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Knox 911 Board looks at new budget, future needs

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
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It's going to be a busy new fiscal year for the 911 organization. A meeting Wednesday morning detailed Knox 911's growth, changes, need for more employees, and a budget that is \$4 million higher than the previous budget. The Knoxville-Knox County Emergency Communication District Board heard from the director, personnel committee, and finance committee.

Finance Director John Fugate spoke of the \$13 million operating budget, the increase in employee benefits, and the expense of the upcoming backup center at the city's new Safety Center. The total

proposed overall budget is \$17.1 million and includes new programs, wages and benefits.

Director Brad Anders reported that employees may be eligible for as much as \$750 from existing funds based on their quarterly employment history. He also said that the district is hoping to become the dispatcher for whoever wins the new EMS contract with the county. If Knox 911 becomes that dispatcher, he said it will be necessary to hire more employees. Fugate moved to authorize the bonus to employees and it passed unanimously.

"We should be the dispatcher," Anders told the meeting, saying that Knox 911's participation will allow for a "better flow

of technology." He also replied to a question about staffing, saying, "We don't have any built-in relief" for employees absent from work.

Anders said the backup location in the new Safety Center has been delayed but that electronics and a telephone system should be up and working by August 31. He said everything else is in place and "Hopefully we'll be in there by the end of the year."

Janette Burgin, the citizen representative on the board, asked about the Mission Critical Study of the system. Anders said the study isn't complete and will be reviewed once it is. He said the

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PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

Knox 911's Financial Director John Fugate spoke of the budget increase for the agency and the funds needed for a backup system in the new Knoxville Safety Center.

City Council Passes Alternative Response Team Resolutions

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
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An unexpected compromise led to the passing of two resolutions at the Knoxville City Council meeting Tuesday evening, both aimed at creating an Alternative Response Team. The team, which would include a mental health worker and a medical professional, had resolutions introduced by Vice Mayor Andrew Roberto and Councilwoman Amelia Parker.

Both ideas involve a pledge by Mayor India Kincannon to allot \$50,000 in possible matching funds to kick off the effort.

Several citizens and health professionals spoke to the idea during the long discussion and an amendment to Roberto's proposal by Councilwoman Seema Singh resolved the difference between the Roberto and Parker resolutions.

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Three Rivers Republicans Meet



PHOTOS BY KEN LAY

Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs (center) with Three Rivers Republican Club Vice President Mike Brown, President Chuck Frazier, Treasurer John Marshall and Secretary Mark Mugford. Jacobs called for unity Tuesday in his remarks at the club's June meeting.

Jacobs calls for growth, unity at Three Rivers Republican Club

By Ken Lay

Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs issued a call for unity Tuesday night at a local Republican Club meeting.

And his words were potentially sobering at the Three Rivers Republican Club monthly meeting at the Marbledale Baptist Church Fellowship Hall.

"If the current trend continues, Knox County will become a purple county," Jacobs said. "When I ran in 2018, I won the Republican Primary by 23 votes, and in 2022, 54,000 people voted and that was down 30 percent from the people who voted in 2018.

"On the Republican side (in the general election in 2022), voter turnout was down 41 percent. On the Democrat side, voter turnout was only down seven percent. That was not good for Republicans."

Jacobs and others stressed the need to take the party back to the grassroots.

"We need to go out and knock on doors," Jacobs said. "For all of their faults, the Democrats are



Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs addresses the Three Rivers Republican Club Tuesday night at Marbledale Baptist Church. Jacobs called for unity within the party in his remarks.

well-organized and they work hard."

Jacobs also noted that he was excited about the turnout at the Three Rivers Republican Club, which serves South Knoxville as well as the Corryton and Strawberry Plains Areas.

In his call for unity, the mayor invoked the name of one of the country's most popular and successful presidents.

"I'm a big fan of Ronald Reagan and Ronald Reagan had the 11th Commandment, 'Thou shalt not speak ill of other Republicans,'" Jacobs said. "We can duke it out in here, but when we get out there, we must support our fellow Republicans.

"Ronald Reagan also said that if a person agrees with me 80 percent of the time, they're my ally, my friend. We tend to focus more on

the areas where we disagree. We need somebody to fight and we've ended up fighting with each other."

Knox County's population has experienced a growth explosion since the COVID-19 pandemic as people are relocating from the Northeast and West Coast and Jacobs noted that those coming to East Tennessee are doing so to flee high taxes and government regulations.

"Knox County is growing and people are coming here to avoid high taxes because raising taxes doesn't work, it just gives government more money to waste," Jacobs said. "We need to grow this party and make sure that we get the people coming in here into the party.

"The Democrats have gone way too far."

Also at Tuesday night's meeting, Knoxville Focus publisher Steve Hunley unveiled a plan for a centralized website that would incorporate all of the Knoxville Republican Clubs.

The site would also contain candidate pages and links to every Republican Club in Knox County.



Tennessee Secretary of State Tre Hargett presented the Knox County Public Library and Director Myretta Black with a Metro Grant check Thursday afternoon at the Lawson-McGhee Branch. Pictured with Hargett and Black is Knoxville County Mayor Glenn Jacobs.

Hargett presents Knox County Public Library with Metro Grant

By Ken Lay

Tennessee Secretary of State Tre Hargett was in Downtown Knoxville last week as he presented a grant check to the Knox County Public Library at the Lawson-McGhee branch.

Hargett presented Knox County Public Library Director Myretta Black with a check in the amount of \$642,235 as a Metro Grant.

Glenn Jacobs also participated in the ceremony.

Hargett said that the library systems in the state's four largest metropolitan areas (Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville and Chattanooga) are not funded like the other nine regional systems.

"The four major metropolitan library systems are not funded by the state like the other regional libraries," Hargett said. "We

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Dr. Fred Hurst: One Of Tennessee's Best

From a distance



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

time that I started my law practice, so he has been my doctor for close to 50 years.

One of the last times I went to see him, I told him as seriously as I could that I wanted to make a deal with him. I said, "25 years from now, I want you to give the eulogy at my funeral." He had a big laugh and then said he would do that if I would make the same deal with him.

Most doctors are making so much money now that many, especially specialists, are retiring in their 50s or early 60s. Fred and I are around the same age, and I am sure he could have begun a very comfortable retirement many years ago. But he is still going strong.

He has a heart of gold and loves taking care of people and I am thankful for that, and many, many others are thankful, too. Fred has touched

thousands of lives in good and positive ways.

When I married my late wife, Lynn, we just had a very small wedding in the home where I grew up in Holston Hills. Fred was one of the very small group of friends and family that were there and served as our unofficial-official photographer.

A few months ago, my new wife, Vickie, became very concerned about some severe chest pains I was having and insisted on taking me to see Fred. He immediately eased her concerns when he told her, "Vickie, I have seen Jimmy when he was really sick. He is not sick today."

In fact, I have been to Fred for several different illnesses over the years, and he has almost always diagnosed me correctly and very quickly.

Unfortunately, almost everybody today has had a

mother, father, son, daughter, brother, or sister who has gone through a divorce or has been divorced themselves. Fred had a short marriage many years ago, but he and I have a mutual friend who is going through a divorce now. Fred made this friend feel much better when he told him to "join the club" and talked to him with love and kindness.

Fred has had a very long, happy marriage to his wife Deena, and they raised a fine son, James, who is in medical practice with his Dad. Fred's and Deena's pride and joy now are their two good-looking, intelligent grandchildren.

I told James several years ago that I would probably have to come to him someday and that he would probably tell me to do something for my health and that I would tell him "Your Dad never would have made me do that."

Fred has such an outgoing personality that he makes everyone feel better. He should teach young doctors about bedside manner because he is the best.

My two sons and I caught on to one of his methods some time ago when we found that all three of us had been to see him for different problems over the preceding year or so. Fred had told all three of us that he had had that same illness or problem, and almost immediately each of us started feeling better.

