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Study of Knoxville Center Mall approved, extended to entire area

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
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"I'm going to veto it," Mayor Glenn Jacobs told the media following the first vote by the Knox County Commission to authorize a feasibility study on Knoxville Center Mall. The motion, introduced by Commissioner Justin Biggs, would include taking bids on a study of the suitability of the empty mall to house much of Knox County Government.

Prior to the regular meeting of Knox County Commission, Mayor Jacobs announced he would be asking for postponement moving the school offices to the TVA Tower and to postpone the sale of the Andrew Johnson Building. He promises a vote of the commission in January but it is becoming obvious that the commission may not approve those deals.

Opponents of the mall idea have cited the City of Knoxville not being interested in joining the county there. Deputy Knoxville Mayor Bill Lyons clarified that statement during public forum by saying the city "has not invested" in pursuing a study.

A quick survey of commissioners by The Focus indicates a majority of the members oppose the TVA Tower agreement.

Commissioner Charles Busler's original motion on the mall was to "explore the possibility of purchasing" the mall. The Biggs motion built on Busler's idea but deleted "purchasing" until a study could be done on the building, grounds, and transportation in the area.

Commissioners Randy Smith, Brad Anders, Larsen Jay, Evelyn Gill and Chairman Hugh Nystrom opposed the study motion with Gill saying the entire area needs such a study. Busler and Commissioner Michele Carringer said they met with the mall owners and the owners are willing to consider selling the complex. Busler proposed several possible uses and said he was simply asking for a study.

Jacobs told the commission the cost per square

Pension Board may be added to lawsuit

By Mike Steely
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Chancery Judge John Weaver quizzed attorney John Owings Thursday morning about the Knox County Retirement and Pension Board entering the lawsuit between Knox County Citizens and Knox County. The suit, which doesn't include the pension board as a party, is being delayed for

30 days.

Judge Weaver said that Owings should have included a "pleading" as to why the board should be allowed to take part. John Valiant, the outside attorney hired to defend the county mayor and commission, said he had no objection to the pension board being included.

"The real party should be the pension board, they need to be

a party,"

Tom McFarland, representing the citizens' class action suit, said he was ready to go ahead with the case but Weaver asked him what party would be responsible for penalties if the class action suit prevails. McFarland replied it would be the county but Weaver indicated that the liable party would be the pension board.

Owings was told to complete a

pleading and return it to the court before the next hearing.

McFarland told the court that the county charter clearly states that the pension board has no authority to up retiree pay.

Weaver asked McFarland if the citizens won the suit who would enforce it, adding that, as the pension board writes the retirement, does the calculations, writes

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The colors of Christmas!



BJ Edwards slams a shot for Knoxville Catholic High School early in the season and his basketball shoes are perfect for this time of the year. Please check out a variety of high school sports coverage in this week's Sports and Recreation, Section C.

No microbreweries permitted in county neighborhood commercial zones

By Mike Steely
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The Knox County Commission voted, after much debate in the late hours of a long meeting last week, to effectively kill allowing microbreweries in Neighborhood Commercial zones.

Allowing breweries on a "use on review" in those zones split the commission in a 7 to 3 vote with Commissioner Richie Beeler passing on the vote.

Commissioners John Schoonmaker and Michele Carringer spoke against the 2nd reading of the proposed ordinance. Schoonmaker said having breweries in CN zones would hurt neighborhoods. Carringer said passing the ordinance would "open ourselves to loopholes."

Planning Director Gerald Green told the commission that while bars are not allowed, restaurants serving beer are permitted. He also said that an establishment might qualify for a state liquor license and sell microbrewed beer legally in the zones.

Green also said that a restaurant in those zones can legally have a microbrewery inside and not violate the county laws.

Commissioner Larsen Jay said, "It's time to evolve as a county and embrace microbreweries." He noted that the ordinance change passed the planning commission with a unanimous vote.

Only Jay, Evelyn Gill and Hugh Nystrom voted in favor of allowing the breweries in the neighborhood commercial zones. The change failed with the majority of commission opposing the change.

Elks Lodge 160 make veterans' holiday season merrier

By Bill Howard

The Christmas holidays can be a happy and joyous time with family and friends. Or they can be anything but, for those who are alone, or need regular care. It can be an especially difficult time for the elderly or infirm.

Because of the generosity of the Knoxville Elks Lodge members and others from the community, some 140 retired veterans in Knoxville will have a Christmas

this year much more merry than they otherwise would.

On Tuesday night, Dec. 17, members of the lodge, along with volunteers from the National Guard, hauled hundreds of gift bags from the Elks Lodge No. 160 on Lonas Dr. to the Ben Atchley Tennessee State Veterans Home in the Karns area. The bags were filled with wish-list items the veterans requested. It's been an annual event since the home

opened.

"For the last 14 years we've done this on a yearly basis," said Gary Ellis, Exalted Ruler of Elks Lodge 160. "We have 50 to 60 veterans that we take. We tell the facility how many veterans we can take and they get the list together. When they established the veteran's home, we started taking gifts to them every Christmas."

Typical items in the bags are common daily things, mostly

clothing and toiletries. Occasionally something extra like a DVD player or CD player is requested. Ellis said the Elks have never yet failed to meet a request. "We've never had an instance where we couldn't fill it, so their lists are filled," he said.

"We go to each one of our residents and ask 'hey, what would you like for Christmas' and it's

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How Do I Win My Slip and Fall Case?

When individuals come to me and want me to represent them on their personal injury case, they are typically talking about one of two types of cases, a car wreck or a slip and fall case.



By Jedidiah McKeegan
attorneyknoxville@gmail.com

While most attorneys are willing to represent someone on a car wreck case, attorneys are much more hesitant to represent individuals on slip and fall cases.

The reason for this is because what a Plaintiff has to prove in order to win is very difficult. In a slip and fall case, a Plaintiff has to show that the dangerous condition that caused their fall was a dangerous condition that the Defendant knew or should have known about, and that the Defendant did nothing to correct the dangerous condition. That is tough to do.

For example, it is conceivable for you to get significantly hurt by slipping and falling on a slippery surface in Walmart. That is unfortunate that you got hurt, but in order for you to receive compensation from Walmart for your injuries, you would have to prove that Walmart knew or should have known of the slippery surface that caused your injuries.

How in the world are you going to prove Walmart knew about that slippery surface? Well, the usual way that this happens is

that an employee of Walmart slips up and says something like, "Yeah, I meant to clean that up, but I just forgot about it." Okay, if that happens, they have just admitted that they knew about

the slippery surface and did not clean it up. Good for your case, bad for Walmart.

Another way to prove their fault is if Defendant should have known about a dangerous condition. So, if we are using the same scenario about a slippery surface at Walmart, if that surface had been there for such a long time, that Walmart should have realized that it was there.

So if you believe you have a slip and fall case that you would like to pursue, then you need to realize that you need to be able to prove the Defendant knew or should have known about the dangerous condition that caused your injuries and did nothing to correct it.

Jedidiah McKeegan is an attorney practicing in Knoxville and surrounding counties. He works in many areas, including criminal, personal injury, landlord-tenant, probate, and estate planning. Visit attorneyknoxville.com for more information about this legal issue and other legal issues.

Study of Knoxville Center Mall approved, extended to entire area

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foot would be too great. Anders and Smith said the county cannot do business with a company that owes taxes. Law Director Richard (Bud) Armstrong said the county can negotiate with a tax-owing company but cannot enter into a contract.

"It's a colossal waste of time," Jay said, urging the body to let the private sector deal with the future of the mall.

"It is an unwise use of taxpayer's money," Mayor Jacobs said.

"Let's see what the possibilities are," Carringer said.

Finance Director Chris Caldwell said it could cost \$250,000 to \$300,000 to do a study and said the commission doesn't have enough money in its budget to fund the study.

The motion to seek bids on the study passed 6-5 with Commissioners



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs suffered a defeat at county commission last week when the body voted to get a study of possibly purchasing Knoxville Center Mall for county offices. He postponed his plans to move the school offices to the TVA Tower and delayed, until January, the sale of the Andrew Johnson Building.

John Schoonmaker, Richie Beeler, Carson Dailey, Carringer, Busler and Biggs voting "Yes."

Following zoning the commission reconvened

and Commissioner Smith asked to reconsider the vote and the study was changed to include the entire mall area, including Interstate 640 around Washington Pike and Millertown Pike, and the commissioners voted unanimously for it. The motion is to have the county and city work together through the Knoxville's Community Development Corporation

for "best use" and to see how the government can assist in redevelopment there. Commission Beeler made the motion and Commissioner Dailey seconded it.

Although the motion includes the city and possible KCDC funding, the city has shown no interest in the project. The passed motion apparently negates a veto by the county mayor.



Emma Grace Llewellyn, granddaughter of Commissioner Michele Carringer, gave out Christmas candy canes to commissioners and visitors last week during the commission meeting. She also called the roll of members as the meeting started.

Photo by Mike Steely.

Knox Audit Committee to recommend keeping Pugh and Associates

By Mike Steely
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The Knox County Audit Committee is preparing to ask the Knox County Commission to renew or extend its agreement with

Pugh and Associates as the county's outside auditor.

The firm is the current auditor and there has been talk about seeking an agreement with no expiration date and then reviewing the contract each year.

Chairman Jim Morrison brought up the extension during the committee's meeting earlier this month. Matt Myers with the purchasing department asked for a decision on continuing the agreement, rebidding

the position, or simply writing a new contact with Pugh.

Gary Mitchell with Pugh told the committee the firm is "in the home stretch" with its current audit. After Mitchell spoke Morrison asked if a decision on the extension could be made by April and presented to the county commission.

