookeville, where her family lived. We celebrated with them on Christmas Eve. Bright and early Christmas morning, I was chomping at the bit to get a move on. We stowed

our stuff in the car and then piled in for the 100 mile drive to Knoxville. I fretted for days about whether a white Christmas would strand us and keep me away from my mother, brothers, and their families. By the time the car pulled into the driveway on Ball Camp

Pike, I'd created a layer of anxiety so thick that Amy and I lost much of our Christmas spirit.

When our daughter Lacey turned three, Amy told her parents and uncle and aunt that we would celebrate Christmas at home. They were more than welcome to travel to our house, and they made the trip for years. Travel worries were replaced with stress over the company that came. A house that has only 1250 square feet was far from

large enough to comfortably accommodate six adults and a small child. At times, I acted like Clark Griswold. Much of my time was spent outside performing some unimportant task. That way I could avoid the stuffy, hot house that was overflowing with talk and television noise. Later, the whole group traveled to Mother's house for dinner. By the time evening arrived, my head ached. I searched for a corner in which to hide. Obviously, I was less than a good son-in-law, husband, and father.

As Dallas and Lacey grew older, I worried about their presents. They had to be equal in number and importance. On Christmas morning they opened presents, and I asked if Santa had brought the things that they wanted. The same question was asked multiple times during the day and often was repeated for

a couple of days after Christmas. I did the same thing with Amy because I bombed so badly with her gifts on the first Christmas we were married. I never wanted to repeat that mistake and see the hurt and disappointment on my wife's face. My family began to dread the day because of Dad's worrying.

When our grandson Madden arrived, it was Lacey's turn to give the ultimatum: we would have to travel to Nashville to see them. Since then, we've traveled to middle Tennessee for the day. Dallas has been unattached and willing to make the journey as well. Madden is the center of attention, and we have risen much too early on Christmas morning to be at his house when he opens presents. Exhaustion sets in about mid afternoon, and we all turn a bit grouchy if naps aren't on our schedules.

I suppose age changes the perspective on Christmas. Like everyone, I enjoy receiving a couple of presents. The truth is that I don't have many wants for the day, at least none that is smaller than a Nissan truck. I still want all to like the gifts they've received, but these days, I don't worry so much since they can exchange them; Santa also leave gift receipts with each box. What I like best is spending the day with my family. The calmer and quieter it is, the better I like it.

These days my energies at Christmas are used up loading and unloading the car and walking the dog. The rest of the time, I simply want to sit back and enjoy the ones I love so much. That makes the perfect Christmas with no stress.

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Girls return to Bearden Super 16 after long absence

By Ken Lay

One of Knoxville's oldest holiday high school basketball tournaments will return in 2017 with a different format.

The Bearden Super 16 will feature some of the state's top high school basketball teams. That's nothing new to local fans but the tournament will return to its former format.

The event, first hosted by the school in 1982, once had eight boys teams and eight girls team but the Lady Bulldogs last hosted their half of the event in 2008 when they finished as the tournament's runner-up. Bearden lost to District 4-AAA rival Heritage before opting to travel during the week after Christmas.

The event continued under the Super 16 as a boys tournament in recent years with eight teams.

This season, the tournament opens on Wednesday and the Super 16 is again a boys and girls tournament. It will also feature 16 (eight boys and eight girls) teams.

The three-day tournament will culminate with the two championship games on Friday, Dec. 30. The girls title tilt will be at 5:30 p.m. The boys championship contest will be at 8:30 p.m.

Action will begin at 10 a.m. on Wednesday with the Halls Lady Devils taking on Austin-East. The host Lady Bulldogs will play Franklin County. Other opening-round girls games include Cane Ridge vs. Grainger at 4 p.m. and Powell will play Pearl-Cohn at 5:30.

The boys tournament field includes Powell, Unicoi County, Cane Ridge, West, Carter, the host Bulldogs, Halls and Austin-East.

The Panthers will open the boys portion of the tournament when they play the Blue Devils at 1 p.m. West will take on Cane Ridge at 2:30 p.m. At 7, the host Bulldogs, under first-year head coach Jeremy Parrott, will tangle with the Hornets.

Opening night concludes at 8:30 as Halls will take play Austin-East.



Daniel Tarwater puts up a shot as Colby Cogdill defends in The King's Academy third grade team's intra-squad scrimmage at UT on Dec. 13.

Pregame excitement for young Lions at UT was a show in itself

By Steve Williams

The opportunity of just getting to go to a University of Tennessee basketball game is thrilling enough for most 8-year-old boys, but to actually get to play on the Vols' court before thousands of fans makes for a life-long memory.

Scoring a game-high six points, as third grader Eli Miller did, has to move the excitement meter up a notch, too.

But that was the kind of night Miller and his teammates had on Dec. 13 as The King's Academy's third grade team got to play an exhibition intra-squad scrimmage at halftime of Tennessee's game against Tennessee Tech at Thompson-Boling Arena.