Fred has been good friends with many Democrats like Vice President Al Gore, former Democratic State Chairman Roy Herron, Jake and C.H. Butcher, and others. Fred's former medical partner, Dr. Larry Huskey, also was a staunch Democrat.

I told Dr. Huskey one day that whenever Fred is around me, he is a staunch

Republican. I know he is a fiscal conservative because I don't believe I ever got a campaign contribution out of him.

But Fred has always had a great interest in politics and great love for this country.

I thought and still think so much of him that I sent the very first letter on my new Congressional letterhead to him, and more than 30 years later I sent my very last letter on my Congressional letterhead to him.

Fred Hurst is not only a great doctor, but more importantly, he is a good and kind husband, father and grandfather, and a dear and cherished friend to me and many others.

This great country would be an even better place if it had more men like Dr. Fred Hurst.

City Council Passes Alternative Response Team Resolutions

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The Roberto idea, sponsored also by Councilmembers Lauren Rider, Singh, Tommy Smith and Charles Thomas, would find partnerships to address mental health, substance abuse and behavioral health needs and seek matching funds and cooperation from Knox County and Tennessee. It also includes provisions for a local long-term psychiatric hospital. Singh moved to drop "multijurisdictional" from the verbiage regarding the creation of the Alternative Response Team. Roberto accepted the change and the amendment passed

unanimously. Parker had two related resolutions and dropped one of them after the discussion. Her approved resolution sets a workshop on the issue and a public hearing in January and includes involving homelessness being aided by the team.

The city co-responder program will soon have four teams after the recent addition of a new mental health worker. The current model, which responds to some 911 emergency calls, includes a medical or mental health worker and a city police officer. The proposed Alternative Response Team does not

include an officer responder unless needed.

Several council members addressed the idea including Smith and Thomas, who both lamented the lack of cooperation between Knoxville Heart and the Helen Ross McNabb Center. Heart's three-year effort to create a response team culminated in the passing of both resolutions.

Parker said the resolutions will lead to "an investment in the city" and that Knoxville will take the lead in creating such a team. Roberto said a work session with the county is set for August 1.

Who's fooling who?

July 3 marks my 78th birthday. Once I had an animated discussion with my mother. I was exasperated and said, "Why did you have me?" She replied, "We didn't know it was going to be you."



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

Bobby Womack sang "Who's fooling who?" Abraham Lincoln said, "You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time". Obviously, Lincoln was not talking about today's Democrat voters who appear to be fooled all the time. For example, almost 80 percent of Jews vote Democrat despite virtually every openly anti-Semitic politician being a Democrat. One of the anti-Semites in Congress, Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) attempted to host an event condemning the founding of Israel at the Capitol Visitors' Center. A group of 2,000 rabbis sent a letter urging the condemnation of the meeting. House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) not only condemned the meeting, but also blocked the group from meeting in the visitors' center. However, Bernie Sanders (I-VT) invited Tlaib to have the event in his Senate committee hearing room. Senate majority leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) who is Jewish did nothing to stop the event. Of the 37 Jews in Congress only Jacky Rosen (D-NV) spoke up against the event. All the other members of Congress that condemned the event were Republicans. Why are the Jews in Congress silent in the face of the virulent hatred of Israel by Democrats like Tlaib? Why do Jews stay loyal to the Democratic Party when

so many "progressives" are anti-Semitic? I guess the analogy is when southern blacks were overwhelmingly Democrats even though virtually every elected official was a white segregationist

Democrat. Apparently, you can fool most of the Jewish Democrats most of the time.

Why do blacks remain the most loyal Democrats when the Democrats actively work against black empowerment? Almost 90 percent of blacks vote Democrat even though blacks are mostly conservative. Blacks are mainly Christians while the Democratic Party openly disdains Christianity and the percentage of white Democrats who are Christians has dropped precipitously over the years. Fewer blacks support affirmative action than do white Democrats. Fewer blacks support LBGQT than white Democrats. More blacks are against defunding the police. Blacks are less tolerant of the influx of immigrants and most importantly more blacks favor school choice than white Democrats (who only favor choice for their own kids). The Democrats want to raise the minimum wage even though it is most responsible for the depression-era size of black teenage unemployment. The Democrats disdain right-to-work laws which increase black employment. Apparently, black Democrats can be fooled all the time.

Then there are the unions who donate most of their money to the Democrats who are zealously pushing a green agenda shouting that climate change is the greatest existential threat (other than white supremacy) in

the history of the planet. Democrats are trying to ban internal combustion engines wanting automobiles and trucks to go electric. They are trying to ban gas-powered lawnmowers, weed eaters and gas stoves. They want buildings to be all electric. They wait that liquified natural gas harms the environment and are conducting a war on fossil energy. The Democrats are handing out trillion dollars to their buddies to subsidize electric-powered stuff. Well, there are around 500,000 workers building automobile engines and working in auto assembly plants. If the auto industry goes all-electric then between 30-50% of those workers will lose their jobs because EVs are simpler and require fewer parts than traditional engines. Yet the unions keep sending their money to Democrats and are financing their own demise. Obviously, you can fool all the unions all the time.

Lastly, the women are mostly Democrats. One reason is abortion. However, all women in the Democrat establishment have apparently thrown the women's movement under the proverbial bus. How else can one explain why every woman in Congress voted against a Republican-sponsored bill to ban biological males from competing against females in sports and using women's locker rooms and bathrooms? Every Democrat woman in Congress apparently favors trans people over biological females. Surely this can't be true of most of the women who loyally vote Democrat. Is support for abortion so important that women's rights are of secondary importance to Democrat women? Apparently so. I guess you can also fool all of the women Democrats all of the time.



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Publisher's Positions



By Steve Hunley, Publisher
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Kincannon told the city council she needed six figures to spend on someone who could write a grant to seek infrastructure funds from the Biden administration. So the council, having all the backbone of a muffin, ponied up the money. Apparently, there was nobody in all of city government already on the payroll, nor at UT, who could write a federal grant application. Not one member of the city council, to my knowledge, had the foresight to ask if the city employed a grant writer. So, more than \$100,000 later, the Biden folks sent back a note saying: "NO." The daily newspaper is fluttering and wringing its hands. Is the new "pedestrian" bridge in trouble? As the old folks used to say, someone would have to be "bold as brass" to refer to it as a "pedestrian bridge" as the Sentinel did. Knoxville and her pedestrians have as much need for that bridge as an old maid needs a shaving mug.

Kincannon warbled that she will persevere and pointed to the \$20 million in funding the State of Tennessee has offered. Of course, Knox County was more polite than the Biden administration, but Mayor Glenn Jacobs told Indya thanks, but no thanks. That's one big reason why the county isn't hiking property taxes every four years. Now the feds have said they have better things to spend our money on, but Indya is resolute. The bridge must be built and she huffs and puffs that she will find a way. The only way forward is to take it right out of your pockets. That's her go-to move and she's a one-trick

pony.

Quid Pro Quo?

The news that wasn't news last week was Councilwoman Lynne Fugate bragging she had been "enthusiastically" endorsed by Mayor Indya Kincannon. Well of course she was. That was the closure to the deal made when Fugate voted to raise property taxes by 40%. Once Fugate did that, the fix was in for Kincannon's support.

Fugate, speaking before the Center City Republican Club, made the statement to the effect that the "mayor raises taxes every four years" in the city. First of all, the mayor doesn't have a vote in raising the property tax; the city council does. It was Lynne Fugate who voted to raise the property tax 40%, although it was certainly at Kincannon's bidding. It also begs one really big question: Why does a government 1/3 the size of that of Knox County have to raise property taxes every four years when the county hasn't raised them in 25 years? The answer is as clear as a sunny spring day. The county is better run, better managed and not afflicted with the squander-spending of the city. When nailed about having jacked up property taxes 40% and having raised the mortgages and rents of working people, all Kincannon and Fugate can mumble is something about "affordable housing." So, you raised the rents and mortgages of working families to build subsidized housing inside the city, at the expense of existing neighborhoods. Kincannon's endorsement might

as well be that of Bozo the Clown. I'll go ahead and predict the next endorsement for Follow-the-Leader Fugate: Bozo's mamma, former Mayor Madeline Rogero.