Commissioner John Schoonmaker suggested that the new agreement should be "brought up to 2020 standards." Myers responded that a new agreement can include some language not present in the current agreement.

"How does the partner rotation play into this?" Commissioner Hugh Nystrom asked.

Commissioner Randy Smith suggested entering into an agreement and giving the procurement power to negotiate the contract.

Deputy Law Director David Buuck said to accomplish the changes a new contract will be needed and not a renewal. He said a new contract "would accomplish the same thing."

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Elks Lodge 160 make veterans' holiday season merrier

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straight from them what their requests are," said Terry Pate, director of activities at the home. "I would say 99% of the time they get everything that's on their list."

"As the director, I 'say they, stay within 50, 75 dollars.' The people at the Elks Lodge can't listen very well (as lodge member Yvonne Mullins nearby laughed) and they never stay within that guideline. One gentleman got a stereo; it was 150 dollars."

The Ben Atchley Tennessee State Veterans Home opened in 2006. Atchley's wife, Sue, was instrumental in making it happen. Atchley served in the Tennessee House from 1972 to 1976, and the Senate from 1977 to 2005 as a Republican. He was a UTK alumnus and veteran of the U.S. Naval Reserve. He died in Nov. 2018. The facility has 140



PHOTO BY BILL HOWARD

One of the volunteers delivering the Christmas bags to the Ben Atchley Home residents was Santa.

beds and, according to Pate, a long waiting list. It offers short-term rehabilitation and long-term care for honorably discharged veterans, veterans' spouses, and Gold Star parents (whose child died serving

in the military). "We have a waiting list of 500 or so," said Pate. "We have excellent rehab. Some of our folks get to go home after rehab. Some of our folks unfortunately pass, and that's how spots

open up." Various churches, families, and others from the community donate to ensure that each veteran at the home has a gift bag, according to Pate. But the Elks are the facility's

biggest benefactor. "Every resident here is adopted by the Elks or community people," he said. "Some folks call up and say 'hey, my family and I wanna do Christmas for a resident here.' Our

biggest support comes from the Elks. They're our biggest supporter both at Christmas and throughout the year. They do ice-cream socials, cookouts ... they've done flag retirements, they've provided funds for outings. They're a very good partner and a great friend."

The Oak Ridge Elks Lodge also chips in, according to Mullins.

Many of the home's residents defy stereotypes of the elderly, said Pate, who started at the home in 2007 as a driver.

"There are some hip veterans here," he said. "Some are well-versed in computers and iPads, and electronics. A lot of them are on Facebook."

"It's amazing the support we get from the Elks and from the community. Truly, our veterans go without nothing. If you have to be anywhere, this is the place to be."

Pension Board may be added to lawsuit

Cont. from page 1

checks, and administers the pensions, the board must be part of the case.

"I can't do a suit if I don't have two sides," the judge said, adding, "If you leave the pension board out I don't know how to enforce it" referring to a possible victory for the citizens.

"What do you intend to do in this case Mr. Owings?" Weaver asked. "I don't have a clue and I don't have the plea."

Weaver then said he could not enforce an order without the pension board being involved. He gave Owings 30 days to respond to the paperwork request.

Looking back at 2019

By Mike Steely
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The year of 2019 saw many things happen locally, not the least of which was the election of a new City of Knoxville mayor and four new city council members. Although the year will end with the oaths of office for those new officials last weekend, their campaigns started early and were only one part of the many things that happened from January until the end of April.

January

The memory of the late Stan Brock prevailed during preparations for Rural Area Medical's 1,000th free clinic at Chilhowee Park's Jacobs Building.

Rule High School's historian, Mary Catherine Hodge Halsey, passed away the month before and was honored in an article by Jody Davis.

Feral cats, Recode and the proposed Safety Center were the topics at city council. The city council voted to capture, immunize, spay and release stray cats, a new policy. Young-Williams Animal Shelter CEO Janet Testerman said the policy will reduce the cat population in the city. Recode passed the planning commission and headed to city council for a decision.

Senators Richard Briggs and Becky Massey answered questions at a League of Women Voter's event.

David Shields was recognized for his service on the Knox County Audit Committee and Central High School was honored at the Knox County Commission for winning the state football championship.

The Hardin Valley Mobility Study drew an audience and the survey drew almost 800 replies.

The Knox County Commission met to approve \$165,000 in attorney fees in the settlement against the Knox County Retirement and Pension Board and the Knox County Board of Education voted to continue the Career Magnet Academy. The county commission also began discussing the Urban Growth Plan.

Knoxville's Bill Lyons and David Brace discussed complications and developments in the proposed purchase of the former Tennova-St. Mary's Hospital for use as the new police and fire headquarters.

Commissioner Carson Dailey recuperated from knee surgery. The Neighborhood Advisory Council listed topics to discuss during the year.



Governor Lee's visit to South-Doyle made the cover of the February 18, 2019, edition of The Knoxville Focus.

Dr. Bill Bass was announced to speak on the exhumation of "The Big Boppers" body in February.

E-911 Director Alan Bull's announced retirement prompted the board to begin seeking a new director and Keep Knoxville Beautiful announced its Orchid Awards nominees.

The city opened legal parking beneath the James White Bridge along the South Knoxville Waterfront and boat ramps were announced to be expanded at Gov. Ned McWherter Park there.

Former Focus carrier Walter Maples reflected on his 90 years of life and Knoxville extended a ban on electric scooters on city sidewalks and streets until a policy could be developed.

The O'Connor Center's Thursday Walkers senior group and Hubert and Suzie LaRue's history collection about Halls were featured with articles and pictures.

February

Eddie Mannis, founder of HonorAir and Prestige Cleaners, announced he would run to become Knoxville's next mayor. His kickoff, held at the EXPO Grand Event Center, drew almost 400 supporters.

A tax break for the new owners of the downtown

Continued on page 4

Brief pension board meeting touches on lawsuit

By Mike Steely
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The Knox County Retirement and Pension Board's very brief meeting last Monday heard John Owings' report on preparations for the Etters vs. Knox County lawsuit which appeared in court Thursday following the meeting.

"Hopefully it will be heard quickly," Owings told the pension board, adding, "And we'll hear what the judge has to say."

The question was whether the judge will allow Owings to be a part of the case since the pension board is not a party to the overall

case.

In other news, the pension board approved several applications for retirement including one from a sheriff's employee with 28 years of service who will receive retirement payment under the Uniformed Officers Pension Plan.

It was reported that UOP recipients will get a 3% cost of living increase and retired teachers will receive a 1.7% increase.

It was reported that \$5.8 million is within the UOP plan funds and that Knox County assets are at \$26 million, or 3% above estimates.

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Looking back at 2019

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Holiday Inn was approved by city council. Fort Sanders residents appeared at city council to object to a mixed-use development in their neighborhood.

The city council voted \$15,000 for a redevelopment plan for the former Tennova-St. Mary's Hospital, part of the \$40 million estimated to purchase and rehab the property. \$200,000 was authorized by the city to hire a consultant firm on the future of Chilhowee Park and a survey began to get public comments. The city council was asked to allot \$555,000 to a company planning affordable housing on Pond Gap's Hollywood Drive.

Vice Mayor Finbarr Saunders chaired a Recode work session that saw many questions about the total revamping of zoning and building codes and the Knox County Commission began discussing creating a county-centered Growth Plan.

The county's internal auditor sought \$25,000 for help with the hotline. The sheriff's department got a \$250,000 check from Securus and the county commission approved the payment.

The Knox County Pension Board changed its rules to require a doctor's statement on disability claims.

Knox County Law Director Bud Armstrong instructed the ethics committee on their duties.

Roger Kane resigned as the county's Education Liaison and the Joint Education

Committee examined the proposed school board budget proposal.

The school board discussed a pilot program to give special education teachers a \$7,000 bonus.

Governor Bill Lee visited South-Doyle High School to discuss vocational programs and the East Tennessee Historical Society held a lecture on Sam Houston.

King Collision donated a car to Kimberly Longmire, a Powell Elementary teacher. The school board began looking at its Strategic Plan and seven veterans were buried in a special ceremony at the East Tennessee Veterans Cemetery.

The Focus honored long-time managing editor, Rose King, with a collection of well wishes upon her departure from the newspaper.

March

Two affordable housing projects for Pond Gap and Young High Pike were before city council and the County's Growth Plan proposal was delayed until July.

The practice of transporting inmates from the county jail into Knoxville to do labor was questioned at city council who added \$15 million to its budget which included funds for the Safe Place at the Broadway Bridge later in the month. The city council voted to increase the salary of the incoming new city mayor, bumping it to \$162,500.

BMX bike supporters spoke at a commission

work session after Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs cancelled the project slated for South-Doyle Middle School.

The county commission renamed the Norwood Library in honor of the late Lynn Redmon.

School board member Mike McMillan was recognized for his promotion of the Career Magnet Academy, where enrollment doubled. A gas leak at Lonsdale Elementary saw a debate at the March school board meeting.

Morning Pointe Assisted Living celebrated its grand opening and Broadway Carpet celebrated remodeling and facade renovations.

The new Magnolia Avenue street sign was unveiled.

Attorney Arthur G. Seymour Jr. passed away and a "Wall of Faces" mural was announced for the Market Square Garage wall.

Three city directors spoke at the Neighborhood Advisory Council and Tim Petree spoke at the Fountain City Town Hall with ideas about marketing.

The Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center turned one year old but lost state funding and began cutting back on staff. A clean-up project in South Knoxville was announced and Mae Moody was featured in a "Getting to Know" story.