Talk about show and tell the next day!

"The excitement pregame was difficult to control as the kids were literally bouncing off the walls," said assistant coach Andy Wallace via e-mail last week. "Watching them talk



The King's Academy third grade basketball team lived a dream of many a boy when it got to play at Thompson-Boling Arena in an intra-squad scrimmage game at halftime of the Vols' game on Dec. 13. Players (left to right) -- Brady Pfeffinger (55), Colby Cogdill (44), Carson Polk (35), Caleb Wallace (30), Colt Glasgow (12), Eli Miller (20), Brady McCarter (14), Landon Tucker (11), Daniel Tarwater (10) and Brennan Williford (21). Coaches -- Chris Tucker (left) and Andy Wallace.

about what was going to happen during the game was almost as rewarding as actually watching them play.

"After the game, it took them a while to catch their breath, as we had no subs, but you could see their joy in their wide eyes as they walked off

the floor. It was an experience that they will remember for the rest of their lives."

The Purple and White Lions play in the Sevier County Junior League and have a 5-0 record this season.

"The score (in the exhibition) wasn't kept and

frankly I think it was pretty even," said Wallace, who noted that the team's head coach, Joe Tarwater, had to miss the game.

"Prior to the game I emphasized to the players that if they did have a chance to score to try and

to give their

Continued on page 2

George Quarles moves on, heads to Furman

By Alex Norman

The East Tennessee Mt. Rushmore of Coaches (if there was such a thing) would find room for George Quarles.

For 18 seasons, he was the biggest reason why the football program at Maryville High School turned into the most respected in the state, and one of the best in the nation.

Last week it was announced that Quarles would leave Maryville for an assistant coaching job at FCS level Furman University, his alma mater in Greenville, South Carolina. The news was first broke by John Brice of 247sports.com.

Quarles will join the staff of new head coach Clay Hendrix, a former Air Force assistant coach.

The success that Quarles had with the Rebels is impressive. In his 18 seasons as head coach, Maryville advanced to at least the championship game 15 times, including 12 in a row from 2004-2015. Since 2000, the Rebels have not failed to at least make it to the semifinals.

They won 11 state titles under his direction, and compiled an overall record of 250-16 since 1999.

At the high school level there is nothing left for George Quarles to prove, and there hasn't been for quite some time.

His name did pop up on a fairly consistent basis for jobs at the college level. Most recently, Quarles was reportedly offered the head coaching job at a Division II level school over the past few weeks, but turned it down.

Quarles almost got a job coaching in the SEC, and it nearly happened very close to home.

Back in 2008, Tennessee was shaking up their coaching staff after David

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Panthers outlast Vine to claim share of first place in MS hoops

By Ken Lay

Powell Middle School boys basketball coach Darin Courtney knows that nothing comes easily for his team. This is particularly true when the Panthers play Vine in East Knoxville.

"When you come over here and play at Vine, you have to come over here and win because they're a good team. They're well-coached and they have a good team," Courtney said after his squad notched a hard-fought 50-43 Knox County Middle School Basketball Conference victory over the Golden Bears at Vine before a spirited crowd on Monday, Dec. 19. "I have great memories at Powell.

"This is Chapter 15 for me and I've been blessed to have some great kids. This is all about the kids."

The veteran coach has seen his share of great teams, championships and big wins and great players. And Powell's most recent conference victory has to rank among some of his fondest memories. That's because it gave the Panthers (13-1 overall, 8-1 in the KCMSBC) a share of

first place in the league standings. The Golden Bears and Panthers are both 8-1 in the conference but Powell now owns the upper hand thanks to its recent victory at Vine.

"We have four games left in the regular season and we're heading into Christmas in first place because we won this game here tonight," Courtney said.

The longtime coach made sure to applaud all of his players as they left the gym last Monday night.

That was a reception that the players truly earned after they knocked the Golden Bears from the ranks of the unbeaten (in league play).

And it didn't come easily.

Powell darted to an 8-2 lead when Logan Sutton buried a long-range jumper midway through the first quarter. Vine, however, would battle back to pull to within 11-10 by period's end.

The Golden Bears had the upper hand throughout the second stanza but Powell took a 17-16 when J.R. Jones scored on a tip-in as time expired in the

opening half.

"That tip-in by J.R. Jones just before halftime was just huge for us," Courtney said.

And Jones wasn't finished. He had 22 points to lead all scorers. He scored 10 of Powell's first-half points.

The Panthers extended their advantage to 20-16 when Sutton hit another long-range jumper to open the third stanza.

Powell built its lead to 33-23 when Jones scored with 1:44 remaining in the frame. The Golden Bears trimmed their deficit to 34-26 heading to the third quarter.

Vine started fast in the final frame and pulled to within 34-29 thanks to a bucket by Alijah and a foul shot by A.J. Pruitt.