Liberal Definitions... Really?

Theotis Robinson recently had an column in the daily paper regarding the origin of "woke." I've frequently said and will say it again, if the Knoxville News-Sentinel was not allowed to write about food or race, it would come inside a fortune cookie. In his column, Robinson insists Governor Ron DeSantis has "twisted" the definition of the word "woke." Really? Citing "a race and culture reporter for ABC news" as his source, Robinson goes on a dizzying merry-go-round ride of silliness in trying to prove DeSantis twisted the meaning of wokeness. If anyone in this country has abused, twisted, and debased the actual meaning of words in this country, it is Robinson's friends on the Left. In fact, the Left tries to cancel people from work and life for not adhering to their recycled definitions of words. The Left changes the meaning of words and language so quickly even they have trouble keeping up. For the Left, it's not a word game; instead, it's an effort to remold society into something more to their liking. Robinson cites Frederick Douglass and Dr. Martin Luther King as two people who he thinks were "woke." Yet both were absolute in their conviction and desire to see a society that was

colorblind, which is anathema to the Left today. They hate the notion of someone rising due to the content of their character, rather than the color of their skin. Which is what the new decision by the U. S. Supreme Court has just done.

Citing a news reporter for the corporate media as an expert on the meaning of "woke" is like picking one of the Seven Dwarfs as an expert on mining. Actually, the Seven Dwarfs were miners so they probably would know what they were talking about.

Thank You, SCOTUS

The decision by the U. S. Supreme Court took a bold step to realizing the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King and Frederick Douglass for a society that is colorblind and insists that the American Dream is for every American - ALL Americans. The very notion a person can be limited because of his/her background and skin color is racist in itself. The case of Students of Fair Admissions v. Harvard University and the University of North Carolina, for all Americans, especially Asian-Americans. Asian-Americans have found their own opportunities blocked, all in the name of diversity. Interesting how in the past 40 years none of us ever heard the corporate media cite the fact the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race. Yet it was the same mainstream media which tried to ignore the brutal and vicious assaults against Asian-Americans throughout the country, precisely because it didn't fit their

own narrative (the attackers weren't white).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 never stopped universities and colleges from denying entry to those minorities who weren't favored. That proves the notion that if one group of people can be favored, it means there are others that are unfavored. That has always been true in every totalitarian regime on earth. The Nazis openly unfavored the mentally challenged, gypsies, gay people, and of course, Jews.

The discrimination was so blatant and noticeable that the Princeton Review, "a company dedicated to college prep and test-taking strategies," counseled Asian-American high school students to avoid providing colleges and universities photographs of themselves when applying for admission. So, too did the Princeton Review advise Asian-American high schoolers not to answer any questions about their ethnic background, as well as not writing essays about their cultures. You'd think the Left in this country, if they indeed worried about the rights of minorities, would be all over that. Nope. Nada. Nothing. The Left didn't give a hoot about Asian-Americans and the discrimination against them. Nor will you hear anything about it now. The corporate media is busy trying to put every Asian face it can find right now in front of a TV camera to divert attention from a very real problem. Woke has nothing to do with justice for anyone, except for those it favors at the moment. The woke Left's idea of justice isn't for all and it isn't equal.

Knox 911 Board looks at new budget, future

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independent study is looking at things such as call volume, salaries, benefits and operations and compares the Knox 911 system to other systems.

Anders said the 911 call center gets about 600,000 calls each year and talked about the ongoing mental health benefits available to employees. Anders also said that eight new call

center staff members are being added and a new class starts this fall for 8-10 possible employees.

The call center is looking for a new assistant operations manager and working on a technology upgrade and possibly placing a new tower on House Mountain. Anders said that he is working with the schools on a response system and with KUB for a fiber system.

County honors student advocate and champion Ronni Chandler



Project GRAD's Vrontdelia "Ronni" Chandler (center) was honored by the Knox County Commission last week for her combined 45 years of service to public education. She is retiring as CEO of the organization.

Hargett presents Knox County Public Library with Metro Grant

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have nine regional library systems.

"The libraries in our four largest metropolitan areas, Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville and Chattanooga fund themselves and those four systems went to Governor (Bill) Lee because they didn't get their fair share. We provide resources for our nine rural libraries system."

Lee allocated \$1.5 million in non-recurring and another \$1.5 in recurring funds. After one year, the non-recurring funds went away, but the recurring

funds continue to benefit the state's four largest metropolitan library systems.

"We need to build circulation and new materials and resources are made available every day," Hargett

said.

"We have to bring in the new resources and get rid of the ones that are no longer being checked out, and this is all a part of that."

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Commission supports renaming Clingmans Dome

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
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The Eastern Band of the Cherokee was successful in obtaining the

support of the Knox County Commission to re-establish the original tribal name of "Kuwohi" to Clingmans Dome.



Kim Frazier and the Knox County Commissioners honored the East Tennessee Veterans Honor Guard last week for their highest score in the state for its recent State Cemetery Evaluation score of 98. The 40 member volunteer honor guard never charges for its service and averages appearing at more than 300 veteran funerals each year. Sergeant Stuart Hall spoke briefly to thank the commission for the recognition.

2021 Jeep Grand Cherokee Trail Hawk \$41,950
2021 Toyota RAV4 XLE Loaded, 8K Miles \$36,940
2021 Ford Expedition LTD, 4X4, Loaded \$64,770
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Clingmans Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains is the highest point in Tennessee and the tribe is petitioning the federal government to restore the title. For more than 150 years the peak has been known for former U.S. Congressman and Senator and Confederate General Thomas Clingman. Prior to that is was Kuwohi, meaning mulberry place, and was a hideout for Cherokee who resisted the Cherokee Removal.

The split vote saw two commissioners, John Schoonmaker and Carson Dailey, vote "No" with Schoonmaker noting the historic designation that is listed on the National

Registry of Historic Places. He cited the cost of the name change for signs, maps, etc. and wondered why the state has yet to sign on to the change.

In other business, the commission's brief regular meeting saw many items pass "on consent" with one vote including the contract with Pugh and Associates as the county's outside auditor. Many of the consent items were discussed the previous week in the commission's work session.

Thermocopy of Tennessee was approved to manage the sheriff's department print services and Keep Knoxville Beautiful was contracted for

litter, education and coordinated services funded by a state litter grant. A memorial bench at Beverly Park from DJ and Wendy Corcoran was approved.

A property on Magazine Road was sold to Thomas A. Williams for delinquent taxes and a contract with Helen Ross McNabb Center, Inc., was approved for services at the Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center.

A lease agreement with the Community and Senior Center of Corryton was postponed and appointments were made to various boards and commissions.

The lease of space in the TVA Tower East

was approved to pass from Nexus Group, Inc. to Peace Communications LLC, which assumed the lease there.

In the zoning portion of the meeting, a request from DC Foundations Inc. to rezone a property at 6789 Oak Ridge Highway was postponed until next month. The company is requesting an office, medical and related services zoning change on a lot currently zoned for agricultural use. There were complaints that earthwork was already underway and some questions about existing permits to do so.

Two neighborhood zonings, annexations approved by council

By Mike Steely
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While the Knoxville City Council spent a good bit of time wrestling with creating an Alternative Response Team, there was much more business passed during Tuesday's regular meeting.

John Holmes was denied an appeal of a Board of Zoning decision involving the creation of six housing units with four driveways at 2230 Laurel Avenue in the Fort Sanders neighborhood. Holmes told the meeting that the townhouses would house fewer people than permitted by zoning. Opponents cited

the increases in traffic and density and that it was not compatible with the neighborhood.

Councilwoman Lauren Rider told Holmes his project does not meet the hardship requirement for a variance. Councilman Tommy Smith noted "some inconsistencies" in the Board of Zoning Appeals policies but moved to deny the appeal.