Powell Valley and Speedwell were featured in a "Day Away" story.

Neighborhood Safety Workshops were announced as a joint effort of the Neighborhood

Advisory Council and the Police Department and would continue, in various neighborhoods, throughout the year.

April

LaKenya Middlebrook was selected as the new Chairman of the Knox County Democratic Party and John Bevil dropped out of the mayor's race, leaving Indya Kincannon, Eddie Mannis, Fletcher Burkhardt and Marshall Stair in the primary race.

Tennessee Governor Bill Lee spoke at the Knox County Republican Lincoln Day Dinner and the Knox County Board of Education began its annual budget planning, arriving at a \$506.6 million dollar budget with a 3.6% raises for teachers. The school board also approved a Five Year Strategic Plan in April.

Mayor Madeline Rogero presented her final budget prior to her leaving office next year with no tax increase and said the city is gearing up for a smooth transition for the new mayor and council.

KAT announced a real-time Bus Tracking App. Neighborhood Safety Workshops began across the city with the first held at the Good Shepherd Church on Jacksboro Pike.

The late attorney Arthur Seymour Jr. was honored by the city and the county governments. He was a well-known and respected real estate and rezoning authority.

Young-Williams Animal Shelter asked for and



The March 11 Focus' top story was titled "McMillan Proven Right: Career Magnet Academy Enrollment Doubles."

received commission approval for a new plan to trap, neuter and release stray cats.

The Knox County government, in a cost cutting effort, began offering employees early retirement.

A public encounter between Commissioners Larsen Jay and Evelyn Gill began when Jay tried to remove Gill from the Joint Education Committee over allegations that took place when Gill as a teacher. The dispute led to a heated exchange between the two during a commission meeting, leading the law director to remind Jay that Gill had been exonerated in a school investigation.

The Police Advisory Committee met and heard citizens complain about an officer shooting a man on Merchant Drive and was awaiting a police review of the incident.

The Vestal community focused on the homeless

problem and more than 90 people attended a meeting dealing with the problem.

Members of the North Knoxville Business and Professional Association continued to pitch "UpTown North" as a theme for many neighborhoods between downtown and I-640.

The E-911 board began searching for a new director to replace retiring organization head Alan Bull. Various people applied for the position and Board Member and County Commissioner Brad Anders was eventually chosen.

The Central Avenue Streetscape was underway with the middle becoming cubed and planted with trees and bushes. Bus shelters and bulb-out parking was being added in a 13 block area.

The Old Gray Cemetery held a ceremony to celebrate the recreation of the Albers Fountain in the middle of the historic graveyard.

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Angelic Ministries has the Christmas Spirit...

By Mike Steely
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Tuesdays and Wednesdays are busy days for Angelic Ministries. On those days, every week, people in need come there for food, furniture, linens, kitchen supplies, clothing and personal care items. In the Christmas season the ministry also has gifts, toys for children, bicycles, decorations and will even be giving away the Christmas trees that decorate the facility located at 1218 North Central Avenue.

Christmas items available to individuals and families are collected throughout the year and there's even a room where children can pick out presents for family members. The organization is always in need of items, volunteers and prayers.

Founded in 2002 by Betsy Stowers Frazier, Angelic extends to individuals and families referred to them by churches or government organizations. Many of the families served have lost their belongings to fires or natural disaster. Some are homeless or escaping abusive situations and want to start their lives over.

The Christmas season is especially trying for people in need. Brother Tony Earl ministered to a couple dozen people one recent Wednesday morning. He spoke about giving gifts and noted that the most important gift was the life of Jesus Christ. He said God's gift of His son was a gift to each individual present and one to be shared.



PHOTOS BY MIKE STEELY.

Angelic Ministries, located in the old Merita building at 1218 North Central Street, serves the needy and can always use your donations or help. You can call (865) 523-8884 for more information.

Angelic Ministries receives no government funding and operates solely from donations from caring churches, ministries, caring private companies, organizations and individuals. These monetary efforts are supplemented with devoted volunteers' time.

Angelic operates several homes for homeless men and men from other rough situations and teaches them marketable job skills through its Knox Christian Men's Job Corps, part of a national initiative. The men

give back by picking, sorting and organizing donations.

Brother Earl said the ministry is looking for a location for a men's ranch. The funds from the sale of the ministry's church property in Halls will go to buying a place where the program can be under one roof, teach the men daily functioning skills and even have space to grow their own food.

He estimates it will take about \$200,000 to develop a property and hopes to have a celebration of the project this coming spring.

Angelic Ministries receives donations Monday and Tuesdays and the office hours are from 8 a.m. until 3:30. On Saturdays donations are accepted from 8 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

You can also call and schedule a pickup of large items. All donors

receive a receipt for tax purposes upon request.

Each Saturday at noon there is a service called "Music, Message and Manna." Parts of the service are provided by volunteers from churches, small groups, colleges and others.

Angelic is always in need of donations such as plates, canned vegetables, twin mattresses, box springs, clothing — especially underwear, towels, blankets, cleaning supplies, can openers, measuring cups, utensils, hygiene items, food and things like paper towels, napkins and toilet paper.

Volunteers are needed as for stocking, office work and cleaning. You can contact the volunteer coordinator, Tammy, at (865) 523-8884 for information on volunteering and how to take a tour of the facility.

Brother Earl is also encouraging the idea of "regifting" an item you may not want. It is not too late to consider giving an end-of-the-year gift to help with their important work.

As you celebrate this holiday season don't forget the families in need in our area. You can help by calling Angelic Ministries at (865) 523-8884. You can find Angelic online at www.AngelicMinistries.com or on Facebook.

Do you?



Above, a man picks out clothing at the Angelic Ministries. Individuals and families in need are referred to the organization and can find food, gifts, clothing, and many more items there.

Left, Brother Tony Earl, executive director of Angelic Ministries, speaks to a crowd of people needing food, clothing, supplies and Christmas gifts on a recent Wednesday morning. Earl said the best gift that God gave each individual there was His son, Jesus.

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Christmas Around the World!



From the Jensen home, a picture of the beautiful Christmas tree adorned with ornaments from 68 countries. Photo by Ralphine Major.

A rose from Spain. A koala bear from Australia. Venetian glass from Venice. From Puerto Rico, a butterfly--the symbol of new life. Ornaments from Japan, Prague, China, and the list goes on. The magnificent ten-foot Christmas tree is the focal point upon entering the home of Carolyn Jensen. It is adorned with ornaments from 68 countries!



By Ralphine Major
ralphine3@yahoo.com

Carolyn is well known

in Knoxville and beyond. I first met her in the nineties when she worked in the Bicentennial Office of Mayor Victor Ashe. She has worked in numerous executive capacities in her career, including Senior Field Representative for former Senate Majority Leader Dr. Bill Frist. In 1964, Carolyn took a group from the YWCA on a tour of Europe and visited 11 countries. Tom Jensen, her late husband,

was prominent in his many roles as well. Jensen, a pilot and Executive Director for National Safe Skies Alliance, served 16 years on the Airport Authority. From 1966 to 1978, he served 12 years in the Tennessee General Assembly as State Representative for Knox County and was Minority Leader for eight years. A tour through the Jensen home reveals fascinating treasures of their life including pictures from Knoxville, Nashville, and even the White House! The beautiful Christmas tree is decorated with 68 exquisite ornaments, every one a special

memory. Celebrating the Christmas season in the Jensen home was a special memory for our family as well. Enjoying the beauty of such an unusual tree, tasting a fresh-baked apple cake, and making friends with a little rescue dog named Reagan created special memories for us this Christmas! May each of you be surrounded by family and friends during this holy celebration of the birth of Jesus; and may you find much peace, great joy, and immeasurable love throughout the Christmas season. Merry Christmas!

Visiting Harrell Road Stormwater Park

A Day Away



By Mike Steely

Want to visit a really unique group of parks right here in Knox County? You could take a day away from home and take the family to the various unique parks in northwest Knox County.

The most unusual of these many parks has got to be Harrell Road Stormwater Park. Donated to the county in 2008 by Legacy Parks the 11-acre site was formerly a derelict field prone to flooding and was often nothing more

than a marsh. Harrell Road Park is one of a kind. Totally reworked to help resolve flooding the former swamp was so improved that in 2018 the county park was awarded the National Association of County Parks and Recreation Officials Environmental and Conservation Award. The "Award of Excellence" noted the park as a model of stormwater management practices for its rain gardens, wetland pools and riparian buffers. It is now a "sustainable and passive public park" and is located in the Karns community at 7221 Harrell Road, just south of Emory Road. A recent visit to the park found a parking lot built with porous asphalt, pervious concrete and pavers that allow rain water to be absorbed back

into the ground. A gravel pathway leads from the parking area around and through the park, past the retaining pools, and down to Beaver Creek. The 4,000 feet of path also has interpretive signs here and there and more than 100 trees. You can get your exercise with walking laps on the short path there. At two points the path encounters the creek. At one point the path runs by a large lake below a large subdivision of houses where local residents and others fish or relax. Harrell Road Park is also an input for local kayaks and canoes. The park is open from dawn until dark. The Beaver Creek Water Trail is a six-mile stretch starting at Harrell Road Park and ending at the Northwest Sports Complex, a mix of light rapids and

placid water. You can find out more about the water trail on the Beaver Creek Kayak Club's Facebook page. Northwest Knox County is growing quickly with new homes and businesses. There are many parks in that portion of Knox County and you could start at Harrell Road Park and visit other parks in that area like Ball Camp Community Park, Ball Camp Soccer Complex, Guinn Road Park, Hickory Creek Park, Meadow Creek Soccer Complex, Melton Hill Park, Nicholas Ball Park, Powell Levi Park, Solway Park, Knox County SportsPark, U.S. Cellular Soccer Complex, and Walker Springs Park. You can get lots of information about Harrell Road Park online at www.knocounty.org/parks/index.plp.