But the Golden Bears couldn't come any closer as the Panthers went on a 10-1 run to expand their advantage to 44-30.

Coltin Reynolds grabbed an offensive rebound, scored and was fouled. Reynolds then converted the subsequent free throw with 4:18 remaining.

Vine had one last gasp



PHOTO BY KEN LAY.

Powell Middle's J.R. Jones had a big game last week. He led a balanced offensive attack for the Panthers in a 50-43 road victory over Vine. Jones scored a game-high 24 points to help Powell claim first place in the KCMSBC standings. The Panthers now hold the tie-breaker over the Golden Bears.

and pulled to within 46-40 when Pruitt buried pair of free throws with 57.9 seconds remaining.

Powell then opened a 50-40 lead but Vine closed

out the scoring when Washington, who finished with 13 points, knocked down a 3-pointer as time expired.

Pruitt also finished with 13 points for the Golden

Bears.

Powell got eight points from Noah Chapman and six each from Reynolds, Sutton and Parker Haley.

West Valley, Halls to host MS hoops tournaments

By Ken Lay

Some local middle school hoopsters will have a short holiday break this year. The players and coaches will return to the hardwood as two area schools will host tournaments after Christmas.

The West Valley Christmas Tournament begins today (Dec. 27) and the Halls Christmas Tournament gets underway Wednesday.

The Wolves and Lady Wolves will entertain teams from Farragut, Bearden, South Doyle, Concord Christian, South Cumberland, Oak Ridge-Jefferson, Jacksboro, Berean Christian and Knoxville Christian.

Both boys and girls teams will compete and the West Valley boys will have two entries (varsity and JV) in the event.

Play opens today at 9 a.m. with the West Valley

girls tangling with the Bearden Lady Bruins. At 10:15, Bearden's boys will play the West Valley White squad. The Farragut Lady Admirals will then take on South Doyle at 11:30. Farragut's boys will then entertain Concord Christian at 12:45 p.m. At 2 p.m., Jefferson's girls will play South Cumberland.

The South Doyle boys will play Jefferson at 3:15 p.m. At 4:30, Jacksboro's girls will play Berean Christian. Opening day play concludes at 5:45 when West Valley's Maroon entry takes on Knoxville Christian.

Pool play continues through Thursday, Dec. 29 with the final round on Dec. 30. Play begins at 9 a.m. each day.

Meanwhile in Halls, the Demons and Lady Demons will host the longest running middle school holiday tournament again in

2016. Games will be played at both Halls Middle and Halls High.

That event will feature teams from Halls, Powell, Gresham, Holston, Huntsville, Morristown-Westview and LaFollette.

Opening round games at Halls Middle School include: Holston vs. Huntsville (girls) at 1 p.m.; Huntsville vs. Halls (boys) at 2:10 and Halls vs. Westview (girls) at 3:20.

Wednesday's game at Halls High School include: Gresham vs. Powell (boys) at 1 p.m.; Gresham vs. Powell (girls) at 2:10 and Gresham vs. LaFollette at 3:20.

Pool play at both locations will continue through Friday. The girls championship will be Friday at 5:40 p.m. The boys title tilt will follow with both games contested at the high school.

Lady Panthers run past Vine 42-17

By Ken Lay

Guy Ballinger couldn't have scripted a better scenario for his Powell Middle School girls basketball than the one that played out at Vine recently.

The Lady Panthers employed a stingy defense, controlled both the offensive and defensive glass and knocked down some clutch shots. Those were the ingredients for a recipe that Powell used to cook up a 42-17 Knox County Middle School Basketball Conference road victory over the Lady Golden Bears in East Knoxville on Monday, Dec. 19.

Early on, the two teams were embroiled in a 4-4 tie but when Powell's Savannah Parker buried a shot late in the first quarter to give the Lady Panthers an 8-4 lead.

Powell (11-3 overall, 7-2 in the KCMSBC) stepped up the defensive pressure and made

things miserable for the Lady Golden Bears throughout the contest.

The Lady Panthers had a slim 12-6 lead by first quarter's end but they used their defense to force Vine into numerous turnovers in the second stanza. Powell not only forced the home team into mistakes. The Lady Panthers cashed those miscues into easy transition baskets or trips to the free throw line.

And when the Lady Panthers didn't score on their initial shots, they hit the boards and nabbed offensive rebounds. On one second-quarter possession, Powell got five shots thanks to its domination on the glass.

"These girls play hard. They always play hard and that's all I can ask for," said Ballinger, Powell's first-year head coach, who once served as an assistant at the school under Sara Greene in the early 2000's. "All

I ask from these girls is they play hard and leave everything they have on the floor.

"I think our press really bothered them and I thought that we rebounded well. We had one possession there in the second quarter where we got four or five shots.

Powell's defense surrendered just two points in the second frame and the Lady Panthers extended their advantage to 24-8 by halftime.