Bearden residents got a victory in an appeal of a planning commission special use permit. Roderrick Ledbetter had been granted permission to build a Taco Bell restaurant at 5613 Kingston Pike and residents came to the

council meeting with petitions against the location. They spoke of congestion and traffic that would be created. Speakers included Miller Foutch and Taylor Forrester.

Vice Mayor Andrew Roberto said that a Taco Bell there is not compatible with the area and Councilmembers Janet Testerman, Smith and Rider spoke in support of the Bearden residents. The vote was unanimous to support the appeal and deny the approval by the planners.

The council voted to annex two properties, one on Dresser Road and one on Sabre Drive. Both were

requested by the property owners.

Resolutions proposing revisions in the city code involving parking lots were postponed. An additional \$1.3 million was granted to the Community Action Committee to help provide transportation as part of the Covid 19 response and an application to the federal government for \$10 million with a \$2 million city match was approved as part of the Safe Streets and Roads for All program.

Lakeshore Park received \$50,000 to support the management of the park.

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The Doctor is in

a weekly column by
Dr. Jim Ferguson

Everything Changes

Good sense is the foundation of all good writing.
Samuel Kirkham

The ancient Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, coined the term "pantarei," which translates into English as "everything changes." When I was practicing medicine, The Focus allowed me to send my essays on Friday mornings instead of Thursday, which was less convenient for the staff. However, since I am now retired, I submit my columns by 6:00 p.m. Thursday evening along with other contributors. I've come to like the Thursday schedule, but now Friday seems like Saturday to me. And if I did not have small group meetings throughout the week with friends, I would never know what day of the week it is. Such is retirement.

I was never fascinated with the 1912 Titanic

tragedy, although I enjoyed the movie. And I can highly recommend the Titanic Museum in Pigeon Forge. It is a fascinating and wonderful venue. However, I would never get in a submersible to "land" on the ocean floor 12,000 feet below to see the original wreck.

When I was a kid, the TV series "Sea Hunt" intrigued me with the thought of silently floating under the sea. I used to scuba dive, but quickly learned that underwater serenity was an illusion because the scuba regulator makes a racket when you breathe and breathing is necessary. I also learned the dangers of entering a foreign environment. At a depth of even 50 feet, a mistake or equipment failure can be fatal.

We have all made mistakes, but years ago I made a mistake scuba diving that could have cost my life. I

joined a group of divers in the Cayman Islands and my mistake was overriding my own judgment and trusting our "Dive Captain" who took us to "The Black Hole." The so-called thrill was to descend 50 feet down to an opening on the ocean floor, and then swim about 30 feet in the dark to exit at a depth of 100 feet over the "Deep Blue," 5000 feet below the continental shelf. However, my scuba tank apparently shifted as I navigated in the dark and because I had no reference point, I soon struck my head against the passage wall. I suddenly thought, "I'm a dead man, lost in an ocean cave."

Fortunately, my NAUI training saved me from panicking, although I can't remember whether I "wet" my wetsuit. In short order, I located a faint distant blue in the blackness and made it out to join my group hovering over the Deep Blue. I no longer seek thrilling adventures, nor do I override my common sense.

I'm always writing and alert for topics that interest me and hopefully my readers. Some of the intrigue of this column may be not knowing where I'm going with an essay or what the Doctor might say. Admittedly, my interests are varied and so are my essays.

When my grandchildren were younger, I used to tell them, "Let's take a walk; we might see something." It's interesting what you see when you walk. Your perspective is much different than when you're driving a car. Becky and I walk in our neighborhood and I always carry a plastic grocery sack to pick up trash thrown along the roadside by "animals" driving through. Actually, that's unfair to animals who rarely foul their own nests.

Some years ago, a young man with Rastafarian dreadlocks stopped and asked me what I was doing. I said I was picking up trash while walking. He looked puzzled, so I invited him to join me, but he said, "No, I couldn't do that" and drove off.

I have found all sorts of garbage and detritus walking along Woodson Drive, a major connector between Alcoa Highway and Maryville Pike in South Knoxville. Examples include soiled children's diapers, beer cans and bottles, fast-food waste and assorted garbage. I once wrote an essay about trash bags thrown in front of my mailbox by drive-through lowlifes.

We hear much about Democrat-run cities with drugs, crime, filth and homelessness. Last week,

I found a discarded hypodermic needle and syringe at my driveway. Recently, there was a drug bust in an adjacent neighborhood. And an 18-year-old was found shot to death only a mile or so from our home. Increasingly, I see confused or intoxicated people wandering the roads and talking to themselves. And homeless encampments are cropping up around Knoxville. Yes, these people have their freedom, but do they have the freedom to litter or endanger the rest of us with drugs and crime? Mayor Kincannon, it is false compassion to coddle these societal ills and disturbed people. Don't bring San Fran-sicko or the hood to K-town.

The liberal Democrat "social experiment" is a dismal failure everywhere. Even my more-liberal-than-me daughter has decided to leave Portland, Oregon, for a safer environment in which to raise the children. And Austin, the San Francisco of Texas, is reportedly in an economic and social downward spiral as a result of liberal Democrat policies. Knoxville is typically behind social trends. Good! I pray that voters wise up and turn the Democrats out before they bring the ills of Gotham here. Like the country, my

body is changing. I'm not as strong as I used to be. However, north of 70, as you wake up with stiffness and aching, you should consider these an affirmation that you're still alive.

I took my grandchildren to Dollywood recently. Not surprisingly, my eleven- and eight-year-olds have no interest in Dolly's great musical shows. As I said, I'm no longer a thrill seeker like my younglings who are roller coaster devotees. However, I got my man card stamped by riding the Wild Eagle with its upside-down loops, twists and gut-wrenching turns! I also did a couple of roller coasters with them, but these are not advisable for a "seasoned citizen" with an arthritic neck.

Sport is made of The People of Walmart, but the sketchy outfits I saw on rotund people gorging themselves on funnel cakes at Dollywood were not a pretty sight. Becky and I decided we were holding up and adequately resisting the changes of aging. We also concluded that most of the people we saw would look better with more clothes rather than less. I wonder what Heraclitus would think.

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

Exploring the Meriwether Lewis Mystery

A Day Away



By Mike Steely

The Natchez Trace is one of the oldest routes in our state and runs as a two-lane parkway from southwest Nashville all the way to Natchez, Mississippi. The route is dotted with historic spots here and there but nothing is as interesting or

mysterious as the grave of explorer Meriwether Lewis of Lewis and Clark fame.

My wife and I ventured down the trace years ago, camping here and there in our little cab-over RV, and spent a day exploring the Lewis gravesite. Along the historic trace are places where the original path can be seen rutted deep in the earth.

Lewis, who before that venture to the Pacific, was secretary to President Thomas Jefferson. Following the big trip, he served as governor of the Upper Louisiana Territory. Lewis was traveling to

Continue on page 2

A Home Run for Pond Gap



Pond Gap's efforts to promote its neighborhood were rewarded last week with the dedication of "Home Run Alley" along Sutherland Avenue between Jade and Renford Roads. Neighborhood Association President David Williams pushed the recommendation and Mayor Indya Kincannon and other city officials turned out to establish the sign. The historic baseball field held games that included people of different races playing together and the sign is but one of many historical signs and banners highlighting the history of the neighborhood.

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May I Be Excused?

When we think about a lawsuit, we generally think about it starting on the date the lawsuit is filed with the Court. While the filing of the lawsuit is an important event, the case does not really start until



By Jedidiah McKeehan
jed@attorney-knoxville.com

the defendant is served with a copy of the lawsuit. Why is that? Because the defendant is not required to respond to the lawsuit or file anything with the Court until they are actually served with the lawsuit. Service can happen through a number of ways, but the most common methods are by law enforcement or a private process server handing a copy of the lawsuit to the defendant. Once a defendant is served, they are required to file a written response to the lawsuit with the Court within 30 days of being served.

One quirk of being served is that serving a defendant with a copy of the lawsuit is not supposed to occur on

Sundays unless it can be shown that the defendant is about to flee to avoid being served. Tennessee Code Annotated section 20-2-106 states, "... civil process shall not be executed on Sundays."