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Tennessee and the League of Nations, II

Pages from the Past



By Ray Hill
rayhill865@gmail.com

Colonel Luke Lea, away in Europe during the First World War, had never gotten along with John Knight Shields when they were colleagues in the United States Senate. Lea's newspaper, the Nashville Tennessean sided with Shields' opponent, Governor Tom Rye in the Democratic primary. According to Lea's newspaper, Shields had made several "unholy" alliances to get himself reelected. The Tennessean stated Senator Shields had allied himself with the political machine headed by Hillary Howse in Nashville, as well as that led by E. H. Crump in Memphis and even Republicans. Worst of all, at least in Luke Lea's eyes, was Shields's alliance with rival publisher E. B. Stahlman, "the open and notorious Hun insulter of President Wilson and the American people."

American boys were fighting a bloody war in Europe as a fierce political contest was fought between U.S. Senator John Knight Shields and Governor Tom C. Rye. The governor was attempting to wrest the Democratic nomination from Senator Shields inside the primary. It was only the second time in Tennessee's history voters would actually select their own nominees in a binding primary contest.

Rye was an able speaker, popular with the people and had been a good governor. Dignified while remaining genial, Tom C. Rye was a sharp contrast to the peppery John Knight Shields. Many observers of the race between Shields and Rye thought the governor was gaining throughout the month of July. The race between Senator Shields and Governor Rye had much to do with support for President Woodrow Wilson. Rye promised all out support for the President, while Shields had been less than enthusiastic about Wilson and his administration.

Despite his contrary nature, John Knight Shields was not without resources, chief of which was his junior colleague, Kenneth McKellar. Loyal to a fault, McKellar had not forgotten the support he had received from Senator Shields when he ran in the 1915 primary against Senator Luke Lea and former governor Malcolm Patterson. McKellar had run exceedingly well in East Tennessee, which was the home of John Knight Shields. McKellar moved his own appointees and friends behind the senior senator and convinced E. H. Crump to back Shields. Relations between Senator Shields and Crump were virtually nonexistent. McKellar wrote that Shields had "never forgiven" Crump

for the Shelby County legislative delegation having fiercely opposed him when he was elected to the U. S. Senate in 1912. McKellar admitted Crump had thrown his support to Shields "on my account." Even more important, Senator McKellar convinced President Woodrow Wilson not to write a public letter denouncing John Knight Shields as no friend to his administration. That alone would have been enough to turn the tide against Senator Shields, as Wilson was highly popular in Tennessee, especially with fellow Democrats. Shields had assessed his own chances and thought he would run well in East and Middle Tennessee, but was worried about West Tennessee, which was the home ground of Governor Tom C. Rye. It was also the home of K. D. McKellar. Senator Shields wanted McKellar to go home to Tennessee and help his cause in the western portion of the state. McKellar was packing for his trip when he received a telephone call from John Knight Shields. Senator Shields told McKellar he had heard President Wilson intended to write a letter to a friend in Tennessee for publication. The letter would state John Knight Shields was no friend to Wilson or his administration. The President had written similar letters, which had helped to defeat at least two other Democratic senators. Shields wanted McKellar to keep the President from writing that letter. A startled McKellar promised to do all he could to prevent President Wilson from denouncing Shields. Immediately after hanging up with Shields, McKellar went to the office of Postmaster General Albert S. Burluson. McKellar related what he had been told by Senator Shields and wondered if it was true. Burluson said it was. Burluson said the President had raised the issue of writing a letter condemning Shields with the members of his Cabinet and every member save for himself had agreed Wilson should write the letter. McKellar hurried over to the White House and saw the President's secretary, Joseph Tumulty. The presidential secretary once again confirmed Wilson intended to write such a letter, but pointed out it had yet to be written. Tumulty told McKellar he would make an appointment for the senator to see the President the following morning at 10 a.m.

Senator McKellar recalled he had never seen the President "in a more engaging frame of mind" when he entered the White House that morning.



FROM THE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL COLLECTION.

Governor Tom C. Rye of Tennessee. Library of Congress

Once McKellar told Wilson why he was at the White House, the President's attitude changed. Wilson told the senator, "McKellar, this war is going to be over in six or eight months and I am tremendously interested in the permanent peace of the world. Mr. Shields will not be for me. He has never liked me, and I have never liked him. I want a Senator who will uphold my plan of securing a permanent world peace."

McKellar quickly replied, "Why, Mr. President I have his word that he is behind you and your aims and purposes in this war."

Wilson was insistent. "I know; but Mr. Shields will not be for me."

Originally scheduled for a five-minute appointment, McKellar stayed for an hour and forty minutes. The Tennessean confessed he tried every way in the world to change the President's mind and finally resorted to quoting from a book Wilson had written on civil government, which deplored the idea of a chief executive of inappropriately attempting to influence the actions of the Congress. After reading Wilson's own words back to him, McKellar concluded by saying it was the best argument that could be made for the President not involving himself in a contest in Tennessee. The President had the good grace to laugh and told McKellar that he had written those words while a very young man and now had a different view brought about by experience. Wilson made no commitments, but he never wrote the letter, even after former governor Malcolm Patterson, who was campaigning hard for Tom C. Rye, had wired the White House and demanded the President write the letter.

While Luke Lea's Nashville Tennessean daily plugged the candidacy of Governor Tom C. Rye, Senator Shields had the support of many newspapers in his own East Tennessee. The

Tennessean claimed the Knoxville Sentinel had refused a political advertisement for Governor Rye. The ad in question was a reprint of a speech made by Rye hitting Senator Shields hard for "aiding slackers" in the war effort. Despite paying for the ad, the Sentinel's management refused to publish it, much to the chagrin of the Rye campaign and the Tennessean. Rye continued his theme of Shields interfering with the war effort, noting he had received a letter from a West Tennessee boy asking to serve in some other way rather than the actual battlefield. Rye, whose only son was on the staff of a general in Europe, refused to help, but claimed the young man had received assistance from Senator John Knight Shields. Speaking in Shelbyville, Tennessee, Governor Rye claimed there was only one issue in the campaign: "Win the war." Rye pledged to follow the lead of Woodrow Wilson, to help the President in all things, and "never be absent" when his vote was needed by the Wilson administration.

Rye swept through his native West Tennessee and drew impressive crowds at a time when there was no radio or television to influence voters. Candidates flourished or sank largely due to their own abilities. The only outlet for candidates, aside from the mail, was newspaper coverage and advertising. Thousands of Tennesseans came out to hear the candidates speak and Tom C. Rye was an able orator, while John Knight Shields was a poor speaker. As the campaign drew to a close, Governor Rye invaded Memphis, the domain of E. H. Crump. Crump had yet to consolidate his hold on Shelby County and Rye was introduced to the audience by former governor Malcolm Rice Patterson. Patterson was from Memphis, had represented

Shelby County in Congress, and the flamboyant former governor still had a statewide following.

Governor Tom C. Rye closed his campaign for the Democratic nomination for the United States Senate in Brownsville, Tennessee. Rye's final appeal consisted of the governor pledging to stand by President Wilson and the Democratic Party. "You must judge a public servant his official acts," Rye reminded his audience, "and judge a Democrat by his fealty to party and its principles." The governor attempted to link Senator Shields with German-born E. B. Stahlman, publisher of the Nashville Banner. Clearly, at least in the mind of Tom C. Rye, Shields had allied himself with the Republicans and pro-Germans.

Oddly, Governor Rye did not attempt to exploit one potential weakness on the part of Senator Shields. Shields had been opposed to giving women the right to vote, which was a contrast with Senator McKellar. McKellar had been a strong supporter of suffrage for women and had voted for it as a congressman. It would be 1920 before every woman could vote in Tennessee, if she were able to pay the poll tax.

Election Day showed Senator John Knight Shields carrying East and Middle Tennessee, while Governor Tom C. Rye ran well in West Tennessee. Shields carried all four of Tennessee's big urban counties. Senator Shields carried Davidson County handily over Rye, winning 4,634 votes to only 1,895 for the governor. Shields carried Knox County easily, winning 2,724 votes to a mere 787 votes for Rye. The governor fared better in Hamilton County (Chattanooga), but still lost to Senator Shields, who tallied 2,079 ballots to 1,876 for Rye. Crump's Shelby County gave Senator Shields 6,309 votes to 4,273 for Tom C. Rye. The governor did not win

significant enough margins in his own West Tennessee to mitigate losses in Middle and West Tennessee, likely because Shields had the support of his junior colleague in the United States Senate, Kenneth D. McKellar. McKellar was highly popular in West Tennessee and many of his friends and supporters backed Senator Shields.

Governor Rye was gracious in defeat and promptly sent a telegram to Senator Shields conceding defeat and offering his congratulations. Senator Shields replied by wire with his own terse acknowledgement of the governor's telegram. "I thank you for your congratulations upon my nomination by the Democratic primary for United States Senator."

In the end, it was K. D. McKellar who saved John Knight Shields' seat in the United States Senate when he went to the White House to plead with President Wilson not to write the letter denouncing Shields as being hostile to his administration. McKellar, pleased by the victory of his colleague in the Democratic primary, proposed Shields join him in visiting the White House.