Vine's lone points in the second half came on a field goal by Ahya Moreno.

She would end the game with 10 points and was the top scorer for the Golden Bears.

Powell's Caydin Baker led all scorers with 15 points, including 10 before halftime.

Parker finished the contest with nine points and Hayden Dye finished with seven for the Lady Panthers.

Pregame excitement for young Lions at UT was a show in itself

Cont. from page 1

teammates the same opportunity, as we only had about five to seven minutes to actually play. Everyone did a good job in following those instructions.

"It seemed like nerves were affecting our shooting early as some players were missing shots that I would normally expect them to make. Of our 10 players on the court, seven of them scored."

There are 17 teams in the Sevier County Junior League with two divisions.

Wallace was asked how the recent tragedy of wildfires affected The King's Academy team and school and other league members?

"The games that were

scheduled the Saturday after the fires were cancelled league wide," said Wallace. "My understanding is that 28 families involved in the Sevier County Junior League suffered losses as a result of the fires.

"Our school was invited to join Boyds Creek, Seymour and Caton's Chapel to play games at Boyd's Creek Elementary (since the fires did not have as big of a direct impact on our community). We used it as a fund raiser to help the 28 families that were affected. The event raised \$4700 towards their help.

"We continue to pray for them and seek opportunities to serve as we realize the process will be ongoing for months to come."

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Sled Dogs providing opportunities for aspiring athletes

By Ken Lay

The players on Knoxville's newest ice hockey team are similar to all who play the game in North America and Europe. They are athletic and they have an undying passion for their sport.

But most of the team's members, however, play and enjoy the game despite battling the affliction of physical disabilities. That isn't enough to stop them from enjoying the game that they love.

The Knoxville Sled Bears are sponsored by the Knoxville Amateur Hockey Association, which sanctions adult, youth and high school leagues in Knoxville.

The Sled Bears have also partnered with the Ice Bears, the city's minor league franchise that competes in

the Southern Professional Hockey League.

Recently, the Ice Bears completed a two-game weekend homestand. They lost Friday and Saturday games to the Mississippi River Kings before answering an early wake-up call on Sunday, Dec. 18 to participate in another contest.

And this game may have been tougher than anything an SPHL foe could throw at the league's most successful franchise.

They played the Sled Dogs before a sparse but passionate crowd and they lost that game too. They dropped a 9-2 decision in a game designed to boost awareness of sled hockey. The Ice Bears had sore arms and shoulders after the game,

but they were far from upset after the loss.

They left the rink with a new respect for their disabled opponents.

"This is hard and they make it look easy," said Ice Bears defenseman Brad Pawlowski, who was playing sled hockey for the first time. "I've never played the game like this before.

"For us and me, it was a great upper body workout. It's really tough. We could go straight [on the sleds] but we couldn't figure out how to turn. This was really tough but it was also a lot of fun. It's great to see these guys play and enjoy the game."

Sled hockey uses many of the same rules as ice hockey. Players play on sleds and use short and small sticks.

The sport appeared in Knoxville approximately a decade ago but quickly faded. It's back and Knoxville Sled Hockey Coordinator Carly Pearson is hoping that the game will catch on thanks to the team's partnership with Knoxville's professional hockey club and with the help of KAHA.

"We're partnered with the Ice Bears and we're sponsored by KAHA," said Pearson, who plays for the Sled Bears. "I just love that we can come here and play a game against the Ice Bears. We want to bring awareness about the game.

"It's great that we can socialize and this is huge for us."

Pearson, a paraplegic, who was injured in 2002 while

working as a firefighter is no stranger to athletics. She's been on the U.S. National Para-Climbing team and she's also competed for the U.S. Para-Triathlon team.

But now, her true passion is hockey.

"I wasn't really all that into hockey before I started playing," Pearson said. "The things that appeal to me most are that it is a team sport and hockey is a game that everybody can play or try to play.

"I've been in sports before. But they were all individual sports. This is the first time that I've been involved in a team sport."

The Sled Bears are comprised of players from Knoxville and Nashville. They are coached by Rob Delorme. He

enjoyed watching his team play against the Ice Bears.

"Our goal is to build the program and compete," Delorme said. "There was a sled hockey team in Knoxville before. It was part of the league in Nashville but it didn't last."

The coach said that the game is more than just a sport.

"We really enjoyed coming here today and playing against the Ice Bears," Delorme said. "It was great for us.

"This [sled hockey] is huge for these guys and girls. It gives them a chance to participate and socialize. We have some players who have played other sports but for some, this is the only sport that they've tried.

Area hockey teams to play in New Year's Eve Shootout

By Ken Lay

Area high school clubs will return to the ice to close out 2016 as the Icearium will host the New Year's Eve Hockey Shootout.