Tennessee legislature has not updated this law since 1932, but one can only guess why this law exists. Was there some belief that Sunday was a sacred day for spiritual worship that should not be disturbed by the serving of lawsuits on defendants? That is one guess, but we may never know the answer to why this law exists.

Jedidiah McKeehan is an attorney practicing in Knoxville and surrounding counties. He works in many areas, including family law, criminal, and personal injury. Visit attorney-knoxville.com for more information about this legal issue and other legal issues.



By Ralphine Major
ralphine3@yahoo.com

I sat in the warm, summer breeze. Wind rustled through heavy foliage, billowy clouds hid behind towering trees, and birds could be heard singing cheerfully. In only a few days our nation would be celebrating July 4, 2023, marking the unofficial midpoint of summer.

In 1776 our country gained her independence, and the Fourth of July is often referred to as Independence Day. It is a time when I think of the military and veterans, presidents and government leaders, democracy, and freedom—especially freedom. The freedom to work, travel, worship, and go to school are only a few of the liberties Americans enjoy. Our nation is facing an upcoming presidential election next year, which brings to mind another of our liberties—the freedom to vote.

On the festive day, special programs usually pay



Picture of our great American flag flying proudly atop Marvin Boruff's John Deere tractor, by Ralphine Major.

tribute to the military, the veterans, and those who gave all. Images of the flag can be seen on merchandise from tee shirts and towels to paper plates and napkins. Americans will surely celebrate the summer holiday with picnics, parades, and flags. Old Glory can often be seen flying proudly on flagpoles on the front lawns of homes, at schools and churches, on car antennas,

and on the back of truck beds. In our rural neighborhood, the flag flies proudly on top of a John Deere tractor belonging to Marvin Boruff. U.S. Army veteran Mike Johnson put the flag on Marvin's tractor. Focus readers may recall Marvin was featured on his John Deere several years ago in The Focus. As you celebrate this special day in our nation's history, have a safe, blessed, and

Happy Fourth of July!

Words of Faith: II Chronicles 7:14 (KJV) always comes to mind this time of year. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Venturing out close to home

Some family members describe Amy and me as miserably. We are thrifty, but on occasion, we splurge just a bit to enjoy a new experience. What we've discovered are plenty of places to go



By Joe Rector
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around Knoxville or within a few miles of home. We are

enjoying retirement by doing more things and spending time together.

Amy and I had a pleasant trip the other Saturday. We boarded the Volunteer Princess for a short cruise down the river. Dinner was served, but drinks were extra, the one negative of

the entire trip. We stepped outside on deck to take in the scenery. Alcoa Highway was on one side, but Sequoyah Hills was on the other. We watched walkers, bike riders and dog walkers there. In other places, folks had creatively set places to fish. One family had dad sitting on the rocky shoreline, while mom and two little ones sat in chairs and waited for him to bring in the big one.

Personally, I'm not eating anything that comes out of the water there, but others might feel safe consuming their catches.

As much as possible, we like to take our dog Sadie with us on short jaunts. Trips take a bit longer because, on trails, the dog stops every few feet to sniff. Good trails are always available at Northshore, Sequoyah Hills and Stony Point in Hardin Valley.

Most native Knoxville of my generation remember "going to town" to shop. When the malls began to open, downtown seemed to have died. However, we humans changed our minds and longed for trips back to the city. The Saturday Farmers' Market isn't the gigantic event that it once was, but walking through the maze of booths and

looking at the wares and foods available is nostalgic for some of us. Folks buy plenty and enjoy talking with farmers and craftsmen. It's not a bad way to spend a Saturday morning.

Knoxville residents are lucky to be so close to the Great Smoky Mountains. But just a short drive west takes adventurers to the likes of Cumberland Mountain State Park or Rock Island or Burgess Falls. Amy and I like waterfalls and enjoy short walks from the car to see them. I'm a chowhound, and my favorite thing at Cumberland Mountain is the buffet that is served for breakfast and lunch. A walk or a nap is necessary after such a meal.

When it's all said and done, home is the place I like best. We are blessed

to have a huge front porch with an equally large screened porch on the side of the house. Cool weather is always a wonderful time to sit there, watch television, listen to music or read. Off the family room, we have a deck. I've worked to replace boards and rails, but my hope is to cover the deck with a composite material that is maintenance-free. We also have a pool, and just sitting by it is as pleasant as any vacation spot.

We are at that time in our lives when venturing out is exciting. I am learning to leave home more often, but that place we built in 1978 is still where I want to be at the end of the day. Traveling around the area is fun, but no bed sleeps as well as my own.

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Exploring the Lewis Mystery

Continued from page 1

Washington, D.C., when his life ended abruptly near what is now Hohenwald, Tennessee.

In September of 1809, Lewis began his journey to Washington, D.C., to document and defend his spending of government funds, publish expedition journals, and meet with former President Thomas Jefferson.

He was escorted by Chickasaw Agent James Neely as they traveled along the Old Natchez Trace and stopped overnight at the inn operated by the Grinder family. Mrs. Grinder fed them and made up a room for Lewis. That night the family heard several gunshots and found Lewis with wounds to his head and chest. He died the next morning at 35 years of age and it remains a mystery if the noted explorer killed himself or if someone else murdered him.

Before entering the trace, Lewis left a journal, much of his possessions, and a will with his mother at Fort Pickering near Memphis.

At milepost 385.9 on the parkway, you'll find a park with the Lewis monument at his grave and you can also visit interpretive exhibits in a log cabin near the site of Grinder's Stand, the inn where he stayed. The monument, designed to look broken or incomplete, has a quote from

Thomas Jefferson about Lewis' courage.

The park has a free campground with few services, a picnic area, hiking trails and restrooms. His grave was located many years earlier after a large search and the broken shaft monument placed atop his remains.

While visiting the gravesite and park you may want to drive the seven miles from Grinder's Stand to Hohenwald and take in the museum there, said to have one of the largest trophy mount collections. The small town is also the home of the Elephant Sanctuary, the largest natural habitat for elephants in our nation.

Hohenwald, originally called New Switzerland, is German for "High Forest" and was founded by Swiss immigrants when the railway came through the area. Hohenwald is the county seat of Lewis County, named for the young explorer, with a population of about 4,000 people.

If you like, you can travel the Natchez Trace Parkway all the way to the southern end or you can double back along several routes in returning to Knoxville. If you venture further south you could spend the day in Tupelo, Mississippi, and visit the "shot-gun" home of Elvis Presley's birthplace.

You can find the Meriwether Lewis gravesite and park on the internet. You may also call the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce there at (931) 796-4084.

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West Virginia Gentleman Hugh Ike Shott

Pages from the Past



By Ray Hill
rayhill865@gmail.com

The State of West Virginia is now seen as a solidly "red" state, but there were decades when it was just as firmly Democratic. The pendulum has swung back and forth in the Mountain State, which had created itself by leaving Virginia, the only state in the nation to come into being by having divided itself.

Suffering in America was truly terrible during the Great Depression and if anything, it was even worse in West Virginia. As Republicans occupied both houses of Congress and the White House when the stock market crashed and the Depression began, voters turned them out of office and didn't soon forget. When Franklin Roosevelt rode a wave of votes into the White House, that same wave washed out the incumbent Republicans in West Virginia. Between 1930 and 2014, only two men would win election to the United States Senate as a Republican from West Virginia. One was Chapman Revercomb, who was elected twice; once in 1942 for a six-year term and again in 1956 when he won a special election for a two-year term.

While little more than a footnote in a game of trivia, when a senator dies or resigns, the governor appoints someone to the United States Senate who serves until the next regular election. The appointed senator may run for election, however, there have been instances when there are two elections for the same seat. That was the case in 1942 when Chapman Revercomb was the GOP candidate for the United States Senate against Governor Matthew Mansfield Neely, who was the Democratic nominee. There was also an election to serve out the remainder of the term from the November election until January 3, when the senator elected for the six-year term of office would take his seat. The contestants in that special election were incumbent Dr. Joseph Rosier and former Congressman Hugh Ike Shott.