McKellar told his senior colleague he would accompany him to the White House so that Shields could thank both Wilson and Tumulty. To McKellar's utter astonishment, Shields barked he would "see them in Hell first." McKellar sadly recalled, "From that time on he fought the President and the President's League of Nations, just as the President had predicted..." McKellar confessed, "I was tremendously embarrassed."

The senatorial campaign in Tennessee was hardly the only disappointment Woodrow Wilson received during the 1918 Congressional campaigns. As the general election approached in the fall, President Wilson called for the voters to give him a Democratic Congress. Wilson made the mistake of making the off year election into a referendum on his own leadership and the voters responded by electing a Republican Congress. Former president Theodore Roosevelt, who had come to loathe Woodrow Wilson, chortled with delight that voters had clearly repudiated the Wilson administration. It was an ominous sign as President Wilson hurried to Paris to help negotiate the peace between the victorious allies and the defeated Central Powers after World War I.

It would also doom the President's vision for American participation in the League of Nations.

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It's the traditions that make things special

Merry Christmas!

I hope yours will be a fabulous one. As far as I'm concerned, any Christmas spent with loved ones is good.

Maybe the gifts aren't just right, or maybe "the little lights are twinkling," but the traditions that we all follow each year give us plenty of reasons to be happy and smile, at least for one day.

A couple of days before the big day, Amy and I will celebrate our 45th



By Joe Rector
joerector@comcast.net

anniversary. Yes, I wonder as well how or why she's put up with me all these years. Then, we'll make plans for traveling to family for Christmas day.

Our holiday will be a bit different. We purchased new flooring for the house, and because of shipping problems, the stuff won't arrive until a few days before Christmas.

All the furniture and those boxes and items that are stowed under beds or closet floors must be moved. I've completed

the second part of the chore, but for the life of me, I don't know where to move things like couches, dressers, or beds.

Because of the hubbub, we aren't putting up a Christmas tree. That's an automatic bummer, but worse would be breaking all our special ornaments when we move the tree from one spot to another.

Amy also decided not to set out all the other Christmas decorations. I miss them as much as the tree because the festive air they bring is absent.

Finding the right gifts isn't as easy as it used to be. In the early days of our

marriage, I came up with some truly creative ones. One was an old cedar chest that I refinished. Another was a new rocking chair that I stained and sealed before Lacey's arrival the following April.

On some Christmases I even dared to pick out clothing items, but I was also smart enough to keep the receipts. Yep, most of the things were exchanged, but that was okay.

I'm in charge of finding things to go in stockings. It's a challenge to find a few new things each year, but the traditional items still appear.

Everyone receives a pair

of fingernail clippers each year. I've also given tire gauges and dental floss. One of the most popular items was de-icer for windshields. The kids parked outside and appreciated not having to use a scraper to remove frost and ice in the mornings.

I've already watched "Charlie Brown Christmas" and "Rudolph." I'm looking forward to "White Christmas" and "It's a Wonderful Life."

When the whole family gets together, we'll sit down one evening for a viewing of the uncut version of "Christmas Vacation." Because we all know most of the dialogue,

we'll say things to each other like "Can't see the lines, can you, Russ" or "Lot of sap," and we'll laugh as if it were the first time we've heard those words.

We'll all eat too much and need naps on Christmas afternoon. Then, we'll gather one more time to eat too much again so that our misery drives us to bed early. A couple of days later, Amy and I will pack up our stuff and Sadie, our dog, and make the trip back home. With a little luck, the floor will be finished by then. If not, our New Year celebration might be a bit cock-eyed as well.

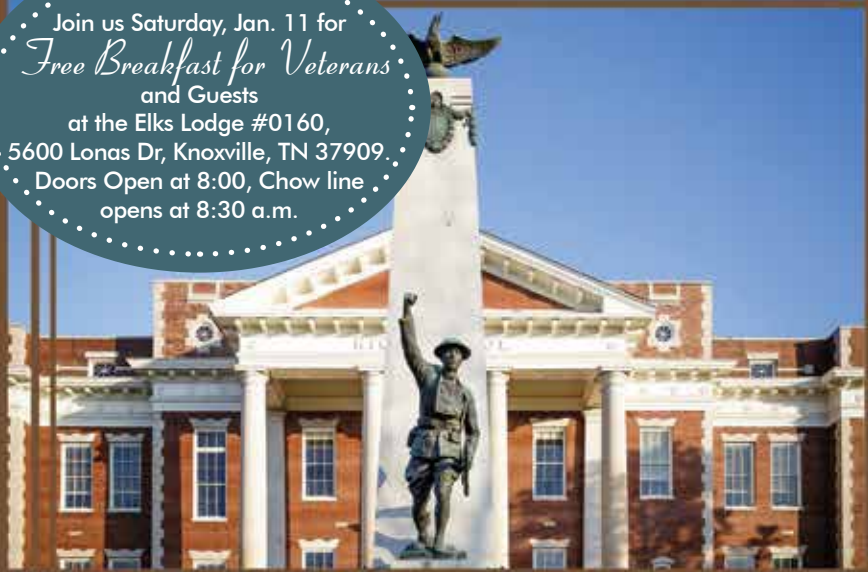
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HOLIDAY HELPERS

Halls High makes Christmas brighter for many families

By Steve Williams

Cheri Duncan's cheerleaders did their part in helping Halls High School make Christmas brighter for many families this year. The cheer squad "adopted" a family for Christmas and provided gifts for them. The adoption was part of the school's total adoption efforts, said Duncan. "The school helped over 70 kids this year," she noted. "Classes, clubs and sports teams 'adopt' kids in the community and provide Christmas for them."

The Halls cheerleaders, who always seem to be busy during the holidays, also worked at Fantasy of Trees the day before Thanksgiving, with proceeds from the annual event going to the East Tennessee Children's Hospital. According to Halls Athletic Director Tucker Jackson, the Lady Red Devils' softball team has volunteered at the Fantasy of Trees and went to the Elmcroft assisted living facility in Halls and volunteered the last couple of weeks.

Halls football team members also opened car doors at elementary schools several times. "We also worked with Beaver Dam Church for their clothing drive," noted Jackson. Meanwhile, the Hawkettes, who make up Hardin Valley Academy's dance team, hosted their fifth annual dance clinic Saturday, Dec. 14, and then danced with 25 amazing Jr. Hawkettes on the following Monday at halftime of the HVA girls' and boys'



Cheerleaders Caroline Dykes (left) and Carly Minhinnett wrap Christmas presents at Halls High for their "adopted" family this holiday season.

basketball games against Heritage. "This is an annual Christmas dance," said Meshon Crateau, "where the dancers teach a special routine and perform during both halftimes. It is to build community love for Hawk Nation." The HVA dance team hosts a clinic every December that's open to feeder elementary schools. Crateau's dance team also continued its holiday tradition of purchasing

blanket kits and making blankets and delivering them to Children's Hospital before Christmas. Earlier this month, Karns football players Jacob Kirkland, Keyshawn Billingsley, Austin Bailey, Zach Fisher, Michael Elliott, Jonathan Fellhoelter, Tyson Taylor and ball boy Will Taylor participated in Faith Promise and Boys and Girls Clubs' "All is Bright," a gift and food distribution for elementary and middle school age boys and girls and their

families, reported Brad Taylor, the Beavers' head coach. The Beavers' four hours of community service had to be a big help at the event on Saturday, Dec. 7, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Coming up today (Monday, Dec. 23), the Grace Christian Academy girls' basketball team will be handing out toys at Children's Hospital. Hopefully, The Focus will have more on that event in its Dec. 30 issue.



The Jr. Hawkettes and the Hawkettes put on a show at halftime of both the Hardin Valley Academy girls' and boys' basketball games on Dec. 16.



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RURAL METRO

Young A-E Roadrunners work overtime to edge Farragut Admirals 73-71

By Ken Lay

Austin-East Magnet High School boys basketball coach Marcus Stanton loves the dynamic of his young basketball team. But he knows that the Roadrunners are going to go through some growing pains this season.

It's simply inevitable.

Austin-East has just one returning player with at the least one year of full time varsity experience and that's LaRon Dixon.

Add all that to the fact that the Roadrunners played only their fifth game of the season Thursday night, and you see why the veteran coach doesn't quite know what to expect from day to day.

But Austin-East's young players got a huge confidence boost when they had to work a little overtime to nab a 73-71 victory over Farragut in the 5Star Preps Basketball Classic at the Lynn E. Sexton Gymnasium.

They notched the win when Dixon made a shot with 3.5 seconds left in the extra frame. The Admirals had a chance to win but Saish Malluri missed a potential game-winning 3-point shot as time expired in the overtime period.

"This a big win for these kids," Stanton said after his young squad improved to 4-1 on the season. "These are tough kids and they're great kids."



PHOTO BY KEN LAY.

Farragut's Robby Geron handles the ball against an Austin-East defender in the 5Star Preps Classic Thursday. Geron scored a game-high 20 points but the Roadrunners prevailed 73-71 in overtime.

"They're young kids and we made a lot of mistakes tonight. But they're extremely coachable and they want to learn. But they get frustrated with themselves and we've got to get over that."

This was a game of ups and down for both the Roadrunners and the Admirals (8-5), who won their first six games of the new campaign.

From the outset, it was obvious

that this game was going to be a battle. Farragut led 26-25 at half-time and expanded that advantage to 41-37 heading to the final eight minutes of regulation.

Austin-East scored first in the fourth quarter when freshman JaQuarius Sanders made a basket with 7 minutes, 22 seconds left.

The Admirals would chip away and they would eventually knot the game 45-45 when Malluri buried

a long-range jumper at the 5:43 mark.