The tournament, formerly known as the Hockey Hoe Down and played during the first weekend in January, has moved for at least one season. The six-team field is somewhat smaller than in past seasons but enthusiasm remains high. Action begins on Friday, Dec. 30 and concludes on New Year's Eve with puck drop for the championship tilt scheduled for 4:10 p.m.

The four Knoxville Amateur Hockey Association teams (Bearden, Farragut, the Knoxville Knights and the Knoxville Warriors) are among the teams participating in this year's event. They'll be joined by Nashville's David Lipscomb, a tournament regular and the Owensboro (Ky.) Ramage, the 2016 Hockey Hoe Down Champion.

The tournament opens Friday afternoon with the Warriors taking on KAHA

league rival Farragut at 1:10 p.m. The Admirals are the defending league and Moore Cup Champions.

At 2:35, Lipscomb will tangle with the Knights. At 4; Owensboro will play the Bearden Ice Dawgs, who made a state tournament appearance last season. The Knights will face off against the Warriors at 5:25 p.m. Farragut and Owensboro, which played in last year's holiday tournament semifinals, will renew acquaintances at 6:50 before opening night play concludes at 8:15 with Lipscomb taking on the Ice Dawgs.

The tournament continues with three preliminary games on New Year's Eve. Those games include: Owensboro playing the Knights at 10:25; rivals Bearden and Farragut (which both qualified for state last season) will battle at 11:50 a.m. Preliminary play concludes with the Warriors taking on Lipscomb at 1:15 p.m. The championship game will follow.

TSD girls help family

Tennessee School for the Deaf's girls basketball team gave gifts to a TSD family who lost their home in the Gatlinburg wildfires, reported Athletic Director Luke Benson last week. In the shopping picture is, from L to R, Julia Carico, Shelby and Sydney Rednour, and Haliey Robinson. Other members of the team are players MarCreshia Phillips, Amber Holmes, Wilhemina Robinson, Cashly Simpson, Jameia Dupree, Athena Ellenberger and Wilma Robinson; manager Itzel Vera, Head Coach Brooke Peters and Assistant Coach Donna Stinnett.



Maryville will keep winning, but not at the same mind-boggling rate

The news that George Quarles was leaving Maryville High for Furman University was surprising but understandable.

Quarles could have made the move to the college ranks years ago had he chose to do so. This time the opportunity and situation afforded him was just too good to pass up. He would be going back to his old school - Furman - and reconnecting with Clay Hendrix, who also is returning to Furman as the Purple Paladins' new head coach after 10 years at Air Force as offensive line coach and associate head coach.

I did not know of Hendrix until I read the story about his hiring by Furman last week. His resume is quite impressive. Many attending Hendrix's introductory press conference applauded when he said Furman would get back to running the football and when it does pass the ball, it would be explosive throws down the middle of the field.

You also have to give Hendrix credit for hiring Quarles as assistant head coach and tight ends coach, even if it will be his first collegiate post. Now that he has taken this step, I won't be surprised if George becomes a head coach someday on the college level. That is if he wants to.



By Steve Williams

He doesn't seem to be the type that likes to move around a lot.

Quarles was head coach at Maryville for 18 seasons. Some who were around when he began might have thought at one time he wouldn't make it to his third season.

Tim Hammontree had guided the Red Rebels to a perfect 15-0 record and state championship in 1998. Quarles started 10-3 in 1999 and was 0-4 in 2000 when his coaching career really took off as that team rebounded to win 11 straight games and the state title.

"Well, let's keep him around a little while and see if he can win consistently," surely one of the veteran Maryville followers once said.

After the early 10-7 take-off, Quarles went 240-9. Yep, that's pretty consistent. That also included 11 state championships and four state runner-up finishes. Only three seasons did Quarles' Red Rebels not play in the state finals - 1999, 2003 and this past season.

Yes, you read it right ... prior to the 2016 season, Maryville had been in the state championship game 12 years in a row! That's simply mind-boggling.

In 1984 Quarles was

a senior quarterback for Coach Craig Kisabeth at Jefferson County High School and I was covering the Patriots in their golden era of football for The Knoxville Journal. George was a junior wide receiver and defensive back on the Patriots' state runner-up team in 1983.

In my time at The Knoxville Focus the past few years, I've covered some Maryville games and e-mailed Coach Quarles several times. He's always been very professional and helpful. You would never know he's the winningest high school coach in the nation over the past 10 seasons. George has handled success well. He's just a down-to-earth guy.

They say he's always been that way in the high school and in the community. They say there's no better role model or anyone more humble. His peers respected him, even though they lost to him and his teams on a regular basis.

Knox County teams have lost close to 100 straight games against Quarles since Central and Halls beat him in that 0-4 start in 2000.

In an interview with Scott Cummings in August of 2013, the former Knoxville West coach was asked if there was really a Maryville mystic.

"Oh sure, yeah," answered Cummings. "We'd

all be lying if we said there wasn't. They've earned it. That's probably the highest honor in football you can give to someone, maybe even more than dynasty is magic. Whatever you want to label it - it's special."