A lanky gentleman with sharp features and a wing of hair that fell across his forehead, Hugh Isaac Shott was a successful businessman as well as a pioneer in the broadcasting industry, owning a profitable radio station, and later a television station. Both stations were known as WHIS, the former congressman's initials. Shott was also a newspaper publisher, owning the Bluefield Daily Telegraph and the controlling interest in the rival daily newspaper, the Mountain Sunset Review.

At the time, owning a newspaper was an invaluable asset, at least politically speaking.

Known by friends and family as "Hugh Ike," his first taste of politics was serving as the postmaster of Bluefield. A genial man who liked people, running for office came naturally to him. So too did business. Shott's eyesight began seriously diminishing following his brief service in the United States Senate and he underwent two operations on his eyes. Neither was particularly successful and Shott went blind in 1945, yet he continued coming into his office daily where he dictated editorials to his secretary, which supported Republican policies.

Like so many others of the time, Hugh Ike Shott started working early, as a fifteen-year-old printer's devil in Staunton, Virginia. Eventually, his media holdings were managed by his two sons, Hugh Ike Jr. and Jim.

When Fifth District Congressman James French Strother opted not to seek reelection in 1928 because of declining health, Hugh Ike Shott became a candidate to succeed him. Shott was popular and well enough known to run without opposition for the GOP nomination for Congress. Shott was allied with Governor Henry D. Hatfield who was challenging Senator Matthew M. Neely for reelection.

In the general election, Hugh Ike Shott faced State Senator John Kee, who was also a resident of Bluefield. Kee was an able orator and a credible candidate. The campaign centered less on issues than political party. Hugh Ike Shott supported GOP presidential nominee Herbert Hoover, while Kee backed Democratic nominee Alfred E. "Al" Smith. Hoover carried West Virginia and Hugh Ike Shott beat John Kee. Within months of having taken office, Congressman Shott was faced with the collapse of the stock market and the beginning of the Great Depression. His district, which covered the vast coal fields of West Virginia, saw acute suffering among the people. The seeming inability of President Hoover and the Republican Congress to solve the

problems did nothing to inspire confidence or garner support from voters.

Shott faced another formidable Democrat in the 1930 general election. Thomas Jefferson Lilly had served a single term in Congress before losing his seat and was attempting a comeback. Congressman Shott reminded the people of his district he had been diligent in his service, having never missed a roll call. Nor had Shott missed a vote during either the regular or special session of Congress. Hugh Ike Shott boasted he had supported expanding benefits for veterans and federal aid to build more and better roads, while also attempting to reduce the tax burden of citizens.

Hugh Ike Shott also tried hard to tend to the myriad of requests that routinely came to a congressman's office from constituents, promptly replying to each letter and inquiry. Lilly campaigned against the Republican administration and increased the vote John Kee had received two years previously.

By 1932, West Virginians were suffering even more than they had previously. John Kee was once again the Democratic nominee for Congress from West Virginia's Fifth District and was campaigning hard against the Hoover administration and pointed to Congressman Shott's support for that same administration. Another difference between the two congressional candidates was that of prohibition; Hugh Ike Shott had a "dry" record while John Kee supported the repeal of national prohibition. Shott attempted to defend Hoover, saying the Depression was not the president's fault. Congressman Shott urged voters not to judge Hoover by the extent of the depression, but rather by what the president had done to halt it.

Kee proved to be a gifted speaker and delighted audiences as he pointed to the gilded dome of the state capitol in Charleston, declaring taxpayers would have to give up the gold fillings in their teeth for a century to pay for it. John Kee charged the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Bill, supported by the Republicans in Congress, with having undone much of America's economic prosperity.

Each candidate for Congress from West Virginia's Fifth District ran with his party's ticket. Shott's support for Hoover turned out to be more of a burden and could likely only notice the enthusiasm of the numerous Roosevelt-Garner-Kee-Kump Clubs throughout the area. H. Guy Kump was the Democratic nominee for

governor and Democrats were energized on behalf of their candidates. The Republicans were clearly on the defensive while the Democrats were on the offense.

Shott's campaign was well financed, but it did nothing to stop the Democratic sweep. John Kee won the election and began a career in the House of Representatives, where he would remain for the rest of his life. Shott was the last Republican to be elected to Congress from West Virginia's Fifth District until 2014.

Hugh Ike Shott was gracious in defeat. At the time, congressmen and senators did not leave office after defeat until the following March, when their successors were sworn in. Unlike some of his colleagues, Shott continued to carry out the responsibilities of his office.

Once bitten by the political bug, it is quite nearly always fatal for only death seems to extinguish the virus. Hugh Ike Shott decided to run for the United States Senate in 1936 and there was keen competition for the GOP nomination. Shott eked out a win in the Republican primary for the right to face Senator Matthew Mansfield Neely.

Neely was an extremely formidable candidate. Vocal, opinionated, and a powerful orator of the old school, Neely was likely the most popular politician in West Virginia, save for Franklin Roosevelt. If not quite the most popular, Neely was certainly the most durable. Neely died many a political death time and again and always somehow manage to resurrect himself.

The popularity of FDR and the New Deal was at its peak in the country and West Virginia was no exception. Franklin Roosevelt had restored hope in the breasts of many millions of Americans; once where the future looked dismal, Roosevelt and his New Deal offered the prospect of a brighter future.

Hugh Ike Shott was an unapologetic Republican, and he ran as a critic of the New Deal and Senator Neely, who was its foremost advocate in the Mountain State. Speaking in Hinton, the former congressman said the Social Security Bill passed by Congress was less a humanitarian measure than yet another New Deal scheme to collect ever more taxes from the working man. By the time it came for folks to receive their benefits, Shott warned Congress "may have seen fit in the meantime to revise the law so that no benefits ever will be obtained for anyone, including the aged



ACME NEWS PHOTO FROM THE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL COLLECTION.

(Left to right) Senator Hugh Ike Shott of West Virginia greets Vice President Henry A. Wallace, 1942.

and helpless, for whom the law was originally intended." Shott was also a critic of the massive spending by the Roosevelt administration.

In Weston, West Virginia, a crowd estimated at 5,000 people gathered at the Lewis County Courthouse to hear the former congressman speak. "Good intentions do not take the place of good judgment," Shott cautioned. "You people believed the New Dealers in 1932 when they said a job for every man by next July but by July the number of unemployed was still increasing and in spite of ten billions spent there are more than ten millions still idle."

Despite a spirited campaign, Hugh Ike Shott only garnered 40% of the vote against Senator Neely. The former congressman kept up a lively interest in politics and things political. His last hurrah came in 1942 when he announced as a candidate for the "short term" in the 1942 election for the United States Senate.

Matthew Neely's political war with the statehouse faction of his own party culminated in his running for governor in 1940. Neely resigned his seat in the Senate and promptly appointed his own successor while the outgoing governor, Homer Holt, had made an appointment as well. Neely's appointee, Dr. Joseph Rosier, the longtime president of the State Teachers' College in Fairmont, was narrowly confirmed as the rightful appointee.

Rosier was considered by most political observers to be an acceptable placeholder for Neely who was expected to run for his old seat in the U.S. Senate again in 1942. Neely disappointed none of his critics and confidently expected to be reelected after having vanquished his intra-party foes.

Republicans nominated different men for the special election and the regular election for the full six-year term. Hugh Ike Shott, the grand old man of West Virginia's Grand Old Party, stood for election as the candidate of his party against Senator Rosier for the few months left of the current term of office. Chapman Revercomb, a largely unknown Republican, faced the formidable Neely.

To the surprise of almost everyone, Republicans in West Virginia experienced the best year they had had in the Mountain State since 1928. Revercomb decisively beat Neely for the full term, while Hugh Ike Shott beat Senator Rosier for the short term. Republicans also won three of West Virginia's six seats in the House of Representatives.