The Roadrunners took a 47-45 lead before Malluri struck again with another 3-pointer to give his team the lead.

Austin-East then turned the ball over on its next two possessions and Farragut's senior point guard, Robby Geron scored the game's next four points to make it 52-47.

The Admirals would eventually

open a 57-49 lead when Malluri culminated a modest 5-2 run with another 3-pointer with 2:33 to go in regulation.

But the Roadrunners simply refused to go away.

They would pull to within 57-56 when Dixon made a pair of free throws with 43.5 seconds remaining in regulation.

Austin-East went ahead on a steal and basket by Jarrett Kyle with 34.7 seconds to go in the fourth stanza.

Farragut sent the game to overtime, in a 58-58 deadlock, on the strength of Carter Mayfield's foul shot a short time later.

In OT, Mayfield scored first but the extra frame, like the rest of the contest was a roller coaster ride with neither team able to take a lead by more than two points.

In the extra frame Kyle (who finished the game with 18 points) scored seven points.

Dixon scored four of his 17 points in overtime and Kadell Robinson made a 3-pointer and Amari Adams converted a free throw.

Sanders finished with 12 points for the Roadrunners.

For the Admirals, Mayfield scored seven of his points in OT. Malluri scored 13 points in the game and scored all of them over the final 12 minutes of the game.

Geron scored 20 points for Farragut and led all scorers.



PHOTO BY KEN LAY.

Holston Middle Camara Minefield (3) attempts to save a ball while a pair of Halls including Blayke Holbert give chase. The Lady Demons notched a 38-35 victory over the Lady Hurricanes Wednesday at Holston.

Lady Demons come back to beat Holston

By Ken Lay

Halls Middle School's girls basketball team survived a tough test in a hostile environment Wednesday afternoon.

The Lady Demons got off to fast start in their in-school game before a packed house, but were lethargic at times and fell behind Holston but they would come back and notch a hard-fought 38-35 victory over the Lady Hurricanes before a packed house in East Knoxville.

Halls, which sits in third place in the Knox County Middle School Basketball Conference standings, darted out to a 14-9 lead in the first quarter before Holston roared back

to an 18-17 lead by halftime.

The Lady Hurricanes used a 9-3 run to pull ahead by the end of the second quarter.

Holston would extend its advantage to 28-23 by the end of the third frame.

Halls would score first in the fourth quarter. The Lady Devils pulled to within 28-26 when Blayke Holbert knocked down a 3-point shot with 5 minutes, 47 seconds remaining in the game.

Holston's Natalya Hodge made it 30-28 a short time later before the Lady Demons shook themselves out of their slumbers and scored the game's next six points.

Halls opened a 34-30 lead when Megan Biliter grabbed an offensive rebound and scored with 1:20 left in the game.

From there, the Lady Demons would never trail again but Holston did pull to within 36-34 when Hodge knocked down a long-range jumper with 33.4 seconds to go.

Halls closed things out but the Lady Hurricanes would battle throughout the game as Hodge had a game-high 24 points, including 14 after halftime.

Jamiyah Williams scored eight points for Holston.

Breanna Taylor led Halls with 11 points and Holbert added nine.

Area middle school hoopsters to hit hardwood after Christmas

By Ken Lay

Schools may be closed for the holiday break and there may be a slight winter chill in the air but several middle school basketball teams will be on the hardwood after celebrating Christmas.

West Valley, Bearden, Farragut and Hardin Valley middle schools will play in the West Knoxville New Year's Tournament.

Tournament play opens Friday, Dec. 27 and the event will be co-hosted by Farragut and West Valley.

Opening pool play games at West Valley include: Lake Forest vs. the Hardin Valley boys at 11:30 a.m.; Robertsville vs. Oneida (boys) 12:30 p.m.; Bearden vs. Liberty Bell (boys) 1:35 p.m.; West Valley vs. Liberty Bell (girls); 2:40; West Valley vs. Oneida (boys) 3:45; Liberty Bell vs. West Valley (boys) 7 p.m. and Bearden vs. Liberty Bell (girls) 8:05.

Opening round games at Farragut include: Farragut

vs. Greeneville (boys) 1

p.m.; Farragut vs. New Center (girls) 2:05; New Center vs. Hardin Valley (boys) 3:10; Lake Forest vs. Greeneville (boys) 4:15; Hardin Valley vs. Lake Forest (girls) 5:20; Farragut vs. New Center (boys) 6:25 and Hardin Valley vs. New Center (girls) 7:30 p.m.

Pool play continues Dec. 28-29 at both locations and after a short break, bracket play will be on Jan. 3-4 at both schools.

Meanwhile, teams from Gresham, Halls and Powell will play in the Maverick Middle School Holiday Challenge at Anderson County High School Dec. 26-28.

Opening round girls games: Halls vs. Huntsville, noon; Fairview vs. Lake City, 3:30 p.m.; Jacksboro vs. Powell, 4:40 and LaFollette vs. Clinton 5:50.

Opening round boys games: Fairview vs. Powell, 1:10 p.m.; Halls vs. Huntsville, 2:20; Lake City vs. Gresham, 7 p.m. and LaFollette vs. Clinton, 8:10 p.m.

Demons withstand valiant effort from short-handed Hurricanes

By Ken Lay

Halls Middle School's boys basketball team may have picked a big win Wednesday afternoon but even in defeat, Holston Middle School coach Dwayne Felder was pleased as he learned something about his team.

The Hurricanes had one of their top players, who was a late scratch from the lineup.

But they hung tough

before falling to the Demons 57-43 before a packed house at an in-school game at home.

"The thing that I'm most proud of about this game is that we knew somebody was going to step up today, and we had some people do that," Felder said. "It was rough because our best player wasn't there."

The going might've been tough for the Hurricanes

(5-8 overall, 4-8 in the Knox County Middle School Basketball Conference), but the game wasn't without its bright spots for Holston, which led 13-11 after the first quarter.

The Hurricanes got a big boost from their backcourt players on this day as Jaillon Hill scored 16 points and Chris Cowan added 14 for Holston, which trailed 39-34 at third quarter's end.

For the Demons (9-5,

8-4) the game was a mixed bag according to coach Nathan Sherrod.

"There were times today when we really played well and then there were times when we really didn't play well, but this was a big win for us."

Halls was in a dogfight when it got a spark from Connor Cummings, who heated up when the Demons needed him most.

Cummings had a

game-high 22 points and scored eight in the second frame. He knocked down a pair of clutch 3-pointers to key a 14-9 surge and help the Demons capture the lead by halftime.

He had 13 points before the break.

"Connor really got hot for us and he was a leader for us today on both offense and defense," Sherrod said.

Cummings was the

brightest star of the day for the Demons but he would get plenty of help from his supporting cast as Kaiden Stanton added 11 points. Evan Workman chipped in with nine. Chandler Gamble had eight and Jake Lane, who scored 35 in a victory over Vine on Monday, Dec. 16, finished with seven against the Hurricanes.

NATIONAL SIGNING DAY



PHOTO BY DAVIS CLEM

Knoxville Catholic High School had a big National Signing Day with four of its football players inking national letters of intent. From left, Chancellor Bright (Marshall), Bryn Tucker (Clemson), Cooper Mays (Tennessee) and Tyler Baron (Tennessee).

Bryn Tucker ready for Clemson

By Alex Norman

Four-star Knoxville Catholic offensive lineman Bryn Tucker is one of the top high school football players in Tennessee and is currently ranked as the 8th best prospect in the state for the Class of 2020. Back in March he verbally committed to defending national champion Clemson and hasn't wavered from that decision.

"They want to see me at guard. I have a good frame on me and I'm a good finisher," said Tucker. "Five members of the Clemson offensive line are leaving, so I want to get my spot ready. They wanted me. I have a great bond with them. I like everything about Clemson, their great tradition, everything about them is phenomenal. I want to be a part of that with (offensive line) coach (Robbie) Caldwell. Clemson is a very special place to be. I love it. Also my decision was made for my education and just seeing where I fit with the program and I fit perfect with the program. I'm glad I made it."

Tucker signed his national letter of intent last week during the early signing period and will arrive on the Clemson campus next month.

"You always want to come in first," said Tucker. "That's better than coming in late. I think it is a good way to be closer with the team and closer with the coaches. Coming in I hope

to have a chance to start and to get to play in the spring game, which is an awesome thing to do. My personal opinion is that I think it is a good decision for me and my family."

Tucker will see a familiar face in the Clemson football complex. Amari Rodgers was a standout at Knoxville Catholic, a senior for the Fighting Irish when Tucker was a freshman. Rodgers is finishing up his junior season as one of the Tigers top offensive weapons. He's fourth on the team in receptions. "Amari didn't put any pressure on me, just told me what Clemson was about," said Tucker. "He always told me they are a great school. Anytime I went there I got to see him. That's my boy. Playing with him my freshman year I looked up to him. He was a leader and I was following in his footsteps. I liked watching him play on Saturdays and potentially on Sundays. He is phenomenal to watch."

Clemson is arguably the top program in college football right now. They've won 28 straight games and will try to win another national championship in the weeks to come. Tucker will have his chance to keep that run going. "I'm proud of what they did in conference and hopefully they stay undefeated and win a national championship."

Catholic's Baron picks Tennessee

By Steve Williams

Tyler Baron's announcement that he was signing with Tennessee was the best news to come out of Knoxville Catholic High School on National Sign Day last week, particularly for fans of the Vols.

Baron, a 6-5, 252-pound defensive end and one of the state's top five prospects in the Class of 2020, chose UT over Ohio State and Kentucky.