Cummings said Maryville's success started in its youth program. He pointed to Maryville having "true middle school football" and a community that "lives and breathes" high school football as other contributing factors.

"The biggest thing," he added, "is they're being taught really good technique."

And to top it off, Cummings called Quarles "one of the best play callers ever."

The new head coach at Furman must have known that, too.

Maryville had a good football program before Quarles arrived on the scene. Ted Wilson, TSSAA Hall of Fame coach, guided the Red Rebels to state titles in 1970, 1976 and 1978 before leaving to coach at Kingsport Dobyens-Bennett. Then Hammontree's state crown in 1998 ended a 20-year drought.

Maryville will continue to win and have a good program, but to think the next coach could match what his predecessor did over the long haul isn't realistic.

Quarles is one tough act to follow times a hundred.

George Quarles moves on, heads to Furman

Cont. from page 1

Cutcliffe quit as offensive coordinator for the second time, in that instance to take the head coaching job at Duke. Phillip Fulmer hired Richmond head coach Dave Clawson to fill that spot.

At the same time the Vols needed to hire a new wide receivers coach to replace Trooper Taylor, who left to take the co-offensive coordinator job at Oklahoma State.

Quarles interviewed for the newly open wide receiver coaching position, but Fulmer chose to go with a member of Clawson's staff at Richmond instead, Latrell Scott.

It likely was a blessing in disguise for Quarles, as the Vols struggled in 2008, finishing 5-7. Fulmer and the entire coaching staff would be dismissed after the season.

Instead, Quarles stayed at Maryville, and continued coaching a team that ended up winning an incredible 74 straight games from 2003-2008.

Quarles very easily could have stayed at Maryville for the rest of

his coaching career, continued to pile up wins and state championships, and set coaching marks that would never be broken. But he decided that this was the time to make the jump.

For that reason, he should be applauded. He is taking on a new challenge and with the support of his family, will move back to the place he went to college, but has not lived for decades.

Quarles is an East Tennessee guy, playing at Jefferson County High School. Blount County is home, and there will be an adjustment in leaving the state.

But it won't be a surprise to see Quarles help the Paladins return to success. Furman was 3-8 last season, and Quarles will hit the ground running in recruiting in talent rich South Carolina.

George Quarles was also one of the good guys, polite to fans and media alike, and his presence on the sidelines on Friday nights will be missed.

East Tennessee's loss is Furman's gain.

2016 Admirals will be known for 'heart, soul and mind'

By Steve Williams

The Farragut Admirals dropped anchor in Tucker Stadium on the night of Dec. 2 and made it their home. Scoreboard and all.

Coach Eddie Courtney's team scored 38 unanswered points in moving past Independence 45-35 in the Class 5A finals for its first-ever state football championship.

The defending champion and No. 1 ranked Eagles had led 35-7 in the second quarter of the BlueCross Bowl game at Tennessee Tech in Cookeville. But Farragut put together one of the greatest comebacks in TSSAA playoff history to claim the gold football.

The Admirals' accomplishment topped a good season for Knox County teams on the state level as Central finished runner-up in Class 4A and Webb School took second in Division II-A.

Alcoa also brought back the Class 3A state championship to East Tennessee.

"This team will be known for their heart, soul and mind," said veteran Farragut head coach Eddie Courtney after the game.



PHOTO BY CARLOS REVEIZ / CRFOTO.COM

The Farragut Admirals celebrate the school's first-ever state football championship after their 45-35 come-from-behind win over Independence on Dec. 2 at Tennessee Tech in Cookeville.

"They showed that if you're going to do something, do it with all your heart. They bonded together as a team and truly are unselfish.

"Our seniors inspired the underclassmen to find a role to be a part of this team and trust the process in the makeup of our program. We are so proud of these young men and the positive things that they have accomplished these last 15 weeks.

"We built a culture that it takes an uncommon man to do things in order to achieve a championship."

Farragut finished with a 14-1 record and 12-game win streak.

Central, making its first state title appearance since 1999, had hoped to join Farragut in the champions' circle the day after but saw their magical season come

to an end in a 27-3 loss to Memphis East.

Three seniors reflected on the season and their prep careers the following week back at school.

Jahvere Weste talked about the factors that led to the Bobcats' historic run.

"Everybody just believed in the same thing and kept fighting and believing in ourselves," he said. "Coach (Bryson) Rosser taught

us about core, character, optimism, redsilenced and enthusiasm and we just used that to grind through our games."

Looking back, Teakok Stanley said he was most proud of "the hard work we put in to get here. The last three years we've been working hard from spring to summer to the season. My sophomore year we weren't that good, but after that season, Coach Rosser told

us to believe in the process and that's what we believed in. We just kept working hard and being dedicated to the seasons."