As one newspaper commented, with a term of two months, Hugh Ike Shott wasn't going to set the world on fire, but he would carry the honorific of "senator" with him for the rest of his life. Having been elected to the U. S. Senate at all is a pretty exclusive club.

Once the election returns were certified, Hugh Ike Shott, his usual cigar in his hand, hurried to Washington, D.C., and took the oath of office as West Virginia's junior United States senator. Shott, always a gentleman, didn't bother to displace any of the women who had comprised Senator Rosier's office staff.

In 1950, the aging publisher and ex-senator suffered a stroke, which confined him to his home. Age and illness took its toll and he caught pneumonia, which carried him away at age eighty-seven.

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Meet The Knoxville Focus 2023 All-County Soccer Team

By Ken Lay
The 2023 high school boys soccer season packed plenty of excitement. The area teams (Bearden, Hardin Valley Academy and Halls) each concluded their respective campaigns on the state's grand stage at the Spring Fling in

Murfreesboro. West High cruised through District 3-3A, winning the league's regular-season title and tournament championship. The Knoxville Focus honors some of the area's top players and coaches with its all-county team.

Co-Coach of the Year: Jessica Stephens Burkhart, HVA
In her final season as the Hawks coach, Burkhart led them to a Class 3A State Tournament appearance. Hardin Valley reached

the tournament semifinals. HVA finished with a 13-4-6 record. Burkhart was recently hired by Farragut High School, her alma mater, as the school's soccer coach.

Co-Coach of the Year: Eldon English, Halls High
The Red Devils had a magical season in 2023 as they won district and regional championships. They also made their first-ever trip to the state

tournament where they reached the Class 2A semifinals.

Player of the Year: Lucas Nordin, Bearden High
Nordin, a senior forward
Continue on page 2



Brad Taylor joins De'Sean Bishop at his signing with Tennessee. Taylor, who recently stepped down as Karns High's head football coach, is looking forward to watching Bishop play for the Vols.

Williams to be guest speaker at 42nd Hall of Fame event

By Steve Williams
Grant Williams, one of Tennessee basketball's all-time greats and a fan favorite, will be the guest speaker for the 42nd annual Greater Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame festivities, presented by First Horizon, Aug. 31 at the Knoxville Convention Center. Williams was a two-time SEC Player of the Year in 2018 and 2019 and a consensus first-team All-American in 2019. He now plays for the Boston Celtics and also is Vice President of the NBA Players Association.

Hospitality begins at 5:30 and Master of Ceremonies Bob Kesling will make welcoming remarks before dinner at 6:30 in the KCC Ballroom. The induction ceremony starts at 7:30. The Class of 2023 includes: John Adams (Media), Billy Arbo (Football), Sarah Fekete Bailey (Softball), Dr. Todd Burgan (Golf), Larry Cox (Community Contributor), Nikki Caldwell Fargas (Basketball), John Fritts (Tennis), Gerald Hodges (Official), Bill Parker (Coaching), and Julia Stowers Dilworth
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Taylor steps down after historic run at Karns

By Steve Williams
Brad Taylor, who guided Karns High football to its best back-to-back seasons in school history, announced June 23 he would be stepping down as head coach. "Thank you to the community and administration for their support," Taylor said in a statement released by the school. "I have been fortunate to coach with some outstanding people who are not only knowledgeable about the game, but are also great men and mentors to our players." Taylor said it felt like the right time to make the career move. He will remain at Karns as a



Karns Coach Brad Taylor on the sideline in the Beavers' 63-48 second-round loss at Rhea County in 2021.

teacher and may explore working in administration in the future. "While we will miss Coach Taylor on the sidelines, we are excited he will remain on staff and continue making a difference in the classroom," said Principal Lacie

Hatfield. "I have had the privilege of watching our players grow into not only good football players but also fantastic people," added Taylor. "I am excited to continue supporting Karns football. I can't wait to see the awesome things these young men will accomplish next." Taylor guided Karns to its first playoff win and a 7-5 record in 2021. Last season, Karns made the playoffs again but lost in the first round and finished 7-4. "We are grateful for Coach Taylor and his commitment to our football program for the past
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Former Tennessee Vol and current Boston Celtic Grant Williams will be the guest speaker at this year's Greater Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame event.

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PHOTO BY PAM RHOADES

Signing college scholarships May 30 at Knoxville Catholic were (left to right) Sam Brott, Sam O'Leary, Ellie Brickner, Ella Perry, Anna Kauffman and Devyn Dunn.

Catholic honors eight college signees at end of 2022-23

By Steve Williams

Eight student-athletes at Knoxville Catholic High signed college scholarship papers in the school's final two signing days for 2022-23.

A "special summer signing day" for two members on its Division II-AA state championship baseball team was held on June 21 in the KCHS Library. Ian Hubbard signed with Radford University and Ben Sompayrac with Cleveland State Community College.

Head Coach Caleb Moore spoke at the ceremony and several Irish teammates were on hand for the occasion.



Catholic also held its fifth National Signing Day of the school year on May 30 in the St. Gregory the Great Auditorium with six student-athletes signing their national letters of intent that will chart their future academic and athletic careers.

That group included three cheerleaders - Ellie Brickner (East Tennessee State University), Ella Perry (University of South

Carolina) and Anna Kauffman (Maryville College).

Others signing that day were Sam Brott with Lincoln Memorial University (Lacrosse), Sam O'Leary with ETSU (Football) and Devyn Dunn with UNC Asheville (Volleyball).

What is the TSSAA dead period?

For those who aren't aware, TSSAA makes contact between coaches and athletes in its high schools illegal for two weeks - the last week in June and first week in July (June 26 through July 9 this year).

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Ben Sompayrac (left) and Ian Hubbard, two members of Knoxville Catholic's state baseball championship team this year, at their signing day on June 21.

Brinley Murphy named Tennessee Gatorade Girls Soccer Player of the Year

By Ken Lay

Bearden High School girls soccer player Brinley Murphy was named 2022-23 Tennessee Gatorade Player of the Year recently. She won the award for the second consecutive year.

Murphy, a four-year starter for the Lady Bulldogs, scored 41 goals and dished out 22 assists. She was named the 2022 Player of the Year by the United Soccer Coaches Association.

Murphy will continue her career at the University of South Carolina in the fall. She helped the Lady

Bulldogs go 24-0 last season and win a second consecutive Class 3A State Championship.

The Lady Bulldogs will enter the 2023 campaign with a 47-match winning streak.

She is the second Bearden soccer player to win the honor for 2022-23 as she joins Bearden boys star forward Lucas Nordin, who was also named Tennessee Gatorade Player of the Year.

Both Murphy and Nordin are finalists for Gatorade National Player of the Year in their respective sports.

Meet The Knoxville Focus 2023 All-County Soccer Team

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for the Bulldogs, was the Tennessee Gatorade Player of the Year. He scored 27 goals and dished out eight assists against one of the area's toughest schedules.

Bearden (18-1-3) won the District 4-3A regular-season and tournament championships. The Bulldogs also won the region and reached the state tournament quarterfinals.

Other all-county team members

Logan Nelson, Bearden High School: Nelson, a sophomore goalkeeper for the Bulldogs, Nelson had a stellar campaign as he posted 11 clean sheets and surrendered just 12 goals, setting a school single-season record.

Chase Stokely, Christian

Academy of Knoxville: A senior midfielder for the Warriors, Stokely scored 18 goals and recorded 15 assists. He was an all-district performer and all-region standout.

Colby Stokely, Christian Academy of Knoxville: He scored 18 goals and tallied three assists for CAK and earned all-district honors for the Warriors.

Brady Hammer, Hardin Valley Academy: A junior forward for the Hawks, Hammer was the District 4-3A Offensive Player of the Year. He helped the Hawks reach the Spring Fling in Murfreesboro for the first time since 2015. He scored 12 goals and dished out 20 assists as HVA reached the Class 3A State Semifinals.