Catholic Head Coach Steve Matthews felt Tyler's final decision came down to picking UT over the Wildcats.

A major deciding factor for Baron was Tennessee's strong finish this season and the current direction of the program under second-year Coach Jeremy Pruitt.

"I think Tyler got along great with the current Tennessee players, and felt like Coach Pruitt is really building a solid foundation to a great future," said Matthews.

Baron joined Catholic offensive lineman Cooper Mays (6-3, 280) in signing with the Vols. Cooper, whose dad Kevin was a standout lineman at Tennessee and played in the NFL, had been committed to UT for a long time. He is expected to play offensive guard or center in college.

Cooper's brother, Cade Mays, is a standout offensive lineman at Georgia. While in high school at Catholic, Cade had been a UT commitment until the Vols' program started



PHOTO BY DAVIS CLEM

Everybody knew Tyler Byron was going to be a Vol when he put on his cap.

Continued on page 4

S-D's Young sticks with Mizzou

By Steve Williams

It was standing-room only in South-Doyle High School's Cherokee Media Center on National Signing Day.

Elijah Young, the most decorated football player in the school's history, was the center of attention.

On hand to celebrate Young's signing were close family members, teammates, friends, football families, faculty, coaches and the media.

South-Doyle Principal Tim Berry said there was no anticipation around Young's school selection, as he and his family were decked out in Missouri Tigers apparel, but there was a lot of

excitement and pride in seeing "one of our own" going Division I.

Young, a 5-10, 175-pound running back, was the Tennessee Titans' 2019 Class 5A Mr. Football and the Tennessee Gatorade Player of the Year.

He amassed 2,645 all-purpose yards and had a hand in 42 touchdowns (39 via rushing) in leading the Cherokees to the state quarterfinals and a 9-4 record.

There was a little suspense in the recruitment



Elijah Young

of Young at the end of his senior season as Missouri fired its head coach. But the SEC East Division member sent coaches to Knoxville soon after the firing to let Elijah know he was still wanted.

Young didn't waver from his commitment but later made a trip to Columbia, Mo., to meet the new head coach and came back to Knoxville convinced Missouri was where he wanted to play college football.

"The day had finally

arrived for us to celebrate his accomplishments, make brief comments and show our appreciation," said Principal Berry.

"I did make a few comments on his behalf that were important to me. I have been in this business for 30 years and watched a lot of great athletes come and go; some making it big, but many not meeting the expectations of the next level.

"Elijah has taken care of his important work in the classroom, overcome many obstacles along the way and not only turned out to be a phenomenal football player, but an even better person."

Added Head Coach Clark

Duncan: "We are extremely excited for Elijah and the next chapter in his life. He plans to graduate in December and be an early enrollee at Missouri this January."

WEBB A BUCCANEER: Powell standout Colton Webb signed Wednesday with East Tennessee State University. A lot of family, friends and students were on hand for the signing.

The Buccaneers recruited Webb as a defensive lineman. "It all depends on the scheme, whether they play him as an end or tackle," said Powell Head Coach Matt Lowe.

Webb was the only defensive semifinalist for the Tennessee Titans' Class 5A Mr.

Football Award this season.

"The pure energy he brought every single day was unbelievable," said Lowe. "I am a 100 percent firm believer that Colton Webb's best football is still ahead of him."

FORMER HAWK SIGNS: Cartez Campbell, a May 2019 Hardin Valley Academy graduate, signed with Georgetown University Wednesday, reported HVA Head Coach Mike Potter.

Cartez (6-2, 200) will be playing safety. He also played free safety for the Hawks.

Georgetown plays in the NCAA Division I FCS Patriot League in football.

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HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS NOTEBOOK

Carter plans to have new football coach in early January

By Steve Williams

Carter High is again searching for a head coach who can bring its football program stability.

Scott Meadows recently resigned after the end of the 2019 season to take the head post at Pigeon Forge, where he had been head coach before.

The Carter program has had five different head coaches since 2013 when Heath Woods resigned.

Jeff McMillan stayed three years. Derek Witt had the job one season (2017) and Vic Wharton was interim coach in 2018.

Woods (2002-2013) had a 59-42 record and led the Hornets to multiple back-to-back region championships.

Carter was 3-7 overall and 1-5 in Region 2-5A under Meadows this past season.

Jewel Brock, Carter athletic director, is working to find a new coach.

"Interview process started Tuesday," stated Brock via email. "Trying to interview two or three each day. The job is still advertised. Numerous applicants. Job will be announced Jan. 6 - Jan. 10."

NEW AT CLINTON: Darell Keith is the new head football coach at Clinton, which plays in Region 2-5A. He replaces Randy McKamey, who resigned after three seasons with the Dragons' program.

Keith, 53, comes to



New Clinton head football coach Darell Keith was welcomed by fans at a "meet and greet" Thursday night at the Hollingsworth Sportsplex.

Clinton from Todd County High in Kentucky, where he guided that school to back-to-back playoff berths in his only previous head post.

The Dragons haven't had a winning season since 2014, but after watching all of Clinton's game films from this past season, Keith said, "I'm impressed. It's not as bad as you think it is."

He plans to "instill old school grit in a new school frame."

Keith, who becomes Clinton's first African American head football coach in school history, also has a strong military background,

having earned the rank of Master Sergeant after serving 29 years in the service.

A potential bonus to the hire too is the fact that Keith's son, Joshua, an eighth grader, is the top rated quarterback in Kentucky in his age group.

GCA SHINES: Ethan Vaden hit a 3-point shot to lift Grace Christian Academy's basketball team to a 59-58 win over up and coming Lakeway Christian on Dec. 13.

The Morristown area school is in line to become a new TSSAA member next year.

Austin Sykes led the

Rams' big win with 15 points. BJ Marable pulled down a team-high nine rebounds. Cooper Riggs and Jaylen Geer each contributed four assists.

For Lakeway, standout guard Daunte Harris, who has signed with Georgetown, poured in 28 points.

"Daunte played well," emailed JP Payne, who reported the game. "He made tough contested shots. He's very athletic and quick."

Harris formerly played point guard at Alcoa.

EAST STARS WIN: The East beat the West 20-7 in the 13th annual Tennessee High School All-Star Football Classic Dec. 13 at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville.

West High's Omarian Wright was named MVP of the East offense. Wright had four receptions for 69 yards, including a 31-yard touchdown catch in the second quarter at Fortera Stadium.

Knox County also had several other players who stood out in the game. Trey Foster of Austin-East was the East squad's leading rusher with 55 net yards on 14 carries.

Hardin Valley's Kelton Gunn snagged a 26-yard TD pass from Farragut quarterback Gavin Wilkinson for the East team's first touchdown of the game in the opening quarter.

Defensively, Drew Francis of West had two solo

stops, one assist and a sack. Powell's Bailor Hughes was in on three tackles plus intercepted a pass and broke up another. Tyrece Edwards of West had two solo stops and a tackle for loss.

ROSSER HONORED: A Coach of the Year award given by Rivalry Thursday/Pilot High School Heroes has been presented to Central Coach Bryson Rosser, according to Central Athletic Director J.D. Lambert. Rosser guided the Bobcats to their second straight Class 5A state championship this season.

BOWLING LEADERS: Bearden's boys and girls teams captured the regular season championships in District 4 and will be seeking post-season honors after the holidays.

The Top 5 individual averages for District 4 boys at the end of the regular season: Ben Whitaker (Bearden) 195, Dillon Bunch (Central) 191, Tyler Fries (Bearden) 187, Andrew D'Anna (Central) 174 and Anthony Stoker (Carter) 173.

Top 5 girls' averages in District 4: Kristy Dean (Bearden) 177, Lucy Edwards (South-Doyle) 163, Grace Brison (L&N STEM Academy) 152, Christina Bogart (Central) 135 and Cori Plankers (Hardin Valley) 132.

Catholic's Baron picks Tennessee

Cont. from page 3

spiraling downward under former coach Butch Jones.

Two other Catholic players - offensive lineman Bryn Tucker (6-3, 310) and athlete (WR / DB) Chancellor Bright - also signed national letters of intent Wednesday, with Tucker inking scholarship papers with defending national champion Clemson and Bright with Marshall University.

"It was a good day for these young men, but also a good day for our football program and our school as well," said Coach Matthews.

"All these guys are outstanding young men, and we are looking forward to following their progress in the future."

Baron, who plans to enroll at UT this summer, transferred to Catholic from Nashville Ensworth in January. He led Catholic in total tackles (103), tackles for loss (16.5), sacks (4.5), forced fumbles (three) and fumble recoveries (two).

Baron and Mays joined Maryville running back Tee Hodge and Greeneville long snapper Will Albright as East Tennessee players to sign with the Vols in the early signing period. All four come from outstanding high school football programs.

ARKANSAS commitments Drew Francis and Tyrece Edwards of West High did not sign in the early signing period and are going to take official visits to Fayetteville in January to meet and get to know the Razorbacks' new head football coach, said West Coach Lamar Brown.

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The Doctor is in

a weekly column by
Dr. Jim Ferguson

Stories

Like a person's life, a culture is comprised of stories. And at this time of the year virtually everyone has a Christmas story or a Holiday tradition.

To a certain extent, humans are creatures of habit and comfort. We like things as we remember them and especially those that brought joy like we experienced on Christmas morning as a kid.

The Christmas story is well known to the faithful and even nonbelievers. Interestingly, the story exists in our minds as a composite. We know of Jesus' birth from the gospel accounts in Matthew and Luke which were written down nearly a half century later. Nonetheless, I believe these stories are valid because the gospelers were inspired. The writers were not scientists or historians, but their stories would have vanished in the sands of time if the stories lacked a truth which

resonates even today. Their focus was on the spiritual implications of an otherwise obscure birth in a small Judean town. Ultimately, this birth, two millennia ago, changed the world.