Quarterback Trey Mitchell, who has received college offers from Cornell and Lindsey Wilson College in Columbia, Ky., liked "how the senior class was able to come together and lead this team in the right direction. It really started at FCA camp during the summer. We got to know each other really well and became closer as a unit.

"I felt like as we went through the season, we just jelled more and more and our leadership took over and got us through some adversity during the season."

Mitchell was asked if he felt Central earned respect.

"I think we did, but then it really doesn't matter," he answered. "We're just going to go out and do what we do. Coach Rosser is going to lead the show and we're just going to play our hearts out. Respect or not, we're just going to play."

That was the Bobcats' mindset to the end.



Above: Members of Fulton's Navy JROTC program present the colors prior to the Falcons' game against Austin-East on Sept. 9. Photo By Lexie Gilland/Fulcom.

Right: Trey Mullins, junior defensive end for Gibbs, puts a hit on David Crockett freshman quarterback Cade Larkin as the Eagles shut out the Pioneers 17-0 in Class 5A first-round playoff action. Photo by James Spears.



PHOTO FINISH

Photo contributors to The Knoxville Focus during the high school football season added a lot to the overall coverage and several of their pictures are on display in this week's issue. Thanks to photographers Lexie Gilland, James Spears, John Valentine, Darnell Britton and Danny Dunlap for their outstanding art work.



Far Left: A Fulton Falcon rides Maryville defenders in their Week 2 showdown. But the Rebels came out on top, 45-29. Photo By Lexie Gilland/Fulcom.

Left: A young Central fan was among many well-wishers when the Bobcats left Dec. 3 for their first state championship game in 17 years. A special message at the bottom of the sign says "We (heart symbol) #81." The Bobcats battled but bowed 27-3. Photo by John Valentine.



Above: Isaac Buell, Central defensive lineman, tries to get to the Memphis East quarterback in the Class 4A state finals at the BlueCross Bowl. Photo by John Valentine.



Left: The catch made by D.J. Mitchell of Catholic on Sept. 15 received national attention on ESPN and helped the Fighting Irish outscore Fulton 69-42. Photo By Lexie Gilland/Fulcom.

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

Justice, Mercy and Humility

Is it finally over? After all, it's the end of 2016 and the end of a grueling political season. The media said it was over even before election night, and at least until nine o'clock on November 8th when actual votes were reported. Then, as the night wore on and one "that will live in infamy" for liberal-progressive Democrats, it became a rout. The Trump train ran over the alphabet media and liberals everywhere, from the left coast to the east coast, from the UN to Europe and beyond.

However, it wasn't over on November 8th. When Hillary Clinton didn't win the Presidency, shell shocked liberals began to conjure up explanations for Hillary's defeat. First, it was the Russians who hacked Hillary's campaign manager John Podesta's and the Democrat National Party's computer systems. Vladimir Putin and WikiLeaks', Julian Assange have repeatedly

denied this. But, why should anyone be surprised that ex KGB agent Putin would try to hack American information systems? In fact, cyber warfare is now referred to as "grey war" rather than the cold war of the past or hot warfare with flying bullets. Actually, Obama was warned of ongoing political cyber attacks in September 2015 and did nothing.

Democrat leaders seem to be more outraged by the attacks rather than what was revealed in the clandestine emails. Someone needs to tell them, "It's [not] the economy, stupid," it's the content! The hacking was unable to penetrate the Republican system, yet revealed Hillary Clinton's dishonesty and malfeasance, and her campaign's collusion with the DNC to marginalize Bernie Sander's campaign. DNC chairman and CNN employee, Donna Brazile was even discovered

slipping debate questions to "crooked Hillary." The revelations in these and other emails finally prompted the Director of the FBI, James Comey, to reopen the Clinton investigation after previously whitewashing her crimes. Magically, 30,000 emails were reviewed in one week and she was exonerated from criminal prosecution. And still the liberals blame Comey for Clinton's loss.

The next excuse for Trump's victory was manipulation of votes in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin. The Democrat's acknowledged that there was no evidence of any tampering with voting machines - however, there were more votes tallied for her in Detroit than cast. The originators of "fake news" (the media) fanned the passions of the loons and breathlessly followed Jill Stein and the Green party as she fleeced lots of people out of seven million dollars for recounts. When that pathetic effort was finished, Trump actually gained more votes than Clinton gained.

Obama has now taken up the latest cause célèbre, fake news. He opines that alternative information sources like Talk Radio and social media caused people to question the "news" reporting of ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN, NPR, Washington Post and the

New York Times. I won't cite the numerous lapses of the truth and outright obfuscation by our lame-duck President.

And the blame goes on. "The polls misled us," they whine. Even the NY Times apologized to their readership for their lack of integrity, and promised to tell the truth . . . next time. This is the same "newspaper" who openly discarded impartial reporting last June, opting to "save the country" by helping to defeat Trump.