DJ Powers, Hardin Valley Academy: A senior midfielder, Powers finished the 2023 campaign with 13 goals and 10 assists for

HVA, which made a state tournament appearance and reached the semifinals in Murfreesboro.

Jacob Eubanks, Halls High School: A senior forward for the Red Devils, Eubanks scored a school-record 34 goals and dished out 15 assists, leading Halls to its first-ever state tournament.

Tobias Hageltorn, West High School: A junior forward and foreign exchange student for the Rebels, Hageltorn shattered the school's single-season goal scoring record as he tallied 27 markers. He also had 11 assists for West, which went 18-2-1, sweeping through the District 3-3A regular season schedule and district tournament.

Daniel Guevara, Halls High School: Guevara anchored the back line for the Red Devils, who reached the Spring Fling for the first time in school history.

Chase Burnett, Halls High School: A midfielder, the junior emerged as a potent offensive weapon for Halls, which had a historic 2023 campaign.

William Bush, West High School: Bush was a solid performer in the back for the Rebels, who finished the season as league and district tournament champions. West was 18-2-1 this season as it posted two victories over league rival Oak Ridge.

Pierce Miller, Webb School of Knoxville: A top scorer for the Spartans, he led Webb to the Division II-AA State Quarterfinals. He received all-state honors from the Tennessee Sports Writers Association.

JP Quigley, Webb School of Knoxville: Quigley was one of the area's top performers in the midfield. He was an all-state standout, earning top honors from the TSWA.

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Gen. Neyland: Locking his jaw

In 1926, Captain Robert R. Neyland had to "lock jaws" with Dean N a t h a n Washington Dougherty and take on the baseball and track coaches to get enough players to hold spring football practice.

By Tom Mattingly

"You hired me to coach football," he told members of the athletics board, "and if we are going to have a football team, we must have the best spring practice we have ever had. If I can't have every single one of the players as long as I want them, I can't operate." After that soaked in, Neyland played a stronger card.

"Let somebody else take the job. I won't have it. I'll leave it with you." The exact details of what came next are not known, but Dean Dougherty later told Neyland to go ahead with spring practice. Neyland said it turned out good enough, which was very good, a key part of the success of the 1926 season and the years to follow.

In 1955, Bowden Wyatt lost his best running back on the second day of his first spring practice. The new coach and Tom Tracy, a 1954 All-SEC selection who rushed for a team-leading

794 yards, developed a different point of view.

"Tom was not a proponent of strict training rules," Marvin West wrote.

In a scrimmage, Tracy suffered leg cramps and lay in a heap on the field. He called out for trainer Mickey O'Brien.

"Mickey." Then louder, "Mickey!"

Wyatt moved the team down the field, and drills continued.

"Tracy was offended by this lack of official compassion," Marvin added. "That evening, he threatened to leave. Wyatt dispatched two assistants to help him pack."

The impact was two-fold. "Losing Tracy was a sizable setback. Establishing authority enhanced Wyatt's influence."

There were any number of players who said they'd "run through a wall" for Wyatt.

In 1964, Steve DeLong had a running disagreement with new coach Doug Dickey that West recounted in his second book, "Legends of the Tennessee Vols."

DeLong was, indeed, a legend, a 1963 All-American at middle guard. He seemed more than willing to help the rookie coach. Dickey wasn't very receptive.

"He called me into his office for a meeting," Steve



Bowden Wyatt (L) and Gen. Neyland faced similar problems early in their coaching tenures, most notably with problems of player availability.

said. "I had been through enough by then to not be intimidated. Coach Dickey said he wasn't sure he could use me on the team. He said I might make it as an offensive tackle."

The idea of DeLong as an offensive tackle after a season of defensive honors seemed equivalent to running Secretariat in a race at the county fair.

There was a fundamental difference of opinion. Dickey wanted his middle guard to play the position. DeLong wanted to chase and catch whoever had the football.

Dickey and DeLong compromised - somewhat, sort of, more or less. Doug allowed Steve to make enough tackles to repeat as an All-American and win the Outland Trophy as the nation's best interior lineman.

DeLong, always respectful of the coach, stayed at home at middle guard for all plays that looked to be coming his way.

In his autobiography, John Majors recalled a memory about spit cups early in his tenure at Tennessee.

"The first time I met

with the players after the announcement that I was to be their new head coach, some of them showed up carrying snuff cups."

Bad move. "Now I know a number of fine people who go around with a big chew of tobacco in their mouths, but I didn't think our athletes should show up at a squad meeting dipping snuff. That rule went into effect right away."

Finally, there are often times reality comes calling, albeit with a personal cost.

There were times National Signing Day was

the culmination of a full year of recruiting. Optimism abounded. All signees were great. The outlook was oh, so exciting. The sky was the limit.

Fans believed better days were just around the corner. Fans began chalking up Volunteer victories.

A few months later, when reality started to set in, some of the young players could play. Some couldn't. Some needed seasoning. Some needed to be at Maryville.

When reality comes, you can see it in body language. Eyes are the key. When a player is thinking about leaving, eyes provide the clues. Soon thereafter comes a press release, stating that a certain player has "left the squad."

That was the summation of choice. Sometimes the head coach said, "We wish him well." Sometimes he didn't.

What followed was a recapitulation of that player's career. Critics, 99 times out of 100, blamed the coach for faulty recruiting judgment or "mistreating" or "misleading" a suddenly popular player, particularly one from the Knoxville area.

As is often the case, the truth was almost always somewhere in between.

The uncomfortable sports lull

By Mark Nagi

With the end of the College World Series (congrats to LSU and their fans who bought a billion Jell-O shots from an Omaha bar), we are now in the dark time on the sports scene.

Basketball is done. Hockey is over. College Football is still eight weeks away with the NFL even further down the road.

Yes, we still have Major League Baseball, but even with the quickened pace and games just about every day, that doesn't come close to filling the void. However, if you look hard enough, you can come up with a few ideas.

Let's start with the obvious. You could always spend more time with your family! Have meaningful

conversations that will stand the test of time. If talking isn't your favorite thing to do, why not visit the park, cast a reel, maybe even go for a hike in the Great Smoky Mountains?

Ok, I felt like I had to present options that didn't necessarily focus on sitting down on your couch and watching sports. That task is now complete.

Do you like tennis? Well, Wimbledon is underway, so you can watch the best tennis players in the world on the English grass courts. Has an American man won this tournament over the last two decades? Why no, not since Pete Sampras captured his 7th and final Wimbledon in the year 2000. Serena Williams was the last American woman to win Wimbledon,

that happened back in 2016.

Maybe this is the year one or both of those streaks ends!

Or not. Probably not. If baseball is more your speed, you could always make the trip up I-40 to see the Tennessee Smokies play some Double A ball off Exit 407. In a couple of years, they'll be playing at the new downtown stadium in Knoxville but for now, you've still gotta hoof it to Kodak. And there's a Buc-ee's there now so... two birds, one stone.

On the Major League level, the All-Star Game takes place on July 11th. The 94th Midsummer Classic used to be one of the biggest sporting events on the calendar, but its significance has taken a tumble because

every game is on television, and interleague play occurs throughout the schedule. This game used to be the rare opportunity for fans of one league to see the stars from the other league. It's not special anymore and yes, you can get off my lawn.

Now, the next week we get the unofficial beginning of the end of summer, SEC Football Media Days. For four days the head coaches and selected players from all 14 SEC teams meet with reporters to talk about the upcoming season.

This event always used to be held at the Wynfrey Hotel in Hoover, Alabama, but it has outgrown that space. This year they've moved SEC Media Days to the Grand Hyatt in downtown Nashville, July 17th-20th. It makes me

chuckle to think about the bachelorette parties that were scheduled that same week, not realizing that thousands of SEC fans will be on Broadway as well.

Right around the time that event comes to a close, high school football practices will be getting

underway, NFL camps will be open, and college football teams will begin their workouts. So, you see, there isn't that long to wait until the good stuff is back.

But the waiting is the hardest part.

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