Since I'm Protestant Christian and an internist, the account by Luke particularly resonates with me. Writing in the late fifties (AD), Luke begins his account after he had "carefully investigated everything from the beginning," just as an internist would do. Luke then tells the story of John the Baptist's parents, including a visitation by the angel Gabriel who then appeared to Mary, Jesus's mother.

Two thousand years ago there were four major Hebrew factions operative in Judea. There were Zealots who wanted a Jewish revolution to throw off Roman rule. There were Essenes who felt the

culture was rotting and ultimately withdrew to a cloistered existence in places like Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found.

The other two factions were the Sadducees and Pharisees. These were especially active during Jesus' ministry thirty years later. The Sadducees were the "go along to get along" crowd who controlled the lucrative Temple money exchange concession. They did not believe in an afterlife nor did they believe in angels. Pharisees believed in "the world to come" and heavenly messengers.

The Greek word for an angel is a messenger. From art we have visions of angels with wings, but the only celestial beings with wings mentioned in the Bible are cherubim and seraphim (Revelations). The movie Michael starring John Travolta is not a reputable reference source for angelic appearance!

There is debate among scholars regarding virgin birth. Suffice it to say there is no way to prove or disprove this. However, just because man can't measure or prove something doesn't exclude a miracle, defined as something "inexplicable by natural or scientific laws."

The Lukan story of Gabriel's message to Mary offers one of the most magical

and mysterious moments in Biblical prose. Mary asks the angelic messenger how she can bear "the son of the Most High." Gabriel announces, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." Truly sublime.

A friend of mine is a researcher and a relatively new convert to Christianity. Like me, his faith is strengthened by learning beyond scripture. By analogy, I believe a simple melody is supplemented by a full symphonic orchestra.

My friend uses the power of the internet to supplement scripture with knowledge gleaned from the ancient history of Rome and the Hebrews of Jesus' time as well as modern science and archeology. He's found archeological discoveries which offer amazing corroboration of ancient scripture. Also, he's found that Jesus was probably born in three BC, now supported by astronomical events documented through computer generated models of the heavens in ancient Judea. Herod's death, once thought to have been in four BC, more than likely occurred in one BC and is supported by modern celestial models. This date dovetails with the massacre of infants and the flight to Egypt recorded in scripture.

As I listened to First Church's beautiful Christmas Cantata, musically telling the old, old story, I thought about how different venues, experiences and presentations of the same account give nuanced insights. I am challenged to rethink my position when I hear or see something new or moved by something beautiful like the "Hallelujah Chorus" of Handel's "Messiah." By the way, did you know the German Handel wrote his "Messiah" in English for Easter rather than for Christmas?

I'm a time-bound philosopher, and historically I focused on the future and less so on the past or the present. However, in the fall of my life I'm trying to be more focused on the present. I was never one to ruminate on the past.

Like children, grandchildren can teach you much if you listen. It was Wordsworth who said, "The Child is father of the Man." Recently, we were quizzing my grandson about timely family issues by engaging him with small talk. After a bit he became flummoxed and told my wife, "BeBe, I can only do right now!" What a profound philosophical truth for a six year old and even a sixty-eight year old.

As 2019 comes to an end, we time-bound

creatures often reflect over the past year and think of the next. Don't worry, I'm not angling toward New Year's resolutions. My reflections revolve around the notions of being comfortable in the present moment versus complacency. I'm comfortable in my skin, my position and my faith journey. However, I challenge myself with the question whether comfortable is a good place for me to be. The Master said we "will have troubles in this world" and Paul said what you do with troubles defines your life.

And this brings me to complacency, defined as a "smug (excessive pride) or uncritical satisfaction with oneself. After much reflection, I conclude that I am not complacent. However, this is my opinion rather than the Master's, who sees my soul beyond my facade. I trust that my conscience is directed by the Spirit.

I accept the fact that I am a sinner walking the tightrope of life with faith. Fortunately, one of my favorite writers, Phillip Yancey, offers beautiful solace with the image of a "safety net of Grace" under us all. A good perspective at any year's end.

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

From Tedium to Amazement

I don't know about you, but I tend to need constant reminders as to what the real meaning of Christmas is all about. With running from party to party, or store to store, you can easily get distracted. On top of this we battle monotony and tedium. Many of us are just going through the motions of another year that has flown by without clear direction or purpose. Instead of wandering through life, we want to be amazed by something unexpected or unfamiliar



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

that will lead to a life of praise to our great God. The story of the incarnation, the birth of God in the flesh, should cause us to marvel and lead to praise, but instead, we have heard the story over and over so many times that it can lose its wonder.

Part of the problem is simply familiarity with the birth story of Jesus. Whether we heard this story for the first time from a Bible class or by watching "Charlie Brown Christmas," it can become stale. Each year I find it challenging to

preach Christmas sermons in a fresh way. We don't want the story to lose its amazement, but it can. We can take it for granted and we miss what is really happening. As they say, familiarity breeds indifference. Michael Yaconelli wrote in his book, Dangerous Wonder, "The greatest threat to Christianity may be people who say they believe in Jesus, but are no longer astonished and amazed at what he has done for them."

As disciples of Jesus, we believe the Christmas story to be true, but we may not be motivated by the importance of the story to want to share it with others.

We can keep it to ourselves. Let us recapture the wonder and amazement of the coming of Jesus and what he accomplished through his life, death, and resurrection - the gospel.

Let God do for us what he did to the shepherds. It is doubtful anyone wanted to be a professional shepherd. In the first century, shepherds were considered unclean and could not worship in the Temple. They were not allowed to give testimony in the court of law because they were not considered trustworthy. They often spent months at a time living out in the open fields with their sheep, which made them smelly

and dirty. Yet it was to shepherds that angels first appeared to share the good news of the birth of Jesus. And it was shepherds who gave the first testimony to others of the coming of the Messiah and they were the first to worship openly, giving praise and glory to God. The shepherds were changed men.

After getting news of this event from the angels, the shepherds responded by saying, "Let us go see this thing that has happened" (Luke 2:15). The word "see" means to stare intensely and to examine closely. They stopped what they were doing to take a close look. Let us do the same in this season of

frantic living.

A shepherd could have felt like their life lacked purpose, leaving them discouraged when life was not what they thought. But these sheep herders had a surprise coming. God had special plans for them. It was unexpected, but that is how God loves to work. You might be discouraged that your life has not gone the way you imagined. But God wants you, like the shepherds, to praise and worship him by taking the focus off your problems and the tedium of life and put them on God. The Christmas story should illicit awe and amazement.

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A Windsor Gardens Christmas Each year Windsor Gardens Assisted Living hosts a Christmas party for all residents, staff, volunteers and family members. This year's party was fantastic!! The 200+ guests enjoyed the most delicious food, precious company, and entertainers that made everyone want to get up and dance. And of course there was a visit from Santa and the Grinch!! Above, Entertainers Karen and Barry S. perform for guests of the Christmas Party.

Most city services operating through the holidays

City of Knoxville offices will be closed Christmas Eve on Tuesday, Dec. 24, Christmas Day on Wednesday, Dec. 25, and New Year's Day, Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2020. Additionally, Knoxville Area Transit buses and trolleys do not run on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

For getting out and around during the holidays, KAT buses and trolleys will run on Saturday schedules on Tuesday, Dec. 24, and on regular Monday schedules on Tuesday, Dec. 31.

There will be no household garbage or recycling collection Wednesday, Dec. 25. Residential and downtown collections will resume Thursday, Dec. 26, and pickups will be one day behind the regular schedule. Wednesday routes will be picked up on Thursday. Thursday routes will be picked up Friday, and so on through Saturday.

Waste Connections will pick up garbage and recycling on Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2020. However, their offices will be closed.

For tips on how to prevent waste by recycling or

donating gently used items during this giving season, please visit knoxvilletn.gov/recyclingguide.

Properly bagged excess holiday household trash and broken-down cardboard set next to full garbage carts will be picked up. Please remember to have garbage and recycling containers out for pickup before 7 a.m. on your respective pickup day.

City recycling centers will be open, but the Goodwill attendant will only be available for household goods donations for a half day on Tuesday, Dec. 24. The center will be unstaffed but open for recycling drop-off on Wednesday, Dec. 25, and Wednesday, Jan. 1.

Holiday recycling is extended to live Christmas trees. If you're a City of Knoxville resident, you can place bare trees at the curb for Public Service workers to collect as time and resources allow during the ongoing leaf collection season.

Christmas trees can also be taken to Knox County Convenience Centers for

recycling. Knox County Convenience Centers do not accept waste from businesses, commercial institutions or nonprofit organizations.

For more information about Christmas Tree and Christmas lights recycling, visit <https://bit.ly/34zLy6Y>

The City's Solid Waste Management Facility located at 1033 Elm Street will be closed on Tuesday, Dec. 24, and Wednesday, Dec. 25, with normal hours resuming Thursday, Dec. 26. For the New Year's Day holiday, the Facility will be closed Wednesday, Jan. 1, with normal hours resuming Thursday, Jan. 2.

Free for City Residents Day at the Solid Waste Management Facility is Saturday, Jan. 4, 2020, the first Saturday of the month, as usual. This service is for City of Knoxville residents only.

As a general reminder, Christmas and Thanksgiving are the only days of the year when curbside trash and recycling are not picked up as scheduled.

service directory

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