Now, Clinton's staff blames Huma Abedin, big donors blame John Podesta's poor campaign and Bill Clinton blames white men who didn't vote for Hillary. What about the Democrat Party that rejected Bernie Sanders and chose the deeply flawed candidate, Hillary Clinton? And the pièce de résistance, fake news was again used to promote the notion that Electors would renounce their pledge of honor and vote for Hillary or someone other than Trump, while ignoring the will of the people in the 2600 counties Trump won (Clinton won 500 counties). The cry went out to sacrifice the peaceful transition of power in America for anarchy. This ruse also failed when three times the number of Electors turned on Clinton while only two renounced their pledge to vote the people's will for Trump. The final tally is 304

votes for Trump and 227 for Clinton.

How long the Trump Derangement Syndrome will last is anyone's guess. MoveOn.org's Director, Anna Galland, says that protests against Electors will only be "a marker for what's to come." These are not the words of the majority of sane Democrats. These are not the words of a "loyal opposition" which holds the group in power accountable. These are the words of subversion which play upon the fertile minds of the marginally sane.

Nascent democracies of antiquity held that a civil society could be constructed on the basis of four virtues which we now call the Cardinal Virtues. These are justice, common sense, courage and moderation. In recent years, we've seen very little common sense or moderation in our polis. The notion of courage requires risk and the possibility of loss. Too many snow flake collegiates can't seem to stand opinions contrary to the indoctrinated messages they've received from their uber leftist professors (alt leftists in modern lingo).

Lately, I've been thinking about the prophet Micah, and his recording of God's words in the 6th chapter and 8th verse. God said, "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to

walk humbly with your God." The verbs are especially important. Acting justly requires discernment and includes consequences more than condemnation. Loving mercy is an ongoing process and, I believe, can only occur after justice is served and there is a contrite and submissive heart in the vanquished. In the movie The Gladiator, the protagonist showed mercy to his fellow gladiator by refusing the Emperor's orders to kill his defeated foe. How can we show mercy to those who are defeated yet refuse to acknowledge their defeat and are not contrite, but remain subversive? The danger is that the victor will become self righteous and no longer walk humbly with God.

I have to admit that it is difficult to show mercy to the likes of Michael Moore, George Soros and other subversive elements in our polis. I believe it would be easier if they supported the peaceful transition of power as so many "deplorable" and "bitter clingers" did in 2008. I can only pray that these wounded and confused folks will come to their senses in the new year and become the "loyal opposition" which makes our democracy and Representative Republic unique in all of history.

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

The Greatest Christmas Gift – The Cross

"Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross" (Acts 2:22-23).



By **Mark Brackney**, Minister of the Arlington Church of Christ

record one of the earliest Christian sermons we have. I want you to note in particular the words: "God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge." The journey of Jesus from the manger to the

cross was no accident. Jesus' death was not a knee jerk decision to save a world that was headed to destruction. The death of the Son of God was known from the beginning. It was part of a plan put into place

since before the creation of the world. The death of Jesus on the cross was in the script. It was part of the original blueprint. Note what Peter wrote: "He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake" (1 Peter 1:20).

Jesus was chosen for this task before day one of creation. What does this mean? It means that Jesus was totally aware of what would one day take place. Jesus knew that one day a tree would be cut down that He helped create in order for Him

to be hung upon. Jesus helped put in place the political situation that would send Pilate to Jerusalem.

Think of all Jesus allowed in order for His death to happen. Also think of what Jesus didn't do; He could have said "no." He could have stopped the whole thing dead in the water. But He didn't because He was fully obedient to His Father and focused on His mission to save humanity.

The cross was no accident. Jesus knew His own death sentence

before His life began. That has never happened before and will never happen again. But as I said a couple of weeks ago, Jesus was born to die. He was born to be crucified.

I don't know at what age Jesus became conscious of who He was. Remember, Jesus was born as a baby. God in the flesh. He was both fully human and divine. This is mysterious. Once Jesus was old enough to realize who He was, He knew what His purpose was on earth. The cross was always before

Him in every move He made. Every interaction, sermon, healing, and confrontation was done in light of the cross.

Jesus came to die for the very ones who killed Him. He died for all those who came before and lived by faith, and all those that would come after who live by faith. Jesus knew His mission clearly and was not going to let anything or anyone get in the way. So this Christmas and New Year's, give thanks for the greatest gift ever given – Jesus' death on the cross.



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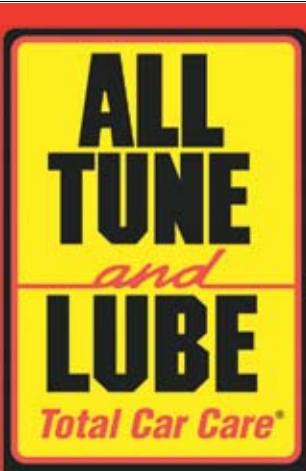
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